



SUMMER FUN

**A Summer of Connection, Celebration, and Community**

There's something special about summer in New Hampshire. Maybe it's the longer days, the lakes and campfires, or the collective agreement that ice cream somehow tastes better between June and August. Whatever the reason, summer has a way of bringing people together and that sense of connection is at the heart of Jewish community life across our state this season.

One of the highlights of our summer will be the Yom Ha'atzmaut "Israel Bazaar" Festival on June 7 at Camp Tel Noar. Inspired by the energy and spirit of an Israeli *shuk*, the festival will feature food, music, activities, community partners, and opportunities for families and friends to gather for a joyful and interactive celebration of Israel and Jewish culture. It's a reminder that community-building doesn't always happen in meeting rooms or sanctuaries. Sometimes it happens over falafel, crafts, and the slightly chaotic search for enough shade on a warm June afternoon.

Summer also means a full calendar of

**Erik Martin**

**JFNH  
Executive  
Director**



PJ Library programs happening in communities across New Hampshire. From story times and playground meetups to family holiday celebrations and hands-on activities, these programs help create meaningful Jewish experiences for young families throughout the state. PJ Library continues to be one of the most effective ways we engage the next generation in Jewish life, not only through books, but through relationships, friendships, and shared experiences that help families feel connected and supported.

And of course, no New Hampshire summer would be complete without baseball. On August 4, we'll once again gather for Jewish Heritage Night with the

New Hampshire Fisher Cats. There's something uniquely fun about seeing our community show up proudly at the ballpark—whether you're there for the baseball, the kosher snacks, or simply the excuse to wear a Hebrew letter T-shirt in public without anyone asking what it means. Events like this matter because they create visible, joyful Jewish community in spaces that bring people together from all walks of life.

Later in August, we'll come together for the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire's Annual Meeting on August 16 in Bedford. Annual meetings are often thought of as business meetings, and yes, there will absolutely be reports, elections, and at least one discussion involving spreadsheets. They are also opportunities to reflect on what we've accomplished together as a community over the past year and where we're going in the year to come. Annual meetings allow us to celebrate volunteers, recognize leadership, and look ahead to the work still to come.

What ties all of these summer moments together is the understanding that Jewish community is built through participation. It's built when families show up to a PJ Library event for the first time, when friends gather at a festival, when neighbors reconnect at the ballpark, and when community members invest their time and energy into shaping our future together. These experiences may look different on the surface, but they all strengthen the same foundation: a vibrant, connected Jewish New Hampshire.

Summer often moves quickly. Before we know it, backpacks will replace beach bags and we'll all pretend we're emotionally prepared for pumpkin spice season again. But before that happens, I hope you'll take advantage of the many opportunities to connect, celebrate, and simply enjoy being together as a community. I look forward to seeing you this summer at Camp Tel Noar, the ballpark, a PJ Library event, or around the table at our Annual Meeting.

**From the Desert to the Table**

On April 17, the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire welcomed community members from across the state to Temple Israel in Manchester for a moving and deeply personal evening with Raif Rashed, survivor of the October 7 attack at the Nova Music Festival in southern Israel.

In front of a full room, Raif shared his firsthand account of the events of that day—describing the fear, chaos, and unimaginable loss he experienced as thousands gathered for what was meant to be a celebration of music and community. His story was both heartbreaking and inspiring, offering attendees a rare and deeply human perspective on the lasting impact of October 7.


*Desert to the Table* continued on page 6



<i>What's Inside</i>	
Federation Voices	3
Calendar	4
Your Federation at Work	7
Education	7
From the Bimah	10
In The Community	12
Jewish Humor	17
Arts & Entertainment	19
Book Review	19
Mitzvahs	20
Jewish Journeys	22
Israel News and Events	24
Simchas	24
Recent Events	25
Tributes	26
Business & Professional Services	27

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# CONGREGATIONS

**JRF:** Jewish Reconstructionist Federation **URJ:** Union for Reform Judaism  
**USCJ:** United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

## BETHLEHEM

**BETHLEHEM HEBREW CONGREGATION**  
Rabbi Hazzan Jeremy Lipton - Summer & High Holidays  
39 Strawberry Hill Road  
PO Box 395, Bethlehem  
Unaffiliated-Egalitarian  
(802) 284-8890  
www.bethlehemsynagogue.org  
Weekly services from July through Simchat Torah with Zoom services and Torah study from November to June. Please check our website for service times and event information.

## CONCORD

**TEMPLE BETH JACOB**  
Rabbi Robin Nafshi  
67 Broadway, Concord  
Reform, Affiliated URJ  
(603) 228-8581  
www.tbjconcord.org  
office@tbjconcord.org  
Services: Friday night - 7:00 PM  
Saturday morning - 9:30 AM

## DERRY

**ETZ HAYIM SYNAGOGUE (URJ)**  
1-1/2 Hood Road, Derry  
Reform, Affiliated URJ  
(603) 432-0004  
www.etzhayim.org  
office@etzhayim.org  
Services: Fridays 7:15 PM  
Saturday 9:30 AM  
Torah Study - Saturday 10:45 AM  
Check the website for updates  
Monthly Family Pizza Shabbat at 5:30 PM  
Please visit www.etzhayim.org/calendar for optional Zoom link.

## HANOVER

**THE ROHR CHABAD CENTER AT DARTMOUTH**  
Rabbi Moshe Gray  
19 Allen Street, Hanover  
Orthodox, Chabad  
(603) 643-9821  
www.dartmouthchabad.com  
chabad@dartmouth.edu  
Services: Friday Evening Shabbat services and Dinner  
Shabbat morning services  
Call for times.

## KOL HA'EMEK UPPER VALLEY JEWISH COMMUNITY

Rabbi Mark Melamut  
Roth Center for Jewish Life  
5 Occom Ridge, Hanover  
Nondenominational, Unaffiliated  
(603) 646-0460  
www.uvjc.org  
office@uvjc.org  
Services: Friday night Shabbat service at 6:00 PM  
Saturday morning Shabbat service at 10:00 AM

## KEENE

**CONGREGATION AHAVAS ACHIM**  
Rabbi Dan Aronson  
84 Hastings Avenue, Keene  
Nondenominational/Unaffiliated  
(603) 352-6747  
www.keenesynagogue.org  
rabbida@keenesynagogue.org  
office@keenesynagogue.org  
Services: Regular Friday night services at 7:00 PM  
Weekly Shabbat Torah study at 9:30 AM.  
Shabbat morning services on the 2nd Saturday of each month at 9:30 AM.  
Meditation and Pirkei Avot study on the 4th Saturday of each month at 10:30 AM.  
All services are in-person and online.  
Check the website for schedule changes and Zoom links.

## LACONIA

**TEMPLE B'NAI ISRAEL**  
Rabbi Andy Bachman  
210 Court Street, Laconia  
Reform, Affiliated URJ  
(603) 524-7044  
www.tbinh.org  
info@tbinh.org  
Services: Every other Friday night at 7:30 PM

## MANCHESTER

**BERNICE AND IRVING SINGER CHABAD CENTER FOR JEWISH LIVING**  
Rabbi Levi Krinsky  
1234 River Rd., Manchester  
Orthodox, Chabad  
(603) 647-0204  
www.chabadofnh.com  
rabbi@chabadofnh.com  
Services:  
Shabbat morning at 10:00am  
Sunday morning at 9:00am

## TEMPLE ADATH YESHURUN

Cantor Dunkerley  
152 Prospect Street, Manchester  
Reform, Affiliated URJ  
(603) 669-5650  
www.taynh.org  
office@taynh.org  
Services: Shabbat services the first Friday of the month at 6:00 PM  
All other Friday nights at 7:00 PM with some exceptions.  
Alternating Shabbat services or Torah study Saturday mornings at 10:00 AM

## TEMPLE ISRAEL MANCHESTER

66 Salmon Street, Manchester  
Conservative Affiliated USCJ  
(603) 622-6171  
office@templeisraelmht.org  
www.templeisraelmht.org  
Shabbat Services: Every month we offer one Friday night Shabbat with a catered community dinner (rsvp required), and two Saturday Shabbat services followed by a light kiddush (no rsvp necessary).  
Every Wednesday, we offer a 7:00 AM in person

morning minyan and a 6:30 PM Torah study via ZOOM. Please check our website www.templeisraelmht.org, call our office at (603) 622-6171 or email office@templeisraelmht.org for information on specific service dates and times.

## NASHUA

**TEMPLE BETH ABRAHAM**  
Rabbi Jon Spira-Savett  
Conservative  
(603) 883-8184  
www.tbanashua.org  
rabbijon@tbanashua.org  
office@tbanashua.org  
Services (generally):  
Every Friday at 8:00 PM  
Every Saturday at 10:00 AM  
Evening Minyan Monday - Thursday at 7:30 PM  
All services are in-person and on Zoom (check our website for schedule changes and Zoom links).

## NEWINGTON

**UNH & SEACOAST CHABAD JEWISH CENTER**  
Rabbi Berel Slavaticki  
2299 Woodbury Avenue, Newington  
Orthodox, Chabad  
(603) 584-4111  
Rabbi@JewishSeacoast.com  
www.JewishSeacoast.com  
Services:  
Saturday morning at 10:00am followed by Kiddush.

