

Berkshire JEWISH VOICE

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

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Builders and Sustainers of Jewish Life in the Berkshires



Major Donors Celebration an opportunity to share ideas on making a difference in our Jewish community

PITTSFIELD – Jewish Federation of the Berkshires will host its annual Major Donors Celebration on Sunday, July 23 at 9:30 a.m., at a new, larger location – Berkshire Hills Country Club.

This year’s event will focus on the tremendous impact major donors have on building and sustaining Jewish life in the region, especially over these last few years marked by significant challenges related to the pandemic, antisemitism, and changing demographics.

MAJOR DONORS,
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Celebrating Federation’s Work – 83rd Annual Meeting

Featuring a special presentation on “The State of Jewish Life on Campus”

LENOX – On Tuesday, June 20, at 7:30 p.m., Jewish Federation of the Berkshires will celebrate its work in the community at its 83rd annual meeting, which will be held this year at Shakespeare & Company’s Elayne P. Bernstein Theatre. A review of accomplishments from the past year will be shared and look forward to our plans and goals for the year ahead.

Community members are invited to a celebratory reception and



schmoozing, followed by a brief business meeting, board elections, and the presentation of the Simkin Schiller Scholarship to Jewish high school seniors who demonstrated high academic achievement and leadership in the Jewish and broader communities.

The special guest speaker will be Rabbi Aaron Fine, executive director of UMASS Amherst Hillel who will share his insights on “The State of Jewish Life on Campus.”

This event is free and open to all members of the Jewish community. The Elayne P. Bernstein Theatre is at

ANNUAL MEETING,
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Jewish Community Day 2023

Together, we planted the seeds for a glorious summer in the Jewish Berkshires

The clouds above High Lawn Farm in Lee parted at exactly 2 p.m. on May 21 and so the nearly 400 revelers joining Federation enjoyed a fine spring day kicking off Super Tzedakah Week and our annual campaign. For a recap, please see page 14.

Summer Culture in the Jewish Berkshires

This summer, Federation partners with local and regional cultural institutions for a compelling lineup of performances and talks.



June 29:
“Reflections on Antisemitism and the Cautionary Tale of Cabaret” with Barrington Stage Company



July 9:
The Workshop Artist Salon: Probing Collective Memory and Hybridity with Shakespeare & Company



August 11:
“Torah in the Tarot: Hidden Secrets of the Crypto-Jews” with Jewish Arts Collaborative (JArts)

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OP-ED

IN MY VIEW

In Israel for Yom Ha’Zikaron and Yom Ha’Atzmaut – and So Much More

By Arlene D. Schiff / Board Member, Jewish Federation of the Berkshires



Imagine sitting outside on a warm summer day with a cool breeze blowing, while overlooking groves of olive trees, fields in various shades of green, and a large “fishpond” with the city of Afula and several kibbutzim and moshavs in the distance. This is the space I find myself in as I attempt to put into words the incredible opportunity I was given to accompany Dara Kaufman, our Federation’s executive director, to Israel for

Jewish Federations of North America’s General Assembly (GA) and a two-day visit to our Partnership2Gether community, Afula/Gilboa.

This is my fifth trip to Israel in the past 22 years, and while all of them were memorable for varied reasons, this is the first time I had the privilege of experiencing Israel in ways where I was more of a member of the Israeli Jewish community than a tourist.

I had several opportunities to walk the streets of Tel Aviv alone and with friends, eat in local restaurants, sip coffee in cafes, salivate over the baklava, halvah, and fresh fruit in the Carmel Market, and take long walks along the beach. I observed people celebrating Shabbat by Israeli dancing, playing a loud paddle game and volleyball (using parts of their body other than their hands),

working out in outdoor gyms in the sand, windsurfing, surfing, walking along the beachfront, or enjoying the sunshine while lounging in a beach chair.

On Yom Ha’Zikaron, everyone stopped when the sirens sounded – everyone! No matter what they were doing, they stopped to observe the 1 or 2 minutes of silence to honor fallen soldiers and victims of terror. On Yom Ha’Atzmaut, the Tel Aviv beachfront parks were filled with large extended families, both Israeli and Arab, having barbecues to celebrate Israel’s 75th birthday. And in Jaffa, dance parties were taking place on rooftop bars, people were eating at waterfront restaurants, and there was lots of ice cream being consumed.

In Afula, we visited four programs our Federation helps to make possible, interacting on a personal level with the staff and beneficiaries, places not on the typical tour guide’s itinerary, but critical to ensuring that new *olim*, youth, and victims of domestic violence receive the support they need to achieve goals and overcome trauma. And two of the four days of the GA were outside of the convention center, providing the opportunity for us to have important discussions in small groups with new *olim*, lone soldiers, and members of the army who participated in Birthright Israel.

I will never forget how it felt to participate in Masa’s memorial ceremony for Israel’s fallen soldiers and victims of terror, “Forever Connected,” at Latrun (a strategic hilltop in the Ayalon Valley which was the site of one of the worst battles in the War of Independence). Seven thousand Jews of all ages came together in a large outdoor amphitheater as the sun was setting to honor the 24,213 fallen soldiers who gave their lives for the Jewish homeland and the many, many victims of terror, some who lost their lives and others whose lives were totally transformed because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time. Seven thousand people in one space for an hour and a half and the silence was

IN MY VIEW,
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Jewish Federation®
OF THE BERKSHIRES

THE STRENGTH OF A PEOPLE
THE POWER OF COMMUNITY.

83rd ANNUAL MEETING

Tuesday, June 20 at 7:30 pm

Shakespeare & Co., Elayne P. Bernstein Theatre

70 Kemble Street, Lenox, MA

Join the Berkshire Jewish community for a celebratory reception and schmoozing followed by a brief business meeting, board elections, the Simkin Schiller college scholarship award, and a special guest speaker.

The State of Jewish Life on Campus

with Rabbi Aaron Fine

Executive Director, UMASS Amherst Hillel



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*Newly Appointed 1st term

^Newly Appointed 2nd term

In accordance with the Federation’s bylaws, additional nominations may be considered when submitted by a petition signed by fifteen Berkshire Jewish Community members

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The color photography in this issue of the *Berkshire Jewish Voice* is made possible through the generosity of **David & Judy Gilberg and Rob Bildner & Elisa Spungen Bildner, honorary publishers.** The staff of the Federation and the BJV are deeply grateful.



Shabbat





Across



The Berkshires

Shabbat Across the Berkshires

Join with the Berkshire Jewish Community as we come together to celebrate a joyous Kabbalat Shabbat with a musical family-friendly service led by our local Rabbis, followed by a festive oneg.

Friday, June 16 at 6:00 p.m.

Hosted by

Congregation Beth Israel,
53 Lois Street, North Adams, MA

Sponsored by:

Jewish Federation of the Berkshires

Berkshire Minyan

Congregation Ahavath Sholom

Congregation Beth Israel

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Berkshire Hills Hadassah



Jewish Federation
OF THE BERKSHIRES

OP-ED

RABBI REFLECTION

Jewish Teachings on Reincarnation

By Rabbi Seth Wax / Jewish Chaplain, Williams College



Among the most common questions that rabbis get, among the more challenging is when a person asks, “What do Jews believe happens to a person after they die?” It is difficult because often, the person asking the question has recently experienced a loss and seeks ways to stay connected to their loved one who has passed away. By learning about Jewish beliefs about life after death, those asking this question often want support in developing a relationship with the person who has died.

Another reason this question is difficult is because there is no easy and straightforward answer. Like with so many things in Judaism, there are many different ideas and theories about what happens when we die that are scattered throughout Jewish literature. In some ways, it can be easier to talk about what Jews don’t think about life after death, rather than what we do think. And even that is imperfect.

Against this backdrop are Jewish teachings on reincarnation. With roots in rabbinic literature, these teachings are infinitely intricate and confusing. But they are also imaginative, deep, and inspiring. When I first learned of them a number of years ago, I wanted to learn more. But I always found them opaque and difficult to penetrate. Fortunately, for the past seven months, I have had the privilege of studying *Shaar HaGilgulim*, the final volume in the collection of Kabbalistic teachings of Rabbi Isaac Luria, as taught to his disciple Chaim Vital and arranged by Shmuel Vital. I have done this with a small group, under the guidance of my teacher, Rabbi Ebn Leader. Through taking part in a guided study of this text, our group has been able to encounter some foundational ideas about Jewish approaches to *gilgul*, or reincarnation. My understanding is still in its early stages, but I’d like to share some of the main ideas that I have encountered that I have found personally meaningful, with the hope that perhaps they might be helpful, or at least interesting, to others.

There is no I – only soul-sparks

According to Lurianic Kabbalah, as we come into the world, we enter as a particular configuration of soul-sparks. These soul-sparks come from an original source that is referred to as *Nishmat Adam HaRishon*, or the soul of the first human being. Drawing on a Talmudic teaching that the first human being stretched from one end of the earth to the other (BT Chagigah 12a), the Kabbalistic notion holds that at the beginning of time, there was only this one all-inclusive soul of Primordial Human. However, when the Primordial Human ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, their all-inclusive soul split into countless sparks and spread throughout the cosmos, many of which fell into dark places. Ever since then, these soul-sparks have come into the world in a dazzling array of configurations, as different creatures and beings.

This pattern continues to play out for us. When we come into the world, we are constituted of a particular configuration of these soul-sparks. They are drawn from a dizzying array of locations in *Adam HaRishon*’s soul, along different dimensions of reality, and they manifest in different forms. So it’s not that each creature or person has one “soul.” Rather, according to this theory, each being is constituted by a conglomeration of this range of soul sparks. We don’t have a soul – rather, we exist as a being consisting of many different bits of soul-sparks.

Why soul-sparks come together: tikkun

When a collection of soul-sparks comes into the world as a living creature, they enter with a purpose: to bring about *tikkun*, or healing. This *tikkun* is limited, however, to the specific soul-sparks that have come together in a person. By engaging in certain religious practices, connecting with certain people, and living life in a certain way, a person can bring about this *tikkun* for their soul-sparks that need it. Each person has particular soul-sparks that need *tikkun*, and we don’t always know what they are and how to bring about *tikkun*. In fact, not every soul-spark is ready for *tikkun* in each incarnation. Spiritual guides can help us discern what *tikkun* we need to engage in, but it’s not always so easy.

While we are on a mission to effect *tikkun* for the soul-sparks within ourselves, we are not the true beneficiary of that spiritual work. Rather, everything we do is for the *tikkun* of *Nishmat Adam HaRishon*. Which is to say, our spiritual work is to

It can be easier to talk about what Jews don’t think about life after death, rather than what we do think. And even that is imperfect.

heal the all-inclusive soul from which all beings come – to engage in *tikkun olam* – through bringing healing to the parts of ourselves that we have been born into the world to heal. Our process of reincarnation is not about us: it is about bringing healing to the soul of *Adam HaRishon*.

No soul-spark is left behind

Since the point of our being born into the world and reincarnating, lifetime after lifetime, is not about us, but rather, the healing of the cosmic soul that includes all beings, nothing can be left behind. The grand project of *tikkun* is about healing the breaches within *Nishmat Adam HaRishon*. And that all-inclusive soul cannot achieve fullness until every single broken piece is healed and reintegrated back into the whole. That means that the process of *tikkun* is inconceivably long – it takes lifetimes upon lifetimes. But it also means that no parts of ourselves nor of others will ever be left behind. In order for the soul of *Adam HaRishon* to be healed, we all need to be healed. This means that all people, all creatures – everything – needs to be recognized, uplifted, and reintegrated into the whole.

What does this mean for us?

A downside of this way of thinking about people and souls is that it doesn’t offer an image of an enduring soul that exists across space and time, and that we can encounter in a heavenly realm. At the same time, I think it offers us a compelling image for what we are called on to do when we come into the world. We are tasked with doing our small part, in our own way, to bring healing to all beings. At the end of our lives, our soul-sparks will go off in different directions and take their place in new beings, with new work to do. My sense is that the parts of our personality endure in these new configurations, bringing our unique experiences to these new incarnations. I also think that this approach invites us to reflect on our work in this life, in this world. To ask, what are we being asked to do in this life? To reflect on what healing within ourselves we need to bring about, and how can we support others in their process of healing? It offers a way to think about *tikkun olam* while recognizing our limitations, while also inviting us into this cosmic task. May each of us reflect on this call and respond in ways that honor our own healing while also working for the healing of others.

Rabbi Seth Wax is the Jewish Chaplain at Williams College.

Berkshire

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Anonymous - 1

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Berkshire

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Your Federation Presents

IN MY VIEW, continued from page 2

overwhelming. Words can't express the experience sufficiently; I encourage you to experience this for yourself via YouTube (google **The Masa Yom HaZikaron Ceremony 2023**) and hear the intimate stories of six families who have lost loved ones, bringing the incomprehensible number of those lost down to the level of an individual family's story.

The following day, Dara and I joined members of the Buffalo, Rochester, and Northeastern New York Jewish communities to experience Yom Ha'Zikaron as part of smaller commemorations taking place across the country. Our first stop was an Absorption Center (where new immigrants to Israel live and study Hebrew before venturing out on their own) in Ra'anana, about 30 minutes outside of Tel Aviv. Here we experienced new immigrants speaking and singing in Hebrew with such pride, for many their dream of living in Israel having recently come true. While I could not understand what they were saying, the solemnity of the day was felt, and you were swept up in the emotion being expressed through body language, voices, and tears.

Following the ceremony, our group gathered in a circle to speak with three lone soldiers from the United Kingdom, South Africa, and the United States, who shared why they chose to enlist in the army (a strong connection to Israel as a result of having visited family members who live here), their parent's reaction to their decision (supportive though nervous), their hopes for their lives five years from now (one unsure, two to be active members of Israeli society), and what they wished could be easier as they transition to living life as Israeli citizens (having someone to call to help them navigate the bureaucracy of all aspects of Israeli life). Two new *olim*, one from Russia and one from Canada, also shared why they chose to make *aliya* (for one it seemed the right place to start their professional life, and for the other, all in his family but his parents live in Israel and the Start-Up Nation is the right place to launch his biomedical career); the challenges they are experiencing (learning Hebrew is difficult and transitioning to Israeli life challenging); and where they hope to be in five years (working and making lives for themselves in Israel).

Later in the day, we met four current soldiers at the memorial for Sergeant Nachson Waxman – the 19-year-old Israel Defense Force soldier who was abducted, held hostage for a period of six days, and killed by Hamas in 1994 – and the Israeli commando officer who was killed trying to rescue him. After they introduced themselves and shared what this day meant to them, we all took a short bus ride to the home of one of the soldier's grandmothers, who graciously welcomed us into her shady backyard for a more intimate conversation.

The grandmother shared her journey to Israel as a Holocaust survivor and the multitude of ways in which she has done her part, including as a teacher, to positively impact Israeli society. Her personal resume was extensive and, at age 84, she does not appear to be slowing down! Then the soldiers shared their personal reasons for enlisting (more than a requirement, for most, it's a responsibility based on events that happened earlier in their lives) and the impact interacting with Diaspora young adults through Birthright Israel has had on them (which has allowed them to gain a better understanding of Jewish life in the Diaspora and to see Israel through new eyes). One soldier showed us the home screen photo on his phone of Masada at sunrise. He noted that he had been to Masada many times, but hiking to the top of the mountain and experiencing the sunrise alongside his American peers allowed him to experience Masada in a different light. The conversation then transitioned to the soldiers asking us questions about life as members of the North American Jewish community. One of them asked us what we were doing to stop the decline of Jews participating in Jewish life, articulating very clearly that they are doing their part to protect the Jewish homeland, but that is not enough. North American Jews need to engage and feel a connection to Israel as, in his opinion, it is this partnership – the people of each country doing its part – that is going to ensure a strong and vibrant Jewish future.

As we were departing, we inquired how the soldiers dealt with, and what it felt like, for them to transition from such a solemn day in which they mourn the loss of family and friends to the celebratory nature of Yom Ha'Atzmaut, Israel's Independence Day. More than one remarked that they were going to several parties because that is what the fallen soldiers would want; for all of us to live our lives to the fullest, celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Jewish homeland that they fought for. I have to say, it was an easier transition than I expected after having heard them express the sentiment that their comrades would want us to move on from the sadness and experience the joy of the existence of a democratic, Jewish homeland. So...that evening we enjoyed incredible Israeli food, danced, and celebrated to the fullest.

When the GA was originally scheduled to take place in Israel to celebrate the Yoms, no one anticipated that we would be doing so after 16 weeks of protests related to judicial and other reforms, and we were not sheltered from these current events. We could hear the protestors outside the gates of the convention center the first evening as we listened to President Herzog share his message that only through dialogue can we turn "moments of crisis into moments of growth." He announced that his office has developed an initiative called 'Kol Ha'am - Voice of the People: The President's Initiative for Worldwide Jewish Dialogue' – in his words, a Jewish Davos, a collaborative forum that will reflect the full diverse range of Jewish perspectives. Everyone is hopeful this will have an impact on the current political situation.

