

# 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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## When Our Community Needs Us, We Are There

Federation Campaign 2016 Kicks Off on  
Super Sunday, May 22

On May 22, the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires kicks off its annual campaign with Super Sunday. This day of community building and outreach helps raise the critical dollars needed to strengthen and care for the Jewish community across the Berkshires, in Israel, and around the world.

Volunteers from all parts of the county will come together at call centers in Pittsfield and Great Barrington to spread the word about what the Federation accomplishes, and to invite others to contribute to its vital work.

Development Officer Margo Golos says that "last year, our Super Sunday volunteers set the tone for the entire campaign. We added a new call center in South County, and were joined in both our locations by a large number of first time callers. They brought a fresh energy to what is always a spirited day, and it was fantastic seeing new connections being made among community members and with Federation."

Last year, we exceeded our campaign goal, raising \$787,726 that went toward helping Jews across the Berkshires and across the world. This year,



Ellen Masters

we hope to raise at least \$790,000 and want to start off strong. So please join us on Super Sunday by making a call or answering a call.

Because of you, we are there.

### Our Super Sunday Chair

A stalwart of the Berkshires Jewish community, Ellen Masters is our 2016 Super Sunday chair. "It was hard to say no," she says, "as this caring and devoted Jewish community has been so good and so supportive of my family. It will be an honor to reach out to those who share with us the great adventure of living Jewishly in the Berkshires year round, and also to the seasonal residents and visitors I meet who never fail to be amazed by the quality of Jewish life we have here in our small community."

"The wonderful part about living in a small community," she continues, "is

**SUPER SUNDAY,**  
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## Regional Partnership Connects the Berkshires with Israel's Afula/Gilboa Region



Israel's Jezreel Valley seen from Gilboa Mountain

In March, the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires joined the Southern New England Consortium (SNEC) community partnership with the city of Afula and the Gilboa Regional Council in northern Israel's Jezreel Valley. Active since 1995, SNEC is part of the Jewish Agency for Israel's Partnership 2gether (P2G) Peoplehood Platform linking global Jewish communities to those in Israel.

SNEC is composed of 12 communities in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New York, each represented by their local Federation. Running the partnership is a steering committee that includes US members from these communities, along with the mayor of Afula and regional leaders from the Afula-Gilboa region. Overall, P2G con-

**SISTER CITIES,**  
continued on page 18

## She Prefers to Live in Color

Using an old school/new school approach to making art, Nina Lipkowitz creates vibrantly colored images taken from both nature and pure imagination



Great Barrington artist Nina Lipkowitz uses two very different mediums – watercolor paints and iPad pixels – to portray two very different types of images. Her elegant watercolors capture flowers from her garden, while her playful iPad finger paintings invent abstract realms of line and color. This spring, Lipkowitz will be participating in a still life show at Spencertown Academy from May 21 to June 19, with more exhibitions to follow. For more on her work, please see page 32.

## Clucking and Plucking in the Berkshires

Two Special Sections Inside –  
Jewish Farming and Jewish Music

Spring is here, and to mark this season of renewal, the BJV celebrates two mainstays of the Berkshires experience to which this Jewish community has long contributed – agriculture and music.



See our special section on farming starting on page 12 for stories about the region's rich (but not widely known) history of Jewish agriculture, along with stories on Jewish farmers working today. Pictured above, with chickens, are Andy and Sandra Snyder of When Pigs Fly Farm in Sandisfield.

Jewish music will be as thick in



the air as pollen this spring, with new CD releases by Berkshires musicians, compelling concerts, and world premieres of compositions by Jewish composers. Pictured right, with cello, is Yehuda Hanani, whose Close Encounters With Music series stages "Fiddler Off the Roof: A Journey of Jewish Music" in mid-April – see page 28 for more.

## In My View

### Making Israel Personal through a New Sister City Partnership with the Afula-Gilboa Region

By Dara Kaufman



A friend recently shared his bewilderment and frustration at the reality that many Jews, especially younger Jews, do not feel any connection to Israel. He thinks that for many, Israel is just a place 5000 miles away that seems to come into conversation only when something tragic or horrific happens that makes the nightly news.

I know how he feels. It seems to be increasingly difficult for us, as

Jews, to talk about Israel in a meaningful way. Conversations, when they do take place, can be difficult, divisive, and all too often expressed solely through a political lens. In many cases, conversations about Israel never take place, either because people have chosen to distance themselves from Israel or because a personal connection simply doesn't exist.

This is not news. Yet we also know that deep connections to Israel are incredibly important for building Jewish identity and community here in Berkshires. At Federation board meetings, allocation meetings, and CRC meetings, community members continually ask, "How do we build a deeper relationship and connection with Israel?"

The answer is that we need to make Israel personal.

I am excited to share the news that this March, the Federation's board took a giant step towards creating a more personal connection with Israel by voting to support Partnership 2Gether (P2G), which establishes a sister city relationship between the Berkshires and the Afula-Gilboa region of Israel.

P2G, an innovative program of the Jewish Agency for Israel, has become the paradigm for successfully partnering global Jewish communities directly with Israeli communities. Today P2G connects 450 Jewish and Israeli communities in 46 regional partnerships, engaging more than 350,000 participants each year in meaningful ongoing connections between Israelis and Jews around the world through unique programs and one-on-one encounters.

Regionally, this partnership was launched in 1995, twinning the city of Afula



Approaching Afula

and the Gilboa Regional Council with the Southern New England Consortium (SNEC), composed of 11 communities in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New York. We are thrilled that the Berkshires will be the 12th!

The Afula-Gilboa region is a diverse part of Israel, and one I know quite well. On my first trip to Israel (partially funded by a grant from this community – thank you very much!), I lived, worked, and traveled together with Israeli teens from kibbutz Ein Harod Meuchad, which is where I met my Israeli husband, Ofer. In 1992, I joined 56 new immigrants from Ethiopia and the former Soviet Union at the "Merkaz Klita" (absorption center) in Afula as we began the process of

integrating as new citizens of the State of Israel.

P2G gives our community the opportunity to support and engage with Israel in creative and unique ways. Through living bridge programs, we will have opportunities to host Israelis from the Afula-Gilboa region in our homes, share meals together, interact in programs and workshops, and learn more about Israel through the eyes and experiences of our guests. There will also be opportunities for community members to make the trip to Israel and see firsthand the impact of our support in the region.

P2G gives us the opportunity to make Israel personal to each one of us who chooses to get involved.

You can learn more about the Afula-Gilboa region and the service programs that our community will support there, as well as the living bridge programs that are in the works, by reading the article on page 1.

If you are interested in helping by hosting a visiting Israeli, organizing some of the programs, preparing a dinner, or just pitching in, please give me a call.

The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires is excited and proud to have joined this partnership, and we look forward to sharing more exciting news and programs as they become available.

Dara Kaufman is executive director of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires.

## Young Judaism

### First Kutz is the Deepest

Newly-minted social justice warrior says: "Go to Jewish camp!" (Federation will help)

By Jonah Alemany



I never looked forward to going to camp, especially summer camp. I liked camp, but for whatever reason, I never had the immersive experience that other kids had. For me, camp was always:

Too short.

Too loud.

Too alone.

That is, until URJ Kutz Camp in Warwick, NY unexpectedly changed everything for me. You see, I spent a good portion of the months leading up to my being sent to Kutz trying to figure out a way to persuade my mother to not send me to Kutz. I did not want another challenging summer camp experience. To no avail – I was sent packing on June 23, 2015.

Surprisingly, from day one I realized that my parents were right. Kutz felt like a home. Heck – it

was more than a home! It was a separate world altogether. Being at Kutz opened my eyes to new possibilities by giving me the chance to befriend Jewish teens from all over America and the world. In all of my years on this earth, I never met

a more tolerant and understanding group of individuals. Just three days after my arrival, same sex marriage was legalized in all 50 states. When Kutz campers and staff learned of this, we all ran straight to the cafeteria, where we watched the historic event on television. After the initial burst of excitement subsided, all 200 campers and staff joined together in a prayer for strength.

It was one of the happiest and most transcendent moments in my life. Imagine being completely enveloped by tolerance, without an ounce of intolerance anywhere. That is the true meaning of social justice. I spent three weeks of my life in an environment completely devoid of intolerance, and that is more than most people receive in their entire lives.

I studied social justice at Kutz and brought much of what I learned back home to Pittsfield. In Reform Judaism, it is our obligation work to help repair the world. It is up to all of us. I cherish the day that I will be able to return to this magical place where I am able to be myself and continue the work of *tikkun olam* and social justice in a place where all are truly equal in the eyes of God. In the words of Rabbi Tarfon, "It is not your responsibility to finish the work of perfecting the world, but you are not free to desist from it either."

I will continue to do the work at Kutz, which will then inform what I do with the community of Jewish youth here in the Berkshires. And to all my peers I say: *Go to Jewish camp!* If the first one doesn't fit, then keep trying. You will find your home and it will change your life.

Jonah Alemany is a junior at Berkshire Arts and Technology (BART) in Adams. He is co-president of YACHAD and PFTY and a member of Temple Anshe Amunim in Pittsfield. Jonah works at URJ Camp Eisner in the off season and is an active participant in NFTY-NE. He will be attending URJ Kutz Camp this summer thanks to the generosity of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, Temple Anshe Amunim, and NFTY NE.

### DEADLINES

The next *Berkshire Jewish Voice* (Vol. 24, No. 4) will cover the period May 15, 2016 through June 30, 2016. The following edition (Vol. 24, No. 5) covers July 1, 2016 through August 4, 2016. **The deadline for press releases and other written submissions, all of which are subject to being edited, is June 7, 2016. Because of limitations of space and time, please be so kind as to not submit lengthy articles without first contacting the editor. Advertising deadline is June 15, 2016.** For a complete *Berkshire Jewish Voice* schedule, contact (413) 442-4360, ext. 11, or e-mail [jfb.berkshirevoice@verizon.net](mailto:jfb.berkshirevoice@verizon.net).

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**Berkshire**  
**JEWISH VOICE**

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## Rabbi Reflections

### Build Me a Sanctuary...

By Barbara Cohen



What are a civilization's monuments? What structures have different peoples built that last and tell the story of their existence to the generations that will survive the builder's blueprint and the workman's hammer? Some rise from the earth as testaments to unimaginable creativity, engineering, and vision – the seemingly impossible given shape out of raw material coaxed and hoisted from quarry and mine, and then melded and molded into temple and marketplace. Think of the pyramids and obelisks of Egypt, the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, the Parthenon, Angkor Wat, Machu Picchu – all rival the towers of our modern Babel in reaching to the heavens to make a name among the clouds.

But alas, as we all too painfully know, buildings come down through hatred and war, as well as foolishness, lust for newness, and

neglect. Among the debris of the old, remnants of these moments of greatness lay like litter, tossed by some indifferent hand.

So what remains? The edifice of words and story, passed from parent to child, from sage to student, from the Divine to the devoted, from age to age. In every culture and in every corner of this world, words are the wealth of a community. They conjure the past, paint the present, and prophesy the future...a wholeness of time that knits a people, its place and its life together, into a recognizable and shared reality...for better or for worse. Tales of glory and pain, brilliance and regret, victory and humiliation, peace and upheaval, all woven into what truly matters in the end....the answer to the question, "Who are we?"

My father was a fugitive Aramean. We were slaves in the land of Egypt. We stood at Sinai to receive the Torah and we were afraid. We were lost for a long time. We built a holy Temple and it was destroyed. We were exiled over and over and over again. We wrote in Hebrew and Aramaic, Greek and Arabic. We flourished and failed. We filled volumes and volumes of books and then engaged with them word by word, letter by letter, and in spaces in between. We were herded like animals to the slaughter and we died and we lived! We loved peace and we went to war and we lost many and we also returned; whether we triumphed or not, we were changed, in some ways, forever. The shedding of blood is wrong and yet we can never seem to stop...our blood, someone else's...it just keeps flowing into the ground we are supposed to keep sacred.

Pesach, Yom HaShoah, Yom HaZikaron, Yom Ha'atsmaut... a caravan of days of memory. A chain of stories that tie us to each other, generation to generation, as we move from the past to the present in a chain of telling... of hardship and miraculous rescue, of the blackening of sky and of spirit, of liberation and always of the loss of so many lives.

Then we tell the story of the day yet to come when our spirits rise, and we feel that an ancient promise has been kept. A day spoken of in longing and hope, though often with fear of disappointment, around hearth fires, in tents, and at family tables for what seems like forever. An oasis – "Next year in Jerusalem." May the unending story that we tell our children be finally filled with lasting peace and only the distant memory of war and sorrow, and tell of those we have uplifted and who we have lost. May we never forget who we are or how we got here, and may we hold as sacred our responsibility, each in our own way, to play our part in the building of our wondrous story.

Barbara Cohen is spiritual leader of Congregation Ahavath Sholom in Great Barrington.

## Letters to the Editor

### Words Cannot Describe Parents' Thankfulness, but Exclamation Marks Do the Trick

Dear Jewish Federation of the Berkshires:

We cannot thank the Federation enough for your generosity with helping with camp for both our daughters, Ava and Madelyn. Words cannot describe how thankful we are!! Without your help, the girls would not be able to go.

Please send our thanks to everyone!!

Thank you, thank you, thank you!!  
Denise and Howard Cherry  
Pittsfield

### On the Jewish Obligation to Speak Out

To the Editor:

From the Torah, as retold every year at the Seder: "You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Exodus 22:21); to the obligation to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18); to the collective wisdom of *Pirkei Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers) which places "show kindness to others" first on the list of ethical principles, Jewish ethics has been one of compassion toward others.

For more than 3000 years Jewish ethics, as all the world's great codes of ethics, both religious and secular, have been universal, not tribal. The same moral principles apply equally to you and to me; to friends and to strangers; to Jews and to Gentiles. It is just as wrong for me to do harm to another as it is for them to do harm to me. In Hillel's words: "That which is hateful to you do not do to your fellow: this is the entire Torah, the rest is the explanation . . ."

Rabbi Michael Lerner published an article in *Tikkun* in response to the 2014 Israeli invasion of Gaza titled *Mourning for a Judaism Being Murdered by Israel*, in which he speaks of the transgression of idolatry. When

Moses descended from Mount Sinai with the tablets of the Law he found them worshipping a golden calf. Today, shamefully, some treat the state of Israel as a golden calf. Israel is a nation among other nations whose actions should be judged by the same criteria. It is not a divine entity which must be given unconditional support and loyalty, but a country with a complicated political landscape whose government, at times, behaves in ways that should make no Jew proud.

Judaism has a long tradition of being self critical when the situation warrants. The prophets were not blindly loyal to the state of Judea. When they saw bad behavior they spoke out. On Yom Kippur – we look first to our sins, not to those of others.

So, I say, that as Jews we have an obligation to speak out against the government of the state of Israel when it engages in behavior worthy of condemnation; to speak for the values of a compassionate Judaism that does not oppress, abuse, and take the land of others.

David Lotto  
Pittsfield

### Hadassah Leader on Responding to Palestinian Terror

Dear Editor:

Terror attacks have spread to every corner of Israel. Israelis are on constant alert as they go about their lives – working, going to school, waiting for a bus, grocery shopping or walking down a street. Parents have been wounded and killed with knives and hatchets in front of their children; pregnant women have been attacked; teenagers and toddlers have been gravely injured.

Over 170 individuals – both the victims and perpetrators – have been treated at Hadassah Medical Organization's two hospitals in Jerusalem.

Our medical personnel are justly famous for never giving up on a patient and we urge President Obama to never give up on Israel's security.

The people of Israel need our help during this time of crisis. The United States must lead the international community in advocating for diplomatic pressure on the Palestinian leadership to condemn the ongoing wave of terror and immediately end the incitement they encourage.

President Obama and the United States must continue standing unequivocally for Israel's right to defend herself against all threats that endanger the safety and security of her citizens and tourists.

Most respectfully,  
Ellen Hershkin, Hadassah National President



Taylor Force, an American graduate student at Vanderbilt University on a school trip to Israel, was killed in a March 8 stabbing attack that wounded 10 people at and near Tel Aviv's Jaffa Port.

MORE LETTERS on page 4

## Berkshire JEWISH VOICE

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#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

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## Your Federation Presents

### Good Deeds Day – A Jewish Community Day of Service on April 10

On Sunday, April 10, join the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires as we mark international Good Deeds Day with a local Jewish Community Day of Service, during which we celebrate the value and importance of giving back to the community we live in.

“Smiles for Seniors,” co-sponsored by the Federation

and PJ Library, will bring smiles and cheer to EPOCH: Assisted Living at Melbourne between 10 and 11:30 a.m. at Melbourne Place, 140 Melbourne Road in Pittsfield. Please RSVP by email at [jfb.officemanager@verizon.net](mailto:jfb.officemanager@verizon.net) or by calling (413) 442-4360, ext. 10.

Other scheduled events

going on are listed on a special Good Deeds Day page on [JewishBerkshires.org](http://JewishBerkshires.org), under “Community and Events.”

If you have any questions, please contact Susan Frisch Lehrer at (413) 442-4360, ext. 14 or email [jfb.volunteer@verizon.net](mailto:jfb.volunteer@verizon.net).

### You’ll Be With Linda (Tyer) on April 7 for “Pittsfield – A City on the Move”

On Thursday, April 7, at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires hosts Pittsfield Mayor Linda Tyer, who will deliver a presentation called “Pittsfield – A City on the Move.” This free program at Congregation Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation’s Connecting With Community series.

Mayor Tyer explains: “The City of Pittsfield has evolved. That’s a good thing if we understand that it allows our great city to be primed for many rich opportunities. My vision for Pittsfield reflects a place where small businesses thrive, strategic collaborations are nurtured, and the creative economy flourishes. I am committed to the exciting work ahead to ensure that Pittsfield seizes every opportunity to ensure this vision.” Join her as she talks about her plans for the future.

Linda M. Tyer was inaugurated as Mayor of the City of Pittsfield in January 2016, and is the first mayor to be elected to a four-year term in the city’s history. Her family’s roots are in the city, and date



Mayor Linda Tyer of Pittsfield

back to her great-grandparents, one of whom was a Pittsfield police officer. Her elected roles in the City of Pittsfield included that of City Clerk and Ward 3 City Councilor.

### Rabbi Dresner on the Jewish Commitment to the Civil Rights Movement and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

On Monday, May 2, at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires hosts Rabbi Israel S. Dresner, one of the most prominent rabbis who participated in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and beyond. He will discuss his own work and his experiences with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in this special Black History Month event. This free program at Congregation Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation’s Connecting With Community series.

Israel Dresner, rabbi emeritus from Temple Beth Tikvah in Wayne, NJ, was the closest rabbi to Dr. King, who on two

occasions (1963 and 1966) addressed his congregation. He was the first Rabbi arrested in the freedom struggle in 1961 in an interfaith clergy Freedom Ride. At Dr. King’s request, Rabbi Dresner helped organize the largest group of clergy ever arrested at one time in American history (65 Protestant ministers and 10 rabbis) in Albany, GA in August 1962. In 1964 at Dr. King’s request, he organized the largest number of rabbis ever arrested at one time (18) in St. Augustine, FL. He was later dubbed “The Most Arrested Rabbi in America.”

Dresner continued his civil rights activism and advocacy

throughout his career as a reform Jewish rabbi in northern New Jersey, participating in the 1962 Albany campaign to desegregate municipal facilities and in the 1965 Selma to Montgomery march. He retired in 1996.

#### IF YOU GO

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

**Venue:** Congregation Kneset Israel

**Date & Time:** Monday, May 2, at 10:45 a.m.

## Letters to the Editor, continued

### Thank You, B’nai Tzedek Youth Foundation

#### Funding Helps Jerusalem Soup Kitchen Feed the Needy

Dear B’nai Tzedek Youth Foundation:

We are deeply grateful to have been selected by you as a grant recipient this year. The grant will be used to help fund the operation of the Meir Panim Jerusalem Free Restaurant, our restaurant-style soup kitchen, which provides nourishment and comfort to Jerusalem’s most impoverished residents.

It is important to note that our diners are served by volunteers, which significantly contributes toward maintaining the integrity and self-esteem of our clients, whose embarrassment and shame we seek to diminish. Additionally, Meir Panim distributes hot, nourishing meals to thousands of poverty-stricken children in schools throughout the country, ensuring that students benefit physically, emotionally, and academically.

With your assistance, Meir Panim will continue to provide nutritious, high-quality meals to the disadvan-

taged, thereby alleviating hunger and lowering the rate of malnutrition among Israel’s impoverished population.

Again, we are thrilled the B’nai Tzedek Youth Foundation of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires has agreed to choose American Friends of Meir Panim as a beneficiary of your funding this year. We appreciate and applaud the life-long philanthropic skills you are learning through group engagement and the difficult decision-making the allocations process demands. Thank you again for choosing to partner with us in our mission to combat poverty and hunger in Israel. Your philanthropy is making a difference in people’s lives. Many thanks!

David Roth, President  
American Friends of Meir Panim

#### Giving Hope and Healing to Charley’s Fund Children

Dear Berkshire B’nai Tzedek Youth Foundation:

We are honored to receive your generous donation, which will be used to support the development of new treatments for Duchenne muscular dystrophy. Thanks to scientific advancements and the support of donors like you, for the first time in history children with this terrible disease have a real shot at longer, healthier lives. We are very grateful and impressed that young people in our community are having a powerful impact at such a young age. You are helping to give hope and healing to many thousands of sick children around the world.

With gratitude,  
Tracy and Benjamin Seckler  
Co-founders, Charley’s Fund



Charley Seckler at Hevreh with Rabbi Emerita Deborah Zecher

#### Food Bank Donation Will Combat Local Hunger

To the members of the B’nai Tzedek Youth Foundation:

The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts is honored to have been chosen by your group to receive a \$300 donation to help us distribute food to more than 35,000 people in Berkshire County who go hungry on any given day of the year. We distribute this food directly and to 24 local feeding programs.

We want you to know how impressed we are with both your commitment to making a difference in the world and your group decision-making process. It is inspiring that you are so engaged in addressing such important issues as poverty, saving lives, and helping the environment. Later this spring, The Food Bank will host a Youth Summit on Hunger, a one-day conference for youth ages 12 to 19, like you, who are interested in learning more about food insecurity in our region. The day will include workshops, presentations, peer networking, and activities to develop actions to deepen engagement in anti-hunger work. We hope you and your peers will join us!

Sincerely,  
Andrew Morehouse, Executive Director

For information on the Youth Summit on Hunger, contact Molly Sauvain at [mollys@foodbankwma.org](mailto:mollys@foodbankwma.org) or (413) 247-9736, ext. 135. For more on the recent B’nai Tzedek philanthropy program, see the related article on page 6.



Inside the Meir Panim Jerusalem Free Restaurant

## Your Federation Presents

### Connecting With Community Series / Kosher Hot Lunch

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

For further information on all programs, please call Nancy Maurice Rogers, program director, at (413) 442-4360, ext. 15. For lunch menus, please see page 22.

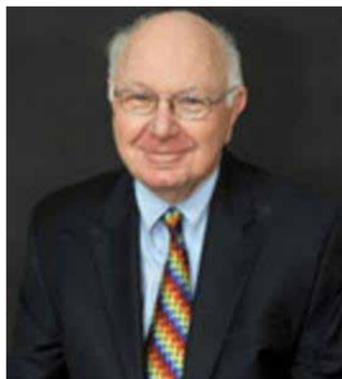
### "Plucked From the Headlines" Discussion Group on April 18

On Monday, April 18, at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires continues its monthly discussion series called "Plucked From the Headlines," moderated by attorney Edward Insley. The issues of the day will be discussed based on the input of attendees. This free program at Congregation Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation's Connecting With Community series.

Please be aware that on program dates coinciding with Passover preparation (April 14-21), lunch will not be served.

It's not always easy keeping up with all that's happening in the news, and this series is designed to offer insight and lively discussion. Topics will be introduced by moderator Edward Insley, and discussion will reflect the interests of the participants. Discussion topics might include: immigration, international refugee crisis, race relations, climate change, sustainable energy, and gun control.