## NORTH CONWAY

**KEHILAT HAR LAVAN**  
Hazzan Marlana Fuerstman  
PO Box 474, Bartlett  
(207) 256-0060  
harlavancommunity@gmail.com  
Services: Wed. mornings 9:00 AM online via Zoom  
Enter meeting ID https://zoom.us/j/381930069  
Holiday service times, locations TBA.

## PORTSMOUTH

**TEMPLE ISRAEL**  
Rabbi Marc Hersch  
200 State Street, Portsmouth  
Conservative, Affiliated USCJ  
(603) 436-5301  
www.templeisraelnh.org  
templeoffice@templeisraelnh.org  
Services: Friday, 6:00 PM  
Saturday, 10:00 AM  
Tues. minyan 5:30 PM  
Temple Israel has a fully licensed M-F preschool.

Mazal tov to Rabbi Beth Davidson of Temple Adath Yeshurun on her retirement!

# The New Hampshire Jewish Reporter

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The New Hampshire Jewish Reporter is published monthly ten times per year, with a deadline for submissions of the 10th of the month before publication. There are no January or July issues. All items, including calendar events, for the December-January or June-July newspaper must be submitted by Nov. 10 or May 10, respectively.

Please send all materials to:  
thereporter@jewishnh.org

To submit Calendar items for the print and online JFNH Calendar and E-News, go to <https://jewishnh.org/community-calendar>, click the red "Suggest an Event" button, then fill in the form with your event information.

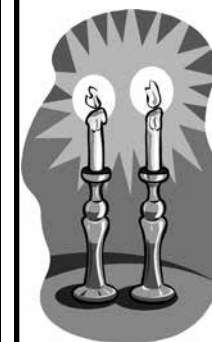
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The New Hampshire Jewish Reporter is overseen by the JFNH Publications Committee, Merle Carrus, chairperson.

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## Shabbat Candle Lighting Times: (Manchester)



<b>June 5</b>	<b>8:03 PM</b>
<b>June 12</b>	<b>8:07 PM</b>
<b>June 19</b>	<b>8:10 PM</b>
<b>June 26</b>	<b>8:11 PM</b>
<b>July 3</b>	<b>8:10 PM</b>
<b>July 10</b>	<b>8:08 PM</b>
<b>July 17</b>	<b>8:03 PM</b>
<b>July 24</b>	<b>7:57 PM</b>
<b>July 31</b>	<b>7:50 PM</b>

## From the Board Chair's Desk

Jeremy Berger

Board Chair,  
JFNH



It has been a while since my last update, and there is much to share — so let me begin.

**First and foremost: the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire is thriving.**

Community engagement continues on an upward trend, and we have seen members from throughout our state attending our events in record numbers. I would like to thank our shuls and partner communities across New Hampshire for supporting this growth. Our community is strongest when we stand together, support one another, and remain connected even during difficult moments.

It also needs to be recognized that while the Federation's Mission Statement explicitly affirms our support for Israel, criticism of the Israeli government and its policies is both reasonable and expected. The Jewish community has long embraced thoughtful debate and a diversity of perspectives on important issues. At the same time, we ask that disagreement — however passionate — never come at the expense of our broader sense of community or our responsibility to treat one another with dignity and respect.

Jewish tradition reminds us of the importance of avoiding *Lashon Hara* — speaking harmfully about other Jews — and *Chillul Hashem* — actions that bring shame or disgrace upon the Jewish people or Judaism in the eyes of the broader world. Especially during periods of heightened tension, these values should guide how we speak to and about one another, both within our community and beyond it.

**Antisemitism Is on the Rise — and New Hampshire Is Not Immune**

Antisemitism is on the rise. Many of us have seen it, felt it, and deal with it on a daily basis — in our workplaces, in our schools, and in ordinary conversations. It is everywhere. If it seems like antisemitism in the United States is increasing, that is because it is.

New Hampshire is not immune. According to the ADL, between 2022 and 2024 there was a 51% increase in antisemitic incidents in our state. By 2025, that number decreased to 36% — but this remains a highly elevated figure. Furthermore, the vast majority of incidents go unreported, meaning the true numbers are almost certainly far worse than what is captured in any dataset.

In the last month alone, I have personally had three families reach out to us for support in dealing with antisemitism in their children's schools. These issues range from bullying to curriculum concerns. In the majority of cases, the schools chose to ignore the issue or simply look

the other way. This is unacceptable.

If you or your child is dealing with antisemitism in any way, shape, or form — please reach out to the Federation. We are here for you. We are *\*Your\** Federation, and we are your resource.

**New Hampshire Makes National Headlines — For the Wrong Reasons**

Unfortunately, our state legislature has not been immune to this scourge, and New Hampshire has made national news in a deeply troubling way.

In January 2026, Republican state Rep. Matt Sabourin dit Choinière successfully pushed the New Hampshire Commission on Holocaust and Genocide Education to hear testimony from Germar Rudolf — a German Holocaust denier who has been deported from the United States and served prison time in Germany for propagating Holocaust denial. Two additional Holocaust deniers testified as a result of Sabourin dit Choinière's efforts, one of whom has led weekly anti-Jewish protests outside a Michigan synagogue for years. Sabourin dit Choinière also presented Holocaust-denial books before a House committee while attempting to amend state education guidelines to incorporate Holocaust denial — books he was asked to remove from the chamber. Most disturbingly, on April 14th — Holocaust Remembrance Day — he posted a photo of himself presenting that amendment on social media with the caption "ahead of our time." Despite calls from a progressive advocacy group and members of our community to strip him of his committee assignments, he has retained them, and to date no formal action has been taken against him. Adding insult to injury, NH state Rep. Brian Cole initially stated he was "honored" to receive Sabourin dit Choinière's endorsement — a statement he only walked back after being directly contacted by NPR.

In a separate incident, Republican state Rep. Travis Corcoran of Weare posted on social media that "we need a final solution for theater kids in politics" — a direct invocation of the Nazi euphemism for the systematic murder of six million Jews — in response to a Jewish Democratic colleague's lighthearted invitation to a bipartisan karaoke event. The post drew bipartisan condemnation, and

in a rare move, the New Hampshire House tasked a committee with determining appropriate sanctions. Corcoran appeared before the committee unapologetic, claiming the post was sarcasm and stating he was unaware of his colleague's Jewish background. He left the hearing before testimony concluded and has said he will not apologize. As of this writing, the committee has recommended censure, and a full House vote is expected shortly. We will keep our community informed of the outcome.

In both of these incidents, the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire worked behind the scenes with our partner organizations — the Jewish Federations of North America, the American Jewish Committee, and StandWithUs — to develop and execute a coordinated response. I would also like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our interfaith partners, who showed up when we asked. They represented their communities in Concord, testifying before the NH State Ethics Committee and standing firmly against hate. We are grateful for their solidarity.

**The News Isn't All Bad — In Fact, Quite the Opposite**

The Jewish Federation of New Hampshire is thriving, and our calendar of events has never been fuller.

Attendance at all of our events has never been better. We have had numerous events sell out — attracting people from as far away as Boston — and we have been called "Small but Mighty" by numerous outside organizations. If you haven't been to one of our events, what are you waiting for?

**The New Hampshire Jewish Film Festival** just concluded, showcasing films across a wide range of genres. A special highlight was *\*Hidden: The Kati Preston Story\** — for those who do not know her, Kati is a member of our community, a true treasure, and a Holocaust survivor. *\*Hidden\** tells her history and her story. If you haven't seen it, I urge you to do so. A special thank you goes to all members of the Jewish Film Festival Committee — without you, this remarkable festival could not take place — and a particular thank you to Patricia Kalik and Ross Fishbein for their stewardship and leadership.

Our **PJ Library and PJ Our Way** programming has also continued to grow and evolve in exciting ways. This spring, the Federation partnered with Temple Israel Portsmouth for Names *We Carry: A Celebration of Hebrew Names and Identity*, an intergenerational PJ Our Way program focused on the meaning and significance of Hebrew names, family traditions, and

Jewish identity. Families explored the stories behind their Hebrew names while creating personalized keepsakes including jewelry, keychains, and Yads for future Brit Mitzvah or Torah reading journeys. Adults were also invited to reflect on their own Hebrew names and naming traditions, including family and tribal connections carried through generations. Special thanks to program sponsor Judy Craig for providing wooden Hebrew letter beads from Israel and helping make this meaningful community gathering possible.

We also hosted a **book tour with Sharon Kurtzman**, author of *\*The Lost Baker of Vienna\**, visiting Keene, Manchester, and Nashua.

April and early May were especially busy. We welcomed **Raif Rashed** to Temple Israel Manchester. Raif, a Druze and Nova Festival survivor, shared his deeply moving story of survival. While visiting family in Israel, Raif helped his brother run a Druze food cart at the Nova Festival. Both Raif and his brother survived — some of their friends did not. After returning to the United States, Raif left his career as an engineer and opened a Druze restaurant in Manhattan, *\*Taboonia\**. After sharing his story, Raif prepared a traditional Druze meal for everyone in attendance. This was a sold-out event, drawing people from well outside New Hampshire. The Jewish Federation of New Hampshire looks forward to partnering with Raif in the future as he builds out the *\*Taboonia Community\** in Carmel, Israel — a community where Druze and Jews will come together to learn from and understand one another. Thank you to Temple Israel Manchester for hosting this memorable evening!