The following morning, the protesters' point of view was exhibited inside the convention center, where GA participants made known their feelings directly to Simcha Rothman, a member of the Knesset who is pushing for the reforms, to the point where breakfast and a session seeking dialogue around "What is a

Jew?" were disrupted. While feelings have consistently been strongly expressed by all segments of Israeli society, it was gratifying to know that everyone agreed to stop protesting to observe Yom Ha'Zikaron and Yom Ha'Atzmaut.

The first full day of the GA was designed to encourage learning and conversation in small groups. There were four sessions taking place at any given time where we tackled tough conversations and engaged in dialogue on how together, the North American Jewish community and Israelis can advance our shared future. My first session focused on celebrating the racial and ethnic diversity of the Jewish People. It was noted that just like in the U.S., minority groups in Israel are still fighting to have the same rights and to be accepted in the highest levels of government. Several organizations shared the strides they are making, but it is clear there is more work to be done to get to a place of equal treatment and opportunity.

This is the first time I had the privilege of experiencing Israel in ways where I was more of a member of the Israeli Jewish community than a tourist.

My second session was titled "Smart and Savvy: The Future of Investing in Israel," which highlighted the fact that the vibrancy of Israel comes from its investment in the tech industry and how together we can ensure this investment continues despite the difficult environment the industry currently finds itself in. The Israeli military invests extensive training in its officers very quickly so they can immediately be effective in their positions, and this results in individuals with a high level of expertise in technology who have ideas for new products and services when their army service is complete, as well as a network of high-quality entrepreneurs. This is what led Israel to be known as the Start-Up Nation. Now, of the top 300 tech companies in the world, 200 have development centers in Israel, and these large companies have smaller companies around them that resulted in extensive hubs of expertise. However, currently, both seed funding and late-stage tech funding have diminished. The three panelists encouraged the audience to use their networks to support the Israeli tech economy and establish pathways to capital. Without North American investment, they stated, the tech ecosystem and innovation Israel is known for will decline.

My final session focused on the new age of Israeli philanthropy. Israel has 39,000 listed non-profits that are only partially funded by the government. Today 40 percent of the philanthropy supporting these organizations is coming from Israelis, whereas in the past almost all was coming from the Diaspora. Two models were discussed. One gets high-tech start-ups to donate stock options to a fund. When these companies are successful and sold, the fund cashes in the stock options and donates the money to non-profits working in the youth and education space. To date, 842 companies are participating and 30 million dollars have been distributed. The other is more grassroots, taking advantage of micro-donations using the concept of rounding up. Through Israel's credit card companies' individuals can designate a charity to which they want their round-up funds to go. So for example if a purchase is made for \$25.50, the purchaser rounds that up to \$26.00, and the 50 cents is donated to the selected organization. The average Israeli donates \$1.20 per month. Today, 20 million shekels per year are distributed to 245 nongovernmental organizations. The process promotes the concept of every time an individual consumes, they also give something to society. The audience was encouraged to get Jewish-owned start-ups in the States to donate stock options to help fund local Jewish causes. Orni Petruschka, the hi-tech and social entrepreneur who founded Round Up, noted that initially, North American's Israeli philanthropy was for nation-building; today it is and needs to be focused on addressing Israel's current societal challenges.

The last day of the GA coincided with Yom Ha'atzmaut and was spent in nature exploring the different educational sites at Neot Kedumim, Israel's Biblical Landscape Reserve. This was the perfect way to transition from thinking about the broad expanse of the work of the Federation system to experiencing the specific impact our community has on the lives of individual Israelis.

While I saw many people at the GA that I knew personally or who were members of communities I work with through my position at the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, and I was happy to make this connection, I was extremely proud to share that I was attending the GA as a lay leader of Jewish Federation of the Berkshires. Thank you to Dara and the Board of Directors for giving me the honor of representing our community in this way. This experience will be one I will never forget and has allowed me to feel an even deeper connection to the people of Israel.



Past and present mentees from Federation-funded Youth Futures, a program of JAFI, that supports at-risk children in Afula.



A traditional Buna coffee ceremony with Ethiopian immigrants at Beit Alpha Absorption Center, where our local dollars have helped provide laptops to support learning computer skills.



Meeting and learning with soldiers who participated in Birthright with their US peers.

Your Federation Presents

Reflections on Antisemitism and the Cautionary Tale of Cabaret

A free panel presented by Federation and Barrington Stage Company

PITTSFIELD – Barrington Stage Company (under the leadership of Artistic Director Alan Paul and Managing Director Meredith Lynsey Schade) and Jewish Federation of the Berkshires will present a free panel, “Reflections on Antisemitism and the Cautionary Tale of *Cabaret*” on Thursday, June 29 starting at 10 a.m. at the Boyd-Quinson Stage, 30 Union Street in downtown Pittsfield.

Join a discussion with Jewish thought leaders on the relevance of art and theater in promoting understanding and combating antisemitism. There will be a 10 a.m. coffee and bagel reception in the Boyd-Quinson Stage lobby. The panel discussion begins at 10:45 a.m. in the theatre.

This partnership between Jewish Federation of the Berkshires and Barrington Stage Company will feature a panel including Alan Paul (BSC Artistic Director), Dr. Barbara Waldinger (Ph.D. Theatre, CUNY Graduate Center) and Dr. Roselle Chartock (author and artist, Professor Emerita of Education), and moderated by Jeffrey Robbins (former US Delegate to the UN Human Rights Commission).

Event chairs are Rhoda Levitt, Hope Silverman, and Zelda Schwebel. This event has been sponsored in part by a grant from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.

About Our Panelists

Alan Paul is the Artistic Director of Barrington Stage and director of *Cabaret*. [For more on Alan Paul, please see the story on the back cover.] Before joining BSC, he was the Associate Artistic Director of the Tony Award-winning Shakespeare Theatre Company, where he directed productions of *Our Town*, *Camelot*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *Man of La Mancha*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, and the film of Patrick Page’s *All the Devils Are Here*, which was a *New York Times* Critic’s Pick. Along with his work at STC, Alan has directed productions at theaters across the country including *Kiss Me, Kate* at Seattle’s 5th Avenue Theatre and *The King and I* at Chicago’s Drury Lane Theatre. Alan has been nominated for five Helen Hayes Awards and was awarded Best Director in 2014. He is a graduate of Northwestern University.

Dr. Barbara Waldinger earned her Ph.D. in Theatre (CUNY Graduate Center) and taught at Queens College, Hofstra University, and Marymount Manhattan College. Currently, she teaches for OLLI in Pittsfield, where she co-founded the Performing Arts Initiative, serves as co-host of their Playreading Shared Interest Group and is a member of the Art Committee. She has lectured for the New York Council for the Humanities and served as a respondent for the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival. She has directed plays at university and regional theatres, local Berkshire venues, the Strindberg New York Festival, Queens Theatre in the Park, and LUNA Stage in West Orange, NJ. As Artistic Director of HRC Showcase Theatre (for which she has staged over one hundred new play readings over twenty years), and as a director for the Association for Theatre in Higher Education, the Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival, and the Plays in Progress Annual Short Play Festival, she has enjoyed collaborating with playwrights on original scripts. Barbara is a member of the Berkshire Theatre Critics Association and writes reviews for Berkshire On Stage.

Dr. Roselle Chartock is Professor Emerita of Education and a full-time artist and writer, having previously taught on all levels for forty-five years, most recently at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts. She is the author of five books and several scholarly articles on topics related to education, American history, and Jewish history and has spoken on those topics throughout the country. Chartock co-edited an anthology on the Nazi Holocaust, published originally as *The Holocaust Years: Society on Trial* (1978, Bantam Books and the Anti-Defamation League), later published under the title, *Can It Happen Again: Chronicles of the Holocaust* (1995 Black Dog and Leventhal). This interdisciplinary collection of readings was the foundation of the curriculum – the first of its kind in the country for high school students - developed by Chartock and her colleagues in the social studies department at Monument Mountain Regional High School in Great Barrington. Chartock resides in Great Barrington with her husband, Alan.

Jeff Robbins, a nationally syndicated columnist and an attorney specializing in First Amendment issues, served as Chairman of the New England Board of the Anti-Defamation League. A former Assistant United States Attorney in the District of Massachusetts, he was Chief Counsel for the Minority for the United States Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations and Deputy Chief Counsel for the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee. In 1999 and again in 2000, President Clinton appointed him United States Delegate to the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva. He is a litigation partner in the Boston office of the national law firm Saul Ewing. He serves on the New England boards of the Anti-Defamation League and the American Jewish Committee, and frequently appears as a guest commentator on ABC News Live.

I, Teresa de Lucena: Reflections on the Trial of a Conversa

PITTSFIELD - How do you make a complex story of a 16th-century Jewish conversa in Spain accessible and beautiful? On Thursday, June 8 at 10:45 a.m., join translator Ellen Kanner and illustrator Annie Zeybekoglu to learn more about how they created *I, Teresa de Lucena: Reflections on the Trial of a Conversa*, an intimate portrait of one woman’s survival and framed it with the religious, political, and social changes that shaped her life.

Writes Kirkus Reviews: "This is an astonishing work; both historically rigorous and profoundly affecting. A rare opportunity to see history in action."

This free program, part of Federation’s summer-long Celebration of Sephardic Culture, will be presented as part of the Connecting with Community series at Knesset Israel (16 Colt Road in Pittsfield) and will be followed by a kosher hot lunch. Lunch is a \$3 suggested donation for adults over 60 or \$7 for all others. Reservations are required for lunch and can be made by calling (413) 442-2200 before 9 a.m. on the day of the program. See page 21 for the lunch menu.

I, Teresa de Lucena tells the story of a complex chapter of Spanish history through an intimate lens: the testimony of a woman who faced the Spanish Inquisition twice.

Teresa was seventeen in 1485 when she and other conversos in Toledo faced the Inquisition for the first time; she was sixty-two in 1530 when she was arrested and held for eighteen months in an Inquisition jail. After a lengthy trial, meticulously recorded by the official scribes, she was found guilty of heresy for practicing Judaism in secret. Saved by her wits, she survived.

Ellen Kanner is an independent scholar and teacher who lived and studied in Spain for many years. In 1988, she obtained a copy of the Spanish Inquisition dossier concerning Teresa de Lucena (1467-1545). In *I, Teresa de Lucena*, Ellen presents the translation she made of the archival materials accompanied by her research notes and personal reflections.

Annie Zeybekoglu is an artist and book designer with extensive commercial and teaching experience. Her work appears in collections in the United States and abroad. Annie designed the book format for *I, Teresa de Lucena*; her line drawings and art appear throughout the book.

Ellen and Annie are both graduates of Smith College and hold M.A.T. degrees from Johns Hopkins University and Harvard University, respectively.

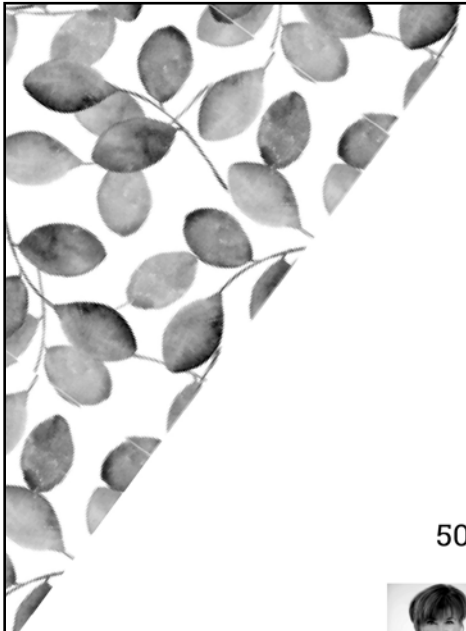
For more on this program and other Federation events, visit our calendar of events at jewishberkshires.org.



Santa Maria la Blanca (formerly Ibn Shushan Synagogue), Toledo, Spain, illustrated by Annie Zeybekoglu

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Thank you volunteers Ellen Rosenblatt and the BJV delivery team, Colin Ovitsky and Roman Rozenblyum.



Major Donors Celebration

Sunday, July 23
9:30-11:30 a.m.

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Program format includes schmoozing and breakfast hors d'oeuvres on the covered porch followed by a theater style program indoors. There will be no assigned seating.



Jewish Federation
OF THE BERKSHIRES

Your Federation Presents

“Social Justice and the American Musical,” a Multimedia Presentation by Singer/ Songwriter Laura Wetzler



Laura Wetzler

PITTSFIELD – On Thursday, June 22 at 10:45 a.m., join singer, songwriter, guitarist, recording artist, and lecturer Laura Wetzler for a multimedia presentation that explores the themes of social justice as expressed in over 100 years of the American musical.

This free program will be presented as part of the Connecting With Community series at Knesset Israel (16 Colt Road in Pittsfield) and will be followed by a kosher hot lunch. Lunch is a \$3 suggested donation for adults over 60 or \$7 for all others. Reservations are required for lunch and can be made by calling (413) 442-2200 before 9 a.m. on the day of the program. See page 21 for the lunch menu.

Laura Wetzler has devoted years of study and performance to diverse, multicultural World music, as well as to the history of American popular entertainment and European Art Music. She takes particular joy in sharing the fascinating and beautiful contributions of Jewish-American and

African-American artists to our musical cultural heritage. Visit her website: laurawetzler.com

“Great voice, great writing” was WBAI Radio’s opinion on her work, while the late Pete Seeger called Laura “One of the very best!”

Her recordings include *Kabbalah Music: Songs of the Jewish Mystics*, which was praised by Robert Sherman of the New York Times for its “superb performances.” Laura sings in seven languages and was featured recently at the International Limmud Festival in Germany and in performances of Ladino songs in the Azores. She has lectured and appeared in concert at Yale, NYU, Brandeis, Merkin Hall, Cami Hall, Brooklyn Museum, at the International Music Conference in Italy, and for Road Scholar, among many other venues.

Laura is also the writer, director, producer, and composer of the multi-award-winning new film, *What Happened at the Veterans Home?* winner Best Humanitarian Film in Prague and Best Screenplay in Paris and Palm Springs, now streaming internationally. When not singing and lecturing, Laura has done extensive volunteer work with the Jewish community of Uganda on over 50 different projects including creating the Kulanu.org Deaf Education Program for children.

For more on Jewish Federation programs, visit our calendar of events at jewishberkshires.org.

ANNUAL MEETING, *continued from page 1*

Shakespeare & Company, 70 Kemble Street Lenox. Please visit our calendar of events at jewishberkshires.org for further details about this event.

Nominated Slate, 2023-2024 Board of Directors Officers (2-year term)

Arlene Schiff, President* (effective January 1, 2024)
Judy Usow, Interim President*, Treasurer
Stephanie Ilberg-Lamm, Secretary
Natalie Matus, VP^
Elisa Spungen Bildner, VP^
Richard Slutzky, VP
Elisa Schindler Frankel, Immediate Past President*

Board of Directors

Term Ending 2024 (3-Year Term): Kathy Fraker and Jane Karlin

Term Ending 2025 (3-Year Term): Josh Cutler, Jane Glaser, Leslie Kozupsky, Stuart Masters, Michael Wasserman and Audrey Weiner.

Term Ending 2026 (3-Year Term): *Amy Blumkin, *Rebecca Cook-Dubin, *Beryl Jolly, *Hank Maimin, *Elizabeth Miller, ^Gail Orenstein, *Jennifer Sacon, *Robert Sandor and ^Tom Sawyer.

Rabbinic Appointee (1-year Term): Rabbi Barbara Cohen

(*Newly Appointed 1st term, ^Newly Appointed 2nd term)

In accordance with the Federation’s bylaws, additional nominations may be considered when submitted by a petition signed by 15 Berkshire Jewish Community members and received by the secretary at least ten days prior to the annual meeting.

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Rabbi Sigal Brier comes to Kol HaNeshama with years of experience as a congregational rabbi. She is a scholar, spiritual mentor, inspirational teacher, and artist. Rabbi Sigal was ordained at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and is also a longtime faculty member of the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health in Stockbridge, MA.

Kol HaNeshama is your “home away from home” for people looking for an active older Jewish community in Florida. A place to meet people.

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Please join us to welcome Rabbi Brier whenever you return to Florida. Please consider us your new home for High Holy Days.

“I’m looking forward to working with members at the Kol HaNeshama community and Sarasota area, starting in July 2023. My role as a rabbi and a spiritual leader is to meet people where they are and provide comfort, teachings, and inspiration. We celebrate together and when we face life’s challenges, individually and collectively, we are poised to help each other.”