Ed Insley is the founder of Business Gravity and Tax Gravity, a tax, accounting, and consulting firm. He is a graduate of the Bronx High School of Science and New York University, with a quad major in History, Political Science, Economics, and English. He received his JD from the Syra-



Edward Insley

cuse University College of Law, and served as chairman of the Students for Morgenthau Committee on behalf of Robert Morgenthau, the Democratic candidate for governor of New York State in 1962. Later, he worked on Thomas Kean's gubernatorial campaign in New Jersey and, with Governor Kean, was named Co-Humanitarian of the Year by the New Jersey Branch of the Humane Society of the United States.

#### IF YOU GO

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

**Venue:** Congregation Kneset Israel

**Date & Time:** Monday, April 18, at 10:45 a.m. No lunch during Passover preparation (April 14-21).

### Federation Awards Camp Scholarships to 36 Youths

PITTSFIELD- Judith Cook, chair of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires' Scholarship Committee, recently announced the Federation's distribution of \$48,238 in financial assistance for 36 Berkshire County youths to attend Jewish overnight camps this summer. A total of \$33,738 was allocated from the 2015 Annual Campaign, and an additional \$14,500 was provided by the Jewish Women's Foundation.

Funding was provided to assist youth attending Eisner Camp, Camp Ramah, Camp George, Kutz Camp, Camp Gan Israel, JCC Camp Kingwood, JCC Camp Seneca Lake, Crane Lake Camp, Six

Points Sci Tech, Camp Emunah, and Eden Village Camp

The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires is committed to providing camp scholarships to Berkshire County youth, as it has been well documented that this form of "informal" Jewish education is the most powerful way to build Jewish identity and commitment in young people.

Anyone interested in contributing to the Federation's Camp Scholarship Fund or establishing an endowment to support Jewish camping experiences is encouraged to contact Dara Kaufman, Executive Director, at (413) 442-4360, ext. 12.

### Chair Yoga with Kripalu-Certified Instructor Robin Seeley, April 4 & May 9

On April 4 and May 9 (both Mondays), at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires presents a chair yoga class led by Kripalu-certified instructor Robin Seeley. This free program at Congregation Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation's Connecting With Community series.

Chair yoga is a gentle and unique practice performed while sitting on a chair. Students are able to warm up the body safely and perform yoga poses with more support and stability. Students learn a variety of yoga postures and breathing techniques that help increase flexibility, strength, and health. Chair yoga is suitable for all ages, fitness levels, and physical conditions.

Robin Seeley has studied and practiced yoga for the last

12 years. She says: "I believe in a compassionate approach to yoga and I guide my students in creating a connection between the mind and body while offering a safe and supported space to gain confidence from the inside out. My ultimate goal as a yoga instructor is to empower my students to become more skillful in listening to their inner wisdom that guides them in the flow of their lives both on and off the mat."



Robin Seeley and daughter

#### IF YOU GO

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

**Venue:** Congregation Kneset Israel

**Date & Time:** April 4 and May 9 (both Mondays), at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 22).

### A Visit to the "Paper Clips" Town with Novelist Stephanie Abrams, April 14

On Thursday, April 14, at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires hosts Stephanie Abrams, nationally syndicated radio travel talk show host and media resource for travel-related issues, as she talks about her visit to the Tennessee town where the Holocaust-themed documentary *Paper Clips* was filmed. This free program at Congregation Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation's Connecting With Community series.

Please be aware that on program dates coinciding with Passover preparation (April 14-21), lunch will not be served.

When Stephanie Abrams saw the film *Paper Clips* (which was screened by the Federation in February), she had to know more. She invited the school's principal, Linda Hooper, to be a guest on each

of her radio shows, Travel WITH Stephanie Abrams and Travelers411, and made a promise that "one day" she would go and visit the Whitwell Middle School Children's Holocaust Memorial & Resource Library in Whitwell, TN. That day came in November 2015. Abrams brings with her a wealth of information and photos of the emotional experience and her unique connection to this Christian rural Tennessee community.

"Travel WITH Stephanie Abrams!" is a three hour weekly radio show heard by over 5 million radio listeners coast-to-coast on the Biz TalkRadio Network. Abrams is the executive producer and host of that show as well as the host and executive producer of the 3 hour weekly show, "Travelers411," reaching a national audience of 6.5 million.



Stephanie Abrams

#### IF YOU GO

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

**Venue:** Congregation Kneset Israel

**Date & Time:** Thursday, April 14, at 10:45 a.m. No lunch during Passover preparation (April 14-21).

### "In Every Generation: Seeing Ourselves in the Haggadah," with Rabbi Neil Hirsch on April 21

On Thursday, April 21, at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires hosts Rabbi Neil P.G. Hirsch of Hevreh of Southern Berkshire for "In Every Generation: Seeing Ourselves in the Haggadah." This free program at Congregation Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation's Connecting With Community series.

Please be aware that on program dates coinciding with Passover preparation (April 14-21), lunch will not be served.

Says Rabbi Hirsch: "In our Haggadah, we read a teaching from the Rabbis that 'in every generation, we are obligated to see ourselves as if we, personally, were redeemed from Egypt.' In this learning session, we'll explore that significant rabbinic passage, to understand what the Rabbis meant when they said it, and to see how we continue to live it out at our own Seder tables. We will explore different commentaries and traditions around the Seder to better understand the perspective of the Rabbis and to help us shape our own."

Originally from Houston,

TX, Rabbi Hirsch earned his bachelor degrees in Art History and Classics from Tufts University. He was ordained from the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York City in 2010.

He currently serves as a member of the Commission on Social Action for the Religious Action Center, and has been involved in many other social justice and community organizing initiatives. He is married to Rabbi Liz P.G. Hirsch, who is an assistant director at the URJ Eisner Camp in Great Barrington.



Rabbi Neil Hirsch

#### IF YOU GO

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

**Venue:** Congregation Kneset Israel

**Date & Time:** Thursday, April 21, at 10:45 a.m. No lunch during Passover preparation (April 14-21).

## Your Federation Presents

### B'nai Tzedek Youth Foundation Teaches Local Teens About Philanthropy

This past fall and winter, thirteen 7th and 8th graders from throughout the Berkshires took part in the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires' third B'nai Tzedek Youth Foundation course about the ins and outs of communal philanthropy. This year, the course was led jointly by Dara Kaufman, the Federation's executive director, and Jenny Gitlitz, a member of Congregation Knesset Israel who has worked with multiple non-profit environmental organizations throughout her career.

Early classes introduced the students to ethical concepts in Judaism, including the various forms of *tzedakah-giving*. All participated in challenging role-playing activities that required making difficult choices when faced with limited resources.

Together the students learned about the importance of non-profit organizations at providing needed services in our local community, in Israel, and internationally. The Federation provided \$3,000 for the kids to disburse to various non-profit organizations. In deciding how to allocate these funds, the students learned how to develop a mission statement, which expressed that their philanthropic priorities were combating poverty and hunger, saving human

life, and protecting the environment.

Then, through a series of five sessions, the students researched different organizations to determine where Federation dollars would have the most impact. Some students felt strongly about funding organizations here in the Berkshires, while others felt that international organizations would have more reach. A heated topic of debate centered on whether the class should fund organizations whose work is targeted to Jews and/or Israel, or to organizations who serve broader populations regardless of religion or national heritage.

"Hearing the kids argue their points, and also listen to each other, was one of the highlights of the class," says Gitlitz.

Funded by the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, the Berkshire B'nai Tzedek program is modeled after the Western Massachusetts B'nai Tzedek Teen Philanthropy Program administered by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.

After sending out requests for proposals and evaluating the responses, the students voted to make the following awards:

- \$1000 was given to the Berkshire Kids' Place & Violence Prevention Cen-

ter, a Pittsfield group that provides counseling and social services to children who have been abused.

[www.kidsplaceonline.org](http://www.kidsplaceonline.org)

- \$700 was awarded to American Friends of Meir Panim, an organization that provides food, education, and social services to the impoverished and at-risk in Israel.

[www.meirpanim.org](http://www.meirpanim.org)

- \$600 was slated for Charley's Fund, a foundation with local roots that raises money to fund medical research leading to a cure for Duchenne's Muscular Dystrophy.

[www.charleysfund.org](http://www.charleysfund.org)

- \$400 was allocated to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the world's leading Jewish humanitarian assistance organization.

[www.jdc.org](http://www.jdc.org)

- Finally, \$300 was sent to the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, a food pantry that means the difference between having meals and going without for many local people.

[www.foodbankwma.org](http://www.foodbankwma.org)

Please see the Letters section on page 4 for responses to the B'nai Tzedek Foundation's charitable giving.



B'nai Tzedek participants making the important choices

### "The Jewish War Veterans: A Berkshire Legacy," with Robert Waldheim on April 28



Robert Waldheim

On Thursday, April 28, at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires welcomes Robert Waldheim, commander of the Jewish War Veterans of the USA, Louis Green Post #140 of Pittsfield. He will speak about his military service and initiatives the group will be taking in the year ahead. This free program at Congregation Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation's Connecting With Community series.

Bob Waldheim was raised in Hinsdale and attended school in Pittsfield. Two weeks after graduation, he enlisted in the Marine Corps with six other friends from Hinsdale and Dalton. They all signed up for the two-year active and four-year reserve duty in order to complete a six-year obligation, and departed for boot camp at Parris Island, SC. In May, 1967, he was sent to Vietnam and served with the second platoon of Kilo Company, the Third Battalion, Ninth Marines in Dong Ha on the DMZ. They were involved in operations from Gia Lin to Con Tien, Camp Carroll, the Rockpile, and Cam Lo, which was south of Khe Sahn. In January, 1968, Bob was transferred to the Third CAG (Combined Action Group) where he went into the villages north of Phu Bia and participated in the liberation of Que during the Tet Offensive of 1968. He returned home in June, 1968 and was

honorably discharged from active duty.

Bob stayed in Pittsfield and worked for different companies such as General Electric and Schaefer Eaton. He used the GI Bill to learn carpentry and construction. In 1973, Bob met his wife Ruth, and while working in Boston, he went through his conversion to Conservative Judaism at Beth Israel in Brookline, MA. They were married in August, 1977 and have two daughters, Nicole and Alyssa, both of whom live and work in Washington, DC. He retired in 2011 from Canyon Ranch, and Ruth retired from teaching at Wahconah Regional High School a year later. They currently live in Dalton.

He is a life member of the Vietnam Veterans of America, and he is also in the color guard of the local James Callahan Chapter 65 Vietnam Veterans. He is a member of the Jewish War Veterans, the American Legion, the VFW, and the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation.

#### IF YOU GO

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

**Venue:** Congregation Knesset Israel

**Date & Time:** Thursday, April 28, at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 22).

### "Aging: A Lifelong Process" – A Discussion and Support Group with Therapist Maggie Bittman, April 11

On Monday, April 11, at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires presents "Aging: A Lifelong Process," with therapist Maggie Bittman. This free program at Congregation Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation's Connecting With Community series.

Explaining her outlook and approach, Bittman writes: "From birth, we begin to age

with time. Along the way, we develop strategies to help manage the stressors that come with living life – those 'existence pains' or 'existential stressors.' Along the way we find meaning and purpose, experience aloneness, confront mortality, and develop self will.

"Within this context, participants will discuss, share, and offer support to one another."



Maggie Bittman

#### IF YOU GO

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

**Venue:** Congregation Knesset Israel

**Date & Time:** Monday, April 11, at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 22).



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Jewish Federation  
OF THE BERKSHIRES

# Your Federation Presents

## Watchers of the Sky – A Film about the Fight Against Genocide for Yom Ha'Shoah

On Thursday, May 5, at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires will commemorate Yom Ha'Shoah by screening *Watchers of the Sky*, a 2014 documentary that sets out to uncover the forgotten life of Raphael Lemkin, the man who coined the word "genocide" and who believed the law could protect the world from mass atrocities.

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

Inspired by Samantha Power's Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *A Problem From Hell*, *Watchers of the Sky* is a provocative journey from Nuremberg to The Hague, from Bosnia to Darfur, from criminality to justice, and from apathy to action. The film depicts the journey of lawyer Raphael Lemkin and his efforts in lobbying the United Nations to establish the Genocide Convention. The movie also focuses on four people inspired by Lemkin: Samantha Power, United States Ambassador to the United Nations; Benjamin B. Ferencz, Chief Prosecutor

in the Einsatzgruppen trial at Nuremberg; Luis Moreno Ocampo, first Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court; and Emmanuel Uwurukundo,



head of operations for refugee camps in Chad set up by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the War in Darfur.

This 120-minute film will be screened in two segments, the first beginning at 10:45 a.m. and the second starting after lunch at approximately 1 p.m.

### IF YOU GO

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

**Venue:** Congregation Knesset Israel

**Date & Time:** Thursday, May 5, at 10:45 a.m. (first half of film), followed by lunch (see page 22) and second half of film.

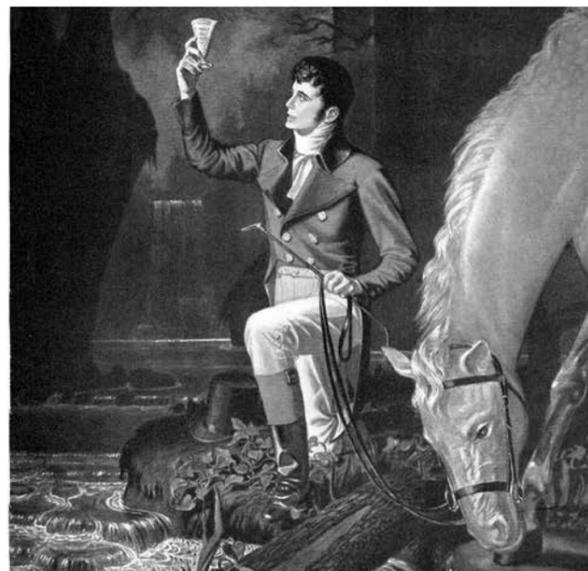
## Local History – "Crane Paper Mills: The Inner Workings from the 19th Century to Today," April 25

On Monday, April 25, at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires hosts Peter Hopkins, director of the Crane Museum of Papermaking in Dalton, who will talk about Crane Paper Mills and its historic impact on this region. This free program at Congregation Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation's Connecting With Community series.

For those living in the Berkshires, the Crane family and its seven-generation paper business are well-known. Founded by Zenas Crane alongside the Housatonic River, the company and the family that owns and manages it have been integral to the history, health, and well-being of the Berkshires for more than two centuries. But even those closely associated with this Berkshire icon know little about:

- Where Zenas Crane came from and how he came to Dalton.
- The inner workings of the Crane mills, which make all the paper for United States currency.
- What really makes U.S. currency so secure.

Peter Hopkins is director of the Crane Museum of Papermaking in Dalton, and has been associated with the company for almost 30 years. He is keeper of the Crane family archives, and is more than happy to share what



A 1950s drawing by artist Nat White depicting Zenas Crane testing the waters of the Housatonic in 1801.

you may not know about this company, whose products are cherished around the world.

### IF YOU GO

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

**Venue:** Congregation Knesset Israel

**Date & Time:** Monday, April 25, at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 22).

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



For Passover recipes visit [stopandshop.com/recipes](http://stopandshop.com/recipes)

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# Your Federation Presents

## One Story – One Life

### Your Federation Dollars at Work

This past March, the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires allocated over \$150,000 to help strengthen Jewish life and care for Jews in need in Israel and Overseas. The largest portion of those dollars went to support the critical services of the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), The Jewish Agency For Israel, and World ORT. Each month we will highlight the story of one individual you have never met, but whose life has been changed forever due to your generosity.

### Strengthening Families in Israel

When 8-year-old Itzik first met Shimrit, his mentor, he was so shy he could barely look her in the eye. But after three years of working closely with her, Itzik's confidence grew tremendously. He's now active in school, and much more willing to reach out to family and new friends.

Shimrit was paired with Itzik through Youth Futures, a flagship program of The Jewish Agency for Israel, a Federation partner agency, and its Family Futures initiative. Youth Futures' staff provides community-based mentoring for at-risk pre-teens and adolescents across Israel. During the 2012-13 school year, 400 mentors worked with 12,000 students and their families in 35 communities.

#### Teens in Trouble

The need for Youth Futures is high in Sderot, where Itzik lives. The desert city is a target of frequent rocket attacks from neighboring Gaza, and many residents suffer from PTSD. Sderot also has large immigrant populations, particularly from North Africa and Russia. Many adults work long hours in factories for low pay, meaning less time at home.

That's where Youth Futures comes in. Each mentor

meets with 15 individual families each week to discuss ongoing familial, economic, and social issues. They also help with personal finance, parenting, and relationship skills. "Our mentors are there in addition to their parents," says Noa Barkley Asher, local director of the program.

Itzik's family came to Sderot from the former Soviet Union, and they have had a difficult time adapting to life in Israel. So while Shimrit helps Itzik with his schoolwork, another mentor works with Ludmila, his mother, on strategies for communicating wants, needs, and boundaries with her husband and children.



Thanks to Youth Futures, a program run by the Federation-supported Jewish Agency for Israel, 11-year-old Itzik feels more comfortable at home and school in Sderot.

#### A Transformation

Itzik may still be shy and soft-spoken but, Shimrit attests, he has transformed. Itzik describes Shimrit as being "like a sister." Last year, he says, "I had trouble making friends. Shimrit helped me, and this year I'm having an easier time."

With Federation support, the Jewish Agency is extending Youth Futures into new initiatives in schools and building even more supportive networks for Israeli children and their families. "It takes time but I can see it," says Asher. "If we give these kids the right attention, they blossom."

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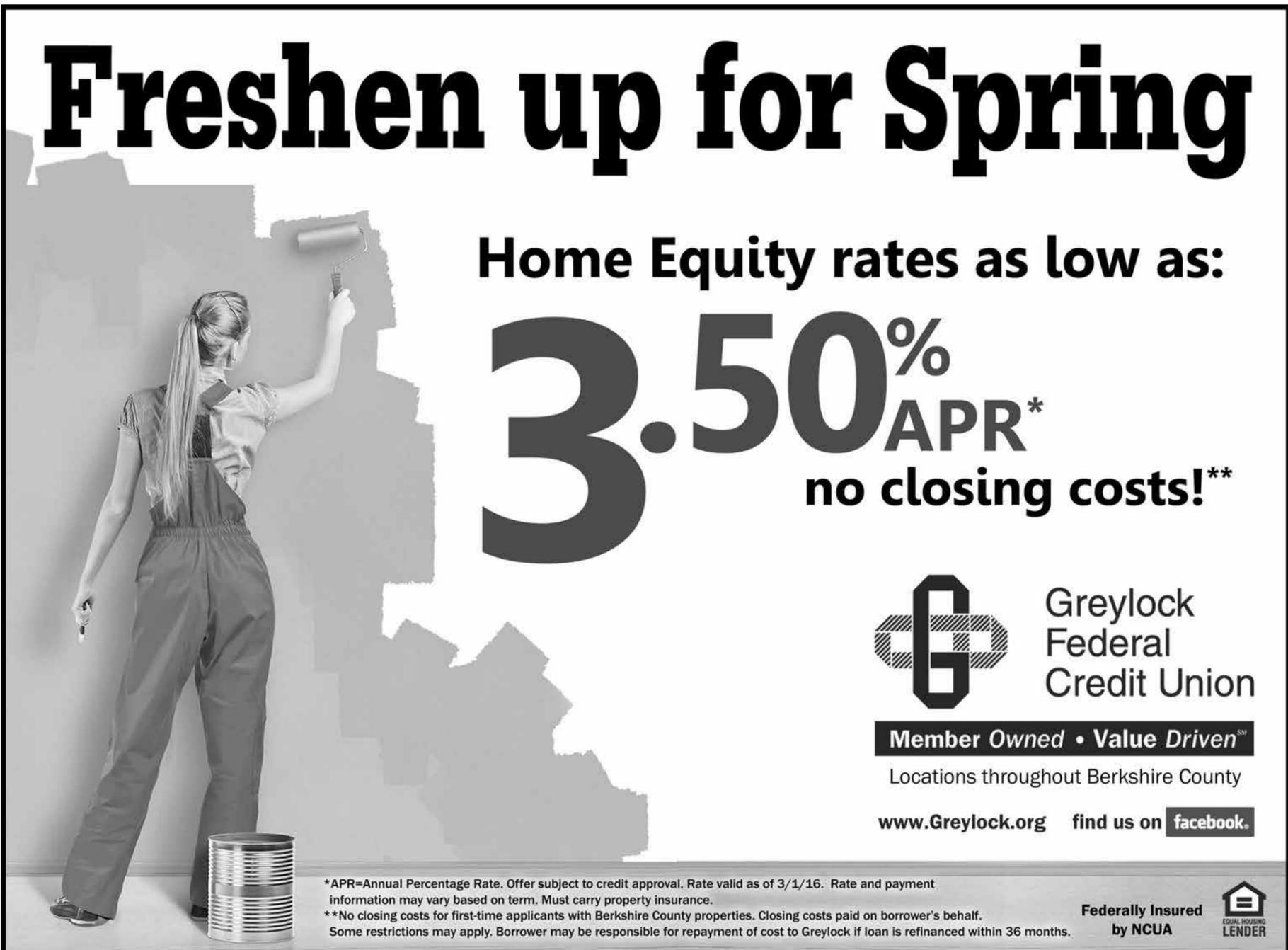
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## Your Federation Presents

### Workshop – “Building BRIDGE: A Vision of an Inclusive Community”

On Thursday, May 12, at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires will host the workshop “Building BRIDGE: A Vision of an Inclusive Community,” an introduction to Multicultural BRIDGE, a Pittsfield-based group that convenes groups for training related to issues of diversity and cultural competence. This free program at Congregation Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation’s Connecting With Community series.

The workshop will explore BRIDGE’s founding in response to urgent needs in the Berkshires community, and its vision for an inclusive community. Presenters will offer a brief overview of BRIDGE’s programs, and explain its approach to fighting racism and promoting multicultural

awareness and acceptance.

Presenting will be Gwendolyn VanSant, CEO and founding director of Multicultural BRIDGE since 2007. Currently, VanSant serves as an appointed state official, as the chair of the Berkshire County Commission on the Status of Women.

VanSant also works with MCLA and Simon’s Rock to promote multiculturalism and equality in education. Also presenting will be Rev. Natalie Shiras, recently retired from Church on the Hill (United Church of Christ) in Lenox and currently development coordinator for Multicultural BRIDGE.



Rev. Natalie Shiras and Gwendolyn VanSant of Multicultural BRIDGE

#### IF YOU GO

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

**Venue:** Congregation Kneset Israel

**Date & Time:** Thursday, May 12, at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 22).

### Documentary About Polish Heroines to Mark Yom Ha’Shoah

PITTSFIELD – The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires marks Holocaust Memorial Day (*Yom Ha’Shoah*) from 2 to 4 p.m. on Sunday, May 1, with a screening of *IRENA SENDLER: In the Name of Their Mothers*, a hour-long documentary about a group of young Polish women who outfoxed the Nazis during World War II to save the lives of thousands of Jewish children.

Co-sponsored by the Polish Falcon Club of Pittsfield, this free event at the Berkshire Museum’s Little Cinema is open to all and will include a facilitated discussion and memorial candle lighting. The

Warsaw’s Jews were imprisoned inside a ghetto without food and medicine, she and her friends smuggled in aid and began smuggling orphaned children out – hiding them in convents, orphanages and private homes. Soon they were appealing to Jewish mothers to part with their children in order to save them. Before the Nazis burned the entire district to the ground, they had managed to rescue more than 2,500 children.

Over the next two years, they cared for the children, disguised their identities and moved them constantly to keep them from being discovered



Irena Sendler

po, imprisoned and tortured. When she refused to divulge anything about her coworkers or her organization, she was sentenced to death. She escaped on the day she was to be executed, thanks to her friends in the Resistance who had managed to bribe a German guard. With a new false identity, she continued with her work until the end of the war.