**Yom HaShoah — Holocaust Remembrance Day** was observed with solemn and meaningful events. For the fourth consecutive year, the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire partnered with Manchester synagogues to participate in *\*Six Million Steps\**, a national initiative supported by the Israeli American Council dedicated to preserving Holocaust memory and raising awareness of global antisemitism. Led by Jesse Mogle, our new Director of Community Advocacy, participants walked from Temple Israel Manchester to Temple Adath Yeshuran, where Jesse shared reflections on memory, legacy, and the importance of standing against antisemitism today.

On the same day, at Temple Israel Portsmouth, a program led by our Federation Treasurer, **Richard LeSavoy**, commemorated Yom HaShoah with guest **Board Chair's Desk** continued on page 5

# Statewide Calendar of Events

**DISCLAIMER: Events are submitted weeks in advance of publication, and are subject to change. For information on format changes, rescheduling, and so on, please contact the event's host.**

To submit Calendar items for the print and online JFNH Calendar and E-News, go to <https://jewishnh.org/community-calendar>, click the red "Suggest an Event" button, then fill in the form with your event information.

## NH Jewish Food Festival Ordering Underway!

This event runs from May 31-July 5 and is exclusively online. The 29th Annual NH Jewish Food Festival, a fantastic summer event in the Lakes Region and vital fundraiser for Temple B'nai Israel (TBI) of Laconia, is back to delight your taste buds! Ordering from the full 2026 menu runs from May 31-July 5 and is exclusively online at <https://tbinh.org>. Authentic, homemade Jewish foods prepared by TBI members, with deli meats sourced from Evan's Deli of Marblehead, MA. Don't delay - order today before the food is gone! For more information, please contact Maria Cantor at 617-680-9452 or at [mcantor40@gmail.com](mailto:mcantor40@gmail.com). Sponsor: Temple B'nai Israel of Laconia

## Sunday, June 7

### Shavua Tov Story Time - Mitzvot

8:30 AM, Zoom  
Final session for the season! Shavua Tov story time is a program designed for families with children ages 2-5. Join us for a 20-minute interactive story time on Zoom one Sunday each month from 8:30am to 9:00am. June's theme is mitzvot. This is a great time to jump in—our final session for the season is offered free of charge! Register to receive craft and zoom link: <https://forms.gle/WqQK8uDuAtVUBWo7>

### Israel Bazaar

2:00 PM, Camp Tel Noar, 167 Main St, Hampstead, NH  
Celebrate Israel with the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire and local synagogues at our vibrant, market-style street fair! This family-friendly Yom Ha'atzmaut event features interactive "market stalls" with hands-on crafts for kids and engaging learning for adults. Enjoy a non-political, welcoming atmosphere in a lively camp setting where you can explore Israeli culture—its people, nature, and creativity—at your own pace. What to expect: Israeli Street Fair: A joyful, summery atmosphere. Kids Activities: Interactive make-and-take crafts. Adult Learning: Visual and informational stalls. Community Connection: Hosted by synagogues from across NH. Kosher food available for purchase. Cost: Free. Theme: Curiosity, creativity, and connection. For more information, please contact Dinah Berch at 603-627-7679 or [dinah.berch@jewishnh.org](mailto:dinah.berch@jewishnh.org). Register Here: <https://bit.ly/israelbazaarnh>

## Thursday, June 11

### Schmooze and Brews with Jews

5:30 PM, Congregation Ahavas Achim, Branch and Blade Brewing Company, 17 Bradco St, Keene, NH 03431  
Casually hang out to Schmooze with Jews over Brews! Join us for this after-hours get together at

Branch and Blade brewing co. Casually hang out to shmooze with Jews over brews! Non-alcoholic drinks are available for purchase. Plenty of delicious food available for purchase as well! No registration required. Just show up :) Go to [www.keenesynagogue.org](http://www.keenesynagogue.org) for more up to date information, or contact Daniela Yitzchak at 603-352-6747 or at [office@keenesynagogue.org](mailto:office@keenesynagogue.org)

### Solving the Food Crisis in Israel

7:00 PM, Etz Hayim Synagogue, 1-1/2 Hood Road, Derry, NH  
Gilad Skolnick is the New England Director for American Friends of Leket Israel Gilad. He will share stories that go beyond the headlines about the food crisis in Israel, groundbreaking new Israeli laws enabling food rescue unlike anything elsewhere in the world, and how the war-ravaged agricultural sector is being restored. These presentations are part of Etz Hayim Synagogue's Adult Continuing Education Program, Hot Topics and Cool Contemporary Stuff. For more information, please contact Steve Soreff at 603-895-6120 or at [soreffs15@aol.com](mailto:soreffs15@aol.com).

## Sunday, June 14

### Ultimate Mitzvah Celebration Showcase

2:00 PM, Event Center Nashua, 2200 Southwood Drive, Nashua, NH  
The Event Center / Courtyard Marriott Nashua is excited to announce our very first Ultimate Mitzvah Showcase, a vibrant and engaging event designed to inspire families planning Bar and Bat Mitzvah Celebrations, as well as other social events. Join us on June 14, 2026, from 2 PM to 6 PM at our hotel, where we will partner with over 30 local vendors to bring together the community for an evening filled with creativity and fun! For any questions about the event, please contact Anna Wall at 603-579-6025 or [anna.wall@marriott.com](mailto:anna.wall@marriott.com). FREE event | Register Here <https://eventcenternashua.com/ultimate-mitzvah-showcase-event/>

## Saturday, June 27

### Beth Abraham's Lunch and Learn with Laura Knoy

12:00 PM, Temple Beth Abraham, 4 Raymond St, Nashua, NH  
Join Beth Abraham after Shabbat services on June 27 to hear award-winning journalist, podcaster and author, Laura Knoy speak about her recently published historical fiction novel, *The Shopkeeper of Alsace*. Inspired by a true story, the book follows Sarah, a Jewish woman whose experiences during World War I help her protect her family during World War II in the Alsace region of France. For more information, please contact Rebecca White at 603-883-8184 or at [office@tbanashua.org](mailto:office@tbanashua.org). Follow the link to register, <https://tbanashua.shulcloud.com/event/lunch-and-learn---laura-knoy.html>

Sponsor: Temple Beth Abraham

## Sunday, June 28

### Holocaust Remembrance Program with Erika Fabian

2:30 PM, Bethlehem Hebrew Congregation, 39 Strawberry Hill Rd, Bethlehem, NH  
The Bethlehem Hebrew Congregation is honored to invite the community to a special Holocaust Remembrance program with guest speaker Erika Fabian, a woman whose life story is a testament to the strength of the human spirit against the darkest tides of the 20th century. Born in Budapest, Fabian was only four years old when the Nazi shadow fell

over her homeland. While her father was taken to a prison camp, never to return, Erika, her sister, and her mother survived by the narrowest of margins. For more information or to register to receive the Zoom link, please email [Bethlehemshul@gmail.com](mailto:Bethlehemshul@gmail.com).

Sponsor: Bethlehem Hebrew Congregation

## Wednesday, July 8

### Books of Jewish Interest Club

4:00 PM, Bethlehem Public Library and on Zoom  
This summer, Books of Jewish Interest returns with a thoughtful lineup of readings centered on a theme that has shaped Jewish history and identity for generations: the search for a homeland. The first book of the summer is *Melting Point*, by Rachel Cokerell. In this richly researched book, Cokerell draws on newspaper accounts, letters, memoirs, speeches, documents, and interviews to trace the development of the Zionist movement and the early ideas that contributed to the founding of today's Jewish state. For more information, please visit our website: <https://www.bethlehemsynagogue.org/books-2026-1>

Sponsor: Bethlehem Hebrew Congregation and the Bethlehem Public Library

## Thursday, July 9

### Schmooze and Brews with Jews

5:30 PM, Congregation Ahavas Achim, Branch and Blade Brewing Company, 17 Bradco St, Keene, NH 03431  
Casually hang out to Schmooze with Jews over Brews! Join us for this after-hours get together at Branch and Blade brewing co. Casually hang out to shmooze with Jews over brews! Non-alcoholic drinks are available for purchase. Plenty of delicious food available for purchase as well! No registration required. Just show up :) Go to [www.keenesynagogue.org](http://www.keenesynagogue.org) for more up to date information, or contact Daniela Yitzchak at 603-352-6747 or at [office@keenesynagogue.org](mailto:office@keenesynagogue.org)