– Rabbi Sigal Brier

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Your Federation Presents

MAJOR DONORS, *continued from page 1*

“We are thrilled that we have such a diverse group of supporters who understand the unique challenges a small community faces,” says Executive Director Dara Kaufman. “Our Federation could not possibly accomplish all that we do to meet essential needs across the Berkshires, in Israel, and beyond without the inspiring compassion, generosity, and leadership of our major donors. That’s why we are so grateful to Carol and Irving Smokler for stepping up as our major donor chairs.”

This event is a way to share experiences of how Federation impacts the lives of all the Jews in our community – both those who come for the summer season and those who live here year-round. Gathering together gives peers an opportunity to share ideas on how to make a difference in a Jewish community like we have in the Berkshires – small in population, yet one where the need for essential services is as acute as it is anywhere else.

Donors will have the chance to see all that this small community accomplishes, and really understand the impact their support has on sustaining the vital programs Federation provides – care services and social engagement for area seniors, Jewish education for our children, camp and Israel



experiences for teens and young adults, security enhancements and training for our congregations, advocacy and support to combat antisemitism, and engaging programming to enrich Jewish identity and connection for people of all ages.

Major Donor chairs **Carol and Irving Smokler**, having spent a lifetime in leadership positions in the Jewish community and at national Jewish organizations, recognize that the Berkshires is a unique model for how a Jewish community mobilizes itself in a rural environment.

“We have had a home here for over 16 years and have seen the Berkshire Jewish community develop and change,” says Carol. “When asked to step up as the chairs of this important event, we did not hesitate to say yes. We see the vitality of Jewish life here and know that does not happen by accident.”

She adds, “This federation is compassionate, creative, and strategic in supporting those in need, empowering and educating young people, and creating diverse and inclusive opportunities for every person to feel welcomed and supported in Jewish life. It has all the same needs as larger communities, but far fewer resources. We, as major donors, are its greatest resource in supporting these efforts.”

Indeed, Federation’s campaign has risen nearly 24 percent over the last 5 years and has allowed for many expanded services including increasing staff capacity, additional hours for the community social worker, expanded investment in Jewish education and camperships, and a greater focus on the safety of the community. Federation also significantly expanded its adult and family programming to create more diverse, inclusive, and collaborative opportunities to engage in “doing” and “being” Jewish, outside traditional spaces

“The pandemic changed our community in so many ways,” says Federation’s president Elisa Schindler Frankel. “Older adults needed more support, families and young people needed opportunities to connect, and an influx of new people seeking a safe haven were looking to engage with this vibrant Jewish community. Despite our small size, we accomplish so much. People see this and want

to be involved. We are so grateful for the support of our major donors in helping us grow our campaign to respond to the changing needs of our community.”

The involvement of our major donors has been instrumental in achieving these successes – not only in their generous support of our annual campaign but in their ever-increasing engagement with Jewish life in the Berkshires and awareness of what this Federation accomplishes year-round in the Berkshires.

Cindy Chazen, who along with her husband **Jay Leipzig** is a member of our Major Donors Host Committee, puts it this way: “I’ve been involved in and seen many federations in action and this Federation is remarkable. Once I went to the head of one of the largest federations in the Northeast and showed him what Jewish Federation of the Berkshires does with the dollars it raises. His reaction was to say that it was impossible to compare the two organizations. My response to him was to say, ‘Just the opposite. Look at what the Berkshires’ Federation accomplishes and see how much each dollar raised can mean to a community.’”

Cindy and Jay spend five months in the Berkshires each year, and she adds: “It’s important for me to be a part of a vital Jewish community wherever I live. Perhaps some people feel as if they give to their capacity in another place. But we should think of all the Jewish programming and engagement we take advantage of while we are here, and understand that Federation supports almost all of it in some way. Being able to give in both places you live in is a profound double mitzvah.”

Federation board member and host committee member **Arlene Schiff** and her husband **Gary** see Federation as providing the critical foundation upon which a strong and vibrant Berkshire Jewish community can exist. “It links us to the efforts of prior generations and provides our small community a connection to Israel and Jews around the world,” shares Arlene, a full-time resident of the Berkshires who raised her daughters here. “We are proud that Federation offers a pathway for everyone to participate in Jewish life and grateful that, through Federation, we can protect and enhance the well-being of Jews locally and around the world.”

Jane Glaser, a member of the host committee and Federation’s board of directors, is excited to acknowledge how important major donors are to our



Thank You, Host Committee!

Federation is very grateful to the members of our Major Donors Celebration host committee:

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Jill and Harold Gaffin
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Hope and Gene Silverman
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Audrey Weiner and Jeff Solomon

About Our Guest Performer – **Annette Miller of Shakespeare & Company’s Golda’s Balcony**

In 2000, Annette Miller originated the role of Golda Meir in Shakespeare & Company’s production of *Golda’s Balcony*. This August, she will reprise the role in the Lenox theater company’s revival of William Gibson’s play, which traces the trajectory of Meir’s life from Russian immigrant to American schoolteacher to a leader of international politics as the fourth prime minister of Israel.

Major donors will enjoy excerpts from Miller’s upcoming performances at our summer celebration. She will also speak about how her approach to the role has changed in the two decades since she first took it on – years in which attitudes toward Israel, and its history and leadership, have been reconsidered and reevaluated.

Annette has performed on Broadway, Off-Broadway, in regional theaters, and on film and television. She had been a leading actor at Shakespeare & Company for the past 25 years and was acclaimed by the Wall Street Journal as Best Actor of the Season in regional theater for her performance as Gladys Green in *The Waverly Gallery* and as Vera in *4000 Miles*. She received the 2018 Berkshire Theater Critics Association Award for Outstanding Actor in a Leading Role for her portrayal of Katherine in *Mothers and Sons*.

Annette’s latest film, *You Will Not Play Wagner*, was featured in the 2023 Berkshire International Film Festival, as well as the Miami, Sarasota, Chicago, and Vancouver Jewish film festivals. She played Mrs. Tanken in the Oscar-nominated 2022 Netflix film *Don’t Look Up* with Leonardo DiCaprio and Jennifer Lawrence.

And, Annette adds, she is “proud to be an active member of the Berkshire Jewish community and its Federation.” Look for more about Annette Miller and her role as Golda Meir in the next issue of the Berkshire Jewish Voice.



Annette Miller

We should think of all the Jewish programming and engagement we take advantage of while we are here, and understand that Federation supports almost all of it in some way. Being able to give in both places you live in is a profound double mitzvah.

– Cindy Chazen,
Host Committee Member

community. “I want donors to know just how valuable they are to our Berkshire Jewish community,” says Jane. “Each of them has a vested interest in the Jewish life here. We look forward to honoring all those who have made that commitment. Federation is truly the pulse of a very diversified Jewish life in the Berkshires. How fortunate we are to be part of the annual campaign and have the opportunity to be part of the future of this Federation!”

Berkshire Hills Country Club is at 500 Benedict Road in Pittsfield. Please register by returning the invitation you have received or online at jewishberkshires.org/celebration. Open to Leadership Donors who make a gift of \$1,000 or more to Federation’s 2023 annual campaign.

Your Federation Presents

“The Comedians: The Good, The Bad, and the Dirty,” a Multimedia Presentation by Laura Wetzler

PITTSFIELD – On Thursday, July 13 at 10:45 a.m., join singer, songwriter, guitarist, recording artist, and lecturer Laura Wetzler for a multimedia presentation that explores the breadth and influence of Jewish comedians including Eddie Cantor, Fannie Brice, Danny Kaye, Jerry Lewis, Sid Caesar, Imogene Coca, Jack Benny, Mel Brooks, Totie Fields, Belle Barth, Joan Rivers, Sarah Silverstein, and Amy Shum.

This free program will be presented as part of the Connecting With Community series at Knesset Israel (16 Colt Road in Pittsfield) and will be followed by a kosher hot lunch. Lunch is a \$3 suggested donation for adults over 60 or \$7 for all others. Reservations are required for lunch and can be made by calling (413) 442-2200 before 9 a.m. on the day of the program. See page 21 for the lunch menu.

For Laura’s bio, please see page 7.

For more on Jewish Federation programs, visit our calendar of events at jewishberkshires.org.



Jewish comedienne Totie Fields with six movie Tarzans (above, in loincloths) and talk show host Mike Douglas (above, in leisure suit)

Jewish Community Comes Together for Shabbat Across the Berkshires, June 16



Last year’s Shabbat Across the Berkshires

NORTH ADAMS - On Friday, June 16, at 6 p.m., Shabbat Across the Berkshires will bring together members of the Jewish community from throughout the county for a joyous, musical, and family-friendly Kabbalat Shabbat service hosted by Congregation Beth Israel of the Berkshires.

Join friends from across the Berkshire Jewish community as we come together for a Shabbat service, led by rabbis, spiritual leaders, and members of the Berkshire Jewish Musicians Collective. The service will be followed by a festive *oneg*.

Congregation Beth Israel of the Berkshires is at 53 Lois Street in North Adams

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

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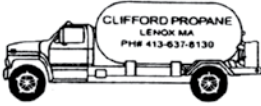


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Your Federation Presents

Shanda: A Memoir of Shame and Secrecy – The BJV Interview with Letty Cottin Pogrebin

Knosh & Knowledge to host what promises to be a lively author talk on July 14



Letty Cottin Pogrebin

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Friday, July 14 at 10:45 a.m., Knosh & Knowledge presents Letty Cottin Pogrebin, who will talk about her acclaimed (and controversial) family memoir *Shanda: A Memoir of Shame and Secrecy*. This free program will take place at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, 270 State Road in Great Barrington. The word “*shanda*” is defined as shame or disgrace in Yiddish. This book, *Shanda*, tells the story of three generations of complicated, intense 20th-century Jews for whom the desire to fit in and the fear of public humiliation either drove their aspirations or crushed their spirit. In her deeply engaging, astonishingly candid memoir, author and activist Letty Cottin Pogrebin exposes the fiercely-guarded lies and intricate cover-ups woven by dozens of members of her extended family. Beginning with her own long-suppressed secret, the story spirals through the hidden lives of her parents and relatives – revealing the truth about their origins, personal traumas, marital misery, abandoned children, religious transgressions, sexual identity, radical politics, and supposedly embarrassing illnesses. While unmasking their charades and disguises, Pogrebin also showcases her family’s remarkable talent for reinvention in a narrative that is, by turns, touching, searing, and surprisingly universal. Books will be available for purchase or bring your own copy for signing by the author. This event is part of the monthly Knosh & Knowledge series sponsored by the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires and is also part of Jewish Literary Voices, a Federation series in collaboration with Jewish Book Council.

The BJV Interview: Letty Cottin Pogrebin

In May, Letty Cottin Pogrebin spoke with the Berkshire Jewish Voice about *Shanda* and shandas. Our conversation was edited for length and clarity. ***Shanda is a comprehensive examination of Ashkenazi Jewish ideas (transplanted to America) of shame, and at one point you identify a notion that might be at its core: the belief that not only is one’s shanda a shanda in the eyes of the people who will judge you once your secret shame is revealed, but is also a shanda that is noticed and judged by an invisible order from which we cannot conceal the truth. Can the traditional Jewish idea of shanda you explore endure without at least a vestigial communal consensus that a higher, unseen source of right and wrong underpins and keeps tabs upon our earthly endeavors?***

Um...
I think we're talking about God here.
I was about to say: “Talk about God without mentioning God.” So, brass tacks. We’re talking about Hashem. There are Jews who believed in God and didn’t have a real clue about the wisdom tradition or the text that supported various

behaviors. They were taught of it with mother’s milk. The value system that all of us take as Jewish when we say ‘Jewish values’ or ‘Jewish family values,’ we get at the Seder table – 85 percent of Jews do one ritual, and that’s the Seder. Otherwise, nothing touches 85 percent of us in terms of Jewish observance. So you have 85 out of 100 Jews who have listened to a message about liberation, about interceding in history in order to relieve oppression, all the things we call ‘Jewish values.’ We were slaves in Egypt, and therefore, we know the feelings of the other, the stranger.
But I think the crux of your question is how can you have a shame-based secret if there’s no value given to a behavior that you’re ashamed of? Where then is that behavior judged to be bad? Well, it’s not from God. It’s not God-given. People do not say, ‘I am not littering because I believe in God’ – even though I use that example in the book because it is so trivial and quotidian. It’s just something you do. You pick up after yourself. Do you really think God is going to hit you, zap you with some punishment because you didn’t pick up a tissue? No, you kind of learned not to litter along the way.
I don’t think that we have a God-anchored moral system. I think we have it from our families and we have it from our blurry sense of our tradition and our forebears and our forefathers and foremothers. We learn about their flaws and we learn what is right and what is wrong and what they did that was wrong. We might call some of what they did deception, but we learn that it was done for a higher purpose. We absorb all that by osmosis. But I’m not Orthodox. I’m not Haredi. If I were, maybe I would feel that God was watching me every minute.
As much as Shanda is about shameful behavior, it is about the networks of misinformation families (and communities, as well) construct to conceal their shandas. Lies are invented, inconvenient facts are expunged from the narrative, and confederates are enlisted within the family to hide certain truths from other family members, putatively with good intentions. You write so well about the feeling of betrayal elicited when a long-buried fact emerges and you realize people you love and trusted were in a conspiracy against you – as you put it, there should be a support group called “Dupes Anonymous for children of deceit.” So in terms of most family shandas (embarrassments, not abuses), what is usually worse for the family – the crime or the cover-up?
I wanted to address that first sentence. I think that’s exactly right. It is about the network of misinformation that families have constructed to conceal their shandas. Then, they make that the baseline. Take drinking alcohol, okay? Jews don’t drink – that’s what I was taught. That was the Ashkenazic culture of the immigrant families that I knew. But what that did was it created a baseline where you couldn’t admit that you had an alcoholic kid or parent, because we had our own ethos around drinking, a mystique that Jews aren’t alcoholics. So I think I wanted to address that core belief that once your shame is revealed, it’s going to be noticed by the community and it’s going to be a shanda, because it goes against the given of the Jewish world, of Jewish life, of Jewish families, of Jewish culture.
It sets up a standard where you can’t be true to yourself or you can’t even confront difficulties that need expert help. Think about the shanda of abuse in Jewish families. Every family is ashamed [if abuse occurs], I think, but Jewish families would rather not get help than let it be known.
So, the second part of my question – in terms of your understanding of family dynamics, what is worse, the cover-up or the crime?
In my case, the cover-up resulted in a loss of trust that has taken me a lifetime to make up for. After you find out that the people that you trust most have lied to you and they’ve constructed this complete Potemkin Village to cover up the truth, you never are going to trust the surface of anything or what people tell you. Never. That made me a good journalist. But the cover-up is the greater betrayal because it creates the status of someone being made a fool. It adds to the pain of what you’re calling a crime. It’s the betrayal or the lie or the deception or the charade or anything that people use to lessen the pain of the shanda.
I felt like a complete fool. Why didn’t I see it? My whole family was in cahoots. I’m the only one who’s been duped, so I must be stupid. I didn’t see the pictures [of my parents’ wedding] that was supposed to have taken place in 1923 – but the men in them are wearing Humphrey Bogart hats from the 1940s. Why didn’t I realize that? Why didn’t I realize my mother was faking her high school graduation picture?
That was one of the most interesting parts of the book – the evidence is often left out in plain sight. And it's just because you have a relationship that you believe is built on trust, you don't see what's right in front of your eyes.
Yeah, right. But in our tradition, every Torah story has an element of this somewhere in it. Even the fact that the brothers who came to Pharaoh’s court for

SHANDA,
continued on page 26



NEW MOON RISING

One night only! Starring a trio of female powerhouses, Elana Arian, Deborah Sacks Mintz, and Chava Mirel, New Moon Rising embodies the best that musical collaboration can be – a soulful oasis of rich harmonies, deep friendship, and pure Jewish joy.

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Your Federation Presents

Jewish Community Day Kicked Off Federation’s Annual Campaign With Spirit

What a special Jewish Community Day we had at High Lawn Farm on May 21. Nearly 400 happy revelers showed up to celebrate our Jewish community and enjoy being together with old and new friends. Gathering together was the perfect way to celebrate Super Tzedakah Week and kick off Federation’s Annual Campaign 2023! Special thanks to Super Tzedakah Week chairs Lara and Jonathan Denmark. It’s summer in the Jewish Berkshires – check out the Jewish Summer Guide insert in this paper for all that’s going on. We hope to see much more of you!

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CAROL SMOKLER, KARA THORNTON, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS



Your Federation Presents



With gratitude to the volunteers, board members, staff and raffle donors who made Jewish Community Day possible!