All of the children rescued by Sendler’s network survived the war, and some were re-united with their families. This 2011 PBS documentary features Sendler and her co-workers, along with several of the children they rescued. Their stories – evoked through rare archival footage, family photographs and poetic recreations shot in Warsaw – are a testament to the power of moral courage, even in the darkest of times.

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

and killed. They joined forces with the Polish Resistance to get money to fund and protect foster caretakers and they preserved the true identities of the children, hoping to reunite them with their Jewish families after the war.

In October of 1943, Sendler was captured by the Gestapo



Little Cinema is at 39 South Street in Pittsfield.

*In the Name of Their Mothers* centers on the experiences of Irena Sendler, who at age 98 told her story for the last time to filmmaker Mary Skinner. Sendler was a 29-year-old social worker when the Nazis invaded Poland in 1939. When

### Federation Welcomes Francine Licata as Its New Social Worker

Amy Lindner-Lesser, president of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, recently announced that Francine Licata, MSW, LICSW, of Stockbridge has been hired to fill the part-time position of Social Worker. Licata’s services are contracted by the Federation on behalf of the Berkshire Jewish community through Jewish Family Service of Western Massachusetts in Springfield.

“We are thrilled to have Francine on board,” says Lindner-Lesser. “She brought the perfect combination of experience and caring. She understood the unique role our Federation plays in supporting our aging population and we know she will be a tremendous resource to our community.”

“It’s a complete feeling,” says ‘Frannie,’ describing her first impressions of her role. She says her new position is allowing her to combine her skills as a clinician with service to the Jewish community to which she belongs, providing her with opportunities for “both *tikkun olam* and *tikkun ha’nefesh*. I am so excited to be connecting with my Jewish community in this way.”



Francine Licata

life transitions, and death and dying.”

Licata observes that the elder community of the Berkshires has a distinct personality. “There are a lot of transplants,” she says, “and this population is always growing in size.” Many second homeowners relocate to this region permanently after retirement, often leaving behind a support system of family, friends, and community in their hometowns that they might have relied on in old age.

“What has impressed me, however, is how organized this Jewish community is in supporting its elders,” says

*“I am fortunate to be able to pursue my career in an organization steeped in Jewish values and ethics, whose mission reflects what those values are all about.”*

Licata, a Queens, NY native, has been a social worker since 1997, obtaining her degree from the Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College in New York City. “I was never interested in private practice,” she says. “My focus was always to be a community social worker with underserved populations, and Hunter is famous for that kind of training.” Employed in New York by the Jewish Board of Family Services, she worked with some of the most difficult types of cases during her early career: patients with dual diagnoses of mental illness and addiction, incarcerated criminals, victims of violence and trauma, emergency room patients, and recovering heroin addicts on methadone maintenance.

Extended visits to friends with homes in this region provided Licata with needed respites from her taxing work and, at a certain point, she says the Berkshires “just called me.” She made her move in 2006, taking the position of director of social work at Fairview Commons in Great Barrington. “It was my first experience in long term care and working with a geriatric population,” says Licata. “I fell in love with working with elders.” She learned more deeply about “the other issues that come along with aging – grief and loss, bereavement,

Licata, “both the synagogues and, of course, the Federation. Thanks to this Federation, elders are able to rapidly establish themselves within an established and welcoming community. There are so many activities, services, and opportunities that the organization provides.”

Working in Jewish mode is extremely appealing to Licata, who finds that shared communal experiences facilitate her engagement with her new clients. “I can connect with my clients in the way they lived their lives,” she explains. “We can talk about Judaism, familiar foods, speak a *bissel* Yiddish. It’s a whole different level of communication within a Jewish community.”

Licata adds: “I am fortunate to be able to pursue my career in an organization steeped in Jewish values and ethics, whose mission reflects what those values are all about. Working with Federation, I can combine my clinical skills and my Judaism, and be of service to the community I am a part of.” Licata attends the Berkshire Minyan in Great Barrington, and is active with the South County *hevreh kadisha* overseen by RIMON.

Licata wants to build on the 11 years of service devoted by her predecessor, Barbara Shickmanter, and wants community members and their families to know her door is open. “We will work with the outstanding resources already in place,” she says, “and find ways to create new ones.”

**THE JEWISH FEDERATION FUNDS AND SUPPORTS A COMMUNITY-WIDE NETWORK OF ORGANIZATIONS THAT:**

- Care for people in need here at home, in Israel and around the world.
- Nurture and sustain Jewish life and learning today and into the future.

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|--|---|---|---|

## Your Federation Presents

### “Jerusalem: One City, Two Cultures, Three Faiths, Many Narratives”

Cantor Robert Scherr of Williams College to explore the mystery and wonder of Israel's capitol at the May 6 Knosh & Knowledge

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Friday, May 6, Knosh & Knowledge will host Cantor Robert Scherr, the Jewish chaplain for Williams College, whose topic will be “Jerusalem: One City, Two Cultures, Three Faiths, Many Narratives.” This Jewish Federation of the Berkshires program will take place at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire at 10:45 a.m., and will be followed by lunch.

Jerusalem, the “City of Peace,” has been a place of turmoil and conflict for at least 3,000 years. Cantor Scherr asks: “Is it foremost a place of holiness, or is it a political center? Is its primarily significant as an ancient archaeological site, or should it be considered a contemporary ‘scene’ where restaurants, a light rail, and jogging paths, and are filled with religious pilgrims and entrepreneurs and scholars and merchants?”

He adds: “Holiness abides for Jews, Christians, and Muslims, not just contiguously, but in sites literally layered one atop the other. Whose Jerusalem is this? In this short journey, we'll encounter history, spiritual quests, loss and renewal, and profound confusion. Let us share a brief journey through time and space to explore the mystery and wonder of Jerusalem!”

Since 2004, Cantor Bob Scherr has been the Jewish



Cantor Bob Scherr

chaplain for Williams College. His winter study course on Jerusalem has enabled several dozen students from a variety of faiths to learn in a most personal way about the unique and uncanny meanings of Jerusalem.

#### IF YOU GO

**Sponsor:** Jewish Federation of the Berkshires

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

**Date:** Friday, May 6, at 10:45 a.m. (lunch follows at noon)

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

**Email** [jfb.officemanager@verizon.net](mailto:jfb.officemanager@verizon.net), or call (413) 442-4360, ext. 10

**Cost:** \$11 with fresh buffet lunch. Program only, \$5.

### “New Beginnings at Jacob’s Pillow” at the April 8 Knosh & Knowledge

Longtime Director of Preservation Norton Owen to speak about the dance festival's past and future

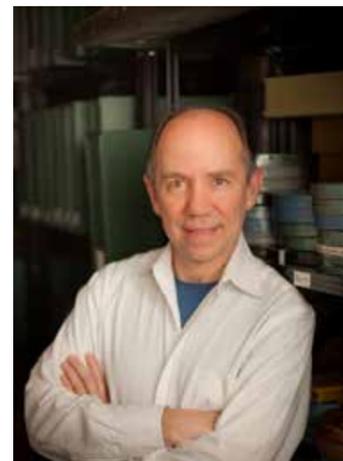
GREAT BARRINGTON – On Friday, April 8, Knosh & Knowledge will host Norton Owen, who has been associated with the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival for four decades and will speak about the festival's history and its future direction in a talk titled “New Beginnings at Jacob's Pillow.” This Jewish Federation of the Berkshires program will take place at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire at 10:45 a.m., and will be followed by lunch.

As a Berkshire landmark for more than 80 years, Jacob's Pillow can boast of a historical dance legacy second to none. Longtime Director of Preservation Norton Owen asserts that it also prides itself on a tradition for new beginnings, from its pioneering days as the summer home for Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers to its current status at the forefront of presenting major dance artists from throughout the world. As the Pillow launches its 84th season with a new director at the helm, Owen will trace the Festival's history of innovation

and offer a taste of what might be expected in the future, drawing upon some of the rich imagery found in the Jacob's Pillow Archives.

Norton Owen has been associated with Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival since 1976 and has been Director of Preservation since 1990, overseeing the PillowTalks series and projects involving documentation, exhibitions, audience engagement, and archival issues. He is the curator of Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive, an acclaimed online video resource that reaches audiences worldwide. In 2000, Dance/USA selected him for its Ernie Award, honoring “unsung heroes who have led exemplary lives in dance.” He has also received awards from the Dance Films Association and the José Limón Dance Foundation, and he is a past chair of the Dance Heritage Coalition.

In 2015, the new Norton Owen Reading Room in Blake's Barn was dedicated, honoring Owen for his career at Jacob's Pillow.



Norton Owen

#### IF YOU GO

**Sponsor:** Jewish Federation of the Berkshires

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

**Date:** Friday, April 8, at 10:45 a.m. (lunch follows at noon)

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

**Email** [jfb.officemanager@verizon.net](mailto:jfb.officemanager@verizon.net), or call (413) 442-4360, ext. 10

**Cost:** \$11 with fresh buffet lunch. Program only, \$5.

## Academic Scholarship Application Deadline Announced

The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires is currently accepting college scholarship applications for the 2016-2017 academic year. Students planning to attend college in fall 2016 are encouraged to apply. Deadline to apply is April 15.

Awarded annually to a graduating senior who has demonstrated leadership in the Berkshire Jewish community, this scholarship is made possible through the generous support

of the Henry Simkin and Frances Simkin Schiller and Dr. Stanley and Fay Simkin Scholarship Fund. Late applications will not be accepted. Applicants will be notified as to the committee's decision in May. The award will be publicly announced at the Federation's annual meeting on June 16, 2016.

Applications are available in the guidance office of high schools throughout the Berkshires, and can also be downloaded from the Federation's website at [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org).

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**LOCAL NEWS**

**Matt Tannenbaum presents “Telling Tales: 40 years of Book Selling in the Berkshires”**

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Sunday, April 17, at 4 p.m. Congregation Ahavath Sholom will host Matt Tannenbaum, who is celebrating his 40th year as the owner and bookseller of The Bookstore in Lenox.

Tannenbaum says he will be sharing some of his many experiences “in which a young man who loved the worlds he entered when opening a new book became a purveyor of many books to many readers and the many worlds they entered, reading the books offered to them.

“It’s a Cautionary Tale, in the best sense of the word,” adds Tannenbaum, who

“shudders to think” what else he could have done over the last 40 years that would have brought him so much comfort and joy.

The talk will include stories like “A Picture of Your Door,” “The Gentile Jungle,” and “The Big Brown Chair in The Gypsy Review.”

A wine and cheese reception will follow the program. CAS is located at 15 North St in Great Barrington. Suggested admission is \$10.

**Also at CAS:**

*Bidding for Good: Online Auction Fundraiser*

The congregation’s spring

fundraiser is a continuation of last fall’s online “Bidding for Good Auction.” Many items will be offered at reduced prices, including ceramic and glass pieces, fabric works, original artist’s prints, and a number of local gift certificates for restaurants and services.

Bidding will take place online at [www.biddingforgood.com/CAS](http://www.biddingforgood.com/CAS) between Monday, May 9 and Sunday, May 15.

CAS is looking to add additional items. To donate to the CAS fundraiser, please contact [www.ahavathsholom.com](http://www.ahavathsholom.com) or call (413) 528 4197. Contributions are tax deductible and greatly appreciated.

**Foundational Books of Judaism at CBI**

NORTH ADAMS – Beginning on April 5, Michael Kaplan will lead a four-session course on the foundational books of Judaism. The course will cover the Talmud, the Midrash, the major commentators – both medieval and modern – and how they impacted the Judaism practiced in the 21st century. “The objective is to illustrate where Judaism came from and how it evolved,” says Kaplan.

There will be four 90-minute sessions on consecutive Tuesday evenings (April 5, 12,

19, and 26) and there is no charge. Participants will be working with texts, but do not need to know Hebrew or Aramaic (the language of the Jews in the early years).

CBI will be preparing texts to illustrate the development over the centuries, so asks that those interested in participating in any or all the sessions, or have questions, to contact Pattie Lipman at [plipman@fairpoint.net](mailto:plipman@fairpoint.net). CBI is located at 53 Lois St. in North Adams.

**Lecture: “Israel: The Devil-We-Know versus the Devil-We-Don’t-Know,” with Ehud Yaari**

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Sunday, May 1, at 7:30 p.m., Hevreh of Southern Berkshire welcomes Ehud Yaari, a journalist, Middle East commentator, Lafer International Fellow at The Washington Institute, and author of *Toward Israeli-Palestinian Disengagement* (1989), *Peace by Piece: A Decade of Egyptian Policy* (1998), and *Sinai: The New Front?* (2012).

This lecture is being

generously supported by the Lafer family in memory of Fred Lafer.

Ehud Yaari is a Middle East commentator for Israel’s Channel Two Television and former associate editor of Jerusalem Report. Mr. Yaari has been a commentator for Israeli television since 1975. Among his numerous awards for journalism are the Israeli Press Editors-in-Chief Prize for coverage of the peace process

with Egypt, the Sokolov Prize for coverage of the Lebanon War, and the Israel Broadcasting Award for coverage of the Gulf War. Yaari’s articles have appeared in respected newspapers and journals such as the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Foreign Affairs, and The Atlantic Monthly.

He is also the author of eight books on the Arab-Israeli conflict, including *Fatah* (1971), *Egypt’s Policy Towards Israel in the Fifties* (1974), *A Guide to Egypt* (1982), *The Year of the Dove* (co-authored with Ze’ev Schiff and Eitan Haber, 1979), *Israel’s Lebanon War*, (co-authored with Ze’ev Schiff 1984), and *Intifada*, (co-authored with Ze’ev Schiff, 1990).

The suggested donation for this lecture is \$10 for Hevreh congregants, and \$15 for community members.

**Lunch n’ Learn at Hevreh: Meet “The Rabbis”**

GREAT BARRINGTON – Hillel and Shammai, Yochanan ben Zakkai, Rabban Gamliel, Akiva, Yehuda haNassi – these are just a few of the luminaries Jews refer to when talking about “The Rabbis.” an ancient group of teachers whose lessons are recorded in Talmud, Midrash, and other period literature. Their legacy is a genre of sacred literature called “Rabbinic Literature,” which serves as the basis for how Jewish traditions are observed. Rabbinic Literature also shapes and gives voice to our unique Jewish outlook on the world.

Join Rabbi Neil P.G. Hirsch of Hevreh of South Berkshire’s rabbinic team for this new five part Lunch n’ Learn series. Each session will explore a different rabbi’s biography, pieced together out of tales told of one of our Master Rabbinic Sages.

“Many of these rabbis were colorful figures,” says Rabbi Hirsch, “and the tales told about them teach us much about who they were. It also



*The first page of the Talmud (Tractate Brachot)*

teaches us something about how we might — in our own way— live lives of righteousness and piety.”

All are welcome. Classes will be held at Hevreh 11:45 a.m. on consecutive Wednesdays, April 13, 20, & 27, and May 4 & 11.

**Make an Early Tee Time for Hevreh’s Golf Open at Cranwell, June 13**



LENOX – Hevreh of Southern Berkshire is sponsoring a golf open event on Monday, June 13, at Cranwell Resort Spa and Golf Club in Lenox. This event is open to the public.

Continental breakfast will be served and registration will begin at 7:30 a.m., with a shotgun start commencing at 8:15 a.m. with a best ball scramble format.

Lunch, winner awards ceremony, and raffle drawings following tournament play will be held at the Meadow View

facility, next to the Cranwell driving range. Other activities include contests for closest to the pin, longest drive, straightest drive, putting, and hole-in-one. The event should wrap up at around 2 p.m.

Sponsorships are available at several levels. Golf tournament brochures are available and can be mailed out by request. Please call the Hevreh offic at (413) 528-6378.

Online registration is at [www.HevrehGolfOpen.com](http://www.HevrehGolfOpen.com).

**Discussion Community – Jewish-themed Films**

GREAT BARRINGTON – Join the Discussion Community at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire for monthly screenings of Jewish-themed films, following by lively exchanges following the movie. This winter/spring film series takes place on the first Monday evening of each month starting with a film from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. (bring your dinner) and a facilitated discussion of the film between 7:30 p.m. and 8 p.m.

**Upcoming films are:**

April 4 – *Liberty Heights* The town is Baltimore and the

year is 1954, a season of dramatic social flux explored through the eyes of a Jewish family. Directed by Barry Levinson, starring Joe Mantegna, Adrian Brody, and Bebe Neuwirth.

May 2 – *Noodle* At thirty-seven, Miri is a twice-widowed El Al flight attendant. Her well-regulated existence is suddenly turned upside down by an abandoned Chinese boy whose migrant-worker mother has been summarily deported from Israel. The film is a

touching comic-drama in which two human beings – as different from each other as Tel Aviv is from Beijing – accompany each other on a remarkable journey. Facilitator: Hinda Bodinger.

All Discussion Community programs are free and open to the public. For more information, Contact Hinda Bodinger at (413) 528-3280 or [hindacbodinger@gmail.com](mailto:hindacbodinger@gmail.com).

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## JEWISH FARMING IN THE BERKSHIRES

### Sandisfield's Historic Synagogue

By Flora Parisky

The history of the building (c.1839) that the Sandisfield Arts Center now occupies speaks to the transformation of a small Berkshire community in the 19th and 20th centuries. What is now a thriving non-denominational community arts center began as the Baptist meetinghouse in the village of Montville before becoming the B'nai Abraham Orthodox synagogue in 1921.

The congregation of the synagogue, known as the "Hebrew Colony," was drawn from Jews who immigrated to the United States in the early 20th century. They moved to Sandisfield, many from New York City, as part of the Jewish Agricultural and Aid Society founded by Baron Maurice de Hirsch (1831-1896). His agriculture-focused projects were only a small part of de Hirsch's veritable empire of philanthropic efforts, but were at the center of the lives of Sandisfield's earliest Jewish residents.

After the Civil War, Sandisfield suffered as many of the young men returning from the conflict chose to follow the new railroads and seek their

fortunes further west, where land was more plentiful and easier to farm. By the turn of the 20th century, the town was considerably depopulated and many farms abandoned and overgrown.

Local resident Lorraine German's research of census data and news articles about the town's Jewish settlers uncovered that while no Jewish families were listed in the 1900 census, 11 Jewish families appear by 1910. They lived on just a handful of roads and were grouped by country of origin: on West Street, all five families were Russian; Town Hill Road was home to three Austrian families and one Russian family; New Hartford Road had one Hungarian family; and Center Road (old name) had one Romanian family. From the data, Lorraine notes one thing that these families shared in common – all spoke Yiddish.

[Town historian Ron Ber-



PHOTO: RICHARD B. MIGOT

nard's exhaustive *Sandisfield Then and Now: 1762-2012* relates an interesting anecdote about how Jewish immigrants revitalized the town: "When the West Street School closed in the summer of 1904 there were three pupils and when the school opened for the winter term there were 24 children; only three spoke English. The parents of the immigrant children were from Russia and spoke Yiddish" – which Bernard says was recorded as "German" in the civic records.]

The early Jewish families endured severe hardships, along with all farmers at this time. The Jews who came to Sandisfield were offered loans to buy farmland, but they had to find land with some kind of dwelling they could rebuild. Most of the heads of families were in their 30s and 40s, and soon found much of the land was not suitable for crop farming. Of the families, eight were involved in general farming, two in dairy farming, and one was a tailor who also had a farm.

The 1920 census listed 23 Jewish families, but only three of them were families remaining from 1910: those headed by Ellis Penziner, Samuel Kaplan, and Isadore Rosner. Solomon Pollack, who is usually credited with founding the Hebrew

Colony in Sandisfield, moved to Hartford in the 1920s, where he worked as a chauffeur. The majority of the families were still involved in farming, but there were also a couple of butchers, a hotelkeeper, an auto painter, a house painter, and a retail merchant. Edith Filansky, a native of Fitchburg, MA whose parents were Russian Jews, was a teacher in Sandisfield and boarded with Samuel Kaplan's family.

A copy of a document dated 1922, discovered in the summer of 2015 when Ida Lindner's home was being cleaned out in summer of 2015 by her son and daughter-in-law, was signed by members of Congregation Ahavet Hazedek of the Sandisfield villages of East and West New Boston. The document delineated the boundaries of the congregation and gave instructions for the disposition of the *Sefer Torah* if all the Jews should leave East and West New Boston. It is signed by Nathan Pinsky, Yisrael Albert, Solomon Pollack, Abraham Kleiner, Ephraim Orinstein, and David Pinsky.

A series of rabbis served the congregation over the



Congregational plaque still in Sandisfield

years with their yearly commitment contingent upon the Jewish population's size and financial resources. There were a few major leaders in the community who took responsibility for finding the rabbis and funding the budget according to the number of services conducted for the High Holidays and other worship services. It is worth noting that summer room rates also included lodging during the High Holidays.

Since dirt farming was difficult, many of the Jewish agriculturalists began to concentrate on poultry and egg farming, while a second "crop" involved the offer of rooms for summer boarders. The summer rental cost was \$30-40 with the stipulation that renters agree to buy all of their food and other needs or supplies from the landlord. Boarders, many of whom were from the Lower East Side of Manhattan, would be picked up from the train station then

**SANDISFIELD'S  
JEWISH HISTORY,**  
*continued on next page*

### Reunion of Rensselaer County Farmers Slated for Fall 2016

*Vertical lines of pinpoint lights  
Stand proudly erect  
Inside the simple sanctuary walls,  
Illuminate memorial plaques  
That retell a hundred year story;  
Honored lives glow together,  
The farmers of Rensselaer County, New York -  
Survivors of the harsher light,  
Could-have-been old world fires  
Set to immolate their homes, business shops, flesh;*

*Survivors!*

Written by Dr. Larry Fader, these lines of verse are part of the narrative poem "Country Shtibel" celebrating the Jewish farmers of New York's Rensselaer County. These farmers – like their counterparts in the nearby Berkshires – were brought from Eastern Europe to this region through the efforts of the Baron Maurice de Hirsch Fund in the early 20th century. They established the county's Hebrew Farmers Association in 1918, and founded three synagogues (in Nassau, East Nassau, and East Schodack).

On October 28-30, the Nassau Synagogue and Jewish Community Center will host a reunion of local Jewish farmers and their offspring. Says Feder: "The reunion will feature plenty of opportunities to renew friendships, share stories and photos from times of yore, collect oral histories, and, of course, eat together."

For further information, or to suggest names of individuals who were part of this community of Jews, please contact either Fred Rheingold (leopoldrheingold@aol.com) or Dr. Fader (larryfader@comcast.net).



Haying on a Hoags Corners Jewish Farm, ca. 1940 (Larry Fader's father George is standing on the cart)

### Backyard Bounty of the Berkshires to Launch Food Initiative

A new organization, Backyard Bounty of the Berkshires, will begin to help feed those in need throughout Western Massachusetts late this summer and early fall by gathering and distributing fresh fruit picked from trees of private property owners in Southern Berkshire County.

Recognizing the waste created by large amounts of fresh fruit that is left unpicked from trees of local homeowners, founders Jay Weintraub and Mark Lefenfeld (past president of Hevreh of Southern Berkshire) created Backyard Bounty in late 2015 to address the sometimes hidden but significant hunger problem throughout the Berkshires. The group will marshal volunteers to gather otherwise wasted fresh fruit and deliver it to those in need throughout Western Mas-

sachusetts.

Backyard Bounty will organize and oversee all fruit harvesting and then transport the gathered fruit to the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts for distribution. Backyard Bounty will also deliver fruit directly to a limited number of other organizations that provide food to those in need in Southern Berkshire County. A do-it-yourself option will be available to homeowners who want to pick and donate their own homegrown fruit.

In this first 2016 harvest season, Backyard Bounty will focus on fresh apples, pears, and peaches exclusively.

Andrew Morehouse, executive director of The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, describes Backyard Bounty of the Berkshires as "an important initiative." Barbara

Zheutlin, executive director of Berkshire Grown sees Berkshire Bounty as "a wonderful way for people to share what they are growing with the community." Dara Kaufman, executive director of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, characterizes Backyard Bounty as "pure *tikkun olam*."