### White Mountain Jewish Film Festival

6:00 PM, Colonial Theatre, Bethlehem, NH  
FOR THE LOVE OF A WOMAN (2025). Mili Avital (Stargate), Uri Pfeffer (Hacksaw Ridge), Moni Moshonov (Late Marriage, America), Menashe Noy (Gett, Tehran) star in a sweeping English-speaking saga based on the beloved novel of Israeli author Meir Shalev, *The Loves of Judith*. A woman in 1970s Israel unearths family secrets from 1930s Palestine. The guest speaker is Dr. Shayna Weiss, Senior Associate Director of the Schusterman Center for Israeli Studies at Brandeis University. As always, your ticket includes our festival's famous patio party beginning at 6PM with complimentary refreshments and an assortment of beverages. The guest speaker will introduce the film and then stay for a Q&A as the houselights go on afterwards. Movie Time – All Films: Box office opens: 5:30PM/ Patio opens: 6:00PM/ Guest Speaker: 6:30PM/ Film: 7:00PM. General Admission \$10; BHC and JFNH Members: \$9; Season Pass (5 Films): \$40 Tickets are sold at the door or can be purchased online. Please follow the link for more information: <https://www.bethlehemsynagogue.org/events-wmjff-206>

Sponsor: Bethlehem Hebrew Congregation

## Thursday, July 16

### SFY Garden Party

private home, Manchester, NH - Jewish Federation of New Hampshire cordially invites you to a summer Garden Party. Wear your best hat and join us in a private garden in Manchester for live music,

afternoon tea and dessert. RSVP for the address. \$5 per guest. Register by July 15th. Rain date: July 23. Register by going to our website calendar at [jewishnh.org/community-calendar](http://jewishnh.org/community-calendar) or email Dinah Berch at [dinah.berch@jewishnh.org](mailto:dinah.berch@jewishnh.org) with questions.

## Friday, July 17

### Sounds in the Sanctuary

4:00 PM, Bethlehem Hebrew Congregation, 39 Strawberry Hill Road, Bethlehem, NH  
Our 13th season opens with a performance by pianist Bernard Rose, who will play music by Bach, Beethoven, and Copeland. A light reception follows. Tickets are available at the door (cash or check only) or online at our website. \$25 General Admission/\$20 BHC Members. Season pass (4 Concerts for the price of 3, available at or before the July 17 concert) is \$75 General Admission/\$60 BHC Members. Please follow the link for more information: <https://www.bethlehemsynagogue.org/concerts-2026>

## Wednesday, July 22

### Books of Jewish Interest Club

4:00 PM, Bethlehem Public Library and on Zoom  
This summer, Books of Jewish Interest returns with a thoughtful lineup of readings centered on a theme that has shaped Jewish history and identity for generations: the search for a homeland. We're especially pleased to welcome Shlomo Shyovitz, who will join us in person to discuss his novel *Borne Back*, a journey through time to the Israel of his youth. For more information, please visit our website: <https://www.bethlehemsynagogue.org/books-2026-1>

Sponsors: Bethlehem Hebrew Congregation and the Bethlehem Public Library

## Thursday, July 23

### White Mountain Jewish Film Festival

6:00 PM, Colonial Theatre, Bethlehem, NH  
MR. KLEIN (1976) It's January 1942 in Paris and art dealer Robert Klein is making a killing. For this loyal Frenchman, the Nazi occupation is a unique business opportunity, since Jews fleeing the country are unlikely to haggle over their heirlooms' worth. As always, your ticket includes our festival's famous patio party beginning at 6PM with complimentary refreshments and an assortment of beverages. The guest speaker will introduce the film and then stay for a Q&A as the houselights go on afterwards. Movie Time – All Films: Box office opens: 5:30PM/ Patio opens: 6:00PM/ Guest Speaker: 6:30PM/ Film: 7:00PM. General Admission \$10; BHC and JFNH Members: \$9; Season Pass (5 Films): \$40 Tickets are sold at the door or can be purchased online. Please follow the link for more information: <https://www.bethlehemsynagogue.org/events-wmjff-206>

Sponsor: Bethlehem Hebrew Congregation

## Friday, July 31

### Sounds in the Sanctuary

4:00 PM, Bethlehem Hebrew Congregation, 39 Strawberry Hill Road, Bethlehem, NH  
A return performance by Sounds in the Sanctuary favorites The Odesa Boys: Julian Milkis, clarinet and Maxim Lubarsky, piano. The duo will perform works by Piazzolla, Pruzhansky, Pärt, Silvestrov, Lubarsky, and Kancheli. A light reception with the musicians follows. Tickets are available at the door (cash or check only) or online at our website. \$25 General Admission/\$20 BHC Members. Please follow the link for more information: <https://www.bethlehemsynagogue.org/concerts-2026>

# Federation Voices

## Board Chair's Desk

continued from page 3

speaker, author, and Holocaust survivor **Janet Singer Applefield**. Janet discussed her new memoir, *Becoming Janet: Finding Myself in the Holocaust*, sharing her poignant journey of resilience, hope, and the enduring legacy of remembrance.

After Yom HaShoah, we moved on to something Jews do very well — **food!** In another at-capacity event, we welcomed noted blogger and culinary influencer **Naomi Nachman** — "The Aussie Gourmet" — to Chabad of Manchester. Naomi, author of *\*Perfect Flavors\** and *\*Perfect for Pesach\**, led a cooking demonstration accompanied by a tasting. Thank you to all who participated, and thank you to Chabad of Manchester!

In early May, the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire, in conjunction with **LeKet Israel** — Israel's National Food Bank — sponsored a gathering at Temple Israel Portsmouth focused on **Voluntourism to Israel**. We brought together community leaders from Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire alongside representatives from the Israeli Ministry of Cultural Affairs and the Israeli Ministry of Tourism. This forum served as the kick-

off to expanded joint programming. We are formulating plans to offer meaningful opportunities to bring people to Israel — person to person, community to community, Jew and Gentile alike. Getting someone to Israel is key: once someone has visited, their eyes are opened, and the propaganda they have encountered on television and social media is dispersed. There will be much more to come on this initiative.

On that note, I am pleased to announce that the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire is working alongside **Taglit/Birthright** to organize a **Voluntourism trip to Israel**, open to those between the ages of **35 to 65**. This will be a heavily subsidized trip. If you are interested, please contact the Federation office at **603-627-7679** or email [info@jewishnh.org](mailto:info@jewishnh.org) to be kept informed as details develop. If you fall outside the 35–65 age range but are interested, please let us know — there are opportunities available for additional trips, but we need to gauge the level of interest.

### Mazel Tov!

A big **Mazel Tov** to our Executive Director, **Erik Martin**, on the Bat Mitzvah of his daughter!

And a very special **Mazel Tov** to my own daughter, **Ariel Berger**, for being accepted as a **Leventhal Intern with Stand-**

**WithUs!** Please read Ariel's article in this month's Reporter, "*The Weight and Light of Being Jewish*", about growing up in New Hampshire. Her experiences and struggles are shared by many children and teenagers across our state, and they

are a powerful reminder of why our Federation must continue to support these young members of our community.

*Am Yisrael Chai.*

Jeremy Berger, Board Chair,  
Jewish Federation of New Hampshire

A gift from the  
**Jewish Federation of New Hampshire**



Sign up your children ages birth through 12 years old and enjoy the gift of Jewish children's books and resources delivered to your home each month. Explore Jewish heritage and culture through PJ Library's high-quality stories about Jewish values, traditions, and heritage.

Through the program your family will be enriched by experiencing the joys of Jewish life.

Funded by the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire, it's a gift that will nourish a Jewish life from the start.

**Harold Grinspoon** FOUNDATION

**Jewish Federation** OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
[jewishnh.org](http://jewishnh.org)

**SIGN UP** Ages birth through 8  
[pjlibrary.org](http://pjlibrary.org)

**SIGN UP** Ages 9 through 12  
[pjjourway.org](http://pjjourway.org)

## An Advisor You Can Trust



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## What PJ Library Taught Me About Preparation

I recently returned from my fifth International PJ Library Conference and, for the first time, I felt like I actually knew what I was doing. Not in an “I have solved parenting” way — absolutely not — but in an “I know what questions I want to ask” kind of way.

Every year, PJ Library professionals and connectors from around the world gather to share ideas, programs, challenges, successes, and very specific opinions about children’s programming logistics. Every year I come home with my brain buzzing.

This year I met with Terry Kaye from the Jewish Grandparents Network and talked about how grandparents can be better supported and more meaningfully connected to Jewish family life. I hung out with Alli Thresher, PJ Library’s Director of Digital Content, to talk podcasts, social media, and how on earth people make Instagram reels. I chatted with Saskia Swenson Moss and Rachel Kozupsky about PJ Library’s international programs and the incredible diversity of Jewish family experiences around the world. I tracked down Alicia in marketing to thank her for constantly answering my questions — and I told her we want PJ Library socks brought back.

I also got to present as part of the “Steal This!” showcase, sharing the Dungeons & Dragons campaigns and Baking

**Dinah Berch**

**JFNH  
Program  
Coordinator**



Show Downs I’ve run for PJ Our Way kids here in New Hampshire — including how I use AI as a creative partner to help expand the types of programs I’m able to offer. Then I got to turn around and steal incredible ideas from colleagues to bring back to our own community.

One thing that resonated with me this year was the realization that PJ Library is really about *hachanah* — preparation. Not pressure. Not perfection. Preparation.