OUR DEDICATED SUPER TZEDAKAH WEEK CHAIRS:
Jonathan and Lara Denmark

OUR EXTRAORDINARY VOLUNTEERS:
Susan Kopelowitz, Roger Matus, Ofer Kaufman, Wendy Robbins, Gail Lansky, Michele Tuvel, Jane and Howard Jacobs, Julie Quain, Alice Cande, Nance Levine-Ebert, Andy Ebert, Alexandra Warshaw, Ellen Heffan, Lisa Fletcher Udel, Carol Smokler, Kathryn Potts, Lonnie Solomon, Elie Katzman, Nancy Cook, Ken and Robin Baer, Bob Lezberg, Emma Lezberg, Kara Thornton, Dan Michaels, Mark Snowise, and Mark Usow.

OUR DEDICATED BOARD MEMBERS
Elisa Schindler Frankel, Natalie Matus, Richard Slutzky, Elisa Spungen Bildner, Judy Usow, Stephanie Ilberg-Lamm, Judith Cook, Gail Orenstein, Len Schiller, Rabbi Seth Wax, Arlene Schiff, Josh Cutler, Kathy Fraker, Michael Ury, Jane Glaser, Stuart and Ellen Masters, and Michael Wasserman

OUR GENEROUS RAFFLE DONORS:
CARR Hardware, The Clark, Concepts of Art, Barrington Outfitters, Norman Rockwell Museum, High Lawn Farm, Domaney's Liquors and Fine Wines, Shakespeare & Company, and Barrington Stage Company

AND A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR AMAZING STAFF
Rabbi Daveen Litwin and Molly Meador, who planned this meaningful event, with support from Liz Irwin, Kathi Todd, Albert Stern, Jenny Greenfeld and Mark Cohn.



WHEN OUR COMMUNITY NEEDS US, WE ARE THERE

HELP US BE THERE! MAKE YOUR GIFT OR PLEDGE TODAY!

Your gift to the Jewish Federation’s 2023 Campaign will bring dignity and care to the vulnerable and elderly, build and strengthen the Jewish identity of our children and young adults, support vital community programs, and create meaningful Jewish life across the Berkshires and beyond.



JEWISH LIFE FOR YOUNG FAMILIES
You help young families in the Berkshires embrace Jewish values and traditions while building a supportive community with Jewish peers through family programming, PJ Library, and volunteer opportunities.



RESOURCES TO FIGHT ANTI-SEMITISM
You help young people stand up against hate through anti-bias education in our public schools. You also combat anti-Semitism and the BDS movement through community programming, national advocacy, and security resources.

DIGNITY & COMPASSION
You provide older adults and homebound individuals with nutritious meals and stimulating programming served up with a side of companionship and compassion through our *Connecting with Community* program and Kosher Meals on Wheels.



JEWISH EDUCATION & VALUES
You nurture a strong Jewish future by providing a high-quality, meaningful and affordable Jewish education for hundreds of children through critical grants to all of our local Jewish religious schools.



A SENSE OF COMMUNITY
You strengthen, sustain, and connect our community through hundreds of educational programs, holiday celebrations, and the *Berkshire Jewish Voice*, which bring people together and engage them in meaningful Jewish life.



A STRONG JEWISH IDENTITY
You help young people across the Berkshires and at UMASS Hillel build strong Jewish identities and become future leaders through scholarships for Jewish camp and Israel experiences, as well as leadership development and holiday meals on campus.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT & EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE
You help individuals facing unexpected challenges and life transitions receive the support they need through the Federation's social worker. You also provide a safety net of emergency assistance due to COVID-19.



COMMUNITY RELATIONS & ADVOCACY
You help provide a proactive voice in our community, public schools, media, and government, addressing anti-Semitism, social justice, Israel, and other issues important to our community.



A SAFE PLACE TO CALL HOME
You help tens of thousands of new immigrants, who are fleeing anti-Semitism in Europe and the war in the Ukraine, build better lives for themselves and their families in Israel through job training and support services that ease their transition.



CARING IN TIMES OF CRISIS
When crisis hits, in the Berkshires or around the world, you help mobilize local resources to respond with immediate relief and longer-term recovery. From support through COVID-19 to the crisis in Ukraine, you help deliver an SOS response.

A CLOSE & CARING RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL
You help connect the Berkshire Jewish Community with Israel and you also help provide programs for at-risk students, shelter for abused women, and support services for disabled youth.



FOOD SECURITY, HEALTHCARE, & WINTER RELIEF
The war in Ukraine and safe resettlement of Jews fleeing the region has been long and difficult but you help the most vulnerable with shelter, transportation, blankets, and heaters. You also bring food, home health aides, and medicine to those



Donate online at jewishberkshires.org Thank you for making a difference!

LOCAL NEWS

Let’s Discuss *My So-Called Selfish Life*

PITTSFIELD - In her documentary *My So-Called Selfish Life*, filmmaker Therese Schecter challenges the social taboo of a childless life and the expectation that female identity be equated with motherhood. Schecter places this decision firmly in the context of the larger conversation about reproductive choice.

This film will be streamed beginning in June and Rabbi Pamela Wax will convene a follow-up conversation and text study of both secular and Jewish sources at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road, on Monday, June 19 at 6:30 p.m.

This session will be hybrid. All are welcome. After you register, you will receive information about how to stream the film.

Find out more and register at knessetisrael.org/event/lets-discuss-my-so-called-selfish-life.html.



Rabbi Michael Strassfeld

Judaism Disrupted, Book Talk at Knesset Israel with Rabbi Michael Strassfeld

PITTSFIELD – Fifty years after the publication of *The Jewish Catalog*, a best-selling and ground-breaking DIY guide to Judaism that he co-wrote, Rabbi Michael Strassfeld has written *Judaism Disrupted: A Spiritual Manifesto for the 21st Century*.

He will be the guest speaker in conversation with Rabbi Pamela Wax following Shabbat morning services at Knesset Israel on Saturday, July 15, and reflect on the past 50 years of American Jewish life. While *The Jewish Catalog* was focused on how to build a Jewish life, this latest book answers the question: Why build a Jewish life? Strassfeld says he wrote this book, “because I am worried about the Judaism I love and about its future.”

As Jews increasingly feel alienated from the rituals and practices of Judaism, Strassfeld believes that Judaism “should be offering wisdom and practices to help us take the most precious gift we have been given—our life—and live it with meaning and purpose.” The book sets out 11 core principles that can serve as a guide for life’s journey. These principles offer ways for cultivating qualities such as gratitude and for deepening a commitment to social justice and to this planet.

In addition to *The Jewish Catalog*, Rabbi Strassfeld has written *The Jewish Holidays* and *A Book of Life: Embracing Judaism as a Spiritual Practice*, in addition to co-authoring *A Night of Questions: A Passover Haggadah* with his wife Rabbi Joy Levitt. Ordained by the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, Strassfeld served as the rabbi of Congregation Ansche Chesed and then of the Society for the Advancement of Judaism, both in Manhattan, until his retirement in 2015. He was a faculty member of the Institute for Jewish Spirituality from 1999-2014.

A limited quantity of the book is available for sale at a discounted price of \$20 during KI’s regular weekday office hours. Rabbi Pamela Wax will lead two follow-up discussions of the book at Knesset Israel. One will take place on Sunday, July 30 at 10 a.m. following the morning minyan, and the second will convene following Shabbat services and kiddush lunch on Saturday, August 26. Feel free to attend either or both conversations.

Ramblin’ with the Rav

Get out your hiking boots and bug spray! This summer, Rabbi David Weiner of Knesset Israel will again share his love of the outdoors with the whole community. Join him as he leads a friendly group of other outdoor enthusiasts for walking, schmoozing, beautiful views, and maybe a little Torah among the trees. All programs are free, but registration is required: knessetisrael.org/RSVP

Azaleas in Pittsfield State Forest on Sunday, June 4

If the timing is right, the azaleas will be blooming in Pittsfield State Forest. This will be a moderate 2.5 to 3 hour hike, covering about 5.2 miles, with a steady, but manageable, 935’ climb alongside Lulu Brook, then up the park loop road to the State Forest’s treasure, a grove of wild azaleas. After enjoying the view over New York, there will be an opportunity to rest by Berry Pond before the descent. Be prepared for muddy trail conditions and a few steep sections. Leashed dogs are welcome. Rain date (but definitely without azalea flowers) will be Sunday, June 11. Meet at the Lulu Brook parking area in Pittsfield State Forest at 10 a.m.

Take the High Road on Sunday, June 25

This will be a moderately paced, moderately strenuous hike, with a little Torah and good company. Climb from Pleasant Valley alongside a cascading brook to the expansive views at the Lenox Fire Tower. Another mile brings one to Yokun Seat, a spectacular perspective on Pittsfield. And another mile-and-a half hike brings one to Mahanna Cobble, with its unspoiled view to the northeast. Descend via the Bousquet ski area. No dogs on this hike, please, as it begins on Mass Audubon property. The specs: moderate but with a steep 1.5-mile climb, 6+ miles walking, a <1000’ elevation gain, and 2.5-3 hours of hiking one way.

Rabbi Weiner will be hiking again in August – check out the next BJV for more info.

A Legacy of Values: Writing Your Ethical Will

PITTSFIELD - What do the biblical Jacob, Nachmanides, Gluckel of Hameln, Sholem Aleichem, and Dr. Andrew Weil all have in common? They each left ethical wills for their descendants.

In this 3-session workshop, you will learn the history of ethical wills, read some classic and contemporary examples, and through different prompts, begin to write your own.

Join Rabbi Pamela Wax on three Mondays, June 12, 19, and 26 from 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. for this hybrid class at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road. To register: knessetisrael.org/event/ethical-wills.html

Holy Rollers!

GREAT BARRINGTON – On the Sundays of June 11, July 9, and August 13 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., join with the Hevreh community for a casual 15 to 25 mile bike ride through the beautiful Berkshire Hills.

Each Holy Rollers ride is a chance to meet others from our community, get some exercise, and enjoy the beautiful scenes in which we inhabit.

Contact the Hevreh office (413-528-6378) or visit hevreh.org/summer for more information.

How to Repent and Why

A July Lunch n’ Learn with Rabbi Neil Hirsch and Other Learning Opportunities at Hevreh

GREAT BARRINGTON – On the Wednesdays of July 5, 12, 19, and 26 from 11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., join Rabbi Neil Hirsch of Hevreh of Southern Berkshire for a series of lunch and learn seminars on “How to Repent and Why.”

Writes Rabbi Hirsch:

T’shuvah, understood as repentance, is often discussed but little understood. The traditional Jewish texts on the matter keep things up in the rafters, when for each of us, the concerns about *t’shuvah* are fiercely personal. After all, who among us can say that we have never done wrong? In this lunch n’ learn, we’ll use classic Jewish texts, as well as explore specific understandings of *t’shuvah* from thinkers like Maimonides and use contemporary interpretations to explore how one actually performs *t’shuvah*. This lunch n’ learn series will be a great way to prepare personally for the High Holy Days, and a way to reframe our relationships with others through a Jewish lens.

All are welcome, in person and on Zoom. Please bring a kosher-style bag lunch. Hevreh is located at 270 State Road in Great Barrington.

Kitah Bet Plus Continues

On Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. on Zoom from June 29 to August 7 (no class July 13), this class uses “Hineni: Prayerbook Hebrew for Adults” as its textbook. Taught by Rabbi Jodie Gordon, it is continuation of the Spring 2023 class. New students are welcome to join and are encouraged to reach out to Rabbi Gordon (jgordon@hevreh.org) first to learn more. \$36 registration fee.

Coming in July: Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in the Berkshires

From Thursday, July 27 through Sunday, July 30, join Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in the Berkshires for engaging programs with local Reform synagogues, community partners, and cultural institutions on and around Shabbat and Tisha B’Av.

There will be timely discussions on the environment, food, social justice, spirituality, and Israel; enriching Torah study, book talks, workshops, and exhibitions; inspiring prayer, song and community gatherings throughout Shabbat; restorative outdoor experiences involving music, study, and meditation; and unique experiences at The Clark Art Institute, Norman Rockwell Museum, and Tanglewood.

More details in the next BJV on this one-of-a-kind learning opportunity with HUC-JIR faculty, senior leadership, and recent alumni who are innovators of Jewish life.

Hevreh High Holy Day Choir Rehearsals to Begin in July

"...alone I cannot lift my voice in song--then you come near and sing with me. Our prayers fuse, and a new voice soars. Our bond is beyond voice and voice. Our bond is one of spirit and spirit..." – Rabbi Pinchas Koretz

GREAT BARRINGTON – The Hevreh High Holy Day Choir starts rehearsing on Tuesday, July 18, and continues its preparation on Tuesdays through September 12 from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Writes Rabbi Jodie Gordon:"Whether you sing all the time, or not in a long time, we warmly invite you to join us this year as we begin our preparations for the High Holy Days at Hevreh. Our choir director Amy Renak and I work with our choir all summer to teach and prepare beautiful music, both traditional and modern, for the High Holy Days."

Interested in learning more? Reach out to Rabbi Gordon at jgordon@hevreh.org.

Jewish Women’s Foundation Annual Luncheon and Meeting

PITTSFIELD – The Jewish Women’s Foundation of the Berkshires (JWF) is holding its Annual Luncheon and Meeting on June 23.

The theme for the luncheon is “Empowered Women Empower Women.” Fabulous raffles are planned with proceeds going to the Elizabeth Freeman Center of the Berkshires (elizabethfreemancenter.org). The nonprofit centers offer free and confidential services to victims and their families experiencing domestic violence and abuse.

The program will include a presentation from one of JWF’s grantees from Girl’s Inc, as well as a surprise musical guest. Attendees are being asked to dress in white in support of women’s rights.

Couvert for the luncheon for paid/pledged members and their guests is \$75. Annual donation to JWF is \$500.

JWF membership supports the Foundation’s Grants Programs. In 2022, JWF awarded \$64,000 to seventeen local organizations. Guided by the Jewish principle of *tikkun olam* (Hebrew for repairing the world), the Jewish Women’s Foundation is dedicated to sharing its Jewish values by meeting unmet needs in the community and supporting social action.

Further information about JWF and the location of the luncheon can be found on JWFB.org. Check out their Facebook page, Jewish Women’s Foundation of the Berkshires.

LOCAL NEWS

Chabad to Host
WSJ Journalist
Gregory
Zuckerman
on July 15



WSJ journalist
Gregory Zuckerman

LENOX – On Saturday, July 15, Chabad of the Berkshires will host award-winning journalist Gregory Zuckerman. All are invited to this

lunch and learn following Shabbat services on the back porch of the Lenox Community Center, 65 Walker Street. Gregory Zuckerman is a special writer at The Wall Street Journal. He's

an investigative reporter and a 27-year veteran of the paper who writes about business and investing topics, and is a three-time winner of the Gerald Loeb Award—the highest honor in business journalism. Zuckerman wrote the "Heard on the Street" column and covered hedge funds, private equity, and the credit markets for the paper. Enjoy an intriguing afternoon engaging in Zuckerman's behind-the-scenes tales about The Wall Street Journal: stories about meeting Donald Trump, grilling Bernie Madoff, adjusting to dramatic changes in the media world, and getting home in time for Shabbat. Services begin at 10 a.m. and conclude at approximately noon. RSVP to this event by calling (413) 499-9899 or emailing jewishberkshires@gmail.com or via the website jewishberkshires.com. Chabad of the Berkshires is located at 450 South Street in Pittsfield.

Enjoy Summer
Challah-Day with
Chabad – Plus a
Weekly Torah &
Tea Gathering

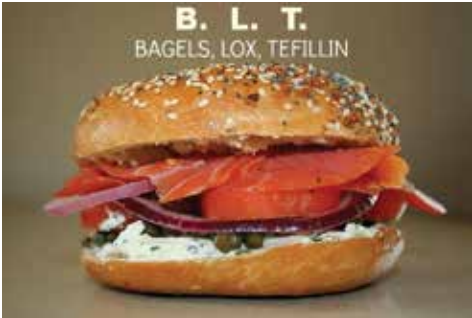
PITTSFIELD – Join Chabad of the Berkshires' co-director Sara Volovik for instructive sessions on how to prepare two baked staples that often bookend a festive Jewish meal – challah and babka. On Thursday, June 22 at 1 p.m., Sara promises “an afternoon of unity and inspiration as we learn the feminine art of challah making.” Participants will knead and braid challah dough that they can take home and bake for Shabbat dinner. Sara will conduct a challah babka bake, sharing baking tips and tricks while experimenting with new flavors and techniques. Suggested donation: \$36. “Torah and Tea for Contemporary Women” Women are invited to join Sara Volovik for “afternoons of inspiration and camaraderie to nourish mind, body, and soul.” Enjoy an outdoor summer lunch while learning insightful and practical Kabbalistic gleanings from the weekly Torah portion. Wednesdays, June 14 and June 28 and July 12 and July 26.