Backyard Bounty of the Berkshires is now seeking interested South County homeowners with backyard fruit trees (minimum of 3 trees), as well as volunteers (16 or older) to help harvest the fruit this season. Anyone interested in participating as a fruit tree grower or fruit picker should visit the website [www.backyardbountyberkshires.org](http://www.backyardbountyberkshires.org) or e-mail [backbo2016@gmail.com](mailto:backbo2016@gmail.com).

## JEWISH FARMING IN THE BERKSHIRES

# When Pigs Fly Farm Carries On a Legacy of Jewish Farming in the Southern Berkshires

SANDISFIELD – When Pigs Fly Farm – what kind of *treifa* name is that for a farm run by a nice Jewish family like the Snyders? When pigs fly, what? Then they'll be kosher?

Not at all, says Andy Snyder. Actually, the name reflects Andy and wife Sandra's uncertainty about their future when they began farming in Sandisfield in 1994, having left the bright lights of Pittsfield for a rustic 16 acre plot of land that had not been worked in 40 years. "The thinking was that when pigs fly," remembers Andy, "maybe then this place would make it."

The Snyders have persevered, operating a small poultry farm and farm stand along Route 57 in the same town where a community of Jewish chicken farmers thrived in the early to mid-20th century. (See related article on facing page.) All those farming families are gone, but the Snyders carry on their legacy by raising chickens, ducks, peacocks, and turkeys (which are "terrible mothers, hard to raise, and hard to butcher," says Sandy, "the good thing being that when you have a problem with one, or any of the other animals for that matter, you just eat them"). Until recently, the Snyders also had a pig on the farm, a 650 lbs. sow that recently died of natural causes – the only swine on the premises now is the enormous carved wooden *chazer* with wings that serves as a roadside waypost for the farm.

Neither of the Snyders comes from directly an agricultural background. Andy's family ties to the Berkshires predate even those early Jewish farmers brought to the region by Baron Maurice de Hirsch at the turn of the 20th century. His great-grandfather Lev, from a family of timber farmers, arrived in the Berkshires in the late 1800s, having fled Russian pogroms.

After a stop in New York, Lev acquired a farm in Cheshire, but then moved into Pittsfield, where the Snyder family became one of the founders of Congregation Knesset Israel. Andy grew up in Pittsfield, where his family operated Pittsfield Supply, a wholesale hardware supply business located near Carr Hardware's store on North Street. He studied biology while away in college and worked on some farm projects involving methane energy, but eventually returned to Pittsfield.

In Pittsfield, he met Sandy, also a native. She describes the circumstances she grew up in as difficult, with her family relying on their summer garden to supplement the food they could afford to put on the table. She remembers working in that garden as some of her happiest experiences, however. "It was how I got to spend time with my father," she says. Her siblings "argued and pissed

*"The thinking was that when pigs fly," says Andy Snyder, "maybe then this place would make it."*

and moaned, and my father threw them right out." They didn't mind, but for Sandy, the time alone with her father was "precious. We didn't talk. But still, it was my favorite activity."

By the early 1990s, says Andy, the couple was living "in a house on one of those postage stamp lots in Pittsfield, where you could see inside your neighbors' kitchen and they could see into yours." They decided to try something new. They took beginning farming classes that were offered locally, and started traveling the back roads of Berkshire County in the depths of a brutal winter looking for a suitable property, not knowing

what they would find, or even exactly what they were looking for. In 1993, they came upon the site that they are farming now in Sandisfield – not that it seemed particularly promising.

The land had been part of a 250 acre farm in the early 1800s that, in the 1920s, was sold in 16 acre lots to chicken farmers. Andy explains the allure of chicken farming in those days was that it was relatively economical to get started, and a single family could independently manage a small operation. He says that local lore holds that the chicken farmers supplemented their income by tossing dead fowl in front of passing automobiles and then chased after the blameless motorists to angrily demand recompense for their lost birds.

Given the challenges facing them in those early years, it would have been hard to blame the Snyders had they tried a shtick like that to make ends meet. When they found the farm, snow drifts had passed above the first storey of the neglected farmhouse. The house had to be made habitable before they could move in, the outbuildings

needed refurbishment, and the fields had to be cleared of the trees that had overgrown them after four decades of disuse. When the land was finally workable and farm able to accommodate livestock, the Snyders were still using farming manuals to figure out what exactly they needed to do, learning on the job. Both Snyders smile, though, as they remember what it felt like to sell the first squash they grew. Daughters Anna and Rosie, now teenagers, were born in the years following and have grown up on the farm.

As the Snyders admit, it's still not an easy life, over-seeing the well-being of their birds and cultivating blueber-



ries, raspberries, currants, herbs, and flowers. In addition to the family operating a farm stand during the summer months, Sandy sells prepared food made from fresh ingredients, all cooked on the wood burning stove that also warms the farmhouse. They are satisfied not to cut corners – they farm organically (no artificial *chazerai*) and without irrigation, relying on the rain to water their crops. Andy says that while the farm supports itself, the family obtains its health care from outside work he takes on, jobs that have him up before the roosters. Both Andy and Sandra are also certified EMTs who work with the town's rescue unit.

Jewish identity is extremely important to their family. Andy grew up attending Knesset Israel, and remembers carrying the Torahs when the congregation relocated from its old digs on Linden Street to the building it currently occupies. Sandy is a Jew-by-choice, who says she grew up without religion, but felt "natural in Jewish context." She feels that her path to conversion, however, was dragged out and uneasy. "For a long time, I felt like I was on the outside looking in," she says. Her daughters were converted to Judaism as children and, believing in the importance

of their Jewish education, for years she chauffeured them to twice-a-week Hebrew school and bat mitzvah training at KI, a nearly hour-long drive from the farm. "I'm kind of a loner type," she said. "I used to wait in the parking lot for them to finish."

When Rabbi David Weiner took the reins at KI, he worked with Sandy and expeditiously completed her conversion. Sandy radiates joy when she remembers the extraordinary feeling she experienced upon emerging from mikvah in Onota Lake.

The entire family is active at KI, making the long trip down on Shabbat. "I believe in shul," says Andy. "I believe in prayers." He is a frequent Torah reader (the most accurate of the regulars, opine some in the KI Peanut Gallery), while the girls participate in and lead services. Their Jewish identity also informs their work on the farm – both Andy and Sandy have learned to slaughter birds in a halachically correct manner (though their poultry is not kosher), and say the same bracha a *shochet* says when dispatching an animal.

Says Sandy: "I'm in the best office building God could have provided. And so I say blessings for that."

## SANDISFIELD'S JEWISH HISTORY, *continued from page 12*

in Great Barrington.

As summertime residents grew, newcomers were attracted by the scenic beauty and rural character. Over time, this created family connections lasting 30 to 50 years.

[According to Bernard: "The population was 412 in 1930... the foreign born were 107 in number and with their children totaled 238, or 58 percent of the population. Of that number, 85 spoke Yiddish.]"

After completing high school, young people in Sandisfield tended to move away for higher education and career opportunities. For example, Anne Hoffman, who was born in Sandisfield, became a teacher in New York City and continued occupying her family's home during summers and weekends. When she retired, she spent several years researching and writing *Sandisfield the Biography of a Town*, which included a collection of oral histories.

The congregation survived until the mid-1970s, when it closed the synagogue. Some of the community leaders, one of whom had maintained title for the building, were concerned about its gradual disrepair and deterioration and sought to involve others in finding a new use for the building. A committee was formed in 1984 to explore reuse options and B'nai Abraham eventually donated the building to the town.

The committee formed a group, the Sandisfield Arts and Restoration Committee in 1986, which began to dream of a community center and by 1995, formulated plans and laid the groundwork to renovate the building. A major fundraising plan was put in place and got things rolling, thus saving the historic building. Several of the descendants of the original Jewish settlers participated in this effort.

The Ark remains in the building, as do several plaques

that record milestones in the communal life of Sandisfield's Hebrew Colony.

*Flora Parisky serves on the Marketing and Community Outreach Committee of the Sandisfield Arts Center. Professionally, she worked in public policy, advising governmental and non-profit clients on strategic planning, organizational management, and fund development prior to retiring. Since 1988, Flora and her husband Sandy have lived in the Daniel Brown house (c.1760), their second home in the village of New Boston, which drew them for the same reasons that Jewish families have returned to Sandisfield for generations: its unspoiled rural character and the sense of history and community that the Sandisfield Arts Center supports.*

## Sandisfield Arts Center Season

The Sandisfield Arts Center organizes events over an 8-month season: forums, book talks, musical performances, plays and art exhibits. The first play written and produced in 2012 for the town's 250th anniversary was a review of the town's history and significant events called "Rascals and Other Tales." The play, based on Ron Bernard's research of the town, included vignettes relaying significant scenes, one of which featured a group of Jewish women talking about the trials and tribulations of taking in summer boarders. Seated on the porch of a country store, this dialogue was drawn from Ida German's 1933/34 dairy and short stories, written while she and her children lived in Sandisfield full time and her husband lived and worked in New York City.

About 30 events will be offered at the Sandisfield Arts Center during the 2016 season (website: [www.sandisfieldartscenter.org](http://www.sandisfieldartscenter.org)). Coming this spring:

**Sandisfield's Historic Homes** – On Saturday, May 21 at 10 a.m., Ron Bernard and Bonnie Parsons discuss properties in the official survey of the town's architecturally and historically significant assets, primarily 100 surviving antique buildings to be submitted to the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Upon submitting the survey to the Commission in early 2016, at least 75 properties may be eligible for official approval for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

## JEWISH FARMING IN THE BERKSHIRES

### No Manure Left Behind

Freund's Farm innovates with CowPots and a new, state-of-the-art dairy complex



Amanda Freund and friends



Freund's Farm new barn under construction

EAST CANAAN, CT – “I never just got off the school bus and turned on the TV,” says 31-year-old Amanda Freund, recalling what it was like growing up on her family’s eponymous dairy farm. “Living on a farm forces a work ethic on you. I had chores.”

Nor are there likely to be too many days off in the future for Amanda, as the management of the 600-acre Freund’s Farm transitions to another generation of Freunds. This spring, the farm has thoroughly modernized its 300-cow dairy operation with an automated barn, while at the same time ramping up production of biodegradable seed starters created via a process pioneered on the premises by Amanda’s father Matthew that repurposes the (abundant) manure left by the fami-

ly’s cows. Not only that, but Freund’s also operates a farm store and catering business that uses fresh ingredients grown onsite and sourced locally.

The Freunds have been farming in the region since the 1950s, when Amanda’s grandfather Eugene arrived to work on a campsite owned by his extended family (Lone Oak,

operated a dairy farm, “but didn’t like it.” (The Browns eventually became involved in real estate.) “My grandparents were always forward thinking,” says Amanda, who attributes her grandfather’s “unique insights” to his non-farming background. The Freunds continue to implement progressive farming techniques, and in 2015 received a Sustainability

While small pockets of Jewish farming communities have existed throughout the greater Berkshire region, the Freunds were largely alone in Canaan, just over the state line from Sheffield. “Faith in our family was practiced internally,” says Amanda. “It was a private matter,” but always important to her grandparents. Her father and uncle were bar mitzvahed at Temple Ahavath Sholom in Great Barrington (which was then an Orthodox congregation that had been founded by cattle merchants in the 1920s), and the family later attended services at Beth El Synagogue in Torrington and, in recent years, at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire.

“On High Holidays, coming in after having finished our chores,” says Amanda, “it’s nice to reflect on the blessing it is to have what we have here, to be able to take care of our animals.”

As a teenager, however, Amanda admits she was “eager to get off the farm.” She attended American University in Washington, DC, and then Cornell, studying Applied Economics and International Agriculture. She worked as an aide to U.S. Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro in 2007 and 2008 and for the Connecticut Farm Bureau as the dairy policy grassroots coordinator in 2009, and then spent two years in Zambia with the Peace Corps in 2010-2012. Upon returning, she felt the pull of the family farm, and now lives in a house nearby. She commutes to work via a zip line the family has constructed for her.

There she works with her mother, Theresa, who has operated the farm store since the 1980s; older brother Isaac, who keeps the farm machinery running and oversees crops like corn and raspberries; and sister Rachel, the farm’s “herdswoman” who manages the health and wellbeing of the cows, as well as taking care of their breeding. “Rachel has a great conception rate,” says Amanda. “I don’t have the touch.” The farm is part of the collective that supplies Cabot Creamery with milk.

Amanda works closely with her father on CowPots, organic seed starter containers made of renewable composted cow manure that turns a waste

product into a value-added asset. The manure fiber, with its large component of nitrogen, breaks down quickly and allows for unrestricted root growth. The CowPots story has something of a mad scientist feel about it, however. “It started on our kitchen stove about ten years ago,” recalls Amanda, after her father got the idea and started experimenting. He moved his lab out to the farm shop, working on the weekend after his chores were complete to develop a machine that would convert the manure into pots.

“There were explosions,” says Amanda.

By 2009, the process had been refined sufficiently so that the Freunds could erect an onsite facility to produce the pots. They work with other farms in the Canaan Valley Agricultural Cooperative to reuse the manure produced locally.

The Freunds are currently in the midst of radically changing their dairy operation. In March, they moved their 300 cows into a new state-of-the-art, energy-efficient barn in which the animals can move about freely, and independently use robotic milking machines (first of their kind in Connecticut) when they feel the need to be milked. The cows all wear rumination collars – “like Fitbits for cows,” explains Amanda – that monitor their health, milk production, and dietary intake, and can even signal when they are ready to breed. All data are fed into a computerized tracking system.

“It’s a huge investment,” says Amanda, “but our family is constantly pushing to take on that kind of change.” Despite the sophisticated technology being introduced, the farming challenge the Freunds are now facing with their animals is unavoidably old school – cows, Amanda explains, are creatures of habit, and getting them into the new routines will take no small effort.

Nevertheless, Amanda asserts that the Freunds are up to it, and are in it for the long haul.

“This kind of business relies on family to take it on,” she says. “We will rely on family, not someone else. It’s predefined in some way. It’s what is meant to be.”

### The CowPots story has something of a mad scientist feel about it,

which is still in operation). A Bronx, NY, native, Eugene was a Korean War era veteran who studied animal science at Cornell. “He met the farmer’s daughter,” says Amanda referring to her grandmother Esther Brown, whose family

Award in Resource Stewardship from the U.S. Innovation Center for Dairy.

Eugene and Esther raised five children on the farm, two of whom – Amanda’s father Matt and uncle Benjamin – took over the reins.

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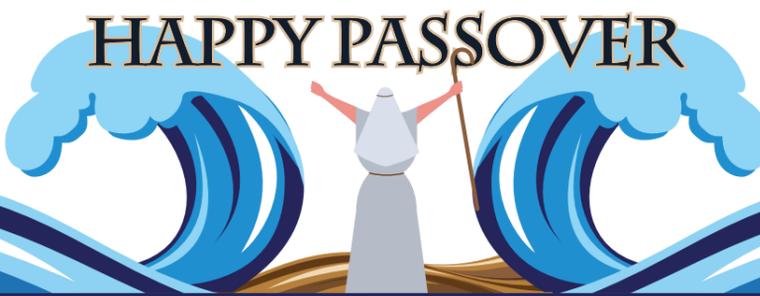
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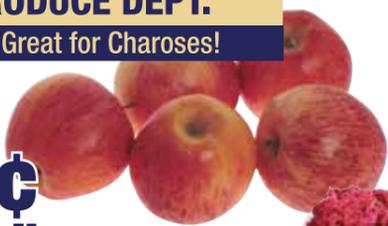
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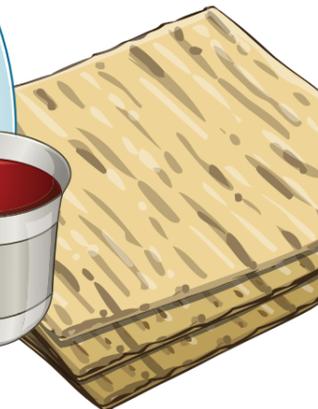
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14.5 oz, Assorted Varieties

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**PASSOVER BEGINS SUNSET APRIL 22, 2016**

**PESACH SAMEAH!**

# Your Federation Presents

## SUPER SUNDAY, *continued from page 1*

As the parent of 4 children who attended Hevreh's religious school, I have always held deep appreciation of the role that Federation plays in making the cost of religious education more affordable. For many years, the Federation partnered with our family and Hevreh in educating our children. Last year, I participated in Super Sunday. It was meaningful to connect with other members of our community to encourage members of the broader Jewish community to support the Federation. — Shelley Rolf, Great Barrington

that we are aware of one another's stories, challenges, and happy times, and can be there for one another. Super Sunday is another way to be there for one another – first by showing up to do the mitzvah of making a call, and then by asking those we reach to perform the vital mitzvah of supporting all the good work our Federation accomplishes."

Ellen adds that when she reaches out to congregations across the Berkshires, she'll also be sharing the importance of interacting with Jews in other communities at gatherings such as the Federation's

At the last Super Sunday, I had my first experience as a volunteer caller. I took a deep breath – in fact, several deep breaths, because asking for donations is not something that comes naturally to me – and started making calls. Someone answered the phone. I introduced myself and made my request. Whoa! The recipient said "yes!" She was my first donor. I experienced relief, elation, and thankfulness, and continued my outreach. No one ever said no, and only regretted not being able to afford more. I felt gratitude, amazement, and pride. In short, volunteer for others and you receive for yourself, as well. — Bonita Ganot, Egremont

General Assembly. "Every time I go, I make so many connections," she says, "and get a chance to see how many people are working through Federation – diligently, creatively, with joy and love – to make a difference in this world. I want others to know how much they will get out of this type of experience!"

### What's Ahead in 2016

As the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires kicks off its 2016 campaign, we can reflect on how much we can do, even as a small community, when

we come together and give of ourselves.

In 2016, we'll hear from fascinating speakers on world



affairs, health, and politics. We'll fund Jewish education and camp experiences and provide hot meals and social services to area seniors. Through our connection to the network of support services provided by the Federation system, we'll help Jews most in need throughout the world.

Most of all, we'll continue to build connections to each other and to our Jewish institutions and work hard to make sure that every gift counts.

Federation brings together Jews from different generations, backgrounds, and levels of observance to celebrate our shared history and peoplehood. Together with our network of agencies, we are

My mom had been bringing me to volunteer at Super Sunday ever since I was 10 years old. For years, I collected donor cards from the callers, and when I was 13, I even made my first donation. But it wasn't until last year, when I was home on break from college, that I tried my hand at making calls. The very first gentleman I reached told me he had never made a contribution before, but after hearing my pitch, he started asking questions. I shared how much this community had invested in me and that I was making calls today because it was now my turn to help others. When he said to put him down for \$500, I almost jumped out of my seat. It felt so good to know that I could give back and it felt even better to know that more kids will get to have amazing Jewish experiences like I did. — Yonaton Kaufman, Pittsfield, MA and UMASS Amherst



tion's programs or the annual campaign, make this the year. Jews everywhere need you now more than ever. Let the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires be your connection to a whole world of community, social activism, and doing good.

creating a community that is welcoming to all, that brings hope and dignity to those in need, and responds to each individual's search for Jewish meaning.

When our community needs us, we are there and hope you will be, too!

If you haven't gotten involved with one of the Federa-



When Our Community Needs Us, We Are There!

## Super Sunday MAY 22, 2016

Join the entire Berkshire Jewish Community as we come together to raise money for the Jewish Federation's 2016 Annual Campaign. Together, we can build, strengthen and care for our Jewish community across the Berkshires, in Israel and around the world!

### MAKE THE CALL

Two convenient phone-a-thon locations. Food, fun, and training provided!

#### Jewish Federation of the Berkshires\*

196 South Street, Pittsfield  
9 am-12:30 pm

#### Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center at their Administrative Office

244 Main St., Suite #3, Great Barrington  
9 am-12:30 pm

#### \*Kids & Families @ Ben & Jerry's

10:30-11:30 am

Doing a mitzvah makes you a superhero! Crafts, PJ library story time, a live superhero and ice cream treats for the kids. Bring your tzedakah box!

RSVP TO VOLUNTEER: (413) 442-4360, ext 14  
or online at jewishberkshires.org.



### ANSWER THE CALL

If your phone rings on Super Sunday, answer it. Your gift to the Federation's 2016 Annual Campaign -- whatever it is you can give -- will help feed the hungry, comfort the elderly and care for Jews in need here at home, in Israel and around the world. It will also help to nurture and sustain Jewish life in the Berkshires, today and for future generations.



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THE **STRENGTH** OF A PEOPLE.  
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## Our Community's 2016 Campaign Goal is \$790,000

See How Your Gift to the 2016 Annual Campaign Will Help Jews Across the Berkshires, in Israel, and Around the World



### *Jewish Life for Young Families*

You can help young families in the Berkshires embrace Jewish values and traditions while building a supportive community with Jewish peers through programs like PJ Library and Federation Family Days.



### *Food Security, Health Care, and Winter Relief*

Winters are long and cold in the Ukraine, but you can help the most vulnerable prepare with warm clothes, blankets, and heaters. You can also bring food cards, home health aides, and medicine to those who need it most.

### *Dignity and Compassion*

You can 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 kosher hot meal program and Kosher Meals on Wheels.



### *Jewish Education*

You can nurture a Jewish future for hundreds of local children by providing a high-quality, meaningful Jewish education through critical grants to all six of our local religious schools.



### *A Sense of Community*

You can help 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 can help young people across the Berkshires and in the former Soviet Union build strong Jewish identities and become future leaders through scholarships for Jewish overnight camp and Israel experiences.

### *Emotional Support*

You can help individuals across the Berkshires who are facing unexpected crises, challenges, and life transitions receive the support they need through the Federation's social worker. You'll also provide community members with a safety net of emergency assistance when needed.



### *Resources to Fight Anti-Semitism*

You can help combat anti-Semitism and fight the growing Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement through community and youth programming, as well as national advocacy and resources.



### *A Place to Call Home*

You can help tens of thousands of new immigrants, who are fleeing anti-Semitism in Europe and fighting in the Ukraine, build new lives for themselves and their families in Israel.



### *Caring in Times of Crisis*

We join with Jewish communities across North America to rapidly mobilize local resources to help in times of crisis. From the recent attacks in Israel to relief efforts in Nepal, you help deliver an SOS response wherever and whenever it is needed.

### *A Close and Caring Relationship with Israel*

You can help provide programs for at-risk students, shelter for abused women, support services for disabled youth, and job training for new Israeli citizens. You'll also help connect our community to Israel and help Israel connect with the Global Jewish community.



### *Advocacy and Community Relations*

You can help provide a proactive voice in our public schools, media, and government, addressing anti-Semitism, religion, Israel, the Middle East, justice legislation, and other issues important to our community.



**When Our Community Needs Us, We Are There.**

**Please Answer The Call & Pledge Your Support To The 2016 Annual Campaign!**

# Your Federation Presents

## SISTER CITIES,

*continued from page 1*

nects 450 Jewish and Israeli communities in 46 city-to-city and region-to-region partnerships, engaging more than 350,000 participants each year in meaningful ongoing connections between Israelis and Jews around the world through unique programs and one-on-one encounters.

Joining SNEC enables our Federation to participate immediately in cross-cultural exchanges that, starting this spring, will bring accomplished artisans and professionals from Afula-Gilboa to our region for workshops and cultural events. (See sidebars to this story for details on upcoming events.)

The partnership will also allow this Federation to join with its regional counterparts in directing a portion of Israel and overseas allocations to fund worthy social services projects in the Afula-Gilboa region. Professional financial oversight is provided by the staff of the Jewish Agency's partnership program, which

oversees the use of the consortium's financial support by designated social services programs and coordinates the living bridge programs.

### About Afula-Gilboa

Founded in 1925, Afula is a city of approximately 43,000 that is known as the "Capital of the Valley" due to its strategic location in the Jezreel Valley, south of Tiberius and east of Nazareth. Roughly 30 percent of its residents are immigrants, with large populations of Ethiopians and émigrés from the former Soviet Union. An anchor and urban center for the greater Gilboa region, Afula provides health care, social services, entertainment, and shopping for an 23,000 additional residents of the surrounding kibbutzim, moshavim, and Arab villages. Israeli Arabs represent 40 percent of the regional population.