PJ Library anticipates what families might need before they even know they need it: the blessings, the explanations, the stories from around the world, the timelines, historical grounding, and the



gentle “why,” “when,” and “how” of Jewish life. Podcasts for long drives. Playlists for Shabbat afternoons. Family Resource Guides for the moments when your child suddenly asks a much bigger question than you expected. The mirrors that help your children see themselves, and the windows into how others do Jewish, too. Thoughtful, kid-friendly entry points that allow families to connect more deeply if and when they’re ready.

I think that’s what I love most about this work. I love bringing people together simply because it’s fun to be around other Jews, or other families in the same stage of life. But I also love when a pro-

gram unexpectedly opens a door — to learning something new, asking a deeper question, or finding meaning where you didn’t expect it.

There is so much exciting work coming out of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation right now, and I’m excited to keep bringing more of it home to New Hampshire families. Keep an eye on your email for upcoming summer events like Splish Splash Shabbats and Popsicles in the Playground — and join us on June 7 for our Israel Bazaar at Camp Tel Noar.

Now if only PJ Library could order my groceries, plan my summer, and fold my laundry.

### Desert to the Table

*continued from page 1*

What resonated most throughout the evening was not only Raif’s survival, but the extraordinary resilience and warmth he has carried forward in the months since. Now living in New York City, Raif has poured his energy into building connection and understanding through food as the founder of Taboonia, New York City’s first Druze restaurant. As he spoke about his Druze heritage, family traditions, and the role food has played in his healing journey, the audience responded with tremendous empathy, curiosity, and appreciation.

The evening concluded with Raif preparing and serving a delicious traditional

Druze meal for guests. The food quickly became more than dinner—it became an extension of his story and an opportunity for community, conversation, and connection around the table. Many attendees stayed long after the formal program ended to continue speaking with Raif and one another.

Programs like this remind us of the power of personal storytelling to build understanding and strengthen community, even in difficult times. We are deeply grateful to Temple Israel Manchester for generously hosting the event and helping create such a welcoming environment for our guests. Special thanks as well to the many volunteers and community members whose hard work behind the scenes made the evening possible.



# Jewish American Heritage Month: Building Community Through Libraries

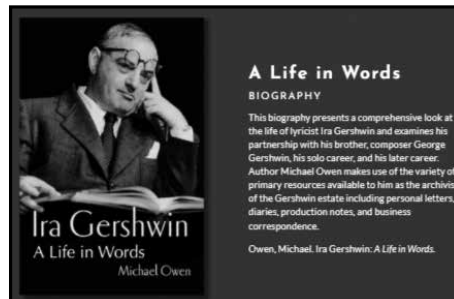
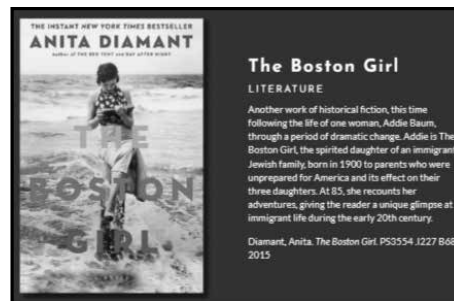
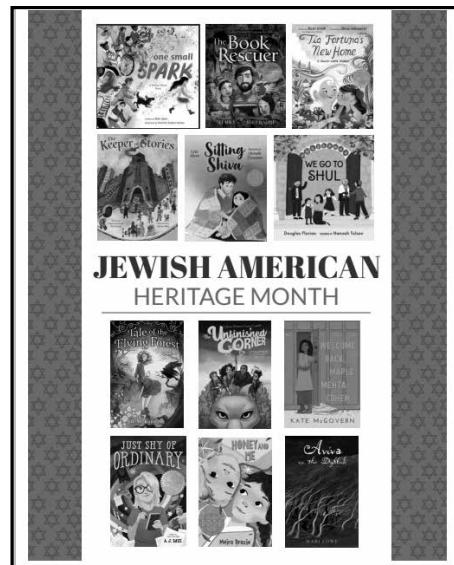
Each May, communities across the United States observe Jewish American Heritage Month (JAHM)—a time dedicated to honoring the history, culture, and enduring contributions of Jewish Americans. Established by presidential proclamation in 2006 and rooted in a 2004 commemoration of 350 years of Jewish life in America, JAHM invites people of all backgrounds to explore the rich and varied stories that have shaped our nation.

This year, the Jewish Federation took a proactive step to bring JAHM to life locally. In April, staff reached out to dozens of area libraries, offering resources and support to help create public displays highlighting Jewish heritage. Librarians were connected with materials from organizations such as the American Library Association, Jewish American Heritage Month official website, and the Anti-Defamation League—each offering curated content, book lists, and educational tools designed to inspire meaningful engagement.

Thanks to this outreach—and the creativity of local librarians—six institutions embraced the opportunity. Libraries in Keene, Derry, Exeter, Manchester, and Merrimack, along with the Portsmouth Athenaeum, developed thoughtful and engaging displays. The Keene Public Library even mounted two separate exhibits, one for adults and another for children, ensuring that visitors of all ages could connect with Jewish stories and experiences.

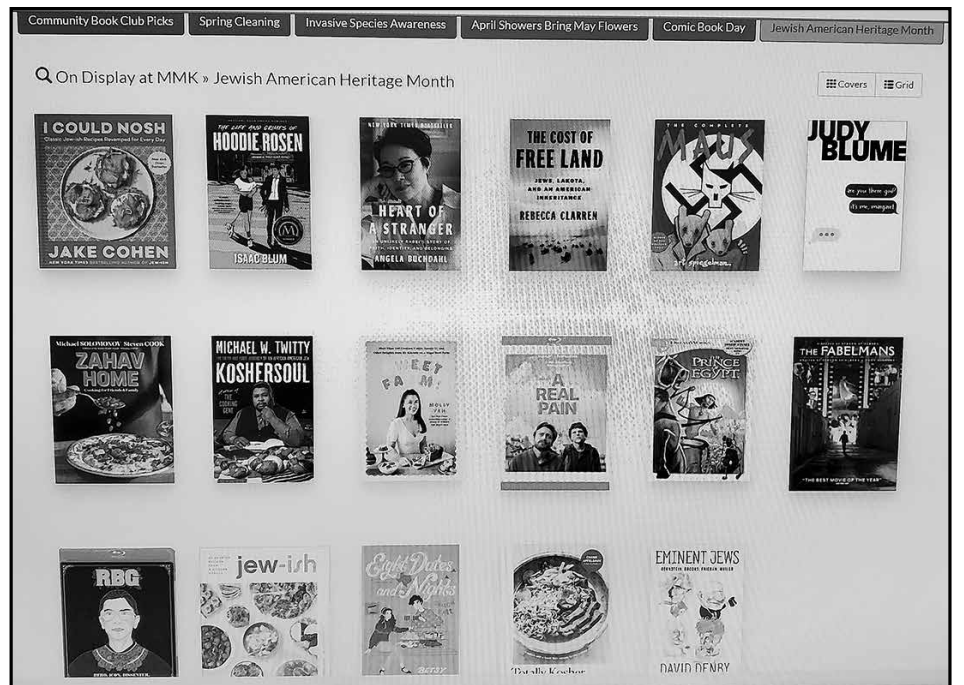
At the Portsmouth Athenaeum, Research Librarian Jessie Zaricki captured the spirit of the month beautifully, noting that JAHM is a time when “hundreds of organizations and Americans of all backgrounds connect to discover, explore, and celebrate the vibrant and varied American Jewish experience.” Their carefully curated book display, paired with detailed online synopses, offered visitors both visual and intellectual entry points into Jewish American history. Similarly, the Merrimack Public Library created prominent book displays throughout its space and expanded access through a comprehensive online catalog of recommended titles.

While the number of participating libraries may seem modest, the impact is anything but. These displays reached hundreds of patrons, offering a positive and accurate portrayal of Jewish life and contributions in America. Just as importantly, they demonstrate what is possible when community institutions work together.



Momentum is already building. Local and regional chapters of Hadassah have begun reaching out to libraries in their own communities, expanding the initiative through grassroots collaboration. This growing network underscores the power of partnership—and the potential for even broader participation in the years ahead.

Perhaps most encouraging are the relationships now taking shape. Julia Lanter of the Exeter Public Library shared her interest not only in JAHM, but also in



future collaboration around Holocaust remembrance. Her library, which has a meaningful connection to Holocaust survivors, is eager to honor their memory through educational displays. In response, the Federation provided resources from leading institutions including the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Facing History & Ourselves, and

Yad Vashem, among others. These connections point to a promising future—one in which libraries serve as vital partners in sharing Jewish history, combating antisemitism, and fostering understanding across communities. With continued outreach and collaboration, the impact of initiatives like Jewish American Heritage Month can only grow stronger.

## New Hampshire Jewish Holiday Planning for School, Sporting Events, & More

Earlier this year, the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire reached out to the New Hampshire Department of Education, statewide education associations, and athletic organizations—including the New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association—to request their partnership in avoiding scheduling conflicts with major Jewish holidays. As part of this outreach, a calendar of Jewish holidays for the 2026–2027 academic year was shared to support thoughtful planning.