Chabad at The Lenox Farmers Market On the Fridays of July 7 and July 21, Chabad will be selling home-made challah, mandelbread, knishes, pastries, and more at the Friday farmers market at 80 Church Street in downtown Lenox. Visit their table from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. RSVP to these events by calling (413) 499-9899 or emailing jewishberkshires@gmail.com or via the website jewishberkshires.com. Chabad of the Berkshires is located at 450 South Street in Pittsfield.

Spiritual Uplift
Outdoors and
Indoors with
Chabad
Plus an Independence
Day barbecue LENOX & PITTSFIELD – On Tuesday, July 4 at 2 p.m., join Chabad of the Berkshires co-director Rabbi Levi Volovik on “an exploratory nature hike

with meaningful moments of spiritual connection” at Kennedy Park. All are invited regardless of background or affiliation. The hike will be followed by an Independence Day barbecue at Chabad of the Berkshires at 450 South Street in Pittsfield. This event begins at 4 p.m. Come for the hike, the BBQ, or both of these free events. RSVP by calling (413) 499-9899 or emailing jewishberkshires@gmail.com. Ongoing Talmud Study PITTSFIELD – On consecutive Wednesdays starting June 21 and continuing through July 19, join Rabbi Volovik for what he promises will be “an intriguing Talmud class. It will give you the opportunity to feel like you are in Yeshiva for one hour a week.” Classes are conducted in English at the Chabad House in Pittsfield. No previous experience is necessary. Reservations appreciated.

Enjoy a B.L.T.
(Bagels, Lox,
and Tefillin) at
Chabad of the
Berkshires



PITTSFIELD – Sundays at 9 a.m. on July 2, 9, and 16, join Chabad of the Berkshires for a power breakfast to nourish body and soul. Wrap Tefillin. Recite a prayer. And then enjoy bagels, lox, and cream cheese with freshly brewed coffee and a little time to schmooze. No prior experience necessary. Chabad of the Berkshires is at 450 South Street in Pittsfield.

Summer
Shabbats with
Temple Anshe
Amunim
Kabbalat Shabbat,
Hikes, Study, and
Tanglewood Havdalah

PITTSFIELD – Temple Anshe Amunim is a Reform Jewish Congregation that promotes engaging and widespread participation in services, education, and cultural and social action programs. Kabbalat Shabbat Join TAA at 5:30 p.m. every Friday night for Shabbat services. All are welcome to join in person or via livestream. Please reach out to the Temple office for the link to the livestream. Torah Study At 9:30 a.m. every Saturday, TAA hosts a Torah study session. All are welcome to join in person or via zoom. Please reach out to the Temple office for the link to Zoom. Shabbat Hikes Join Temple Anshe Amunim for Shabbat hikes all summer long. On June 17, visit Canoe Meadows in Pittsfield. On July 1, explore the Appalachian Trail beginning at Kirchner Road in Dalton. For each hike, please meet at the Temple at 10:45 a.m. Most hikes are accessible for all levels. Pre-registration is required; call the Temple office at (413) 442-5910 to register. Tanglewood Havdalah

LENOX - Pack your picnic gear, dinner, and beverages and join TAA on the lawn at Tanglewood on Saturday, July 17 at 7 p.m. for a brief Havdalah service, followed by a BSO concert at 8 p.m. Look for the blue and white balloons! A ticket to the concert may be purchased at the gate or in advance online. No pre-registration is required. The Temple, located at 26 Broad Street, Pittsfield is an accessible building. For more information, contact the Temple Anshe Amunim office at (413) 442-5910, email templeoffice@ansheamunim.org or visit www.ansheamunim.org.

UNICORN • COLONIAL • PLAYHOUSE

BERKSHIRE THEATRE GROUP

June 15–July 1
at The Unicorn Theatre
The Larry Vaber Stage

PHOTOGRAPH 51

by Anna Ziegler
directed by David Auburn
featuring David Adkins, Shaun Anthony,
Rebecca Brooksher, Christian Coulson,
Brandon Dial, Allen Tedder

June 27–July 16
at The Colonial Theatre

MILLION DOLLAR QUARTET

inspired by ELVIS PRESLEY, JOHNNY CASH,
JERRY LEE LEWIS and CARL PERKINS
direction and choreography by Greg Santos
music direction by Colin Summers
featuring Zach Cossman, Kroy Presley, Billy Rude,
Bill Scott Sheets, Trey Snyder, Colin Summers,
Alessandro Viviano, Emma Wilcox

WORLD PREMIERE 17+
July 12–29
at The Unicorn Theatre
The Larry Vaber Stage

THE SMILE OF HER

written and performed by Christine Lahti
direction and dramaturgy by Robert H. Egan
featuring Christine Lahti, Georgi James

WORLD PREMIERE
August 12–September 2
at The Unicorn Theatre
The Larry Vaber Stage

On Cedar Street
a Musical

music direction by Kristin Stowell
choreography and associate direction by Terry Berliner
direction by Susan H. Schulman
featuring Stephen Bogardus, Lana Gordon,
Wild Handel, Hayden Hoffman, Ben Roseberry,
Dan Teixeira, Lauren Ward, Lenny Wolpe and
Addison the Dog

The Colonial Theatre
III South Street • Pittsfield, MA
The Unicorn Theatre
6 East Street • Stockbridge, MA
(413) 997-4444
www.BerkshireTheatreGroup.org



THE STRENGTH OF A PEOPLE
THE POWER OF COMMUNITY.

WE'RE HIRING!

Food Service Director for Kosher Lunch
Program (part-time)

Jewish Federation of the Berkshires seeks a part-time Food Services Director to run the daily operations of our kosher lunch and kosher meals on wheels program in a welcoming environment that meets the nutritional needs of the Jewish older adult population.

The Food Service Director develops, plans, coordinates, and executes the preparation of 20-40 kosher meals, three days a week for most of the year and two days a week during the summer. Full training on kosher dietary laws and ongoing support for compliance is provided.

25-28 hours a week. This position offers an opportunity to work with caring individuals who share a commitment to helping those in need and strengthening the Jewish community.

For a full job description visit
jewishberkshires.org/news-announcements/food-service-director

LOCAL NEWS

Scholar-in-Residence Ruth Messinger

A local collaboration to host the noted social justice advocate county-wide on August 18-20



Through a collaboration of congregations and institutions throughout Berkshire County, Ruth Messinger will serve as scholar-in-residence on the

weekend of August 18 to 20, speaking at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire in Great Barrington on Friday evening, at Pittsfield’s Knesset Israel on Saturday morning, and at Congregation Beth Israel of the Berkshires in North Adams on Sunday morning.

This scholar-in-residence program has been generously co-sponsored by Knesset Israel, Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, The Berkshire Minyan, Congregation Ahavath Sholom, Temple Anshe Amunim, Congregation Beth Israel, First Congregational Church of Williamstown, Williams College Jewish Association, and Jewish Federation of the Berkshires.

About Ruth Messinger

A trained social worker, Messinger began her social justice career as a community organizer in rural Western Oklahoma and then in New York City on Manhattan’s West Side. She ran and won a seat on her local school board and then served in NYC government for two decades, first as a council member and later as Manhattan Borough President. She was the first woman nominated by the Democratic Party in New York to run for mayor, losing to Rudy Giuliani in 1997.

Messinger became the CEO of American Jewish World Service, a faith-rooted organization that supports local efforts to end poverty and expand human rights, funding more than 400 grassroots projects in 18 countries in the Global South and advocating on their behalf in the United States. She stepped down from that position in 2016 but remains AJWS’s Global Ambassador, in addition to consulting, teaching and facilitating social justice matters for several different faith-based and secular organizations.

Schedule of Programs

On Friday evening, Messinger will speak at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire in Great Barrington on “The Role of Social and Racial Justice in Contemporary Judaism.” The Shabbat evening service will begin at 6 p.m., followed by dinner. For further information, go to hevreh.org/summer.

On Shabbat morning, Messinger will be a guest at morning services at Knesset Israel in Pittsfield beginning at 9:30 a.m., during which she will offer the *Dvar Torah* for *Parashat Shoftim*, the Torah portion which includes the well-known passage, “Justice, justice shall you pursue.” Following the service and lunch, Messinger will speak on the topic of “Immigrants, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers Then and Now.” Both the morning service and the talk following lunch (at approximately 12:45 p.m.) will be live-streamed at knessetisrael.org/livestream.

On Sunday morning at 11:30 a.m., Messinger will conclude her Berkshire

weekend residency at Congregation Beth Israel in North Adams, speaking on the topic of “Our Democracy: If We Can Keep It.” Light refreshments will be served. Pre-registration is requested at cbiberkshires.com/event/ruth-messinger/.

The beautiful outdoor labyrinth at CBI will be available for private walking meditation prior to Ruth Messinger’s talk. Immediately following Sunday’s program, a guided walking meditation through the labyrinth will be facilitated by Rabbi Rachel Barenblat and/or Rabbi Pam Wax. This will be an ideal opportunity to integrate Messinger’s message of “walking the walk.”

For further information about each individual program, contact the host congregation. For general information about the weekend, you may contact Rabbi Pamela Wax at pwax@bcn.net.

Summer Shabbat Services and More at Congregation Beth Israel of the Berkshires

NORTH ADAMS – With summer now upon us, Congregation Beth Israel of the Berkshires keeps on celebrating Shabbat with friendly, welcoming services.

Shabbat Services

Saturday morning services are scheduled on June 10, June 24, July 1, and July 8 at 9:30 a.m. Join CBI on Shabbat morning to celebrate Shabbat with prayer, song, and poetry. You will hear some words of Torah (and some words about Torah) as all present bask in Shabbat’s sweetness. All CBI service leaders bring a unique style to the *bimah* and the CBI choir provides beautiful harmonies.

Please use the CBI calendar to RSVP for all services and events – cbiberkshires.com/calendar-of-events/.

Congregation Beth Israel of the Berkshires is at 53 Lois Street in North Adams.

Young Family Fun at Congregation Beth Israel of the Berkshires

NORTH ADAMS – Families with young children can experience and enjoy the beautiful Berkshire summer outdoors and indoors with Congregation Beth Israel’s Young Families Program.

Kids’ Art at MASS Moca on Sunday, June 11 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Meet up with Corry Buckwalter, CBI member, artist, and art educator, in the lobby at 1040 Mass MoCA Way in North Adams. Visit Kidspace — a child-centered art gallery and hands-on studio. Make art together, then explore the Sol LeWitt galleries with Corry. Families must register by Monday, June 5.

Admission to Kidspace is always free but there is a fee for other parts of the museum. CBI will cover the cost of tickets for the first 25 children to register; adults will need to purchase tickets at the applicable group rate - \$18 if 10 or more attend and \$20 if fewer than 10. RSVP to cbiberkshires.com/event/kids-art-at-mass-moca/

Potluck Shabbats By the Pool on Friday, June 9 and Friday, July 21 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. at a private home in North Bennington, VT

Sing, bless, eat, play, and swim. There’s no better way to celebrate Shabbat in the summer than with friends, good food, and fun.

RSVP to Rabbi Jarah Greenfield at rabbijgreenfield@gmail.com for exact location

CBI’s family programs are sponsored by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. See all the scheduled family programs at cbiberkshires.com/upcoming-family-events/. Masks are required indoors.

Jewish Theological Seminary in the Berkshires Returns for Another Summer Season

LENOX – The Jewish Theological Seminary has served as the intellectual and spiritual center of Conservative Judaism for 130 years, training outstanding leaders and strengthening Jewish life in North America.

Join Knesset Israel and Jewish Theological Seminary in the Berkshires this summer for lively and thought-provoking lectures and conversations with three leading thinkers from the Jewish world.

All events take place on Friday mornings, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Elayne P. Bernstein Theatre at Shakespeare and Company, 70 Kemble Street in Lenox.

Pre-registration is strongly encouraged. Tickets for each lecture are \$15. Please pre-register at <https://inspired.jtsa.edu/Berkshires2023> to avoid lines at the door.

For more information, contact Lynn Feinman at (212) 678-8821 or lyfeinman@jtsa.edu

Session I: Friday, July 7: “Revisiting Zionist Thought: Charting a Path Forward,” with Dr. Arnold M. Eisen, Chancellor Emeritus and Professor of Jewish Thought, JTS



Reflecting on Israel’s 75th birthday and the recent crisis regarding judicial reform we will ask: What elements of past Zionist thought

remain indispensable to our thinking about Israel today? How should diaspora Jews think about Israel – and vice versa? Have events of the past few months—or the past few years – changed our thinking about Zionism and/or Israel? We will try to agree on a path forward.

Professor Arnold M. Eisen, one of the world’s foremost authorities on American Judaism, is the author, among other works, of *Galut: Modern Jewish Reflection on Homelessness and Homecoming* and *Rethinking Modern Judaism: Ritual, Commandment, Community*. He is the co-author of *The Jew Within*, as well. Before coming to JTS in 2007, Eisen served on the faculties of Stanford, Tel Aviv, and Columbia universities.

Session II: Friday, July 21: “In the Narrow Places: Jeremiah and His Artistic Interpreters,” with Rabbi Gordon Tucker, Vice Chancellor for Religious Life and Engagement, JTS



The darkest time in the Jewish calendar, the three weeks leading up to the Ninth of Av, is referred to as *bein hametzarim* (the narrow places).

Marking the final weekend of this period, we will explore some evocative passages in the Book of Jeremiah and in the Book of Lamentations, traditionally attributed to the prophet. We will also reflect on how Jeremiah’s later interpreters in midrash, visual art, and music (including Leonard Bernstein) continued to find meaning in these texts.

Rabbi Gordon Tucker is the author of scores of articles on Jewish theology and law. An anthology of his writings was published under the title *Torah for its Intended Purpose*. He has also published *Heavenly Torah*, a translation of and commentary on Abraham Joshua Heschel’s three-volume work on rabbinic theology, as well as a commentary on *Pirkei Avot*. Rabbi Tucker is senior rabbi emeritus of Temple Israel Center in White Plains, NY, and a senior fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America. He previously served as assistant professor of Jewish Thought and as dean of The Rabbinical School at JTS.

Session III: Friday, August 4: “Law in Context: Uncovering the Mother’s Perspective in Traditional Sources on Abortion,” with Dr. Shira Billet, Assistant Professor of Jewish Thought and Ethics, JTS



Can a closer look at Jewish sources move us beyond the entrenched simplistic pro-life/pro-choice binary of American public

discourse today? This session examines traditional sources that have played a central role in constructing Jewish perspectives on abortion. Participants will explore the complex interplay between the legal aspects of these sources and the stories from women’s lives in which they are embedded to uncover a complex and nuanced Jewish perspective on abortion.

Dr. Shira Billet’s research is focused on 19th-century and early 20th-century German Jewish philosophy, both in historical context and in relation to contemporary conversations in philosophical ethics. Her current book manuscript focuses on the virtues of courage, truthfulness, intellectual humility, and fidelity as public virtues – as virtues of citizens within the public square, and of individuals in relation to communities.

Presented in partnership with Knesset Israel and in cooperation with Jewish Federation of the Berkshires. Supported in part by Valerie Ann and Allen I. Hyman, MD; Brenda and Fred Landes, MD in memory of Harold Landes; and a grant from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.

OBITUARIES

Charlotte Leavitt Genn, 95, worked for the National Democratic Party-U.S. Presidential Campaigns

LENOX - Charlotte Leavitt Genn, 95, died on Tuesday, April 25, at Mount Carmel Care Center.

Born October 1, 1927, in Pittsfield, daughter of the late Julius Gilbert & Rebecca (Borke) Leavitt, Charlotte attended local schools and went on to attend the University of Alabama. Charlotte was the widow of Edward Lewis Genn.

Charlotte had numerous occupations, most notably working for the National Democratic Party-U.S. Presidential Campaigns; White House Volunteer/Old Executive Office Building, Washington, DC (during President Jimmy Carter's Administration). She also worked in retail sales as a cashier for Family Sports Memorabilia Store and was a homemaker to her family.

Charlotte leaves her children; Gilbert J. Genn, Jonathan M. Genn and wife, (daughter-in-law) Pamela Brekhus Genn; grandchildren, Michael Joshua Genn, Benjamin Aaron Genn, and Adam David Genn; cousins, Maurice Leavitt, Alan Leavitt, David Leavitt, Barbara Shluker Schreiber, Karen Borke, and Harriett Borke; nephew Jonathan Gilbert Leavitt; nieces Julie Leavitt, Amy Leavitt and Kim Leavitt.

Charlotte was predeceased by her husband, Edward L.