### What SNEC Accomplishes in Israel

SNEC supports the following social service programs in the Afula-Gilboa region:

### Women to Women – Valley Rape Crisis Center

This program focuses on underserved communities in the region, raising awareness of local inhabitants about the subject of sexual violence. Counselors encourage youth and adult survivors of abuse to contact the Haifa Rape Crisis Center (HRCC) for support and consultation. The HRCC facilitates outreach programs with the Jezreel Valley's education, health, social services, and criminal justice systems, ensuring that residents from all ethnic and religious background receive support and prevention services.

### Beit Singer Children's Village at Kfar Yehezkel

This home for children and youth who have suffered abandonment and abuse provides a warm and loving environment. Children are organized in small groups that receive intensive attention from a range of professionals, including educators, social workers,



psychologists, and movement, art, and animal therapists.

### Gilboa Bayit Cham – Afterschool Program for Students At Risk

Bayit Cham ("warm house") creates a protected afterschool environment for children identified as struggling and who may be from families that are disadvantaged or in crisis. This program enables these at-risk children to remain in a safe educational environment from morning until 4:30 p.m., five days a week during the school year. Elementary school students receive a hot meal, homework assistance, and enrichment activities. Bayit Cham practices a holistic approach that integrates home, parents, school, and staff.

### Dream Doctors – Medical Clowns

The Dream Doctors project integrates professional medical clowning into the medical services provided at 20 Israeli hospitals, including the Emek Medical Center in Afula. The program is designed to assist in reducing the stress, anxiety, and fear that patients young and old experience, and thus facilitate healing. Medical clowns are trained in psychology, social work, nursing and theater. They approach each patient individually and work alongside medical staff to help people heal, not just entertain. As part of the SNEC exchange, a delegation of Dream

Doctors will also be available to visit the region at some time in the future.

### Additional Benefits

All SNEC communities can request use of the Partnership Guest House, located at Kibbutz Yizrael, free of charge for up to two nights. These guest rooms are available for individuals and community groups visiting Israel from the Berkshires who would like to explore the region and learn more about the programs their community supports.

This partnership enjoys the full support of the mayor of Afula and elected officials in the Gilboa region, who ensure that the programs SNEC supports have a meaningful impact on the community. Berkshire residents visiting Israel can reach out to P2G staff in Israel to arrange site visits and explore additional opportunities.

*For more on the Berkshires' sister city relationship with Afula-Gilboa, please see Dara Kaufman's "In My View" column on page 2.*

## Olive Tree – A Story of Coexistence in the Afula-Gilboa Region



*Jewish and Arab Israelis together in the Olive Tree project*

On June 5 through 7, four Jewish and Arab artists from the Olive Tree project will share their experiences of how 40 women from Afula and surrounding Arab villages came together for a year-long art program. Creating representations of olive trees, the women worked together to make art in both Jewish and Arab enclaves, sharing their experiences and cultures with one another. Plans are in the works for a special public exhibit and programs with the artists focused on shared society and coexistence in Israel.

See the next BJV for more details!

## Federation Invites All to Celebrate Yom Ha'azmaut with Visiting Israeli Chefs from Afula-Gilboa

**LENOX** – The community is invited to celebrate Yom Ha'azmaut, Israel's Independence Day, with cooking demos, Israeli music, and tastes of delicious Israeli specialties prepared by visiting Israeli chefs Tamar Saleme Digmi and Israel Noah Odles, with assistance from Chef Michele Gazit, owner of the Gateways Inn.

This special celebration, which kicks off the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires' new partnership with the Afula-Gilboa region of Israel, will take place on Tuesday, May 10 at 7:30 p.m. at the Gateways Inn, 51 Walker Street in Lenox. This event is free and open to the public

### Meet the Chefs

An educator by day and a fabulous royal icing cookie-maker by night, Afula

native **Tamar Digmi** is a mother of two boys. She offers her talents in leading this workshop for decorating cookies with royal icing techniques. This very trendy technique combines creativity, art, baking, and lots of fun. Tamar was a SNEC Young Emissary in Connecticut during the years 2000-2001.

**Israel Noah Odles** grew up in Afula and now lives in Kibbutz Tel Yosef in the Gilboa Regional Council. A father of four, Israel spent over a decade as one of the head chefs of the Isrotel hotel chain's top restaurants in Eilat, where he acquired professional training in the Italian kitchen, meat, fish, and seafood cuisine. Recently he returned to the Gilboa region and is now the head chef of the renowned Herb Farm Restaurant in the Gilboa Mountains.

Says **Michele Gazit**: "I learned the joys of cooking from my



*אולת הבאונים באפולו*  
*מסעדה כפרית באזור האולה*

*Herb Farm Restaurant*

paternal grandmother, the joys of baking from my maternal grandmother, and the joys of entertaining from my mother." As co-owner of the Gateways Inn, Michele puts it all together nightly at one of the Berkshires' most popular destinations for food and lodging. A New Jersey native, she met her husband Eiran in Israel, and ended up making aliyah and staying for 20 years, time enough to make her an Israeli cuisine maven.

The Visiting Israeli Chefs will also be getting to know community members through home hospitality and working with children in the religious schools during their time in the Berkshires.

For more information please contact the Federation at (413) 442-4360, ext 12.



*Tamar Digmi*



*Israel Noah Odle*

**Donate  
Volunteer  
Make a  
Difference**

LOCAL NEWS

### Groundswell Rising – A Timely Documentary on Fracking

PITTSFIELD – On Sunday, April 10, at 2:00 p.m., the Social Action Committee of Temple Anshe Amunim will show a film about the environmental impact of fracking. *Groundswell Rising*, distributed through the group 350.org, will be shown in the Temple Social Hall. This event is free and open to the general public. Following the screening, light refreshments will be served, and representatives of 350.org will lead a Q&A session and discussion.

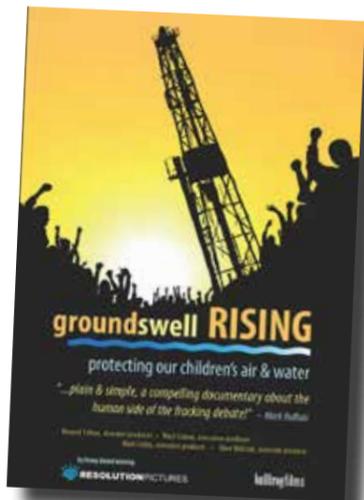
*Groundswell Rising*, a film produced and directed by Matt and Renard Cohen, documents the health and environmental impacts of the practice of hydraulic fracturing. Parents, scientists, doctors, farmers and individuals weigh in on this growing energy extraction process and the grassroots movement that has developed to expose its dangers.

Larry Pellish, the chairperson of the Temple's Social Action Committee, says that "the showing of the film is prompted by our concern about global warming and protecting the environment."

Before the film, Rabbi Josh Breindel will give a presentation on the Jewish imperative to care for the environment. He explains: "Our tradition is very clear that we have a strong duty to protect the environment. In the story of Creation, the Torah teaches that we are made from the earth. Our ances-

tors knew what we're only starting to understand: tending to our world is closely linked to caring for ourselves. Being mindful of our interactions with nature is as much a matter of Jewish ethics and spirituality as it is of science or economics."

For more information, contact the



Temple Anshe Amunim office at (413) 442-5910, or email templeoffice@ansheamunim.org or visit www.ansheamunim.org. Temple Anshe Amunim is at 26 Broad Street in Pittsfield.

### Brandeis Professor to Speak on Jewish Life and Anti-Semitism on College Campuses

SALISBURY, CT – Professor Leonard Saxe, director of the Steinhart Social Research Institute and Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University, will speak on "Jewish Life and Anti-Semitism on College Campuses," on Sunday, April 10, at 11:00 a.m. in the Community Meeting Room at Noble Horizons in Salisbury, CT. This event is sponsored by the Jewish Community Group of the Northwest Corner.

Using data from a series of recent surveys, the presentation will describe the Jewish landscape on campuses and

how anti-Israel/BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanction) efforts are affecting Jewish student life. Professor Saxe will assess the situation and suggest how the Jewish community can best respond.

Noble Horizons is on Cobble Road, just north of the entrance to the town of Salisbury on either Route 44 or 41. The talk is free and open to the public. Call (860) 824-4658 for further information.

### TAA Presents Café Anshe – TAA-Nite!

PITTSFIELD – On May 21 from 6:45 to 10 p.m., Temple Anshe Amunim will host Café Anshe, a musical fundraiser featuring temple members Michael and Erin Duffy of DUFFY and ERIN Acoustic Duo. The event will begin with a Havdalah service, and then on to a night of live music! There will also be performances by Rabbi Josh Breindel, Mark Franklin, Alan Gold, and other renowned temple and community musical friends and guests.

A variety of specialty coffees, teas, and desserts will be served. Raffle tickets will be sold for a 50/50 Raffle and

Berkshire Themed Baskets.

Seating is limited! Advance tickets may be purchased at the Temple Anshe Amunim office, 26 Broad Street, and at Wood Brothers in the Allendale Shopping Center (check or cash). All proceeds will benefit the temple music program. Temple member prices are: adults \$15, youth/students \$7.50. General admission prices are: adults \$20, youth/students \$10. Tickets at the door will be sold, based on available seating.

For more information, please call the TAA office at (413) 442-5910.

### Join us Sunday, April 10, 2016 in Doing a World of Good!



#### Smiles for Seniors

Sunday, April 10  
10 am - 11:30 am

EPOCH Assisted Living at Melbourne  
140 Melbourne Road, Pittsfield

- ♥ **FAMILIES:** Volunteer to share a PJ Library story together with a senior resident and decorate cards for the residents.
- ♥ **COMMUNITY MEMBERS:** Volunteer to join residents in a friendly visit over bagels and lox, enjoy live music and help assemble fresh flower vases to be delivered with cards to memory care residents.

Share your morning and make a difference!  
Free T-shirts at the door, while supplies last.



RSVP suggested. Contact the Federation at (413) 442-4360, ext. 10, or email jfb.officemanager@verizon.net



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

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



Anonymous (9)  
Ed Abrahams  
Norman Avnet  
Barbara Bashevkin  
Robert Bashevkin  
Linda J. L. Becker  
Robert Berend  
Shelley Berend  
Helene Berke

Lawrence Berke  
Lee & Sydelle Blatt  
Betty Braun  
Cipora Brown  
Barbara Cohen  
Mark Cohen  
Mimi Cohen  
C. Jeffrey & Judith Cook  
Gerry & Lynn Denmark  
Jonathan & Lara Denmark  
Sheila K. Donath  
Melva Eidelberg  
Monroe England, *in memory of Monroe B. & Isabel England*  
Dr. Armand V. Feigenbaum, *of blessed memory*  
Dr. Donald S. Feigenbaum, *of blessed memory*  
Steven Feiner  
Diana & Stanley Feld

Stuart M. Fischman  
Lynn & William Foggle  
Elaine Freidman  
Eiran Gazit  
Jeffrey Goldwasser & Jonquil Wolfson  
Jordan & Laura Green  
Harold Grinspoon  
Ellen Heffan  
Ed Jaffe, *of blessed memory*  
Elihu Katzman  
Marilyn Katzman  
Howard & Nancy Kaufman  
Lawrence Klein  
Sarah Klein  
Arthur Kriger, *of blessed memory*  
Fred & Brenda Landes  
Beth Laster-Nathan  
Andrew S. Levine

Toby H. Levine  
Erna Lindner-Gilbert  
Amy Lindner-Lesser  
Helen Maislen  
Ellen Masters  
Stuart Masters  
Estelle Miller  
Robert Newman, *of blessed memory*  
Ken & Fran Rubenstein  
Stella Schecter  
Arlene D. Schiff  
Gary Schiff  
Stephen & Deborah Schreier  
Martin Silver  
Sylvia Silverberg, *in memory of Jerome Silverberg*  
Richard A. Simons & Marcie Greenfield Simons  
Mark & Elisa Snowise

Harold Sparr  
Lisa Fletcher-Udel  
Edward Udel  
Michael & Joan Ury  
Mark & Judy Usow  
Henry & Beate Voremborg, *of blessed memory*  
Alexandra Warshaw  
Florence Wineberg, *of blessed memory*  
Rabbi Deborah Zecher & Rabbi Dennis Ross



Jewish Federation OF THE BERKSHIRES

## PASSOVER 5776

### Hevreh to Host Second Night Passover Seder and Pre-Holiday Family Event

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Saturday, April 23 at 5:30 p.m., Hevreh of Southern Berkshire will host a second night Passover Seder. All are welcome at this holiday celebration, though advance registration is required.

The Passover service will be led by Hevreh's rabbinic team, Rabbi Neil P.G. Hirsch and Rabbi Jodie Gordon. A delicious traditional Passover dinner will be catered by Carlucci Simons Catering. Tables will be set with Seder plates, matzo, ceremonial wine, and grape juice. The meal will include chicken, but vegetarian and fish options are available upon request and should be made when making reservations.

Deadline to RSVP is Thursday, April 14. Cost for adults and children 13 and up is \$40 per person. For children ages 5 to 12 the cost is \$18. Children under 5 are free.

Space is limited. Call the Hevreh office at (413) 552-6059 or visit [www.hevreh.org](http://www.hevreh.org).

#### Yachad Passover: SederLab 2.0

'Yachad' means together in Hebrew, and this Sunday, April 10 program focuses on bringing religious school

students and young families together to celebrate the Passover holiday. The program is open to the public for families with religious school age children from 10 a.m. to noon, and for families with children under 5 at noon.

School-aged children and religious school parents will come together for Visual T'Fillah, breakout learning sessions, Passover holiday traditions, and more. At noon, families with children 5 years and younger (both within the congregation and the wider community) are welcome to join for special Passover singing, holiday snacks, and fun

Rabbis Jodie Gordon and Neil Hirsch will dive deep into the Passover story, ask big and little questions, and help imagine ourselves as if we went forth from Egypt. Why is this Yachad Passover different from all other religious school days? Because all learn together as one community! There will be adult learning sessions, a community sing, and special snack.

### Chabad of the Berkshires to Host a First Night Seder, and Facilitate Sale of Chametz

PITTSFIELD – Chabad of the Berkshires will host a communal Passover Seder on Friday, April 22 at Chabad of the Berkshires, 450 South Street, in Pittsfield, starting at 8 p.m.

The Seder, its theme "The Unbroken Chain of Jewish Existence," will take participants through the liberation of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, as well as help participants understand the Seder's relevance to today's Jews. Included in the Seder

will be the traditional hand-baked *shmurah matzo*, the ritual four cups of wine, and a delicious full-course Passover dinner that includes home-made gefilte fish, an array of unique salads, chicken soup, a gourmet entrée, and delectable desserts.

"Passover is a time when families sit together and discuss our rich heritage" said Rabbi Levi Volovik Executive Director of Chabad of the Berkshires. "At Chabad, every Jew is part of our family."

Seating is limited and reservations are required before April 11. Cost is \$36 per person and \$18 per child under the age of ten.

There is no charge for children under the age of three. Rabbi Volovik says no one will be turned away for lack of funds.

For more information, to make a reservation, or to sponsor a family, call Sara Volovik (413) 499-9899.

#### The Chametz 'Sale'

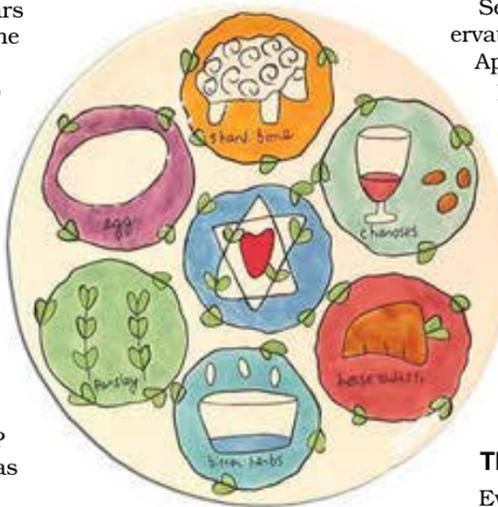
Every year for the duration of Passover, Jewish *halachah*

(law) prohibits the consumption, possession, or derivation of any benefit from leavened food items – 'chametz' in Hebrew.

Rabbi Volovik explains the practice: "Chametz remaining in a Jew's possession during Passover may not be used, eaten, bought, or sold even after the holiday. Therefore, any *chametz* remaining must be sold to a non-Jew, and may then be 'bought back' following Passover. A rabbi acts as the agent to both sell the *chametz* to the non-Jew on the morning before Passover begins, and to buy it back on the evening it ends."

Again this year, Rabbi Volovik is using a new way for local Jews to sell their *chametz* conveniently, having posted a free online 'Sale of Chametz' form on the Chabad of the Berkshires website, [www.jewishberkshires.com](http://www.jewishberkshires.com), that will empower him to act on their behalf in the sale.

Rabbi Volovik says those who are not technologically inclined and would like to have their *chametz* sold the old fashioned way can contact him at (413) 499-9899.



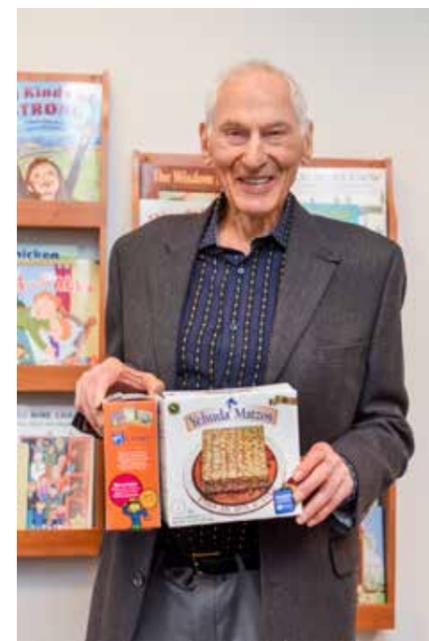
### PJ Library and Yehuda Matzos Partner for Passover

AGAWAM – This Passover, PJ Library® will engage families in a new way as they come together for Passover.

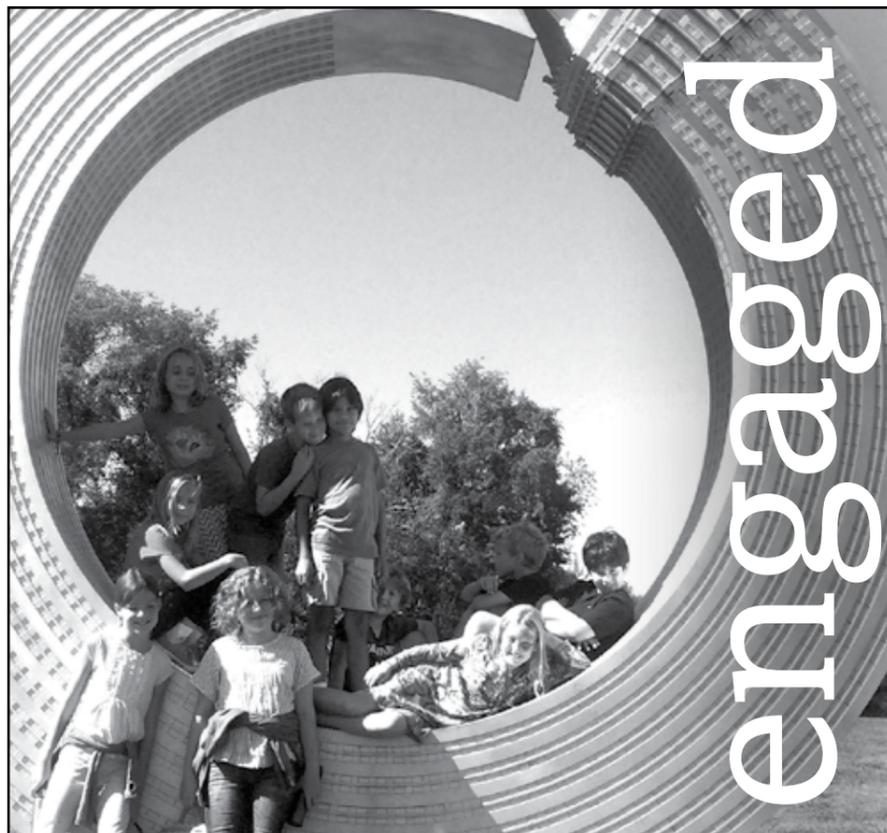
Through April 30, PJ Library will appear on boxes of Yehuda Matzos to entice enrollment in the Harold Grinspoon Foundation's (HGF) flagship program.

This is the first partnership of its kind in which Yehuda Matzo, a company in Israel, with their US distributor, Kayco/Kedem Food Products, is providing in-kind advertising to create awareness and further Jewish identity. In addition, this is the first time PJ Library is partnering with a company to co-brand a product on a national level.

In addition to co-branding on Yehuda Matzo boxes nationwide, the PJ Library national team is providing resources to professionals across the country to create programs for families around the matzo boxes and Passover themes. Says PJ Library founder Harold Grinspoon. "The PJ Library-Yehuda Matzos partnership offers an additional channel to connect with families across the country and partake in the most widely practiced Jewish tradition, a Seder meal."



Harold Grinspoon with Yehuda Matzo boxes



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### Affiliate with a Congregation.

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

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



The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires  
encourages you to affiliate.

**PASSOVER 5776**

**Stories and Songs at Federation’s Kosher Community Seder – April 22**

PITTSFIELD –The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires will host a kosher community Passover Seder at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, April 22 at Congregation Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road.

Participants will enjoy a traditional kosher Seder experience with plenty of explanation, insight, and song, while enjoying a delicious four course Passover meal.

Catered by Cindy Bell-Deane, the Seder meal will include all ritual foods, as well as ceremonial wine, gefilte fish, matzo ball soup, savory herb chicken, mixed roasted potatoes, vegetable, coffee, tea, and a selection of fresh fruit and delectable desserts.

Gluten free and vegetarian options are available upon advance request. Attendees are invited to bring their own Kosher for Passover table wine.

Rabbi David Weiner of Congregation Kneset Israel will



serve as Seder leader. Children of all ages, extended family, and community friends are welcome. Children will enjoy plague bags and be invited to hunt for the afikomen. Prizes will be awarded to all.

The cost is \$36 for adults and \$18 for children ages 5 through 13. Children 4 years and under are free of charge.

**Advance reservations and payment are required by Friday, April 15.** Financial assistance is available through the generosity of the Jewish Women’s Foundation.

Reservations can be made by calling the Federation at (413) 442-4360, ext 10 or visit [www.jewishberkshires.org](http://www.jewishberkshires.org).

**Help Share Passover during the Season of Liberation**

PITTSFIELD – This Passover, Chabad of the Berkshires is working to ensure that all members of this community can enjoy this sacred holiday, share in its communal spirit, and perform its mitzvot.

Chabad’s outreach includes:

- Bringing Seder to those unable to join a Seder.
- Distributing food packages one week prior to Passover to anyone in need. Packages include grape juice, gefilte fish, matzo, shmurah matzo, fruits,

vegetables, borscht, Passover cakes, and chocolate.

- Visiting and bringing Passover packages to those who are in hospitals, assisted living facilities, or homebound.

Please contact Sara Volovik at (413) 499-9899 or [saravolovik@gmail.com](mailto:saravolovik@gmail.com) for more information about sponsorship and volunteer opportunities. Chabad asks that if you know someone in need who may benefit, please let them know – packages can be directed anonymously.

**Temple Anshe Amunim to Host Second Night Passover Seder and Dinner**

PITTSFIELD – Temple Anshe Amunim will host its annual second night Passover Seder on Saturday, April 23. The Seder, which will begin at 5:30 p.m., will be led by Rabbi Josh Breindel. Students from the religious school will read selections from the Haggadah (Hebrew for “the telling”) and lead attendees in Passover songs.