We are pleased to provide that calendar again here as a resource for schools, athletic programs, and community organizations as they plan for the coming year. We hope it will be used to ensure that students and families are able to fully participate in both their educational and religious lives without conflict.

We also encourage families to engage proactively with school and athletic leaders to highlight the importance of these dates and to share any scheduling concerns. Your partnership helps ensure that our community's needs are recognized and respected.

*Mr. Frank Edelblut  
Commissioner  
State of New Hampshire Department of Education  
101 Pleasant Street  
Concord, New Hampshire 03301*

*Dear Commissioner Edelblut,*

*As school districts create their calendars for the upcoming academic year, we write to remind you of the dates of important **Planning for School** continued on page 9*

### 2026-2027 Calendar of Major Jewish Holidays

Abstaining from school, work, and secular activities is a critical part of the observance of some of the Jewish holidays. On some occasions, a fast is required. As a result, Jewish individuals may be absent from work and school.

This calendar has been prepared to assist you in scheduling business, school, and community events to avoid conflicts that place Jewish students and employees in a difficult situation or at a disadvantage. We ask that you consider these dates when scheduling examinations, assemblies, parent-teacher conferences, sports and theatrical tryouts and events, field trips, major assignments, school photographs, and graduations, as well as school-related programs for parents and teachers and other school officials. If conflicts cannot be avoided, we ask that arrangements be made that will place Jewish students and workers on an equal footing with their peers.

HOLIDAY	DATES
<b>Rosh Hashanah</b> , the first of the High Holidays, is the Jewish New Year.	Begins sunset of Friday, September 11, 2026; Ends nightfall of Sunday, September 13, 2026. <b>No work is permitted.</b>
<b>Yom Kippur</b> (the Day of Atonement) is the holiest day on the Jewish calendar.	Begins sunset of Sunday, September 20, 2026; Ends nightfall of Monday, September 21, 2026. <b>No work is permitted.</b>
<b>Sukkot</b> (Feast of Tabernacles).	Begins sunset of Friday, September 25, 2026; Ends nightfall of Friday, October 2, 2026. <b>No work permitted on September 26 - 27.</b>
<b>Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah</b>	Begins sunset of Friday, October 2, 2026; Ends nightfall of Sunday, October 4, 2026. <b>No work is permitted.</b>
<b>Chanukah</b>	Begins sunset of Friday, December 4, 2026; Ends nightfall of Saturday, December 12, 2026. <b>Work is permitted except on Shabbat</b> , i.e., the Sabbath (which begins Friday 18 minutes before sunset and ends Saturday at nightfall).
<b>Passover</b>	Begins sunset of Wednesday, April 21, 2027; Ends nightfall of Thursday, April 29, 2027. <b>No work is permitted on April 22 and April 28.</b>
<b>Shavuot</b>	Begins sunset of Thursday, June 10, 2027; Ends nightfall of Saturday, June 12, 2027. <b>No work is permitted.</b>

### 2027-2028 Calendar of Major Jewish Holidays

Abstaining from school, work, and secular activities is a critical part of the observance of some of the Jewish holidays. On some occasions, a fast is required. As a result, Jewish individuals may be absent from work and school.

This calendar has been prepared to assist you in scheduling business, school, and community events to avoid conflicts that place Jewish students and employees in a difficult situation or at a disadvantage. We ask that you consider these dates when scheduling examinations, assemblies, parent-teacher conferences, sports and theatrical tryouts and events, field trips, major assignments, school photographs, and graduations, as well as school-related programs for parents and teachers and other school officials. If conflicts cannot be avoided, we ask that arrangements be made that will place Jewish students and workers on an equal footing with their peers.

HOLIDAY	DATES
<b>Rosh Hashanah</b> , the first of the High Holidays, is the Jewish New Year.	Begins sunset of Friday, October 1, 2027; Ends nightfall of Sunday, October 3, 2027. <b>No work is permitted.</b>
<b>Yom Kippur</b> (the Day of Atonement) is the holiest day on the Jewish calendar.	Begins sunset of Sunday, October 10, 2027; Ends nightfall of Monday, October 11, 2027. <b>No work is permitted.</b>
<b>Sukkot</b> (Feast of Tabernacles).	Begins sunset of Friday, October 15, 2027; Ends nightfall of Friday, October 22, 2027. <b>No work permitted on October 16, 2027.</b>
<b>Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah</b>	Begins sunset of Friday, October 22, 2027; Ends nightfall of Sunday, October 24, 2027. <b>No work is permitted.</b>
<b>Chanukah</b>	Begins sunset of Friday, December 24, 2027; Ends nightfall of Saturday, January 1, 2028. <b>Work is permitted except on Shabbat</b> , i.e., the Sabbath (which begins Friday 18 minutes before sunset and ends Saturday at nightfall).
<b>Passover</b>	Begins sunset of Monday, April 10, 2028; Ends nightfall of Tuesday, April 18, 2028. <b>No work is permitted on April 11 and April 17.</b>
<b>Shavuot</b>	Begins sunset of Tuesday, May 30, 2028; Ends nightfall of Thursday, June 1, 2028. <b>No work is permitted.</b>

### Jewish Holiday Descriptions

**Rosh Hashanah** - Rosh Hashanah is considered the anniversary of the creation of humankind and is celebrated as the Jewish New Year. This is the day on which all of humankind is judged. Together with Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah is part of the Days of Awe. The focus of this period is self-examination, repentance, and the performance of righteous deeds.

**Yom Kippur** - The Jewish Day of Atonement. This is the most solemn day of the Jewish year devoted to prayer and fasting.

**Sukkot** - An eight-day Jewish holiday of thanksgiving, harvest, and remembrance of Jews wandering in the desert after the Exodus from Egypt.

**Shemini Atzeret** - Shemini Atzeret, which occurs on the final day of Sukkot, is an extra celebration in which the Creator invites the Jewish people to stay for a more intimate celebration.

**Simchat Torah** - The annual reading (in weekly portions) of the Torah is complete and begun anew in the synagogue.

**Chanukah** - An eight-day Jewish holiday commemorating the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem after its defilement by those who sought to force the Jewish people to reject Judaism and accept their culture and belief instead.

**Passover** - An eight-day Jewish holiday marking deliverance of the Jews from slavery in Egypt.

**Shavuot** - Jewish holiday commemorating the giving of the Torah (Law) on Mount Sinai.

## Brindis Fund Scholarship to Support New Hampshire Jewish Students

The Jewish Federation of New Hampshire is pleased to help spread the word about an exciting opportunity for Jewish students across the Granite State through the Brindis Fund Scholarship. This \$5,000 scholarship is available to Jewish college students and college-bound high school seniors from throughout New Hampshire who have demonstrated a meaningful commitment to Jewish communal life.

The Brindis Fund Scholarship was established to support and encourage the next generation of Jewish leaders, volunteers, and community builders. Whether through synagogue involvement, youth groups, social action projects, Israel advocacy, Jewish education, cultural programming, or other forms of engagement, applicants are encouraged to share the ways they have contributed to Jewish life in their communities.

Eligible students are invited to submit an application by August 1, 2026. Appli-

cations should include a short personal bio along with a description of the applicant's Jewish communal activities and involvement up to this point in their life. The scholarship committee is especially interested in learning how applicants have helped strengthen Jewish community, identity, and connection in New Hampshire and beyond.

The Jewish community thrives because of individuals who choose to give their time, energy, and passion to others. Scholarships like this not only recognize those efforts, but also invest in the future of Jewish life by supporting students as they continue their educational and personal journeys.

Applications and questions can be sent directly to Scott Selig at: [scottselig2017@gmail.com](mailto:scottselig2017@gmail.com).

We encourage families, congregations, educators, and community leaders across New Hampshire to share this opportunity widely with eligible students.

## Planning for School

*continued from page 8*

*Jewish holidays. Enclosed is a calendar for the 2025-2026 academic year.*

*We think it is critical that in scheduling important activities, schools do not inadvertently dissuade Jewish students and employees from observing important religious holidays or place those students and employees at a disadvantage. As we have in the past, we ask that you share this letter and the calendar with all school administrative units and ask that they in turn share these materials with school principals.*

*It is our hope that schools will avoid the dates set out in the calendar as they plan important events, including exams, assemblies, tryouts and auditions, field trips, sporting events, school dances, and graduations. We deeply appreciate their sensitivity in avoiding conflicts as they schedule events and activities for students, parents, faculty, and any other district staff who would be adversely impacted.*

*Abstaining from school, work and secular activities is a critical part of the observance of some of the Jewish holidays. This*

*is especially the case for the "High Holidays" of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and for the first two days of the important holiday of Passover.*

*Although the Jewish day begins and ends at sunset, many people need to be absent from school or work the entire day on which the holiday begins. As an example, the first night of Passover begins with a seder, a complex ritual meal that involves the re-telling of the exodus through stories and song and the consumption of ritual foods. Many people travel great distances to share this significant event with family members. There is another seder on the second night of Passover.*

*We thank you in advance for your understanding and consideration of the important dates set out on the enclosed calendar.*

*We hope that schools will look to the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire as a resource if they have questions when scheduling important events or addressing potential conflicts in the SAU calendar.*

*Sincerely,  
Erik Martin  
Executive Director*

**We Need You**

## Review your favorite PJ Our Way book for The Reporter!

Do you have a favorite PJ Our Way book? Something you just couldn't put down or that you think **EVERYONE** should read?