Genn; brothers, Bruce Leavitt and Charles Levitt; uncles Jason Leavitt, Jason Borke, Benjamin Borke, and aunt Sarah Borke Shluker.

A graveside service was held on Friday, April 28, at Kneset Israel Cemetery in Pittsfield. Donations may be made to Kneset Israel (General Fund for Greatest Need), 16 Colt Road, Pittsfield, MA 01201.

Shirley Rubenstein, 89, active community volunteer, enjoyed all types of cultural activities

LENOX - Shirley Rubenstein passed away peacefully on Tuesday, April 18, at her home at Kimball Farms.

Born in Windsor, Ontario, Canada on August 12, 1933, daughter of Sender and Bessie Steinhardt, she lived in the Berkshires for the last 48 years, in Pittsfield and at Kimball Farms. In 1955, she graduated from the Harper Hospital School of Nursing in Detroit. For the next six years, she worked as a nurse at several hospitals in Detroit, New Orleans, and Newark, NJ. While working in NJ, she became head nurse on the state's medical board.

In 1960, Shirley met her husband, Saul Rubenstein, while vacationing in the Lenox area. They were in town for the Tanglewood season and both staying at Avaloch (now the Apple Tree Inn). The couple married on January 1, 1961, and lived in the Albany area until they moved to Pittsfield in 1975.

After leaving nursing,

Shirley was a homemaker and active community volunteer. She was a life member of Hadassah and a board member for the American Cancer Society, the Berkshire Center for Children and Families, and the Richmond Performance Series. She enjoyed reading, traveling, gardening, and all types of cultural activities.

Mrs. Rubenstein is survived by her three children and their families; son and daughter-in-law, Robert and Karen Rubenstein of Riverside, CT, and their children, Jack and Anna; daughter and son-in-law, Susan and Steven Diamond of Pennington, NJ, and their children, Gabriel and Charlotte; and son Eric Rubenstein of Westbrook, CT.

She is also survived by her sister Laura Kohn of Hillside, NJ, nieces, nephews, and many friends.

Funeral services were held on Tuesday, April 25, at Flynn & Dagnoli-Bencivenga Funeral Home, 5 Elm Street, Pittsfield. Burial followed at the family plot at Pittsfield Cemetery.

Donations may be made in Mrs. Rubenstein's memory to Hadassah, P.O. Box 187, Pittsfield, MA 01202, Vista Vocational & Life Skills Center, 1356 Old Clinton Road, Westbrook, CT 06498, or to HospiceCare in the Berkshires, 369 South Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201.

Holly Schneider, 60, family, helping others, and creative hobbies defined her life

OTIS - Dr. Holly Pevzner

Schneider, born November 6, 1962, died peacefully on Monday, May 8, at her home in Otis. She was comforted by the love of her family as she spent her final days in a location she cherished.

Holly and her family spent hours on the lake, becoming skilled in practically every water sport available. Holly and Jeff would host summer events that welcomed family and friends from far and wide. Everyone loved to be invited to Otis.

Dr. Schneider also lived in Newton, MA. She graduated from the Massachusetts College of Optometry and Simmons College. Professionally, Dr. Schneider was an optometrist who went the extra mile for her patients. She treated every patient as if he/she were the most special to her. Patients acknowledged this and appreciated her for her careful, thoughtful, and meticulous care.

As Dr. Schneider, she balanced practicing in a large firm with managing her own business, which allowed her to build close and meaningful relationships.

Holly's attention to detail and her care for others were also exemplified in her creative knitting projects. Holly was an expert knitter. Her passion for color, intertwined with her need to be challenged, resulted in an impressive output of beautiful pieces that her family will always cherish.

Holly was always athletic and loved to snow ski, and was an accomplished water

skier and sailor. She loved the Red Sox and was a devoted fan to almost her last day. Above all, family, helping others, and creative hobbies defined Holly's life.

Holly is survived by Jeff, her loving husband of 38 years; two sons, Marcus and Andrew; daughter-in-law, Katie; two sisters, Paula Pevzner and Lynne Pevzner Kaplan, as well as many nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her older brother, David Pevzner, as well as her parents, Jack and Millie Pevzner, who were long-time residents of Great Barrington and were the proprietors of Jack's in Lee and Jack's Country Squire in Great Barrington.

Funeral services led by Rabbi Jodie Gordon were held on Wednesday, May 10, at Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home, Great Barrington. Burial immediately followed at Ahavath Sholom Cemetery, Great Barrington. Donations may be made to Dana Farber Cancer Institute or The Price Center in Newton, MA.

Susan Miller, 83, loving mother, active at Kneset Israel

AVENTURA, FL - Susan Miller, 83, passed away on Friday, April 28.

Born in Moline, IL, on August 31, 1939, she was the loving mother of Dale Miller and the late Myra Miller Groobert.

A chapel service was

OBITUARIES, continued on page 21



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Sponsored by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation

BARRINGTON STAGE COMPANY

A DEEPER LOOK

REFLECTIONS ON ANTISEMITISM AND THE CAUTIONARY TALE OF "CABARET"

Join a discussion with Jewish thought leaders on the relevance of art and theatre in promoting understanding and combating antisemitism.

PANELISTS:

Dr. Roselle Chartock - author/ artist, Professor Emerita of Education

Alan Paul - Artistic Director, Barrington Stage Company

Dr. Barbara Waldinger - Ph.D. Theatre, CUNY Graduate Center

MODERATOR

Jeffrey Robbins -former US Delegate to UN Human Rights Commission

Free Event

RSVP at BarringtonStageCo.org/Panel

Thursday, June 29th

10 AM coffee and nosh

10:45 AM Panel

Boyd-Quinson Stage

30 Union Street, Pittsfield, MA

Event Chairs: Rhoda Levitt, Zelda Schwebel, Hope Silverman



Connecting with Community

Nourish Your Body, Mind, and Soul!

Meals-on-Wheels & Meals to Go – Advance Reservation Required

Kosher lunch will be prepared on Mondays and Thursdays. *Meals to go* will be ready by noon for pickup at the Knesset Israel kitchen door, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield. All meals-on-wheels will be delivered by Federation volunteers in the early afternoon.

Please note: Starting in June and continuing through the summer months, lunch will not be prepared on Tuesdays. Tuesday lunches will resume in the autumn.

Please call (413) 442-2200 no later than 9 a.m. to reserve your meal for pickup and to arrange delivery if standing instructions are not in place. All are welcome to reserve meals for pick-up, although delivery may be limited in certain circumstances.

The menus listed below are planned, but may be modified depending on availability of ingredients. When making a reservation, please inform us if a person in your party has a food allergy. Adults 60 and over: \$3 suggested donation. Adults under 60: \$7 per person.

Volunteers are Vital! Volunteer drivers who can deliver meals-on-wheels are always appreciated. Please call Molly Meador at (413) 442-4360, ext. 14. The Federation’s kosher hot lunch program is offered in collaboration with Elder Services of Berkshire County.



Jewish Federation
OF THE BERKSHIRES

What’s for Lunch?

Gluten Free Main Entrée ** and Dairy Free Main Entrée #

Kosher lunch will be prepared on Mondays and Thursdays.

JUNE

MONDAY, 5..... Meat loaf, gazpacho, French fries, green beans, whole wheat bread, and tea biscuits.

THURSDAY, 8..... Maudeh (Sephardic chicken & potatoes)**#, salad, crusty white bread, and parve rice pudding.

MONDAY, 12..... Stir fried chicken, rice, Oriental blend vegetables, pumpernickel bread, and pineapple.

THURSDAY, 15..... Fresh fish**, noodle kugel, broccoli, challah, and pudding.

MONDAY, 19..... Closed for Juneteenth

THURSDAY, 22..... Tuna salad & cottage cheese platters**, three bean salad, farmer’s loaf, and cookies.

MONDAY, 26..... Roasted chicken in red pepper sauce (ajvar)**#, rice pilaf, mixed vegetables, seedless rye bread, and grapes.

THURSDAY, 29..... Falafel#, mango juice, stuffed grape leaves, tahini sauce, mini Greek salad, pita bread, and baklava.

JULY

MONDAY, 3..... Hot dogs & hamburgers**#, potato chips, coleslaw, pickles, vegetarian beans, hot dog or hamburger roll, and watermelon.

THURSDAY, 6..... Greek salad platters**, hummus, pita bread, and apricots.

MONDAY, 10..... Meat loaf**#, tomato juice, mashed potatoes, peas, rye bread, and applesauce.

THURSDAY, 13..... Fresh fish**, pineapple juice, French fries, salad, green beans, muffins, and grapes.

MONDAY, 17..... Miso roasted chicken**#, brown rice, Oriental vegetables, salad, challah, and peaches.

THURSDAY, 20..... Fish sticks#, sweet potato fries, roasted cauliflower & broccoli, salad, farmer’s loaf, and pudding.

PLEASE NOTE: The suggested donation is completely voluntary. Seniors who cannot pay a voluntary donation will continue to receive a meal, no questions asked. We appreciate your understanding.

Homebound or recovering from an illness or injury?

Let us help you arrange for a kosher lunch to be delivered through our Kosher Meals on Wheels Program. Call (413) 442-2200.



MAZEL TOV!

Hannah Wohl, Ph.D., daughter of **Alba Passerini and Charles Wohl**, at being offered a fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton, NJ, where she will spend the next academic year. She will continue her research and work on her book on the sociology of the adult film industry. She has also just been granted tenure and promoted to the rank of Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Ben Gundersheimer (aka Mister G) on the publication of his fourth children’s book, *We Make Things Better Together*.

Rafi Bildner on his recent acquisition of the former John Andrews Farmhouse Restaurant property in Egremont to evolve his mobile and pop-up pizza business, Hilltown Hot Pies, into a physical space.

Knesset Israel 16 Colt Road, Pittsfield

ONGOING MINYANS

Saturday, 9:30 a.m.
Sunday, 8:45 a.m.
Tuesday, 7 p.m. Zoom only
Thursday, 7 p.m., Zoom only
Friday, 5:45 p.m.



CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

Friday, June 9..... 8:10 p.m.
Friday, June 16..... 8:14 p.m.
Friday, June 23..... 8:15 p.m.
Friday, June 30..... 8:16 p.m.
Friday, July 7 8:14 p.m.
Friday, July 14 8:11 p.m.

OBITUARIES,

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held on Monday, May 1 at Levitt-Weinstein/Beth David Memorial Chapel, Hollywood, FL. The family requests donations in memory of Susan to the NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale, www.nsuartmuseum.org, or Aventura Turnberry Jewish Center, www.atjchome.org.

Ronald Burton Hinds, 89, always had a smile, cherished by his family

CORAL GABLES, FL – Dr. Ronald B. Hinds passed away on Wednesday, May 10.

Born May 28, 1933, Ron was a man who always had a smile and was the life of every occasion. The grandchildren revered him and he loved sharing sports and music events with them all the time. He was loved dearly and he touched many lives. He was a special man and his memory will live on in all of us.

Ron was the devoted husband to Miriam; cherished father to Rick (Jen), Mitch (Lori), Gregg (Nika), and Julie (Martin); loving grandfather to Robbie (Lexie), Sam, Alex, Mikey, Ashley, and Annabel; and proud great-grandfather to Ryder and Peyton.

Funeral services were held Friday, May 12 at Temple Beth Am, Pinecrest, FL

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Flynn & Dagnoli-Montagna Central Chapel West Chapel 74 Marshall St. 521 West Main St. North Adams, MA 01247 (413) 663-6523

Rinaldo Dagnoli Nicholas Flynn Donato Dagnoli

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BERKSHIRE JEWISH VOICES

YOUNG JUDAISM



Reflections from Jerusalem

This past spring, Hevreh of Southern Berkshire’s post-B’nai Mitzvah Family trip to Israel spent 10 days exploring Israel, with a special visit to Afula-Gilboa, our Jewish Federation Partnership2Gether region. These students were fortunate to be supported by the generosity of Jewish Federation of the Berkshires. Here, one of the student travelers shares reflections from a day in Jerusalem.

By Sadie Honig-Briggs

Today was one of those days where you find yourself out of your body. You feel like you’re looking at the moment from a viewpoint above. See: the first days of summer, walking down the street when everything is green and full of warmth and light. Watching the people you love laugh together. Reading the news and wondering how it’s possible that we’ve come so far but somehow can’t help but move backward at the same time.

Today was one of those days, and even after the fact I am still thinking about it, now fully inside my body and my head.

We started off at Yad Vashem, Israel’s Holocaust museum. I knew going into it that it was going to be intense. I’ve been learning about this mass genocide since I was ten years old, but I don’t think I fully understood the atrocities until going to this museum. The experience of winding your way down a vast triangular hall, each room taking you through another stage of what slowly became the brutal murder of 6 million people, is indescribable. You feel your body seizing more and more each time you see a new picture, a new first-hand

I want to carry on the traditions and values of Judaism not only because I love them, but also because of the people who were silenced too soon – because it was important to them, it’s important to me.

account. You clench your hands tighter and tighter with every baby doll, every toy you pass, knowing that a real child held it in their arms as they got on a packed train. When you look down the hallway you can see the beginning of the museum: a video of Jewish life pre-World War II. If you turn around and face the end of the building, you see the view of Jerusalem through the window; an ending that represents the future, still holding everything we and our people have lost.

I found myself trying to make sense of it all. There’s no rationalizing what was done to the Jewish people and countless other people, so I tried to put myself in their shoes. I imagined what I could have done, what I would have tried to do to survive. I thought about what it would have felt like to wear that star, to be on one of those trains, to be standing on the edge of one of those pits. It’s too much to imagine, it makes me feel sick, but then I remember that real people lived through, or didn’t live through those things. It’s terrifying.

Despite that, I think it’s so important to learn about and to experience in that way. I now feel more connected to the history of a community that I have the privilege to call mine. Being there made me deeply realize that I want to carry on the traditions and values of Judaism not only because I love them, but also because of the people who were silenced too soon, because it was important to them, it’s important to me.

This, this idea of our culture and traditions being so important, the fact that they can connect us to our past came full circle tonight. Shabbat arrived and the city went quiet, families gathering around their tables to celebrate. We made our way to the local Reform synagogue and we joined in their service. I didn’t know the tune to most of the songs, nor the people, nor the language at times, but I knew the feeling. The feeling of singing together, of listening to toddlers play in the back of the room. The feeling of standing as a community, as one people who love and care for one another, even if they’ve never met before. And later that night when we sat down to eat with Rabbi Jodie Gordon’s family, I knew the feeling of being welcomed into someone’s home, of smiling and laughing and eating together.

This is why we take this trip, why we make this pilgrimage. It is so we can have these out-of-body experiences, whether they are caused by shock and horror and heavy history, or by joy and hope and found family. It is so we can leave knowing why we came: to learn more about ourselves, about where we came from, and about where we’re going.



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A REFORM JEWISH SUMMER CAMP

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Campers 4 years old to rising 2nd graders

All campers must be "up to date" with Covid-19 vaccinations.

Week-long sessions:
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Attentive, caring
and energetic staff!
Day Camp fun includes
boating, swimming, farm,
sports, crafts, drama and music!

BERKSHIRE JEWISH VOICES

TRAVELING WITH JEWISH TASTE

Open Sesame

By Carol Goodman Kaufman



Many Sunday mornings throughout my childhood, my dad would pick me up from Hebrew School and head toward Sam Mandell’s delicatessen on Columbus Avenue. While he shopped for pastrami and rolled beef, I would gaze at the countertop, on which sat boxes adorned with the image of a mustachioed and turbaned man. And every once in a while, if my prayers were answered, he (my dad, not the man) would buy me a bar of said man’s halvah.

Of course, Joyva still uses the man with the turban as its logo, but I no longer dream about halvah. Unless, of course, it is the variety of the candy found at Mamlechet Halvah (Halvah Kingdom), one of the dozens of food stalls found in the Mahaneh Yehudah market in Jerusalem — and I’m sure at other open-air markets. In fact, the “king” has several stalls tucked in among the market’s many alleys. His offerings are true ambrosia.

And “variety” is the operative word. Unlike the limited choices we had, and still have here, the king’s super fresh sweet comes in dozens of flavors. There’s even a sugar-free halvah in several flavors.

Back then, I didn’t know from sesame. I just knew that halvah satisfied a craving for sweets. Nor did I know that the candy isn’t the only food that is based on the seed. It took a year of living and working with Mizrahi Jews in Israel to discover the culinary joys of sesame.

One of the most basic uses of sesame seeds is their oil. When they are pressed, the paste that remains is tahina, based on the Arabic word tahn, which means ground. Tahina can serve on its own as a dip or as part of the recipe for hummus. For decades, as Middle Eastern foods gradually made their way across the ocean, hummus, with or without tahina, was basically it. But once the Israeli food scene entered the firmament of Michelin stars, I found the paste as an ingredient in fabulous savory dishes created by renowned Israeli chefs like Yotam Ottolenghi, Alon Shaya, and Michael Solomonov.