This family-friendly event is open to all who would like to experience a Passover Seder. “Passover is my favorite holiday,” says Rabbi Breindel. “As we remember the exodus from Egypt, we also give thanks for the blessings of freedom in our own lives. There’s something for everyone at the Seder: stories and songs, food and a lot of fun!”

The meal will include chicken soup with matzo balls, gefilte fish, beef brisket, roast turkey, carrot tzimmes, plus assorted desserts. A vegetarian option will be offered. Children will be invited to hunt for the afikoman (a piece of matzo hidden during the Seder) for prizes.

For more information or to make reservations, please contact Keren at the temple



Rabbi Breindel leading the TAA Seder

office at (413) 442-5910 or by email [templeoffice@ansheamunim.org](mailto:templeoffice@ansheamunim.org) by April 15. Temple Anshe Amunim is at 26 Broad Street in Pittsfield.

**More Passover at TAA**

On Saturday April 23 at 9:30 a.m., Rabbi Breindel will lead a guided

reading of *Shir Ha-Shirim (The Song of Songs)*, followed by festival morning services.

**JON GOTTERER DMD**  
[berkshiredentist.com](http://berkshiredentist.com)

**Spirited to Host a Wine, Charoset, and Gefilte Fish Tasting in Honor of Passover**

LENOX – Thumbing through your Passover recipe file? Hoping to kick your humdrum charoset up a notch or two? Wondering if there’s more to Passover wines than that syrupy-sweet stuff that always ends up on your Seder table? Wishing you knew what Passover was all about, anyway?

Come to “Passover for Foodies: Wine, Charoset, and Gefilte Fish Tasting,” to celebrate the Season of Liberation with Chabad of the Berkshires. The program will be held at Spirited, at 444 Pittsfield Road, Lenox, MA, on Friday, April 8, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The event is sponsored in part by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation and Chabad of the Berkshires.

Charoset (derived from *cheres*, the Hebrew word for clay), a traditional Passover food that is found on every Seder plate, is a sweet mixture

of dried fruits, nuts and wine, and represents the mortar and mud bricks used by the enslaved Jews to build Egypt’s cities. Sara Volovik will bring her international culinary expertise to the table, demonstrating how to prepare three kinds of charoset – German, Turkish, and Greek – and also discuss the many regional differences in Passover cuisine. Free samples and recipes will be offered, along with a wine tasting that will showcase the excellent quality and extensive variety of today’s Passover wines.

The tasting is open to the public, and everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend, regardless of religious affiliation or level of knowledge. Please contact Sara Volovik at (413) 499-9899 or [saravolovik@gmail.com](mailto:saravolovik@gmail.com) for more information.

**Calling All High School Seniors**

**College Scholarship Opportunity**

Awarded annually to a graduating senior who has demonstrated leadership in the Berkshire Jewish community, this scholarship is made possible through the generous support of the

**Henry Simkin and Frances Simkin Schiller and Dr. Stanley and Fay Simkin Scholarship Fund.**

**Deadline: April 15, 2016**

Download an application on [Jewishberkshires.org](http://Jewishberkshires.org) or pick one up at the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires 196 South Street, Pittsfield, MA



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# IMPORTANT NOTICE

## Knesset Israel renovations

Due to renovations taking place at Congregation Knesset Israel, the Federation's "Connecting With Community" series and kosher lunch program may experience some minor disruptions through May 2016. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

We will do our best to keep the community apprised of changes as they develop and appreciate your flexibility as we work to maintain the high quality of this valuable community program.



### Like us on Facebook:

- Jewish Federation of the Berkshires
- PJ Library Berkshire County



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Broker



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sthunfor@bcn.net  
www.stonehouseproperties.com



# Connecting with Community

## Nourish Your Body, Mind, and Soul!

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

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

Venue: Congregation Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Rd, Pittsfield, MA.

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

Please call (413) 442-2200 no later than 9 am on the day you would like to attend.

Open to the public. All are welcome!

**Adults 60 and over:** \$2 suggested donation

**Adults under 60:** \$7 per person

Program only is free!

When making a reservation please inform us if a person in your party has a food allergy.

The Federation's kosher hot lunch program is offered in collaboration with Elder Services of Berkshire County.



Jewish Federation  
OF THE BERKSHIRES

## What's for Lunch?

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

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

### APRIL

**Monday, 4** ..... 10:45a.m., Chair Yoga with certified Kripalu teacher, Robin Seeley. **Lunch: Turkey stew, rice, peas & carrots, salad, rolls, mandarin oranges, and tea.**

**Tuesday, 5** ..... **Meat leftover day, vegetable and bread to be announced, Chef's choice of fruit, and tea.**

**Thursday, 7** ..... 10:45a.m., "Pittsfield – A City on the Move" with Mayor Linda M. Tyler. **Lunch: Dairy leftover day, vegetable and bread to be announced, chocolate chunk cookies, coffee, tea, and milk for coffee.**

**Monday, 11** ..... 10:45a.m., "Process of Aging" with therapist, Maggie Bittman. **Lunch: Salisbury steak, salad, noodles & onions, mixed squash medley, rye bread, applesauce, and tea.**

**Tuesday, 12** ..... **Roasted chicken, chicken soup, asparagus, oven roasted potatoes, Challah, cookies, and tea.**

**Thursday, 14** ..... 10:45a.m., "Travel with Stephanie Abrams!" Executive Producer and Host of Nationally Syndicated Radio Travel shows. **No lunch today for Passover preparation.**

**Monday, 18** ..... 10:45a.m., "Plucked From the Headlines" with Attorney and Financial Planner, Edward Insley. **No lunch today for Passover preparation.**

**Tuesday, 19** ..... **Closed for Passover preparation**

**Thursday, 21** ..... 10:45a.m., "In Every Generation: Seeing Ourselves in the Hagaddah" with Rabbi Neil Hirsch of Hevreh of Southern Berkshire. **No lunch today for Passover preparation.**

**Monday, 25** ..... 10:45a.m., "Crane Paper Mills: The Inner Workings from the 19th Century to Today" with Peter Hopkins, Director of Crane Museum of Papermaking. **Lunch: Passover meat loaf#, oven roasted potatoes, salad, broccoli, Matza, grapes, and tea.**

**Tuesday, 26** ..... **Roasted chicken#, Chef's choice of soup, asparagus, baby carrots, Matza, applesauce, and tea.**

**Thursday, 28** ..... 10:45a.m., "The Jewish War Veterans: A Berkshire Legacy" with Commander Bob Waldheim. **Lunch: Passover meat pie#, vegetable medley,**

**salad, Matza, macaroons and Passover desserts, and tea.**

### MAY

**Monday, 2** ..... 10:45a.m., "The Jewish Commitment to Civil Rights" with Rabbi Israel Dresner. **Lunch: Traditional grilled cheese sandwiches, tomato soup, salad, celery sticks, whole wheat bread, mandarin oranges, coffee, tea, and milk for coffee.**

**Tuesday, 3** ..... **Spinach pie, Avgolemono (egg and lemon) soup, mini Greek salad, beets, Italian bread, dessert TBA, coffee, tea, and milk for coffee.**

**Thursday, 5** ..... 10:45a.m., Film, "Watchers of the Sky" in honor of Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day. **Lunch: Chicken enchilada casserole\*\*#, black bean soup, yellow rice, salad, bread cubes, coconut pudding, and tea.**

**Monday, 9** ..... 10:45a.m., Chair Yoga with certified Kripalu teacher, Robin Seeley. **Lunch: Meat loaf\*\*#, apricot mango juice, mashed potatoes, peas & carrots, rolls, peaches, and tea.**

**Tuesday, 10** ..... **Roasted chicken\*\*#, red pepper soup, green beans, rice pilaf, multi-grain bread, pears, and tea.**

**Thursday, 12** ..... 10:45a.m., "Building BRIDGE: A Vision of an Inclusive Community" with Gwendolyn Van Sant and Rev. Natalie Shiras. **Lunch: Vegetable lasagna, spring minestrone soup, beets, rolls pineapple, coffee, tea, and milk for coffee.**

**Monday, 16** ..... Program to be announced. **Lunch: Turkey piccata\*\*#, salad, rice pilaf, asparagus, Challah, brownies, and tea.**

**Tuesday, 17** ..... **Salisbury steak\*\*#, vegetable soup, potatoes O'Brien, green beans, farmer's loaf, apples, and tea.**

**Thursday, 19** ..... Program to be announced. **Lunch: Fresh fish, mushroom soup, noodle kugel, broccoli, salad, potato bread, pudding, coffee, tea, and milk for coffee.**

**Monday, 23** ..... Program to be announced. **Lunch: Open faced roast beef sandwiches, mashed potatoes, peas & carrots, salad, multi-grain bread, fruit cocktail, and tea.**

### Homebound or recovering from an illness or injury?

Let us help you arrange for a kosher lunch to be delivered through our Kosher Meals on Wheels Program. Call (413) 442-4360, ext 17



## OBITUARIES

### Jack Widitor, 87, Commander of the Jewish War Veterans

PITTSFIELD – Jack Widitor, 87, of 76 Alfred Drive, died early Wednesday morning, February 10, at the Mt. Greylock Extended Care facility after a long illness.

Born June 13, 1928 in New York, NY, Mr. Widitor attended Central Needles High School in the Fashion District of Manhattan. He graduated as part of the first class of the Fashion Institute of Technology. He found his way to Pittsfield as manager of the Glix-Brand pajama factory on Brown Street. While in Pittsfield, he met and married his beloved wife, the former Jane Kobritz.

After serving in the US Army during the Korean War, Mr. Widitor moved back to Pittsfield, where he joined his brothers-in-law, the late Nathan Kobritz and Irving Lazerus, at Tyler Home Supply. He owned and operated Tyler Home Supply for over 40 years, retiring in 1995. Even after his retirement, he was actively involved in the business and enjoyed working with his son, Peter, in the store.

For many years, he was also a devoted assistant to his father-in-law, the late Charles J. Kobritz, in the management of the Seymour Realty Company. He was a well known figure in the Morningside area and always had a friendly greeting for everyone.

Mr. Widitor, a longtime member and supporter of the Pittsfield Family YMCA, enjoyed early morning exercise classes and water aerobics. He also served on the Y's Board of Directors. He was an avid member of Congregation Knesset Israel and enjoyed going to services as well as serving on the synagogue's board. Mr. Widitor served as Commander of the Jewish War Veterans, Louis Green Post No. 140 in Pittsfield from 1966-1967, and remained active in the organization for many years. He was particularly proud of his work with the 'Classmates Today, Neighbors Tomorrow' scholarship program sponsored by the JWV.

He is survived by his wife, Jane Widitor, as well as three sons, Scott and Peter of Pittsfield and David of Brooklyn, NY, and nine grandchildren.

Graveside services were held on Thursday, February 11 at Knesset Israel Cemetery with Rabbi David Weiner, spiritual leader, officiating.

The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires extends condolences to Naomi Schwartz on the passing of her sister, Evelyn Azer, in La Jolla, CA. The funeral took place on Thursday, January 28 in La Jolla. Donations may be made in support of the Congregation Knesset Israel Renewal Campaign.

### Sidney Solomon, 98, active in community of Lowell

PITTSFIELD – Sidney Solomon, 98, formerly of Lowell, MA, died Monday evening, February 8 at Berkshire Medical Center.

Mr. Solomon was a 1935 graduate of Lowell High School. In October, 1942 he enlisted in the Army, attended officer candidate school, and was discharged in 1946 with the rank of captain. He owned and operated Solomon's Fabric, Inc. for 30 years, later working as a bank teller and real estate agent.

A lifetime trustee of the former Temple Beth El, Mr. Solomon was past president of B'nai B'rith Chapter, Montefiore Synagogue, Masonic Lodge, and Volunteer for SCORE, and a was member of the Chamber of Commerce, all of Lowell.

A resident of Pittsfield since 1983, he was also a member of Congregation Knesset Israel. Mr. Solomon's family wishes to thank the doctors and nurses on the 5th Floor of Berkshire Medical Center and the personnel of Hospice Care in the Berkshires for their attention and kindness to Sidney and the entire family during this difficult time.

Mr. Solomon was the husband of Shirley (Palefsky) Solomon; father of Marcia and husband, Charles Mandel, and Helene and husband, Peter Woog; grandfather of Debra Woog, Jacqueline and husband Brad Chernow, Carl and wife Lauren Woog, Marc and wife Shana Mandel, and Joshua Mandel and partner Carrie Niziolek; great-grandfather of Aidan Woog McGinty, Kira Woog McGinty, Abigail Chernow, and Zev Woog. He was predeceased by his siblings Leo Solomon, Allen Solomon, Elizabeth Lerman, and Sarah Ferman.

Private graveside services were held Wednesday, February 10. Expressions of sympathy may be made to Hospice Care in the Berkshires, 877 South Street, Suite 1W, Pittsfield, MA 01201.

The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires mourns the passing of Rebekka Kirshiteyn on Monday afternoon, February 15. We offer our condolences to Moisey, Yaakov, Boris and Mila, Sam, Mark, and their extended family. A graveside funeral took place at Congregation Knesset Israel Cemetery in Pittsfield on Tuesday, February 16.

### Alan Curtis, 84, generous to many Jewish causes

LENOX – Alan Curtis, 84, of Boca Raton, FL, and Lenox, husband of Brenda Curtis for 57 years, succumbed to injuries on Friday, February 12 after being struck by a car while riding his bicycle in Boca Raton.

Born to Lena Stein and Samuel Surkis in the Bronx in 1931, Mr. Curtis graduated from the University of Connecticut in 1953 and served in the US Army for two years during the Korean War. He and his wife raised their children in Longmeadow, MA, where they lived for more than fifty years.

In 1960, Mr. Curtis founded United Transmission Exchange and in 1962, Dean Transmission Parts. He led his entire life energetically and optimistically, and avidly

pursued boating, tennis, skiing, and hiking. His unique, self-deprecating sense of humor and deep sense of loyalty endeared him to countless friends. In his retirement, he remained close to his family and intellectually engaged in current events, politics, business, and travel.

His generous philanthropic efforts on behalf of numerous Jewish causes and his passionate support for Israel were widely admired. He was a past president of the Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts, co-president of Heritage Academy in Longmeadow, trustee of the Jewish Endowment Foundation, and member of the National Young Leadership Division of United Jewish Appeal.

Mr. Curtis is survived by his son, Dean Curtis and daughter-in-law Lara Curtis of Longmeadow; his daughter Sarah Curtis Richmond and son-in-law Will Richmond of Newton, MA; grandchildren Ethan, Benjamin, Julia, Li-anne, Abby, and Eli. His eldest son, Adam Curtis, predeceased him in 2013. He was also predeceased by his siblings Helen Etkin and Bernard Surkis.

Funeral services were held on Wednesday, February 17, at the Ascher-Zimmerman Funeral Home in Springfield, MA. Burial followed at the Kodimoh Cemetery, West Springfield, MA. Contributions may be made in the name of Alan Curtis to The Hebrew High School of New England, 300 Bloomfield Avenue, West Hartford, CT, 06117 and The Rashi School, 8000 Great Meadow Road, Dedham, MA, 02026.

### Sherwin "Rocco" Fink, 93

HILLSDALE, NY – Sherwin "Rocco" Fink died on Friday, February 12.

Mr. Fink grew up in Brooklyn, NY, but spent much of his life in the Berkshires, where in 1975, he and his wife, Phylis, founded the clothing store Gatsbys in Great Barrington.

A graduate of Baruch College, CCNY, in 1945, his passion for life was boundless, and he lived each moment to the fullest. One of his greatest joys was playing golf with his friends at Wyantenuck Country Club.

He truly cherished every day as he did his wife; his children, Robin H. Fink, Pamela Fink, and Jonathan Fink; his daughter-in-law, Amy Brusiloff; and his grandchildren, Schuyler Fink and Harrison Fink.

### Robert M. Staskin, 86, committed to community service

PITTSFIELD – Robert M. Staskin, 86, passed away on Saturday, February 20 at Mt. Greylock Extended Care Facility where he had resided for the past three years.

Born in Pittsfield on March 18, 1929, son of Isador and Jennie Staskin, he spent his early years in both Pittsfield and Lenox. He was employed by the City of Pittsfield Public Works Department as a heavy equipment operator and retired after 38 years of service. He was affectionately nicknamed "The Rabbi" and

was called that by not only his co-workers, but by Pittsfield and state police officers.

Mr. Staskin was married for 54 years to the love of his life, Irene (Polikoff) Staskin. They were truly a team in both their marriage and their commitment to community service. Mrs. Staskin passed away in 2009 and not a day went by that he didn't talk about her and how someday he believed he would join her.

For 40 years, Mr. Staskin had the pleasure of playing Santa Claus for various day cares, agencies, and individuals. His co-workers at the City Yard held a raffle to get the money to get him his own Santa suit, so that he didn't have to borrow one.

Along with his wife, he was involved in many volunteer activities. They actively began a fundraising campaign (which was later joined by UNICO) to raise the money to get a thermal imaging camera for the Pittsfield Fire Department. They also started Cans for Kids, collecting cans and bottles to redeem so that money could be given to the Department of Children and Families at Christmas time to buy gifts for children in need. The Staskins were the joint recipients of awards from RSVP, the Pittsfield Senior Center and the Berkshire Regional Council of NASW in recognition of all their volunteer work in the community.

Mr. Staskin leaves his daughter, Susan, of Pittsfield and his brother Gene (Pat) of Pennsylvania. He will always be remembered for being a man who spoke his mind and for his commitment to the community he lived in. The family would like to thank the staff on South 1 and Hospice for all their support in his final days.

Funeral services were held Monday, February 22 at Flynn & Dagnoli-Bencivenga Funeral Home with Rabbi David Weiner, spiritual leader of Congregation Knesset Israel, officiating. Burial followed at Knesset Israel Cemetery. Donations may be made to Cans for Kids or Hospice Care in the Berkshires in care of the Flynn & Dagnoli-Bencivenga Funeral Home, 5 Elm Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201.

The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires mourns the passing of Dr. Stanley L. Lane, Sr., husband of Alice Lane. Dr. Lane leaves his stepdaughter, Karyn Goffin, her husband Scott, and their children, Zachary and Alec. The funeral was held at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire on Thursday, March 3. Burial immediately followed at Ahavath Shalom Cemetery.

### Murray Pinsker, 67, veteran of Vietnam

NORTH ADAMS – Murray Pinsker, 67, died Thursday, March 10 at Berkshire Medical Center, following a long illness.

Born in Brooklyn, NY on November 12, 1948, son of Joseph and Fanny (Novick) Pinsker, he grew up in Miami Beach, FL, graduated from Miami Dade Community College, and furthered his studies at the University of West Florida in Pensacola before joining the US Army and serving in Vietnam. After his initial discharge he re-enlisted, but suffered spinal injuries while parachuting in training. He continued living in Miami Beach before moving to North Adams in 2004.

His wife, Hava (Landau) Pinsker, predeceased him. Survivors include his close friends Mary Ellen LaFountain of North Adams and Irene Killian of Myrtle Beach, SC.

Graveside services were held in the Gerald Solomon Saratoga National Veterans Cemetery in Schuylerville, NY on Monday, March 14. Memorial donations, in his name, may be sent to the Jewish National Fund, the Humane Society, or the ASPCA.

The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires extends condolences to Miriam Maduro and family on the sudden loss of her brother, David Gersh, 55, of Bedminster, NJ, on Saturday, March 12.

A service was held on Friday, March 25. Donations may be made to The American Diabetes Associates, The American Cancer Society, or Goodwill Industries of the Berkshires.

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This program is funded by the Jewish Women's Foundation of Berkshire County and administered by the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires

## BERKSHIRE JEWISH VOICES

### Traveling with Jewish Taste

#### Santorini — Exploding Volcanos in the Past, Picture Postcard Views Today, and Maybe a Long-Ago Connection to the Tribe

By Carol Goodman Kaufman



Cerulean skies, sapphire waters, and cliff-hanging whitewashed buildings. These are the images that come to mind when one thinks “Greece,” due to their appearance on countless postcards, calendars, and tourist brochures.

The source of these iconic photos is the island of Santorini, situated about 200 kilometers southeast of the mainland in the southern Aegean Sea. Santorini is the largest island in the Cyclades group, once a single landmass before the most powerful volcanic eruption in history. Known variously as the Thera, Minoan, or Santorini Eruption, this cataclysmic event, accompanied by earthquake and tsunami, wiped out the entire Minoan settlement on the island and devastated communities and agricultural areas as far away as Egypt. In its wake was left a giant caldera surrounded by enormous deposits of volcanic ash.

Today, the capital city of Fira attracts tourists eager to enjoy its narrow alleys, picturesque squares, and street musicians. Between window shopping, gazing out over the beautiful seascape, and enjoying local treats, one can easily forget its catastrophic history. But for me, the best part of our visit to Santorini was the archaeological dig at Akrotiri, where excavations have been underway since 1967.

About a year before our arrival, our book group had discussed a novel titled *Thera*. The main characters were archaeologists who had worked at the Santorini dig. So, even though we hadn’t really cared for the book itself, we were excited to see what had inspired author Zeruya Shalev to write it.

At Akrotiri, we found a city entombed in volcanic ash and mercifully covered, protecting us from the brutal sun (if only every archaeological site featured such a thoughtful shelter). Our guide explained that the people of the city fled for their lives upon witnessing the eruption, taking their valuables with them. Where they went is anybody’s guess.

While archaeologists have not yet found any skeletal remains (only about 10% of the site has been excavated at this point), they did find evidence of a very sophisticated civilization that designed and installed a system of running water, the earliest known toilets, and a complete sewer system. The small section of the settlement that has been excavated has revealed multi-story houses and businesses, workshops, streets, masonry, and beautifully preserved frescoes.

The volcano has inspired a host of theories, among them that the caldera is the site of the lost city of Atlantis. Believers cite the advanced plumbing and sewer systems that Plato wrote about in his description of the city.

Of greater interest to the Tribe is filmmaker Simcha Jacobovici’s History Channel documentary, *Exodus Decoded*, in which he explores the intriguing possibility of a Jewish connection to Santorini. Jacobovici sets out to prove that the biblical Book of Exodus is a factual account. First, he pegs the timing of the eruption to the second intermediate period of Egyptian history, when Ahmose I was Pharaoh. In Hebrew, he points out, Ahmose means “brother of Moses.”

Jacobovici posits that it was the severe ecological consequences of the volcano that caused the 10 Plagues. Coincidentally, around the time of the volcano, a group known as the Hyksos departed Egypt. Their crossing of the Sea of Reeds (aka the Red Sea) was, he maintains, aided by the alternate flooding and draining of the area caused by the collapse of the volcanic crater in the Aegean Sea. The filmmaker believes that it was during a period of draining – while the sea bed was relatively dry – that the Hebrew/Hyksos/Habiru crossed over. The Hyksos, coincidentally, are also known as Habiru, which sounds very much like Hebrew (which scholars believe is from the Hebrew word *abar*, “to pass over”).

He continues providing support for his thesis with unearthed artifacts such as Egyptian-style signet rings engraved with the name Yaakov – the patriarch Jacob. And, adding to his list of evidence/coincidence, Jacobovici reports that one of the Hyksos cities, Avaris, is known today as Tel el-Yahudiyeh, or Mound of the Jews.

Our heads filled with history after our day on Santorini, we had the choice of descending from Fira on foot via the Donkey Route, on the donkeys themselves, or on the funicular. Given the near-100 degree temperatures and the inevitable aroma of the animals and their leavings, we chose the funicular. Despite the very long queue to get onto the car, it turned out to be the wise decision. I learned only upon returning home that the Greek government advises tourists not to ride the donkeys because too many are kept in deplorable conditions.



The view across collapsed caldera in Santorini

#### Strapatsada

The deep layer of volcanic ash on Santorini makes for amazing vegetables. These include white eggplants so sweet they can be eaten raw, intensely flavored cherry tomatoes, and cucumbers that taste like melon when allowed to over-ripen on the vine. Cooks use them all to their best advantage in the island’s cuisine. This dish can be served for brunch or a light Sunday supper.