**Tell us all about it!**

Send your reviews to [Dinah.Berch@jewishnh.org](mailto:Dinah.Berch@jewishnh.org) or email for details & question prompts.

**We'll publish your review in upcoming issues of The Reporter and on Facebook!**

Jewish Federation OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

PJ Our Way sends FREE Jewish middle-grade books for kids ages 9 through 12. Sign up at [pjourway.org/enroll](http://pjourway.org/enroll)

## PLANNED GIVING

Secure the future of our Jewish community

**As you envision the future of the Jewish community that means so much to you, consider creating a planned gift with the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire that will touch the lives of generations to come.**

**ENDOWMENT AND PLANNED GIVING**

By making a planned gift to a JFNH endowment fund, you can ensure that your generosity and vision will have an impact that extends far beyond your lifetime. Endowment funds that were established decades ago are still providing important support to our community today. At JFNH, we have the knowledge and expertise to help you design a planned gift that meets your needs while also endowing your personal vision for the future.

- Unrestricted Endowment.** A gift to JFNH's Unrestricted Endowment will support the full spectrum of initiatives and programs essential to the future of our Jewish community.
- Perpetual Annual Campaign Endowment (PACE).** You can create an endowment to perpetuate your Annual Campaign gift. This is a wonderful way to sustain your lifelong investment in the community you have helped build.
- Restricted Endowment.** Our planned giving professionals will work with you to craft a gift that supports the work of a valued partner organization or an area of particular interest to you, such as caring for the most vulnerable, engaging people of all ages in Jewish learning, and supporting Israel.

**WAYS TO ENDOW YOUR VISION**

- Bequests:** A bequest through your will, trust, or retirement account is an easy way to create an endowment. We will work with you and your advisor to create a gift that clearly reflects and honors your intentions.
- Retirement Plan Assets:** You may designate JFNH as a beneficiary of a qualified retirement plan such as an IRA, 401(k), or 403(b). To do so, simply contact your plan administrator and complete the appropriate beneficiary designation form. By naming JFNH as a beneficiary, you may avoid significant and often unanticipated estate and income taxes that would otherwise be paid by your heirs.
- Life Income Gifts:** A Charitable Gift Annuity or a Charitable Remainder Trust can provide an immediate tax deduction and lifetime income for one or more beneficiaries. After the death of the last beneficiary, the remainder becomes part of an endowment fund to be used in accordance with your wishes.
- Life Insurance:** You may purchase a life insurance policy that names JFNH as both owner and beneficiary. After your passing, JFNH will redeem the policy and the proceeds will support JFNH's endowment.

**LEARN MORE:**  
Contact Foundation Chair through the JFNH Office at 603-627-7679

Jewish Federation OF NEW HAMPSHIRE THE STRENGTH OF A PEOPLE. THE POWER OF COMMUNITY.

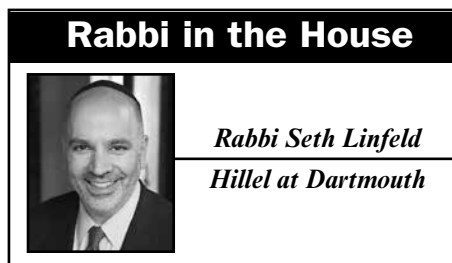
See what's happening in the community at [www.jewishnh.org](http://www.jewishnh.org)

# Lifting Our Eyes to the Mountains: Jewish Life in a Season of Long Light

Early summer in the Upper Valley has a way of making Psalm 121 feel very close. At Dartmouth, this is Sophomore Summer, when nearly every rising junior is on campus, and the entire class experiences a shared season of growth and reflection. The mountains rise in their deepening green, the Connecticut River moves with quiet steadiness, and the long light settles over the Green as if to remind us that renewal often comes quietly.

Across the Jewish world, this is a moment that poses the Psalmist's enduring query:

*"I lift up my eyes to the mountains: from where will my help come?"*  
Psalm 121:1 (translation by Robert Alter)



At Dartmouth, challenges echo that are felt across campuses nationwide. Students are searching for meaning yet remain wary of institutions, uncertain whether organized Jewish life can hold their questions or their hopes. They navigate a digital landscape where social media accelerates misinformation and intensifies identity pressures, often leaving them unsure what is true or whom to trust. At the same time, the mental

health strain that defines so much of college life today makes it harder for students to feel grounded or connected. Even when they long for community, many struggle to summon the energy to reach for it.

Rising antisemitism adds pressure from the outside and often leaves students feeling exposed in ways that are painfully new. Hostility from beyond the campus can seep into daily life, which makes it even more essential to strengthen our inner life as a community and the bonds that hold us together. Yet polarization within student communities can strain relationships that once felt natural and easy. These forces converge to create a campus environment where belonging must be cultivated with intention and care.

alone. Help comes when small groups gather as learning cohorts in the Koreman Library, questioning and disagreeing with kindness, and discover that this community can hold differences without breaking. These moments are holy. They are the steady ways we answer the Psalmist's question with our own hands and hearts.

In this season of long light, Dartmouth Hillel strives to be a place where Jewish campus life does its thinking, a laboratory of belonging, and a *beit midrash* (study hall) for the future.

Here, students wrestle with the hardest questions of identity, community, purpose, and Israel, doing so with honesty and courage. What happens in this valley can ripple outward and offer a model of Jewish life that is resilient and rooted in connection.

Psalm 121 ends with a promise:

*"The LORD guards your going and your coming, now and forevermore."*  
Psalm 121:8

*"My help is from the LORD, maker of heaven and earth."*  
Psalm 121:2

Psalm 121 answers its own question with quiet conviction: *My help is from the LORD*. In the language of Hillel work, that help arrives through relationship-based engagement, through the sacred act of accompaniment.

At Dartmouth Hillel, Psalm 121 becomes a lived practice. Help comes when a student is met for coffee under the tall pines and feels heard. Help comes when Shabbat melodies rise from the Alperin/Hirsch Sanctuary and the noise of packed Shabbat Dinner tables fills the Roth Center and a student realizes, in the warmth of that crowded Bildner Dining Room, that they are not

In this season of long days and growing light, let us guard one another's steps with care. Let us build a community where every soul is seen and every question welcomed. Let us lift our eyes to the mountains and become, in our own time, the help the Psalmist longed for, a people who answer fear with courage and the challenges of this moment with a steadfast commitment to one another and to the Jewish future.

May this summer bring strength to those who are weary and blessing to all who seek meaning and peace.

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Funding in part by The Jewish Federation of New Hampshire, The Ben and Zelma Dorson Fund, The Maurice Foster Fund, The Saul Sidore Fund, The Paul and Fran Gordon Fund and The Singer Family Trust Fund

On Friday April 10th, Laconia's Temple B'nai Israel Adult Education Committee hosted, as part of their Wisdom & Wellness series, a presentation by Melissa Grenier from the New Hampshire Alzheimer's Association titled "Healthy Living for your Brain and Body". The event was well attended and informative. For those of you who missed it, the Alzheimer's Association website at [alz.org](http://alz.org) has a wealth of information about Brain Health under their Help & Support tab. Please stay tuned for more exciting and informative Adult Education events!



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# In the Community

## Author and Holocaust Survivor Janet Singer Applefield

Author and Holocaust Survivor Janet Singer Applefield visited Temple Israel Portsmouth to tell her engaging story of combating hate and prejudice on April 12, 2026.



### Lunch & Learn: Antisemitism in New Hampshire

**June 25th, 11:30am**

Join us for a conversation with NH State Representatives Paul Berch and Jessica Grill on recent Antisemitic activities and legislation followed by a Q&A.

In Person in the JFNH Community Room, 273 South River Road, Unit #5, Bedford, NH 03110

**Registration required.**

\$8/person | Pizza and salad lunch provided  
Zoom link available upon request.



To register please scan the QR code or call the JFNH office at 603-627-7679



Funding in part by The Jewish Federation of New Hampshire, The Ben and Zelma Dorson Fund, The Maurice Foster Fund, The Saul Sidore Fund, The Paul and Fran Gordon Fund and The Singer Family Trust Fund

## Delighting in the Flavors of the 29th Annual New Hampshire Jewish Food Festival

Order Online Available Beginning Sunday, May 31

**Laconia, NH** - Get ready to enjoy the taste of tradition! The 29th annual New Hampshire Jewish Food Festival, a popular summer event in the Lakes Region and a vital fundraiser for Temple B'nai Israel (TBI) of Laconia, is back to delight your taste buds.

From authentic homemade Jewish food prepared with love and care by TBI members, to premium deli selections, this festival offers a delicious array of treats you won't want to miss. Indulge in homemade favorites including savory brisket, comforting matzah ball soup, crispy latkes, flaky knishes, sweet rugelach, and much more. Stock up on the best quality corned beef, pastrami, and tongue direct-

ly sourced from Evan's Deli in Marblehead, MA.