I don’t have any data on how much sesame we Americans consume, but Israelis reportedly eat 50,000 tons of the stuff every year. That’s a whopping eleven-plus pounds a year. And most of that is in the form of tahina.



The sesame plant. From the West Coast Seeds website: “Sesame is commercially produced in desert settings. Sesame is a tropical annual herb that grows to about 60cm (24”) tall. Its leaves radiate out from a stem that is square in cross section.”



Popeye’s memorable line “Open, sez me!” is from Popeye the Sailor Meets Ali Baba’s Forty Thieves.

The Mizrahi branch of our Jewish extended family had been using sesame seeds for thousands of years throughout the Middle East and Africa before the establishment of the modern State of Israel. But after the Declaration of Independence, many Arab countries expelled their Jews, and between the years 1948 and 1951, over a quarter of a million came to Israel. They brought their cuisine with them, and sesame seeds were part and parcel to many of their dishes. Here in the States, the seeds are used mainly to flavor and garnish various foods, such as our beloved bagel.

Jews have also used sesame oil for non-culinary purposes. In fact, the Mishnah even has a discussion about whether or not sesame oil is suitable for kindling Shabbat lights. The late Gil Marks writes, “Talmud explained, ‘What would the Babylonians do [if only olive oil was permitted for the Sabbath lights] who have nothing but sesame oil?’” Apparently, olive

oil was not readily available to the captives by the rivers of Babylon. Elsewhere in the Diaspora, Indians called their Jewish neighbors Shanwar Teli (Saturday oilmen) because they made their living by preparing and selling sesame oil. The sobriquet came from the fact that the Jews refrained from working on Shabbat.

Experts disagree on the exact origins of the sesame plant, but it likely originated in Asia or East Africa. Documentary evidence supports both claims. Ancient Egyptians are reported to have used the ground seed as a flour. But it was widely used in Asia as well. At least one early Hindu legend claims that sesame seeds are blessed by the god Yama and therefore represent immortality.

The Chinese have employed the seeds for at least 5,000 years, and not just for food. They have burned the seed’s oil and used the resulting soot to prepare the highest quality ink. The substance is variously known as India ink and Chinese ink, adding to the confusion regarding the seed’s origins.

Much further west, the Romans ground their sesame seeds with the spice cumin to make a spread.

Sesame boasts two special features: 1) the oil is stable enough to resist rancidity; and 2) the seed itself is high in protein, thiamin, and Vitamin B6. But it’s the wonderfully nutty aroma and taste that makes me think of heaven on Earth.



Roasted butternut squash and red onion with tahini and za’atar

Adapted from one by Yotam Ottolenghi

Serves 4

I’ve made this recipe at least a dozen times since first encountering it. While Ottolenghi offers this as a side dish, the tahini and pine nuts provide enough protein, and the vegetables enough substance, that you could legitimately serve it as a vegetarian entrée.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 large butternut squash, cut into 3/4 by 2½ inch wedges
- 2 red onions, cut into 1¼ inch pieces
- 3½ tablespoons olive oil
- 4 tablespoons light tahini paste
- 1½ tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1 small clove garlic, crushed
- 4 tablespoons pine nuts
- 1 tablespoon za’atar
- 1 tablespoon coarsely chopped parsley
- Maldon sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

DIRECTIONS:

- Heat the oven to 425 degrees. Put the squash and onions in a large bowl, add the oil, a teaspoon of salt and some black pepper, and toss well.
- Spread, skin down, on a baking sheet and roast for 40 minutes until the vegetables have taken on some color and are cooked through. Keep an eye on the onions: they may cook faster than the squash, so may need to be removed earlier. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.
- Put the tahini in a small bowl with the lemon juice, water, garlic and a quarter-teaspoon of salt. Whisk to the consistency of honey, adding more water or tahini as necessary.
- Pour the remaining oil into a small frying pan on a medium-low heat. Add the pine nuts and half a teaspoon of salt, cook for two minutes, stirring (watching carefully!), until the nuts are golden brown, then tip the nuts and oil into a small bowl.
- To serve, spread the vegetables on a platter and drizzle the sauce over all. Scatter the pine nuts and oil on top, followed by the za’atar

If you’ve ever read “Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves” from *Tales of the Arabian Nights*, you will know that, at least in one version, sesame seeds were once thought to have magical power enough to open a cave holding magic treasure, as in “Open Sesame” (not Popeye’s “Open Sez Me”!) However, it turns out that this phrase only appears in Antoine Galland’s 18th century French translation of the *Tales*. My sources tell me that no earlier Arabic reference to “open sesame” can be found anywhere.

However (there’s always a “however”), the fact remains that farmers may indeed have developed an incantation of sorts around the time of the sesame harvest. According to agricultural sources, timing is everything when it comes to harvesting the plant. If one waits too long, the pods can burst open and scatter the seeds widely. Great for propagation. Not so much for gathering and selling. But reap too early and the flavor of the seed, and its oil, will be blah.

So, “open sesame” may be what farmers chant when they hope to catch the seeds!

Carol Goodman Kaufman has just published the second picture book in what is planned as a series about nature for young children. Written under the name Carolinda Goodman, *Pirate Ships and Shooting Stars* is written in rhyme, and its lively stanzas encourage young children to use their imaginations when looking up at the sky. From rainbows to constellations to pictures in the clouds, Kaufman believes there is much to see if only they lift their eyes.

In addition to her work for children, Kaufman also writes under her “real” name about food history (including for the *Berkshire Jewish Voice*), and her first novel, a murder mystery, will drop in 2023.

CULTURE

Berkshire Jewish Film Festival Returns with In-Person Screenings

LENOX – After three years in a virtual format, the Berkshire Jewish Film Festival (BJFF) will once again be presented in person this summer in the Duffin Theater at Lenox Memorial Middle and High School, 197 East Street in Lenox.

The series starts on July 10 and continues every Monday through August 14. Films will be screened on Mondays at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m.

All presentations are open to the public. Tickets are \$15 per person. All seating is general admission. Single tickets are only available on the day of the show.

Season passes are available at knesetisrael.org/filmfestival. For information on filmmaker talkbacks and other related events, please visit the BJFF web page at berkshirejewishfilmfestival.org.

Organized by Kneset Israel, the Berkshire Jewish Film Festival is generously supported by MountainOne, Greylock Federal Credit Union, Berkshire Bank, Jesse & Bernard Wolfson Family Foundation, Harold Grinspoon Foundation, John Bergman Charitable Fund, Marcia & Albert Schmier, and Spitz-Tuchman Charitable Trust. Proceeds benefit the Hebrew School at Kneset Israel.

Information at berkshirejewishfilmfestival.org or (413) 445-4872, ext. 10.

BJFF Film Synopses 2023

July 10

4 p.m.
Our (Almost Completely True) Story

Making an unlikely couple, both Jerry Sroka's and Mariette Hartley's characters bond over the indignities of being out-of-work actors of a certain age, while navigating the seniors' singles scene. A life-affirming dramedy that "sparkles with wit and depth as it celebrates love and romance while reflecting on the challenges of growing older."

8 p.m.
Four Winters

Against extraordinary odds, over 25,000 Jewish partisans fought back against the Nazis and their collaborators from deep within the forests of Eastern Europe, Ukraine, and Belarus. Along with stunning archival footage, the last surviving partisans relive their journey, sharing their stories of resistance. Transformed from young innocents raised in closely-knit Jewish communities and families to fierce partisan soldiers with enduring hope and grit, they exhibited magnificent courage and deep humanity. Local resident Michael Stoll, who is featured in the film, is scheduled to appear in person.

July 17

4 p.m.
The Muses of Isaac Bashevis Singer

In the mid-1960s, Isaac Bashevis Singer established an army of female translators – more than 40 women – who helped spread his work. He chose his translators carefully and was inspired by their presence, often falling in love with them. Nine of the women who were intimately familiar with the man and work are still here. Theirs will be the only voices heard in the film, as they allow us a glimpse into his complex personality and personal life.

8 p.m.
Reckonings

Reckonings is the first documentary feature to chronicle the harrowing process of negotiating German reparations for the Jewish People. It captures the anger on one side, the shame on the other, and the anguish for all as talks broke down and failure seemed imminent. By confronting the past, German and Jewish leaders charted a better future for desperate and traumatized people.

July 24

4 p.m.
Shttl

Shttl is the story of the inhabitants of a Yiddish Ukrainian village at the border of Poland, 24 hours before the Nazi invasion, known as Operation Barbarossa. In one unflinching shot, this film presents a day in the life of a Jewish village before it disappears.

8 p.m.
Karaoke

Sleepwalking through marriage, an older couple beset with unspoken regret gets a much-needed spark with the arrival of Itzik (the effortlessly magnetic Lior Ashkenazi), a sexy, middle-aged hedonist who loves hosting karaoke parties in his posh penthouse.

July 31

4 p.m. - 2 short films
Grossman

David Grossman, one of Israel's most notable authors, shares the rare and captivating connections between his life and his novels. The film follows the writer up close and takes the viewers on a personal journey into the soul and work of an exceptional human being.



From *Four Winters* (July 10)

Castles in the Sky

Filmmaker and professor Pearl Gluck's provocative dramatic short film centers on Malke, a Holocaust survivor and sex-ed teacher who has been leading a secret life for decades: performing slam poetry on the Lower East Side. *Castles in the Sky* features commanding performances from actor Lynn Cohen, who died in 2020, and poet Venus Thrash, who died in 2021.

8 p.m.
Where Life Begins

Each summer, Esther travels with her French Ultra-Orthodox family to a farm in Calabria to harvest etrogs for Sukkot. Trapped by the suffocating rituals of her faith, the despairing and curious Esther captures the attention of the farm owner. Their brief encounters help Esther find her path. In this visually sumptuous and deeply moving film, there is a subtle portrayal of self-realization.

August 7

4 p.m.
Queen of The Deuce

Born in Salonika, Greece, Chelly Wilson came from a religious Sephardic family. At the start of World War II, leaving her family and children behind, she emigrated to America and built a business that ultimately turned a dark yet lucrative corner when she entered the world of pornographic film theaters located alongside the X-rated shops on 8th Avenue, known as The Deuce.

8 p.m.
March '68

Hania and Janek are students in Warsaw in 1968. When the government's persecution of Jews starts to gain strength. Janek, whose father is a government official, and Hania, who is Jewish and whose parents have lost their prominent jobs, join other university students protesting the government's actions, changing their lives forever.

August 14

4 p.m.
The City Without Jews

H.K. Breslauer's 1924 silent masterpiece is the tragicomic story of the fictional Austrian city of Utopia. The story follows the political and personal consequences of an antisemitic law forcing all Jews to leave the country. When the citizens of Utopia come to terms with the loss of the Jewish population and the resulting economic decline, they must decide whether to invite them back. The satirical events transformed into an all-too-horrific reality. The silent film is accompanied by live original music composed by renowned klezmer violinist Alicia Svigals and silent film music legend pianist Donald Sosin.

8 p.m.
Farewell Mr. Haffmann

In this gripping wartime thriller probing issues of conscience and character, a French-Jewish jeweler is caught in a Faustian pact that will change the fate of all involved. When the Nazis occupy Paris, Joseph Haffmann (Daniel Auteuil) arranges for his family's escape and hastily signs over his humble shop to trusted right-hand man François (Gilles Lellouche). As fortunes reverse, Haffmann is now at his employee-turned-collaborator's mercy, trapped hiding in the basement to avoid deportation. Impeccable performances and unpredictable twists mark this superbly crafted morality tale based on an award-winning play by Jean-Philippe Daguerre.

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CULTURE & ARTS

The Workshop – JOCISM (Jews of Color, Jewish-Indigenous, Sephardi & Mizrahi) Artists and Culturemakers Exploring Their Jewish Identities

Brought to the Berkshires by Federation and Shakespeare & Company



The Workshop’s founding artistic director, Rabbi Kendell Pinkney

There are so many differences between people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds that the term ‘Jew of color,’ while it can serve as a point of connection for people, won’t necessarily [be enough], which is part of the reason why I think there always has to be a second thing. For me, the second thing that’s really important is being an artist. So if you are able to take that constructed identity and the identity of being an artist and really foreground the arts, then suddenly people have something to galvanize and organize around.”

Unlike many people who possess an artistic bent, Rabbi Pinkney also seems to be a born organizer. As he recounted the personal and professional development that led him to this point in his career, what became clear is that he possesses a talent for being able to recognize and then access the resources that might be available through established institutions to further his goals. His adeptness at building and sustaining relationships is a big part of the story of why and how The Workshop will be hosted by Federation and Shakespeare & Company in July, the first time this innovative salon will be presented outside New York City.

But before we get to that story, a little backstory on Rabbi Pinkney’s Jewish journey. “I did not grow up Jewish,” he says. “Rather, I grew up in a Black church in Dallas and found my way to Judaism once I got to Oberlin College and Conservatory. Once I became interested in Judaism, there were a lot of really wonderful people at my alma mater who were really generous and patient with me, especially as I became more interested and started asking more questions. I visited my first Kabbalat Shabbat when I was at Oberlin not really even knowing what to expect; but I became intrigued and I kept coming back. From there, I found that I kept being drawn into Jewish spaces.”

After graduation, he moved to New York City to study for a master’s degree in Fine Arts and Musical Theater Writing at New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts. In New York, he says he began to “daven-hop, getting to know different communities.” He became “more established, taking on more responsibility” with Kolot Chayeinu, a congregation in Brooklyn he describes as “unaffiliated, what I often think of as a crunchy granola synagogue that might have been started by Oberlin students who grew up a couple of generations ago.” Later, he became involved with Altshul, a more traditional congregation also in Park Slope.

“By this time, I had finished converting, and kept meeting different rabbis and friends who were telling me, ‘You know what? You might be interested in being a rabbi’ because they saw that I was involved and interested in study. I had already studied abroad in Jerusalem for a couple of years at that time and had some Hebrew under my belt. So it was one of those things where I was interested and the people around me kept noticing an interest and then encouraged me. That’s when I decided, in 2017, that I would take the plunge and study to become a rabbi.”

Pinkney enrolled at Jewish Theological Seminary. Upon completing his studies, he became the first Black person to whom JTS conferred *smicha*. “But I knew, even going into study at JTS, that I did not want to work at a synagogue,” he adds. “I didn’t want to be a pulpit rabbi. I knew I wanted it to be something else and if possible, something that combined my study of Judaism and love of it with the arts.”

He says he felt pulled in two directions by his interests and his training. “One of the challenges of being in rabbinical school was that I often felt like a person who was kind of in the margins – not so much because of my race or ethnic background or anything like that. I actually felt pretty welcomed from that perspective. Rather it was my identity as an artist, as someone who had written several full-length musicals, had finished an MFA program and had gone through that whole system and had a lot of friends who were still part of that system. Deciding that rabbinical school was my path was out of left field for some friends (and to some extent some family). So I was enjoying being at JTS, the one thing that felt like it was kind of always at the side was my creativity and my creative community.

“So I reached out to a number of friends from NYU Tisch, several of whom happened to be Jewish and happened to be Jews of color or Sephardic. And I told them, hey, let’s get together. Let’s create some stuff and just see what comes out. We ended up creating a very short piece that was written by one of my very dear friends about the challenge around saying Kaddish for her father who wasn’t Jewish – what it was she was having to negotiate in thinking about and remembering this moment of grief. It was so strong, with all these wonderful themes that

LENOX – On Sunday, July 9 at 4:30 p.m., join members of The Workshop for a salon presentation showcasing 3 cutting-edge artistic works-in-progress that probe the intersections of race, religion, identity, and sacred text through music, storytelling, and film. This performance will be presented at Shakespeare & Company’s Elayne P. Bernstein Theatre, 70 Kemble Street in Lenox. Co-sponsors of this event are Jewish Federation of the Berkshires and Shakespeare & Company.

“Identity in and of itself, including Jewish identity in and of itself, is not necessarily enough to create community,” says Rabbi Kendell Pinkney, the founding artistic director of The Workshop. “There always needs to be a second and or third thing.”

Explaining why he thinks the early iterations of The Workshop, which began presenting salons in New York City in 2022, have clicked, Pinkney adds: “The identity of being a Jew of color is a constructed identity.

There are so many differences between people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds that the term ‘Jew of color,’ while it can serve as a point of connection for people, won’t necessarily [be enough]...

– Kendell Pinkney

felt very Jewishly relevant. I said to her, ‘What you’ve written here is Torah.’”