##### Ingredients:

|                         |                                      |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 5 large tomatoes        | 1 pinch of oregano                   |
| 4 large eggs            | 1 handful basil leaves               |
| 1 cup feta cheese       | 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil |
| 1 pinch of black pepper |                                      |

##### Directions:

Beat the eggs and crumble the feta. Set aside.  
Peel the tomatoes and coarsely chop them.  
Add tomatoes to large skillet and place over medium heat.  
Cook until all liquid has evaporated, stirring occasionally.  
Add olive oil and stir for one minute.  
Add beaten eggs, whisking until barely set.  
Stir in the feta, but don’t let it melt. Add chopped basil.  
Spoon onto grilled baguette and drizzle with olive oil  
Sprinkle freshly ground pepper and oregano.  
This can be served hot or cold.

#### Yasher Koach, Carol!

##### Hadassah’s New Youth Aliyah Chair

The BJV’s own food and travel correspondent Carol Goodman Kaufman has been named chair of Youth Aliyah for Hadassah, the Women’s Zionist Organization of America. Born in the effort to rescue young Jews during the Holocaust era, Youth Aliyah villages in Israel today provide a safety net of services—food, shelter, education, and love—to immigrants from around the world and at-risk Israeli children from poor or abusive homes in Israel.

The Hadassah-supported Meir Shfeyah, Ramat Hadassah Szold, and Hadassah Neurim villages have, since 1934, graduated over 300,000 young people from 80 lands from Youth Aliyah programs. Youngsters receive not only shelter and food, but counseling, education, and other supportive services that help them develop the life skills they will need to become productive members of Israeli society.

Says Carol: “To follow in the footsteps of Henrietta Szold as chair of Youth Aliyah is both an incredible privilege and a tremendous challenge. The position gives me the ability to make a real difference in the lives of children. My goal is to visit communities across the country to tell the Youth Aliyah story and raise the funds to keep this vital program going.” Carol, a Pittsfield native and West Stockbridge second home owner, has also served as chair of Hadassah Academic College.

##### Dessert Reception May 16

On Monday, May 16, Carol will speak about Youth Aliyah at the Berkshire Hills Hadassah chapter’s dessert reception at 7 p.m. in support of this valuable program at the Whitney Center for the Arts, 42 Wendell Avenue in Pittsfield.

Minimum donation to attend is \$18, payable to Hadassah, along with a separate cover charge of \$18, payable to Berkshire Hills Hadassah. Send two separate checks are requested. Please respond by May 2 to: Judy Nishman, P.O. Box 656, Lanesborough, MA 01237, (413) 443-5545

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

## MAZEL TOV

Mazel tov to Shimon and Natali Rotches on the birth of their son, Ethan.

\*

Mazel tov to Bonnie and Marty Oszmian on the engagement of their daughter, Jenna Oszmian to Mason Brooks.

**BERKSHIRE JEWISH VOICES**

**Teaching Outside the Jewish Community – A Rare Privilege**

By Rabbi Josh Breindel



Not only do I agree to these engagements whenever possible, but I look forward to them as they approach.

Throughout the seven years of my rabbinate at Temple Anshe Amunim, teaching has become a central part of my work. In many ways, it's at the very core of my identity as a rabbi. On any given week, I'll lead our Shabbat morning Torah study class (9:30 a.m. – come join in the fun!), plan our monthly Sabbath of Study, and teach in our two days of Hebrew school. But there's something special in the calls that I receive from outside the Jewish community – there is a rare privilege in these requests.

The blessing (and corresponding challenge) of living in the 21st century is the fact that we are all connected – and interconnected. We in the Berkshires are in the ideal po-

sition to recognize this truth. You don't need to be here long to realize that many of us are connected by only one or two degrees of separation! For the Jewish community in particular, this creates a special opportunity.

Though my first years in the Berkshires, I had the privilege of meeting with the brothers Dr. Feigenbaum. Inspired by their mother's vision of tolerance and inclusivity, Donald and Armand encouraged us to open our doors to the public for their annual Hilda Vallin Feigenbaum Memorial Lecture Series. Their vision was to bring people of every faith and background into our building so that they would have the memory of having sat in a sanctuary, met a rabbi and becoming connected, if only peripherally, to the Jewish community as a whole. While our speakers rarely address

Jewish topics directly (and we have an amazing presenter lined up for this year), these evenings help us to discover the values that unite us, regardless of faith and creed.

So here we are; spring is on the way and my phone has begun to ring. I'm getting excited to visit classrooms and share my passion for my culture and heritage. This is one way for me to share a gift not only with my people, but with residents of the Berkshires as a whole. As I teach about who we are, as a people, I'm also encouraging students of all ages to find new ways to connect to Judaism in a manner that will bring blessing to all.

Right now, I'm preparing to return to the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at Berkshire Community College (for the fifth time) to teach about King David's story, which has inspired artists

and storytellers throughout the millennia. Just as when I present for my younger students, I have every hope that this experience will help create bonds between Jewish and non-Jewish participants, bringing us together with the power of shared stories.

As we move into spring, let's find new ways learn together and freely share our love of Judaism. Our heritage has much to offer; as we teach about its many riches, so may we strengthen the ties that bind us together and weave us into our greater community!

*Rabbi Josh Breindel is spiritual leader at Temple Anshe Amunim in Pittsfield. His five session OLLI course "PASSION-ATE SONG: The Story of King David" will begin on April 14 at Berkshire Community College. For full details and to register, visit www.berkshireolli.org.*

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## BERKSHIRE JEWISH VOICES

## Rubbing Elbows with a Who's Who of the Civil Rights Movement

Recalling a Special White House Visit to Commemorate the March on Washington

By Avi Dresner

In the summer of 2013, I had the great honor of attending a White House reception commemorating the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington, which took place on August 28, 1963. My father, Rabbi Israel Dresner, was one of the early Freedom Riders and a prominent figure in the Civil Rights movement, and was present as Martin Luther King delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

My dad's courage 50 years ago in the face of numerous beatings and jailings – as well as his lifelong commitment to

ment, who had set everything up for our visit, found us and informed my father that he would be meeting briefly with the President on a receiving line. Unfortunately, our contact said, I would not be able to accompany him. Needless to say, I was disappointed, especially since my dad had led me to believe that I would be meeting the President. Still, I wasn't devastated, in large part because I had a backup plan.

Knowing something like this might happen, I'd written a note to the President in my

I've ever heard. Then again, the man I saw could have been his identical twin brother, Joaquin, who's a Congressman.

I approached him saying that I wasn't sure which Castro he was but that, if he was the one who gave the convention speech, I loved it. He laughed and thanked me saying people confuse them all the time – to which I replied: "Well, at least no one confuses you with Fidel or Raul." He laughed again and asked me what I was doing there and when I told him about my father, he said, "You must be very proud." I was even more so when I got his autograph on one of the White House napkins I'd put in my suit pocket for just such a purpose. I asked him to sign it from the first Hispanic president. He laughed, and wrote instead "To Avi – Great to meet you! Best wishes always."

Next, I saw the 92-year-old Reverend Joseph Lowery, one of the founders (along with Dr. King) of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, being pushed in his wheelchair towards the door my dad had gone through. I extended my hand to him and said, "It's an honor to meet you, sir." He shook it gladly, and replied "It's good to see you here." Shortly thereafter, my dad surprised me by grabbing my hand, and saying, "Come on, you're in." He handed my letter back, telling me I could give it to the President myself.

If the hall outside had been a who's who, this room was a who's who's who's who. After shaking Andrew Young's hand and talking to him, we chatted briefly with LBJ's daughter, Lynda Bird Johnson Robb. My dad had met her on his first trip to the White House. Congressman John Lewis, the only living speaker from the March 50 years ago, actually introduced himself to me, although I assured him I knew perfectly well who he was.

A uniformed member of the White House's military social staff wrote our names on a card, and directed us to our place in line. She put us behind Julian Bond, the former head of the NAACP. He and my dad got into a discussion about their FBI files, and how both of them had been branded as Communists. Mr.



With the First Couple, Avi Dresner and his father Rabbi Israel Dresner

Bond was wearing an NAACP pin on his lapel, and I pointed to it and said, "Well, it does say CP on it." He laughed and replied, "And it's red."

A short while later, after Caroline Kennedy and Valerie Jarrett walked by, Oprah arrived and disappeared just as quickly into the next room, where I knew the President was waiting.

When our names were called, my father and I entered and were greeted warmly by the Obamas – the President shook our hands, and Mrs. Obama hugged us. Both of them exuded an aura of greatness, and yet, at the same time, they both radiated an incredible warmth and approachability that made me feel completely at ease. I knew instantly that I could deliver the opening line of my letter to him without nerves or fear. First, though, I stepped aside to make sure my dad had the first word. He told the President who he was, to which Mr. Obama replied: "I've read the file. I know exactly who you are." Then it was my turn. I thanked the President for honoring my father in this way, and told him it was almost as cool as when my dad was on Oprah. That evoked one of the President's signature megawatt smiles.

In typical fashion, my dad pressed on and used the opportunity to tell Mr. Obama that not all American Jews agree with the policies of the Netanyahu government in Israel, and that the President should tell Martin Indyk, head of the American mediated negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians, to push the Israelis to make concessions. The President smiled and said, "I see you haven't lost your passion" and assured my dad he would deliver the message. I told the President,

"My dad believes in standing up to power, while I believe in doing stand-up to power."

After our picture with the Obamas was taken, I remembered the letter in my pocket, and turned back to the President. I thought I might be gang tackled by Secret Service agents as I reached into my breast pocket, but I'd already made it through security, and figured they knew that. I handed the envelope to the President, saying it was a thank you note, and he took it and thanked me.

Back in the East Room, my dad was ushered over to the VIP seats, and I stood about thirty feet away, talking to Susannah Heschel, daughter of Abraham Joshua Heschel, the great rabbi who marched with King in Selma. Heschel was King's friend and ally in life, and eulogized him in death.

Eventually, I worked my way through the crowd and positioned myself on the other side of the velvet rope next to my father, who was chatting with Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Later, the famous Harvard professor would try to get his son into the section telling one of the White House staffers with a smile, "Let him in and I'll get your kids into Harvard." Others were trying to get in too, and the woman sitting in front of my dad gave up her seat so the widow of Medgar Evers could sit down.

Soon after, the President and First Lady walked in accompanied by John Lewis, who took the podium first. Lewis talked about his experiences with Dr. King, then he introduced the President. "Now I can talk," he said, "but don't expect a speech like the one fifty years ago." Five minutes later it was all over, and I knew I'd have to make a quick exit if I wanted to make my plane.

I said goodbye to my dad, and thanked him for bringing me. "I'm proud of you," I told him. He thanked me for making the trip and, as I turned to leave, said: "And I'm proud of you."

In the cab on my way to the airport, I replayed the evening in my mind, trying to capture each detail. I realized that I now had a new dream – someday I'd like to make it back to the White House, but not for something someone else had done, but for something I've done. Something I have yet to do.

*"If the hall outside had been a who's who, this room was a who's who's who's who."*

civil rights and social justice – garnered him an invitation to the White House reception. Since he could bring a guest, he asked me if I wanted to come along.

After snaking through a security line, we heard a gospel choir singing as we entered the East Wing of White House, which was filled with poster boards with photos from the

best penmanship, left over from the calligraphy lessons that my mom, sister, and I had taken over thirty years ago in order to address my bar mitzvah invitations. Near the iconic portrait of President Kennedy with his arms crossed and head bowed low, I handed this envelope to my dad and said, "Please give this to him." A short while later, my father disappeared behind an enormous door, and I headed to the bar for a glass of champagne.

I took in the scene around me. There were hundreds of people moving between the hallway and two cavernous rooms on either side. I'd say that about 80 percent of them were African American, a veritable who's who of Civil Rights-era legends alongside contemporary political heavyweights and up-and-comers. One of the latter I recognized as Julian Castro (since appointed Secretary of Housing and Urban Development), whose speech at the Democratic convention in 2012 was one of the best and most moving American Dream stories



Rabbi Israel Dresner will be at Connecting With Community on May 2. See page 4 for details.

Civil Rights era and captions explaining what they showed. My dad and I walked up an elaborate marble staircase to a reception hall, where a military jazz quartet played beneath a portrait of Bill Clinton. Al Sharpton was one of the first people I recognized in the room.

Our contact from the White House Office of Public Engage-

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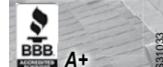
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# Calendar – Ongoing Events Around the Community

**Continuous** – Chabad of the Berkshires “Smile on Seniors,” or “S.O.S.,” volunteer program to serve senior citizens in the Berkshires. Information for families who can benefit and volunteers: Rabbi Levi Volovik at (413) 499-9899 or visit [www.jewishberkshires.com](http://www.jewishberkshires.com).

**New England Holocaust Institute & Museum** – Artifacts from the collection of founder Darrell English are now on view at the Adams Free Library, 92 Park Street, Adams, telephone (413) 743-8345. Mr. English remains available to bring selections from his collection of Holocaust artifacts to presentations for organizations, schools, and private functions. To schedule offsite presentations, call Ed Udel at (413) 446-8409.

**Monthly** – Ruthie’s Lunch Bunch meets at Congregation Beth Israel, or a local restaurant. Call for details. Congregation Beth Israel, 53 Lois Street, North Adams. Information: (413) 663-5830.

**Monthly, fourth or fifth Sunday** – Volunteers from Congregation Beth Israel, 53 Lois Street, North Adams “Take and Eat” program cook, package, and deliver hot meals for all North Adams clients of “Meals on Wheels.” Information: (413) 663-5830 or [office@cbiweb.org](mailto:office@cbiweb.org).

**Monthly** – One Monday a month (date varies according to length of book), the CBI Book Discussion Group meets at Congregation Beth Israel at 7:00 a.m. Check the CBI Newsletter for current books and schedule. Information: Chaim Bronstein at (917) 609-6732.

**Sundays (second of each month)** – Berkshire Hills Society of Israeli Philatelists meet. Discuss Israeli and American stamps. Coffee and donuts. Information: Ed Helitzer, (413) 447-7622, daytime.

**Sundays, 10:15 a.m. (Approximately every six weeks)** – Congregation Ahavath Sholom Book Club. Contact Diana Richter at [drpajama1@gmail.com](mailto:drpajama1@gmail.com) for titles, dates, and location. On April 10, the group discusses “All The Light We Cannot See” by Anthony Doerb at Great Barrington Bagel Company, 777 Main Street.

**Sundays, 10:30 a.m. (every seven weeks)** – Congregation Ahavath Sholom’s “Bagels and Brainstorms.” Contact Guy Pancer, [GPancer2@sbcglobal.net](mailto:GPancer2@sbcglobal.net) or (860) 435-2821 for topic and location.

**Tuesdays, from 10 to 11:30 a.m.** – Torah Portion of the Week study group at Congregation Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road, Pittsfield. Facilitator Myrna Hammerling guides the group through the triennial cycle, year-round in the K.I. Library. New-comers always welcome to this gathering of students of diverse ages, backgrounds, and perspectives who search together to deepen understanding of our foundational text. Free. Information: (413) 445-4872, ext. 16.

**Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m.** – “Beginner Hebrew” Learn to speak Hebrew from a native Israeli with Esther Benari-Altmann at Temple Anshe Amunim, 26 Broad Street, Pittsfield. Open to the community at large. Registration, full information: (413) 442-5910, extension 12, or [eba@ansheamunim.org](mailto:eba@ansheamunim.org).

**Wednesdays, from 10 to 11:30 a.m.** – optional meditation 11:30 a.m. to noon – “Yoga @ KI” with instructor Jane Rosen at Congregation Knesset Israel social hall, 16 Colt Road, Pittsfield. \$5 per class for Knesset Israel members; \$10 for non-members. Open to the public. Information: Jane Rosen at (413) 464-0173 or [janerosen@berkshire.rr.com](mailto:janerosen@berkshire.rr.com).

**Wednesdays, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.** – Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, 270 State Road, Great Barrington, offers “an hour of morning stillness” with Nina Lipkowitz, a certified Kripalu Yoga Teacher. Donation of \$10 is asked for from non-members. Information: (413) 528-6378.

**Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m.** – Explore the stories behind the story of the weekly Torah portion at Tea and Torah, at Chabad of the Berkshires, 450 South Street, Pittsfield MA. Led by Sara Volovik, the course is intended to outline a spiritual road map for day to day life. Using the weekly Torah portion as a starting point, participants will learn from the Talmud, Midrash, and Chasidic masters, as well as from the insights of others in the class. The course is free of charge, and no prior background in Hebrew or the subject matter is necessary.

**Wednesdays at 6:15 p.m.** – “Conversational Hebrew”. Practice speaking Hebrew with native Israeli Esther Benari-Altmann, Temple Anshe Amunim, 26 Broad Street, Pittsfield. Open to the community at large. Information and registration: (413) 442-5910 ext. 12 or [eba@ansheamunim.org](mailto:eba@ansheamunim.org).

**Thursdays, from 10:45 a.m. to 12 p.m.** – The Book of Kings, with Rabbi David Weiner. This class explores this literary chronicle of the history, ideas and personalities of Ancient Israel. Wide-ranging discussions explore themes that arise from the text and our encounter with it. Please bring your own copy of Tanakh to the KI Library. Information and Schedule: (413) 445-4872.

**Thursdays (fourth of each month)** – Hadassah Book Club. For times, locations of meetings, and further information about the books: Roz Kolodny at (413) 243-2077 or [rozlk@yahoo.com](mailto:rozlk@yahoo.com).

**Thursdays at 6:15 p.m.** – “Intermediate Hebrew,” with Esther Benari-Altmann. Teens and adults join together for lively study of Modern Hebrew with an expert instructor. Temple Anshe Amunim, 26 Broad Street, Pittsfield. Open to the community at large. Information and registration: (413) 442-5910, ext. 12 or [eba@ansheamunim.org](mailto:eba@ansheamunim.org).

**Fridays, last of month, time varies with candle lighting** – Chabad of the Berkshires’ “Friday Night Live,” traditional Kabbalat Shabbat service. Information: (413) 499-9899 or visit [www.jewishberkshires.com](http://www.jewishberkshires.com).

**Fridays, at 9:00 a.m.** – Meditation with Rabbi Rachel Barenblat in the Congregation Beth Israel sanctuary, 53 Lois Street, North Adams, overlooking the Berkshire mountains. Silence, chanting, and meditation designed to help prepare for Shabbat. All welcomed. Information: (413) 663-5830 and [www.cbiweb.org](http://www.cbiweb.org).

**Fridays, usually first of each month at 5:30 p.m. (followed by a family style Shabbat dinner at 6:15 p.m.)** – Congregation Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road, Pittsfield. Shirei Shabbat (“Songs of Shabbat”). Unique service combines melodies from Carlebach, Debbie Friedman, and Camp Ramah to create a ruach filled (“spirited”) family friendly experience. Cost \$18 per adult, \$36 family maximum. Dinner reservations are due by the Monday before services. Full information: (413) 445-4872, ext 11.

**Friday, April 8, 5:30 p.m.** – Temple Anshe Amunim offers monthly Family Shabbat services led by Religious School students and invite all interested families in the community to join. A dinner in the social hall will follow. Services feature some prayer in Hebrew, short readings in English, and songs, and are designed for families with preschool and elementary school-aged children. Older and younger siblings are welcome. The cost of the dinner is \$5 per person, with a maximum of \$20 for families. Reservations are required for dinner and can be made by calling the Temple Anshe Amunim office at (413) 442-5910 or emailing [TempleOffice@AnsheAmunim.org](mailto:TempleOffice@AnsheAmunim.org).

**Saturdays from 9:00-10:00 a.m. (When Congregation Knesset Israel’s Hebrew school classes are in session.)** – Facilitator Judith Weiner guides a journey through Jewish texts on justice. All texts will be presented in English translation. Winter: Mapping Jewish language onto contemporary American politics. Spring: Focus on issues. In the KI Library, 16 Colt Road, Pittsfield.

**Saturdays at 9:30 a.m.** – “Torah Plus: Exploring Jewish Text and Culture.” Join Rabbi Josh Breindel for a conversation based on the texts of the Jewish people and reflection on

what it means to be Jewish. All texts are offered in English. Temple Anshe Amunim, 26 Broad Street, Pittsfield. Free. Open to the public. Information (413) 442-5910 or [templeoffice@ansheamunim.org](mailto:templeoffice@ansheamunim.org).

## Congregation Knesset Israel 16 Colt Road, Pittsfield

### ONGOING MINYANS

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

### CANDLE-LIGHTING

April 8 ..... 7:10 p.m.  
April 15 ..... 7:17 p.m.  
April 22 ..... 7:25 p.m.  
(Shabbat/1st night Pesach)  
April 23 ..... 8:26 p.m.  
(2nd night Pesach)  
April 28 ..... 7:32 p.m.  
(7th night Pesach)  
April 29 ..... 7:33 p.m.  
(Shabbat/8th night Pesach)  
May 6 ..... 7:41 p.m.  
May 13 ..... 7:48 p.m.

See “Berkshire Jewish Congregations and Organizations” on page 21 for information on all regularly scheduled services in the area. Contact a congregation directly if you wish to arrange an unscheduled minyan.

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## JEWISH MUSIC IN THE BERKSHIRES

### Seeking Answers, Finding Questions

Close Encounters With Music's "Fiddler Off the Roof" concert to explore Jewish music

GREAT BARRINGTON – What is Jewish music?

Whenever that question is asked, says Yehuda Hanani, cellist and founder/artistic director of Close Encounters With Music, at least ten more questions predictably arise. He suggests that coming up with an answer may be impossible once one takes into account the vast geographic dispersion of the Jewish people, the diversity of the cultural influences they encountered, and the unplumbable historical depth of a tradition that is documented as going back to the days of the Temple in Jerusalem, if not earlier.

Why then even bother to ask what Jewish music is, wonders Hanani, who then promptly and predictably answers his own question with another question – "Why not?"

On April 17, Close Encounters With Music will present "Fiddler Off the Roof," an exploration of Jewish music featuring works by Gershwin, Bernstein, Mahler, Mendelssohn, Milhaud, Bloch, Bruch, and Ravel – plus a bit of klezmer. The matinee concert will take place at 3 p.m. at the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center in Great Barrington.

"Serious" American composers had long looked to Europe music for inspiration and styles to emulate, with American idioms developing more distinctively within folk and popular music. Jewish immigrants and their children, however, were instrumental in infusing a unique American voice into non-folk music, both classical and popular.

He cites Aaron Copeland's *Rodeo*, the Gershwins' *Porgy and Bess*, and Irving Berlin's *White Christmas* as outstanding examples of Jewish music, though they have nothing thematically Jewish about them.

Jewish musical influences inform these and other works, partly due to the composers' ethnic backgrounds – Berlin's father was a cantor, for example, as was Kurt Weill's – and partly because tunesmiths were sneaking Jewish touches into their work. Hanani points out that the melody to Gershwin's "It Ain't Necessarily So" mirrors a very ancient cantillation used by Talmudic scholars in their textual disputations.

In keeping with Close Encounters With Music's creatively unconventional approach, "Fiddler Off the Roof" will also feature Jewish works composed by non-Jews. Maurice Ravel's *Kaddish* incorporates a melody traditionally used for the prayer on Yom Kippur, while Max Bruch, a Catholic, wrote an accompaniment for *Kol Nidre*. How Jewish are they? This concert is a chance to find out.

A highlight of the program, however, is bound to be the premiere of ZEMER, a new work for piano and cello by noted composer Paul Schoenfield, who used a melody composed by the Berkshires' own Rabbi Max Roth as a starting point for his piece. Rabbi Roth, who retired to this area after a long career as a spiritual leader and cantor, says he grew up in an Orthodox family in Brooklyn, and learned

Jewish liturgical music as a child singing in a large choir. His musical gifts were apparent and, starting at age 17, he was being hired to lead High Holy Day services. "All my life, I composed songs," he says, "creating them in my head while I traveled on the subway, staying up late to work on them." About 15 years ago, while in Cleveland, he shared some of the tunes he had compiled with Schoenfield. "I'll tell you what he told me," says Rabbi Roth. "Keep composing!"