His friend responded that she hadn’t thought about Torah since her bat mitzvah and asked that he explain what he meant. “And so I took her through what it was that she had written, kind of showing her some of the thematic and structural things that she had done that reminded me of different parts of the Bible or Talmud.” Together, they developed the piece into a monologue that was presented in various Jewish settings where it resonated with audiences. Pinkney wondered if he couldn’t involve more people in the process, and approached people he knew at JTS and in the Jewish nonprofit world. “We were able to raise a bit more funds to be able to give our first seven fellows a stipend and provide them with a bit of space to do their work,” he recalls, “And from there, The Workshop was born.”

Peri Smilow, best known locally for being the current artist-in-residence at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, is also executive director of the Shards of Light Foundation, an organization with a mission to “support...capacity building in non-profit organizations and transformational work in progressive Jewish life.” Smilow says, “One of the prime areas of our funding is to find start-up programs and organizations run by Jews of color who are looking to establish new opportunities for Jews of color to both be able to bring their full identities to their Jewish lives.” The Workshop is one of those start-ups the organization invested in, providing those stipends that allowed the first fellows to develop their work.

The way The Workshop operates is that the fellows meet monthly to study Jewish texts around a specific theme. Says Pinkney: “Our first year’s theme was ‘Collective Memory.’ So how is it that societies and peoples remember? Who can enforce remembering? Who can enforce forgetting? Why does it matter? The hope was that studying together in this kind of affinity-based community would inflect people’s creativity and that it would show up in their work.” He says this process is not unique to The Workshop, that he had engaged in this creative process while participating in LABA: A Laboratory For Jewish Culture, a study circle with an international profile. Two of the fellows appearing at Shakespeare & Company will present work based on the collective memory theme, while the third will present work about ‘Hybridity,’ the theme of this year’s Workshop study.

Fellows for The Workshop are chosen, in part, because they have demonstrated accomplishment in their respective fields of artistic endeavor. Although the July 9 salon will feature works-in-progress, “there’s every reason to believe that a number of these pieces are going to have a life of their own beyond the year of the fellowship,” says Peri Smilow. “What that means is that we will have

the opportunity potentially to see a new TV show, a new piece of art, a new piece of choreography that will be seen by thousands of people, that will reflect this question of Jewish identity through the lens of color and race.”

This is part of the reason that Smilow says she was involved behind the scenes “in making the *shidduch*” between The Workshop and key people in the Berkshires to make performance possible. She

approached Amy Handelsman, managing director of Shakespeare & Company – and this is where the professional networks in which Rabbi Pinkney has participated began to pay dividends.

Handelsman first met Pinkney through her own participation in LABA, where she was exploring her fascination with boxing (as a spectator and participant) through the lens of ‘War and Peace.’ Although the two were in different LABA cohorts, she had been a teacher at NYU Tisch while Pinkney was at JTS and, she says, “we were talking about setting up a salon then.” The pandemic prevented that from happening, and Handelsman moved to the Berkshires to take the job at Shakespeare & Company. While here, she got involved with Hevreh. “Then, Peri, the artist-in-residence, said to me, ‘You really should meet this guy who runs this thing called The Workshop.’ And I said, ‘Kendell.’ So it all kind of came full circle.”

Looking for additional funding for the event, Handelsman approached Federation, which soon signed on as a partner in presenting the salon. “We have a large Jewish constituency and we’re also very involved in diversity work,” she says. “So this will be wonderful to bring to our theater in a kind of partnership, because we’ve worked with the Federation before and I wanted to work with Kendell, and the artists seemed really fascinating to me.”

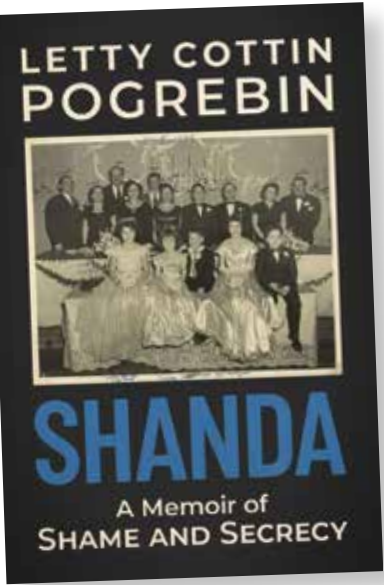
Says Smilow: “Collaboration among nonprofits just doesn’t happen a lot, for understandable reasons. People don’t have a lot of money, and there are all kinds of reasons that folks tend to stick with what they know. And what is unusual about this is that each of these entities is successful in their area of operation. Federation does a tremendous job of supporting all kinds of amazing Jewish life activities in the Berkshires. And we know that Shakespeare & Company is one of the jewels of the Berkshires from an arts organization point of view. They have a magnificent campus. They have magnificent productions. And The Workshop is a startup that’s a new experimental and experiential program based in New York City. By inviting this small and growing and impactful organization founded by a person of color who is Jewish to plug into a major regional theater space and be supported by an important Federation, it means The Workshop is going to reach all kinds of people in the Berkshires.” Our audience on July 9, she adds, may then take their experience of The Workshop back home to other places, thus increasing the profile of its



Actor Nemuna Ceesay will perform on July 9 at Shakespeare & Co.

CULTURE & ARTS

SHANDA,
continued from page 12



food saw Joseph, who couldn't have looked that different, didn't recognize him. He was their *brother*. He was not an infant when they threw him in the pit. But they couldn't imagine his survival or certainly this role for him and he could get away with pretending.

So Joseph duped his brothers to put them through something you might call reparational punishment for what they did to him. He puts the cup in Benjamin's sack and puts his brothers through a trial by fire *punitively*. And he's right there in front of them being their brother, but they couldn't see him, just like I couldn't see my parents for who they were. It didn't fit the narrative. Joseph as vice consul for Pharaoh couldn't fit the narrative for the brothers, so they blotted it out. How can my parents have lied to me about when they got married or who they are or who my sister is? How could that be? Where's my other sister [Letty's twin, the circumstances of whose demise were kept a family secret]? I could never have made that stuff up in order to figure it out.

You differentiate between toxic shame (“a chronic sense of unworthiness [that is] a festering stew of self-loathing that corrodes, debilitates, and yields zero positive by-products”) and guilt, which “can lead to improved behavior and the development of a moral and ethical baseline, which, as I look back on my life, is what Jewish guilt has done for me.” As someone who came from a family so steeped in shandas, how did you arrive at this distinction and what does it mean to you? And how might others use their “Jewish guilt” in the constructive ways you were able to?

I think because I am essentially, quintessentially, a Jew in the sense that I really do what you're supposed to do on Yom Kippur. I really ask for forgiveness from those I've hurt. I understand that I can ask forgiveness from God only for sins against God. For what I've done against others, I have to go to them. And *then* I can spend the day with my shoes hurting, standing and sitting and standing and sitting all day long, and be cleansed. I cannot be cleansed of the shame when I was carrying around the shame of my abortions. Who am I going to in order to get rid of that? So I had to put [the story of that shame] out there to get rid of it.

Guilt is often what we do and shame is who we think we are. You have to get rid of shame at such a deep level. I have some Christians in my family, and I interviewed them about the difference between guilt and shame. In the book, I described my cousin's husband – a firefighter on 9/11 and a big strapping guy – and his mother used to take her finger and rub her forefingers and say, “Shame on you, shame on you, shame on you.”

It wasn't like our Jewish parents, who said, “How could *you* do such a thing?” You can undo ‘such a thing.’ It wasn't shame on *you* because *you* are a terrible person – that seeps into oneself. To get rid of ‘Jewish guilt’ and be a better person, you say you're sorry. If you don't want to feel that guilt again, you stop doing the thing that caused you to feel guilty. Guilt comes from an action-oriented kind of misdemeanor. Shame is inbred and something that is so intrinsic to who you are. You have to go much deeper to get rid of that. You need therapy, I think.

I think that our tradition allows us expiation – and only once a year, because [Yom Kippur] is so majestic as a ritual. It's *so big* if you're a believer – even if you're not an Orthodox person, which I am not. I believe to the point where I really feel I have to act – I can't just think, I have to act – to undo these things. And I think most people I know have some version of that, even if they don't put it in the context of *halakha*.

Letty Cottin Pogrebin, co-founder of *Ms.* magazine, is a nationally acclaimed writer, activist, and public speaker. The author of twelve books, she has also published articles and essays in numerous print and online periodicals, including the *New York Times*, *The Nation*, and *Huffington Post*. She is a co-founder of the National Women's Political Caucus and the *Ms.* Foundation for Women; a past president of the Authors Guild and Americans for Peace Now; and has served on the boards of the Harvard Divinity School Women in Religion Program and the Brandeis University Women's and Gender Studies Program. Among her many honors are a Yale University Poynter Fellowship in Journalism, a Matrix Award for excellence in communication and the arts, and an Emmy Award for her work as consulting editor on the TV version of Marlo Thomas's *Free to Be...You and Me*. Pogrebin lives with her husband in New York City and Stockbridge.

Nina Lipkowitz’s “Battle Fatigue” will be On View in June



In 2018, the BJV featured Great Barrington artist Nina Lipkowitz and her series of paintings “Battle Fatigue,” an ambitious investigation of her father's harrowing military service in the US Third Army under General George Patton. The work illuminates how his World War II experiences shaped both his life and her own. In addition to experiencing combat in the Battle of the Bulge, Morton Polkowitz was among the forces that liberated

the concentration camp Ohrdruf, a sub-camp of Buchenwald, one of the first camps to be freed by the Allies. After returning home, Morton had to receive treatment for the trauma he experienced.

Through June 25, Lipkowitz's “Battle Fatigue” will be on view at 510 Warren Street Gallery, 510 Warren Street in Hudson, NY. With its themes of war, the Holocaust, family discord, and trauma, “Battle Fatigue” is unsettling and dark, despite the vibrant colors of Lipkowitz canvases. “I was nervous about it originally because it was so dark, and it feels like things are so much darker now,” says Lipkowitz, citing the rise in antisemitism and violence against Jews in recent years.

Shown here is “Sara and Mort,” depicting Lipkowitz's parents, from the “Battle Fatigue” series.



Cheryl Sacks of Lanesboro recently contributed this photo to ArtAgainstAntisemitism (art.combatantisemitism.org), an Instagram campaign created under the aegis of the Combat Antisemitism Movement.

About this image, she writes: “While on a family genealogy journey with my 84-year-old Polish-born grandmother, we went to the Lodz New Jewish Cemetery. There we located my great-grandfather, Yakov Zegrzanski's gravestone. I had never known my mother's family's ‘real’ last name. This cemetery covers 100 acres with over 180,000 graves and was actually within the boundaries of the Lodz Ghetto during World War II. Pictured is the Ghetto Field, the site of mass executions and containing rows of symbolic gravestones, serving as memorials to those deprived of proper funerals during the Nazi occupation.”

She adds: “It was an honor to be included in the ArtAgainstAntisemitism Instagram campaign. It offered me a chance to be part of a community fighting antisemitism in a small way.”

According to its website: “Art Against Antisemitism is a robust community that regularly features its own art, invites artists of all backgrounds to contribute theirs, and inspires viewers to learn about antisemitism in a way that feels personal, meaningful, and impactful to its mission. The project was started by artist Lisa Link and brought to the Combat Antisemitism Movement as a recipient of a grant-writing contest in 2022.”

Find out more about the Combat Antisemitism Movement at: combatantisemitism.org.

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YIDSTOCK: The Festival of New Yiddish Music Returns

Performances by The Klezmatics, David Krakauer's Mazel Tov Cocktail Party, and Frank London and the Yidstock All-Stars

AMHERST – The Yiddish Book Center announces the return of the annual YIDSTOCK: The Festival of New Yiddish Music from Thursday, July 13, to Sunday, July 16. The four-day festival features a diverse lineup of new performers and audience favorites and promises to be an unforgettable event for fans of Yiddish music and culture.

Tickets for YIDSTOCK: The Festival of New Yiddish Music, plus a full lineup of programs, are available at the Yiddish Book Center website, yiddishbookcenter.org.

YIDSTOCK Artistic Director Seth Rogovoy curated this year's lineup, which includes favorites like Merlin Shepherd, Nigunim Trio, and Lorin Sklamberg alongside new performers, including Forshpil, Midwood, and Sam Sadigursky. In addition to the music performances, the festival includes workshops, talks, films, and conversations with the artists.

The 11th annual YIDSTOCK festival also introduces a new program called "Festival Artists-in-Residence." This inaugural year features Eleanor Reissa and Socalled, who will make surprise appearances with other performers and lead short, casual sessions exploring their creative process.

"Last year we were able to regain our footing with a live festival after a two-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic," said Rogovoy. "This year, we are thrilled to be able to present three artists and groups making their YIDSTOCK debuts, as well as several international artists. We look forward to the magic and surprises that can only happen at a live event, which often provides a platform for spontaneous cross-pollination and jamming between performers."

Concert Details

The Klezmatics, the Grammy Award-winning modern klezmer band, will kick off the festival on Thursday, July 13, at 8 p.m.

On Friday, July 14, at 2 p.m., Yidstock newcomer Sam Sadigursky will perform excerpts from "The Solomon Diaries," his suite for duo, accompanied by accordionist/multi-instrumentalist Nathan Koci. Sam's musical composition is inspired by photographer Marisa Scheinfeld's visionary project, The Borscht

Belt: Revisiting the Remains of America's Jewish Vacationland.

The Nigunim Trio, featuring vocalist/accordionist Lorin Sklamberg and trumpeter Frank London, will bring their unique blend of *nigunim* and *zmiros* on Friday, July 14, at 5 p.m. They will be joined by special guest Merlin Shepherd, the world-renowned klezmer clarinetist, from Brighton, England.

YIDSTOCK favorite David Krakauer will return on Saturday, July 15, at 8 p.m., with his latest project, David Krakauer's Mazel Tov Cocktail Party, which showcases an international crew of performers including Iranian percussionist Martin Shamoopour, jazz bassist Jerome Harris, Montreal rapper Sarah MK, and electric guitarist Yoshie Fruchter.

Sunday's lineup includes Midwood, a Brooklyn-based outfit led by violinist Jake Shulman-Ment and Forshpil, an international group founded in 2003 in Riga, Latvia, and led by vocalist Sasha Lurje and keyboardist/arranger Ilya Shneyveys.

The festival will culminate with the YIDSTOCK All-Stars, led by Frank London, on Sunday, July 16, at 7 p.m. This once-in-a-lifetime grouping will perform a globally oriented program called "YIDSTOCK All-Stars: The Finale" that features klezmer and Yiddish talent including vocalist Eleanor Reissa, Montreal-based Josh Dolgin, aka Socalled, the de facto godfather of "klezmer hip hop," clarinetist Merlin Shepherd, vocalists Sasha Lurje, Lorin Sklamberg, Eleonore Weill, and Lauren Brody, plus many others.



David Krakauer's Mazel Tov Cocktail Party

PHOTO: REMI HOSTEKIND

B'Shalom Chorale Seeks Singers for its Ninth Season



The B'Shalom Chorale

GREAT BARRINGTON – B'Shalom Chorale, conducted by Jack Brown and accompanied by Joe Rose, begins nine weekly rehearsals, on Wednesday, June 7, from 7 p.m. to 8:30 pm. The concert will be Wednesday evening, August 9..

The Chorale is open to people of all faiths, who have a pleasant singing voice and the ability to stay on pitch. Choral experience is preferred, as is a love of singing four-part music. The ability to read music is helpful, but not mandatory. Rehearsals and the concert will be at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, 270 State Road in Great Barrington.

Dues are \$50.Please RSVP to the Chorale: (413) 418-1836 or email: BShalomChorale@gmail.com.

Sponsored in part by a grant from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.

The B'Shalom Chorale, Inc. is a tax-exempt non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

THE WORKSHOP,

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innovative work.

Says Rabbi Daveen Litwin, Federation's director of programming and community engagement, "We are excited to partner with Shakespeare & Company and The Workshop to explore 'being Jewish' beyond the traditional narrative associated with Judaism and to embrace broader, multi-racial, and multi-cultural perspectives."

Although The Workshop is just emerging as a platform for the work of JOCISM (Jews of Color, Jewish-Indigenous, Sephardi & Mizrahi) artists and culture-makers, Pinkney says he is in it for the long haul. For some of the fellows, artistically expressing their identities as people of color has often seemed easier than expressing themselves as Jews. The Workshop is an opportunity for these artists to explore their Jewishness in new and unexpected ways.

"The Workshop is built around providing an intensive fellowship, experience, and community for these fellows. I've figured from being an artistic director and from being an artist myself, it can take 5 or 10 or 15 years in order to see a full-blown product in the world. And so, our hope is to stick with our fellows through the duration of their careers and the duration of their creating these projects. And we also know that audiences are incredibly curious as to what we've been doing."

Join Federation and Shakespeare & Company on July 9 to find out.

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