Several years later, Rabbi Roth discovered that Schoenfield was close to Yehuda Hanani, who Roth had befriended in the Berkshires. The cellist sent Schoenfield Rabbi Roth's melody for the Sabbath prayer "Yismach Moshe," and the composer took on the challenge of creating a new work inspired by it. The result is ZEMER (Hebrew for "song"), variations on Rabbi Roth's theme that were commissioned for this concert. ZEMER, says Hanani, turned out to be "a very charming, very tender quasi-klezmer tune in the Carlebach tradition."

Says Rabbi Roth, "I think the appeal for Paul was that my melody was rhythmic and exciting," and adds that

concertgoers can listen for his melody within the cello part of the composition.

The concert will close with Felix Mendelssohn's Piano Trio in D minor, completed in 1839, which Hanani feels is one of the final artistic expressions of the optimism born of the Enlightenment and the utopian ideals of reason articulated by thinkers like Moses Mendelssohn, Felix's grandfather. In the decades following its composition, says Hanani, "those hopes were crushed," a reality that adds poignancy and a very Jewish sense of plaintiveness to the selection.

"Historically, there has been an element of longing that is very powerful in Jewish history," Hanani says, (which might explain why Jewish songwriters were so successful in creating the love songs at the heart of the Great American Songbook). "Jews are suspended between a glorious past and a messianic future. The present, however, is not always happy. That's why the fiddler on the roof was playing – to bring the fantasy to reality."

Joining Hanani onstage for "Fiddler Off the Roof" will be tenor Alex Richardson (who will perform Ravel's *Kaddish*), clarinetist Paul Green, pianist



Rabbi Max Roth

Michele Levin, and violinist Sarah McElravy.

"Fiddler Off the Roof" takes place Sunday, April 17 at 3 p.m. at the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center in Great Barrington. Tickets are \$45 (Orchestra and Mezzanine) and \$25 (Balcony), and are available at The Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center box office, (413) 528-0100. More information is available at the Close Encounters With Music website at [www.cewm.org](http://www.cewm.org). A 20 percent discount is available for groups of ten or more – call (800) 843-0778.

### On Stage: Jewish Family Saga From Door to Door, with Original Music

GREAT BARRINGTON – THEatre Company will present six performances of *From Door to Door* by James Sherman (*Beau Jest*), which traces the trajectory of the three generations of one Jewish family's women from impoverished immigrants to assimilated Americans. It's a mix of past and present, a heartfelt portrayal of the ties that unite mothers and daughters.

This comedy features Gayle Schechtman, Leah Marie Parker, Harryet Puritzman

Candee, and is directed by Bruce T. MacDonald, with original Yiddish music composed by Alexander Sovronsky.

Performances will take place at Lauren Clark Fine Art, 25 Railroad Street in Great Barrington. Evening performances will be at 7 p.m. on May 6, 7, 13 & 14. Matinee performances will be at 2 p.m. on May 8 & 15. Tickets at the door are \$20 (special senior and student rush rates available). For reservations, call (413) 854-4400 or email at [theatrecompany.gb1616@yahoo.com](mailto:theatrecompany.gb1616@yahoo.com).

Cantilena Chamber Choir  
presents

## Tanglewood Music Center's 75.th Anniversary:

*The Choral Music*

Music for chorus and orchestra  
by former composition fellows:  
Foss, Carter, Rorem, Del Tredici  
& a World Premiere by Ken Lampl

**SATURDAY, MAY 14<sup>th</sup>, 7:30PM**  
Trinity Church, 88 Walker St., Lenox

[www.cantilenachoir.org](http://www.cantilenachoir.org)



### ISRAEL TRAVEL & STUDY GRANTS FOR YOUTH

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

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

To request an application contact the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires  
(413) 442-4360 or  
[jfb.officemanager@verizon.net](mailto:jfb.officemanager@verizon.net)

Download an application at  
[www.jewishberkshires.org](http://www.jewishberkshires.org)



Jewish Federation  
OF THE BERKSHIRES

## JEWISH MUSIC IN THE BERKSHIRES

### Cantilena Chamber Choir to Perform Jewish Choral Music, May 14

LENOX — On Saturday, May 14 at 7:30 p.m., the Cantilena Chamber Choir (Andrea Goodman, founder and director) will present a performance of choral music showcasing compositions by former Tanglewood Composition fellows in honor of the Tanglewood Music Center's 75th Anniversary.

The featured composer is Ken Lampl, who writes Jewish choral music. On the program will be his *Adon Olam* and *Jerusalem* for a cappella choir, as well as the world premiere of *In the Most Silent Hour* for choir, strings, and harp, written especially for Cantilena. This performance of Lampl's work has been funded in part with grants from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation and the Wassermann-Streit Y'DIYAH Memorial Fund of the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation. For a preview of Lampl's music, go to [www.kenlampl.com](http://www.kenlampl.com).

Also on the program will be works for chorus and orchestra by Lukas Foss, Ned Rorem, Elliot Carter, and David del



Composer Ken Lampl

Tredici, plus a new work by 29 year-old Composition graduate Stephen Feigenbaum called *Home*.

All tickets are \$30; seniors \$20 and children are admitted free. Tickets may be purchased at the door or in advance through the Choir's website [www.cantilenachoir.org](http://www.cantilenachoir.org). Reservations: (518) 791-0185 or [satchoir@yahoo.com](mailto:satchoir@yahoo.com). Trinity Church is located at 88 Walker Street in Lenox.

### B'Shalom Chorale Plans Third Season

GREAT BARRINGTON – Rejoice and come sing with the B'Shalom Chorale, which is preparing for its third musical season at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire. Singers will have the opportunity to work with noted conductor and singer Jack Brown, with all-around musician and accompanist Joe Rose, and with Cantor Emily Sleeper Mekler, longtime cantor of Sinai Temple in Springfield, MA.

The B'Shalom Chorale is Berkshire County's only choral group that offers a full program of Jewish music. Its mission is to preserve the treasures of music in the Jewish tradition, from various eras and genres, through public performance. The chorale continues to grow and is seeking more singers for this third season.

Weekly rehearsals begin Wednesday evening, June 1 at 7:30 p.m., and will continue through the concert, Wednesday evening, August 10. Men and women of all faiths are invited to join. The only requirement is a nice singing voice (if possible with some choral experience) and a willingness to learn music in 2-4 part harmonies. Dues are \$50.

The Chorale has 501(c)(3) status, and private contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. The Chorale is grateful for support from the Harold Grinspoon

Foundation and the Great Barrington Cultural Council. If you would like to join to sing or to offer financial support, please email founder and coordinator Cantor Mekler at [bshalomchorale@gmail.com](mailto:bshalomchorale@gmail.com) or call (413) 531-8706.

Foundation and the Great Barrington Cultural Council.

If you would like to join to sing or to offer financial support, please email founder and coordinator Cantor Mekler at [bshalomchorale@gmail.com](mailto:bshalomchorale@gmail.com) or call (413) 531-8706.



### Jewish Women's Foundation Lunch & 7th Annual Meeting

Monday, June 27, 2016  
11 a.m.

Gedney Farm  
34 Hartsville-New Marlborough Rd  
New Marlborough, MA

Guest Speaker: Lauren Keats  
71<sup>st</sup> International President,  
B'nai B'rith Girls of BBYO



Lauren Keats of Scarsdale, NY is the 71<sup>st</sup> International N'siah, International President, of B'nai B'rith Girls. She is an active and dedicated member of BBYO. As the international president, Keats has been traveling the world, meeting with members of BBYO, and inspiring a love and passion for the movement. After her term, she will be attending George Washington University where she hopes to double major in Political Science and Women's Studies. After college, Lauren aspires to work towards women's equality throughout the U.S. and around the world.

Couvert: \$40. RSVP is required by June 20<sup>th</sup>  
Please call to (413) 442-4360, ext. 10

In the spirit of tikkun olam, the Jewish Women's Foundation of Berkshire County is dedicated to sharing Jewish values by meeting unmet needs in the community and supporting social action.

## Donate • Volunteer • Make a Difference

## BERKSHIRE JEWISH CONGREGATIONS & ORGANIZATIONS



### Welcome to the Jewish Berkshires

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

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

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

[JEWISHBERKSHIRES.ORG](http://JEWISHBERKSHIRES.ORG)

### Berkshire Minyan

Lay-led egalitarian minyan held at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, 270 State Rd., Great Barrington, MA (413) 229-3618, [berkshirerminyan.org](http://berkshirerminyan.org) Services: Saturdays at 9:30 a.m.

**Berkshire Hills Hadassah**  
P.O. Box 187, Pittsfield, MA (413) 443-4386, [Berkshirehillshadassah@gmail.com](mailto:Berkshirehillshadassah@gmail.com)

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

**Chabad of the Berkshires**  
450 South St., Pittsfield, MA (413) 499-9899, [jewishberkshires.com](http://jewishberkshires.com) Check website for service times and locations.

**Congregation Ahavath Sholom Reconstructionist**  
North St., Great Barrington, MA (413) 528-4197, [ahavathsholom.com](http://ahavathsholom.com) Services: Fridays at 5:30 p.m., Saturdays at 10 a.m. Call to confirm services

**Congregation Beth Israel Reform**  
53 Lois St., North Adams, MA (413) 663-5830, [cbiweb.org](http://cbiweb.org) Services: Saturdays at 9:30 a.m.

**Congregation Knesset Israel Conservative**  
16 Colt Rd., Pittsfield, MA (413) 445-4872, [knessetisrael.org](http://knessetisrael.org) Services: Fridays at 5:45 p.m., Saturdays at 9:30 a.m.

**Hevreh of Southern Berkshire Reform**  
270 State Rd., Great Barrington, MA (413) 528-6378, [hevreh.org](http://hevreh.org) Services: Fridays 7:30 p.m., except first Friday of month, 6 p.m., Saturdays, Torah Study at 9 a.m., services at 10 a.m. Call to confirm.

**Israel Philatelist Society**  
c/o Rabbi Harold Salzman  
24 Ann Dr., Pittsfield, MA (413) 442-4312

**Jewish Federation of the Berkshires**  
196 South St., Pittsfield, MA (413) 442-4360 [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org)

**Jewish War Veterans**  
Commander Robert Waldheim (413) 822-4546, [sellit4@aol.com](mailto:sellit4@aol.com)

**RIMON – A Collaborative Community for Jewish Spirituality**  
PO Box 502, Great Barrington, MA (413) 274-1034, [rimonberkshires.org](http://rimonberkshires.org)

**Temple Anshe Amunim Reform**  
26 Broad St., Pittsfield, MA (413) 442-5910, [ansheamunim.org](http://ansheamunim.org) Services: Fridays at 5:30 p.m., Saturdays, Torah Study at 9:30 a.m., services at 10:45 a.m.

### BEYOND THE BERKSHIRES

**Congregation Anshe Emeth Conservative**  
240 Joslen Blvd., Hudson, NY (518) 828-6848, [congregationansheemeth.net](http://congregationansheemeth.net) Services: Fridays at 7:30 p.m., Saturdays at 9:30 a.m.

**Congregation Beth El**  
107 Adams St., Bennington, VT (802) 442-9645, [cbevermont.org](http://cbevermont.org) Services: Saturdays at 10 a.m.

**Nassau Jewish Community Center & Synagogue**  
Route 20, Box 670, Nassau, NY (518) 766-9831 [nassausynagogue.org](http://nassausynagogue.org) Services: Saturdays at 9:30 a.m.

**Temple Israel of Catskill Reform**  
220 Spring St., Catskill, NY (518) 943-5758, [templeisraelofcatskill.org](http://templeisraelofcatskill.org)

**The Chatham Synagogue**  
Route 28, Box 51, Chatham, NY (518) 392-0701, [chathamsynagogue.org](http://chathamsynagogue.org) Services: Saturdays at 9:30 a.m.

## JEWISH MUSIC IN THE BERKSHIRES

### Jazz and Klezmer Come Together on Clarinetist Paul Green's New Recording

A union of jazz and klezmer music is bound to be a mixed marriage, at least the way clarinetist Paul Green describes the fusion of forms he has cooked up with *Music Coming Together*, a new recording with his band Two Worlds that is coming out this spring.

For one, he explains, "Jewish music, both klezmer and prayer, emphasizes melody. Jazz is more harmonically based, improvising off a tune, but keeping the harmonic structure. Jazz musicians play around a melody." While traditionally klezmer is dance music, jazz evolved away from its early dance roots into "music for its own sake," a variety of art music meant to be listened to in clubs and concert halls. Green adds that while propulsive klezmer rhythms keep one's feet moving, they don't swing, at least not in the way jazz rhythms do.

Nevertheless, Green and his talented band of mostly Berkshires musicians manage to make the two musical forms cohere on *Music Coming Together*, creating klezmer/jazz hybrids out of three jazz standards, one novelty tune, and six Jewish songs, both Ashkenazi and Sephardic. Says Green: "You can hear two genres in one tune, even if there is some tension between the two forms. Resolving that tension is the way making this into art."

Green has even hybridized the song titles – "So, Nu?" (Miles Davis "So What?"),

"My Funny Jewish Valentine" (Rogers & Hart), "Yiddish Footprints" (Wayne Shorter's "Footprints"), and "Tarras Doina and Blues" (a doina [a Romanian musical style, possibly with Middle Eastern roots] by great klezmer clarinetist Dave Tarras). The latter piece is described in the liner notes as a "fragment...based on a Jewish 'Misheberach' scale, which works great for blues." "Utta Da Zay" is a novelty tune made famous by Cab Calloway, who imitated cantorial singing for comic effect –this version starts off solemn, and then breezes home.

Jazz had a profound influence on Jewish composers, for one because it was the pervasive music during the era that large waves of Jewish immigrants first arrived in the United States. US culture influenced Jewish music, but these songwriters also changed jazz, supplying the tunes that largely define the Great American Songbook created in the first half of the 20th century. "The quintessential songbook tunes are great because of the melodies," says Green, "which is what Jewish composers were able to write."

Green said he worked with the Two Worlds musicians, all jazz players, to convey "the time feel of klezmer, and how elements of klezmer are structured. It's less complex than jazz, and I had to relate how to improvise on Jewish, rather than jazz, scales." He says the band, which cut the album

at Pilot Recording Studio in Housatonic, caught on quickly. "Jazz musicians know more about structure than classical musicians, who have to really know their instruments, but who play pieces in which musical structure has been laid out for them by the composer. A good jazz group will be able to adapt."

Among the most enjoyable tunes on the recording are the Sephardic tunes "Si la Mar Era de Leche" and "Los Bilbilicos," the former distinguished by Green's sensitive clarinet work and the second by a Latin jazz beat the compliments the melody, and by Michael Mussillami's guitar. "Papirosn (Cigarettes)" is a sad klezmer about which Green writes in the liner notes: "The tune is resilient, as are most klezmer tunes, and can take a wide variety of interpretations. This is a characteristic of Jewish music, which is why it can coexist and combine with



Paul Green (carrying satchel) with the musicians of Two Worlds

other musical traditions."

The Berkshires will have a chance to hear this fusion live on April 30, as Green and Two Worlds invite the public to their record release party at the Meeting House Concert Series at the Congregational Church of Lee, 25 Park Place

in Lee. Tickets, \$20, available at the door. The show is at 7:30 p.m. and a reception will follow.

CD copies of *Music Coming Together* will be on sale at the concert, and can be purchased on iTunes or Amazon, or a [www.paulgreenmusic.com](http://www.paulgreenmusic.com).

### Time to Wake Up to Ladino Songs for Today's Kids

For the better part of two decades, Sarah Aroeste's artistic mission has been not only to preserve the musical and linguistic riches of Sephardic culture and the Judeo-Spanish dialect Ladino, but also to generate a new vitality through the music that will keep the traditions alive, exciting, and relevant.

The Berkshires-based singer's first three recordings – *A la Una: In the Beginning* (2003), *Puertas* (2007), and *Gracia* (2012) – capture the passion, sultriness, drama, and Northern Mediterranean sound of European Sephardic music. By her third album, she was not only interpreting songs, but also writing new ones, working within the tradition but adding contemporary touches. For years, she has entertained audiences at music festivals around the world as a performer, and was a finalist in Israel's "Festiladino" competition of original Ladino songs in 2008.

In 2013, Aroeste was expecting her first child, and started writing about the thoughts and emotions she was experiencing. A sweet ballad titled "Komo vas a ser" (How Will You Be?) was a product of that time. When daughter Irit arrived and Aroeste found herself immersed in the routines of motherhood – mealtime, playtime, bedtime, happy time, crying time – she realized that she wanted to pass down a bit of her family's heritage in a fun and child-friendly way. Finding a dearth of existing options, she began writing Ladino songs with lyrics that re-



flected her growing daughter's experience of the world, set to the types of music a child might be accustomed to hearing these days.

The result of Aroeste's efforts is her new recording, *Ora de Despertar* (Time to Wake Up), a collection of 11 original tunes that she describes as "bouncy, whimsical children's songs that happen to be in Ladino. I grew up on American musical traditions, and when I

LADINO KIDS' SONGS, continued on next page

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**JEWISH MUSIC**

**Ladino Kids' Songs**, *continued from page 30*

started writing an album for kids, that's what I used." For example, "Las Komidás," a food song, is pure surf music, while "Mi Familia" has a lively New Orleans bomp. She said she thought of using some of the instruments familiar in Sephardic music, but decided against it, preferring to keep things contemporary.

Aroeste explains that there are virtually no songs passed down in Ladino expressly for children, and what few she was able to track down through her contacts among experts and enthusiasts of the language consisted of choral music and lullabies. "And lullabies really are for parents, not kids," she says. Modern-sounding Ladino songs for children are unlikely to have been written, as "no one grows up speaking Ladino as a first language anymore," she says. Among the challenges of keeping Ladino alive today, Aroeste explains, is that European Sephardim tended to be insular, with traditions being passed down within closed communities and around the family dinner table. During the Holocaust, the European Sephardic population was decimated, and much of that oral culture was lost. The State of Israel has invested heavily in preserving field recordings and other archival material, but it has been up to artists like Aroeste, exploring her own roots, to keep Ladino vital.

With *Ora de Despertar*, Aroeste is taking the tradition in a new direction for a new generation. She uses no English on the recording – "I never do English," she says, "I'm all about the Ladino" – but has been creative in figuring out how to use the songs to teach

the basics of the language to a child. Each of the 11 songs on album has an accompanying music video, available online, that will help youngsters visually understand what the tunes are about. Both the songs and the videos have the all-important Again Factor – you know, "Mommy/Daddy play it again." None of the songs, however, are Jewish themed – Aroeste said she might try an album like that some day, but wanted *Ora de Despertar* to focus on the daily business of a child's life.

Aroeste, whose second daughter, Dalia, was born last October, says that



Sarah Aroeste

the album has given her a special bond with her eldest, Irit. "It gives me great joy," she says, "to see her ears perk up when she hears the music and say, 'You wrote that for me.'"

*Ora de Despertar* is available through Amazon and iTunes. For more information and links to purchase, visit [www.saraharoeste.com](http://www.saraharoeste.com).

**WORLD NEWS**

**Candy-making Holocaust Survivor Believed to be World's Oldest Man**

HAIFA, ISRAEL (JTA) — A Holocaust survivor in Haifa is believed to be the oldest man in the world.

Yisrael Kristal, 112, achieved that status in January after Yasutaro Koide of Japan, also 112, died.

Kristal's grandson, Oren, received an email this week from the Gerontology Research Group, an international organization that tracks the world's over-110 set, alerting him that the Polish-born Auschwitz survivor was up for the honor. Upon hearing the news, Kristal said in Yiddish: "The joy of my old age."

Born on Sept. 15, 1903, in the town of Zarnow, Kristal moved to Lodz in 1920 to work in his family's candy business. He continued operating the business after the Nazis forced the city's Jews into a ghetto, where Kristal's two children died. In 1944, he was deported to Auschwitz, where his wife, whom he had married at age 25, was killed. In 1950, he moved to Haifa with his second wife and their son, working again as a confectioner.

Kristal's daughter Shula Kuperstoch told *The Jerusalem Post* that he has been religiously observant his whole life and continues to lay tefillin each morning.

"The Holocaust did not affect his beliefs," Kuperstoch said. "He believes he was saved because that's what God



Yisrael Kristal

wanted. He is not an angry person, he is not someone who seeks to an accounting, he believes everything has a reason in the world.

"His attitude to life is everything in moderation," she added. "He eats and sleeps moderately, and says that a person should always be in control of their own life and not have their life control them, as far as this is possible."

Interviewed by *Haaretz* in 2012, at the comparatively youthful age of 109, Kristal declined to offer a theory for his longevity, instead saying, "It's no great bargain. Everyone has their own good fortune. It's from heaven. There are no secrets."

Asked if his diet was responsible for his long life, he said, "In the camps there wasn't always anything to eat. What they gave me, I ate. I eat to live; I don't live to eat. I don't need too much. Anything that's too much is no good."

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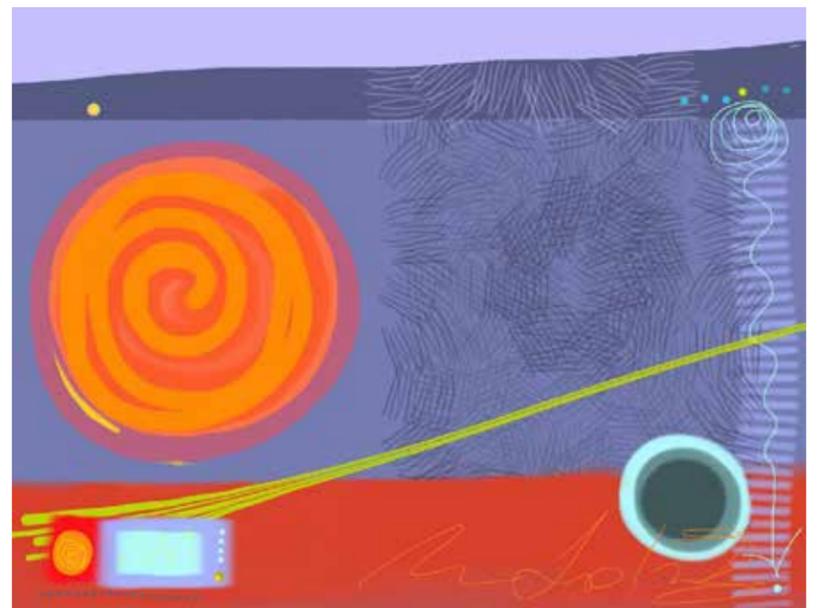
**CULTURE AND ARTS**

**Working in Two Styles, Nina Lipkowitz Explores Line and Color, Transparency, and Pattern and Light**



Nina Lipkowitz describes herself as "a student of light, color, line, and the human spirit." After starting out primarily as a sculptor, the Great Barrington resident turned to painting and developed two very different bodies of work.

She writes that her recent watercolor paintings "could be called 'Garden Gone Wild' or 'Flowers Gone Wild' or 'Colors Gone Wild' or 'Lines Gone Wild,' but they are more than any one of those; they are all of them. Each flower is grown in my garden, planted to be painted, and is then carefully arranged in vases that are handmade or wheel thrown by me. They represent just one or two days of spring and summer. Jonquils and daffodils followed by tulips in riotous shapes and colors; then bleeding hearts, allium, irises, peonies, poppies, and lilies. Each is a poignant reminder of the fragility and the beauty of life, each a visual reminder of how precious yet precarious life is."



Working in a style and medium completely different than those she uses for her watercolors, Lipkowitz also "finger paints" on the touch screen of her iPad to create vibrantly colored abstract images. She turns these images into limited edition prints.

This spring, Lipkowitz will be participating in a still life show at

Spencertown Academy (790 NY-203 in Spencertown, NY) from May 21 to June 19. A show of her iPaintings will run No. Six Depot Gallery and Cafe in W. Stockbridge from October 15- November 29, with a joint winter 2017 show with her husband, photographer, John Lipkowitz, at the gallery at the Berkshire School, Sheffield, MA.



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