"Our very popular Lunch and Dinner Packs will be available again this year," stated Susan Needleman, TBI member who is responsible for all food preparation for the New Hampshire Jewish Food Festival. "The Lunch Pack is perfect for on-the-go summer adventures, and the Dinner Pack is a complete, frozen meal perfect for holiday gatherings or busy weeknights."

### A Festival Steeped in Love and Tradition:

Over the years there have been many changes to the New Hampshire Jewish Food Festival, but the consistent component has always been the focus on the food. Almost every item sold is made by TBI members, working in teams, pouring



their hearts and countless hours of chopping, slicing, rolling, and frying into creating these culinary delights, all while schmoozing in the TBI kitchen. Their

unwavering commitment to quality ensures every bite is a taste of authentic tradition and sincere care. Their focus is clear: if the food isn't exceptional, the mission isn't complete.

### How To Purchase:

Ordering from the full 2026 menu will be available beginning Sunday, May 31 and will run through Sunday, July 5 on the TBI website, <https://tbinh.org>. Food quantities will be limited and likely to sell out, so early ordering is highly recommended. Convenient curbside and drive-through pickup will be available by appointment only on Friday, July 17 and Saturday, July 18.

### For More Information

Contact: Maria Cantor

Email: [mcantor40@gmail.com](mailto:mcantor40@gmail.com)

Cell: 617-680-9452

## A Voice of Resilience: BHC Welcomes Holocaust Survivor Erika Fabian

The Bethlehem Hebrew Congregation is honored to invite the community to a special Holocaust Remembrance program. On Sunday, June 28, 2026, at 2:30 pm, we will gather to light candles for those who perished and to hear Erika Fabian, a woman whose life story is a testament to the strength of the human spirit against the darkest tides of the 20th century.

Born in Budapest, Fabian was only four years old when the Nazi shadow fell over her homeland. While her father was taken to a prison camp, never to return, Erika, her sister, and her mother survived by the narrowest of margins—hiding in plain sight.

Through the use of false Christian papers, the trio managed to evade capture while nearly eighty percent of their extended family perished in the camps. Yet, the end of World War II did not bring immediate peace. Erika's family soon found themselves living under the oppressive Stalinist regime in Hungary. After a harrowing attempt to escape to the West that resulted in their imprisonment, they finally secured their freedom following the 1956 Hungarian uprising, eventually making their way to the United States.

Fabian did not just survive, she flour-



ished. After graduating from high school in New Jersey, she attended Northwestern University and subsequently worked in the theatre, eventually opening an acting school in San Francisco. She later became a photojournalist. She recently self-published an autobiographical novel, *Liars' Paradise*, based on her childhood experiences.

Bethlehem Hebrew Congregation's Holocaust Remembrance program is free and open to the public. It will take place on Sunday, June 28, 2026 at 2:30 PM, in person at Bethlehem Hebrew Congregation, 39 Strawberry Hill Road, Bethlehem, New Hampshire and on Zoom (Ms. Fabian will join us remotely from her home in Los Angeles). For more information or to register to receive the Zoom link, please email [Bethlehemshul@gmail.com](mailto:Bethlehemshul@gmail.com).

## Journalist and author Laura Knoy speaks at Temple Beth Abraham in Nashua on June 27

After Shabbat services on June 27, come hear award-winning journalist, podcaster and author Laura Knoy speak about her recently published historical fiction novel, *The Shopkeeper of Alsace*. Inspired by a true story, the book follows Sarah, a Jewish woman whose experiences during World War I help her protect her family during World War II in the Alsace region of France.

The book follows Sarah from her youth in Poland through her life as a successful shopkeeper in Colmar, detailing her resilience and resourcefulness as she navigates the dangers of the Nazi occupation. Drawing on real family accounts and letters, *The Shopkeeper of Alsace* is a powerful story of survival, and the impact of war on ordinary people.

For 25 years, Laura Knoy hosted New Hampshire Public Radio's live, daily news and public affairs call-in show *The Exchange*. Over the years, she interviewed thousands of inspiring, wonderful people. At both the state and national level, the show was repeatedly cited for its intelligence, depth, and civility.



During her June 27 presentation, Laura will discuss the inspiration for her novel, rooted in a 35-year friendship with Annette, whom she met as an exchange student in Strasbourg, France in the mid-1980s. Annette, who was about Laura's mother's age, once casually mentioned she was hidden at a convent during the war.

After Annette's death in 2015, Laura regretted not asking more about Annette's wartime girlhood. But then in 2018, Annette's daughter, Brigitte, revealed that cassette tapes existed in which Annette and her siblings had recorded their memories of the war. She also connected Laura with Annette's brother, her Uncle Jacques, who, at age 95, still remembered everything. Between her interview with Jacques and the cassettes, the foundation for *The Shopkeeper of Alsace* came to life.

A light lunch will be served after Shabbat services. There is no charge, but donations for programs like this one are strongly encouraged. Register for the event at <https://tbanashua.shulcloud.com/event/lunch-and-learn---laura-knoy.html>

# In the Community

## Names We Carry

On April 19, the community came together for an intergenerational program on Jewish names and identity. “Names We Carry,” a partnership between PJ Our Way, the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire, Temple Israel Ports-

mouth, and the Jewish Language Project, invited participants to share the stories behind their names and explore their meanings. Participants then created personalized name jewelry and *yadot* (ritual pointers) as keepsakes.



## Northern New England Communities Unite Around Voluntourism in Israel

By Arinne Edelman

Jewish leaders from across northern New England gathered in Portsmouth on May 6th for a first-of-its-kind regional roundtable aimed at fostering Jewish American identity and supporting Jewish education through the encouragement of voluntourism and experiential education in Israel. Hosted by the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire at historic Temple Israel in Portsmouth, the gathering brought together the Jewish Community Alliance of Southern Maine, the Jewish Communities of Vermont, rabbis from across the region, Israeli officials, and nonprofit leaders to discuss how the Jewish American community can help strengthen Jewish American community and engagement while reinforcing Israel's tourism and volunteer sectors.

This marks a historic convening of communal organizations serving the Jewish communities of Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, and Northern Massachusetts.

Chad Martin, Director of the Northeast Region for Israel's Ministry of Tourism, and Jordanna Cantin, Business Development Manager from the Ministry, traveled from New York City to address attendees.

Martin shared that more than two million trips to Israel were canceled because of the war, dealing a major blow not only to Israel's economy but also to Americans' understanding of the realities on the ground.

"When people return from Israel, they become ambassadors," Martin highlighted. "They share what they saw with their communities, on social media, and through deeper Jewish engagement."

The conversation focused on practical strategies to strengthen community and volunteer missions to Israel, including reducing financial barriers, engaging travelers through niche trips of interest to multiple communities, post-trip follow-up engagement, and expanding community partnerships across the region.

Gilad Skolnick, Leket's New England Director, highlighted the growing need for volunteers in Israel, noting that Leket Israel hosted more than 100,000 volunteers over the past year while Israel currently faces a shortage of approximately 30,000 agricultural workers.



Leket Israel, Israel's national food bank - widely believed to be the world's largest food rescue organization - rescues surplus agricultural produce and prepared food that would otherwise be discarded and redistributes it to approximately 475,000 Israelis in need every week.

Jeremy Berger, chair of the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire, announced exciting plans for a new subsidized Israel trip initiative, alongside other innovative efforts to strengthen Israel engagement in the region.

Among others participating were Rabbi Alex Matthews of Temple Ahavas Achim in Newburyport, Rabbi Daniel Aronson of Ahavas Achim in Keene, Rabbi Gary Berenson of Etz Hayim in Portland, Maine, Rabbi Jon Spira Savett and Sarit Tsor of Temple Beth Abraham in Nashua, and Mark Ettinger, President and chair of the board of the Food Rescue Institute, and a board member of Leket Israel, and staff from Israel's Consulate for New England. The convening was sponsored by Returning the Sparks and spearheaded by American Friends of Leket Israel.

Organizers expressed hope that the Portsmouth gathering would mark the beginning of an ongoing northern New England partnership focused on increasing travel to Israel, expanding volunteer opportunities, and deepening ties between local Jewish communities and Israel.

*Arinne Edelman is a former UNH Hillel Advisor and the Executive Director of Returning the Sparks, which creates opportunities to transform people's connections with Judaism, with Israel, and with each other. <https://www.returningthesparks.org>*

## Etz Hayim Synagogue Presents: Solving the Food Crisis in Israel by Gilad Skolnick

On June 11 at 7:00PM, Gilad Skolnick, New England director for American Friends of Leket Israel, will share stories that go beyond the headlines about the food crisis in Israel, groundbreaking new Israeli laws enabling food rescue unlike anything elsewhere in the world, and how the war-ravaged agricultural sector is being restored.

Leket Israel, the National Food Bank, is Israel's leading food rescue organization. Unlike other food banks, its sole mission is to rescue healthy, surplus food and deliver it to those in need through a network of nonprofit partners. It is believed to operate the largest gleaning program in the world, rescuing and distributing meals every week to vulnerable Israelis of all backgrounds—including single parents, Israeli Arabs, new immigrants from Ethiopia and Ukraine, and Holocaust survivors.

To learn more about Leket Israel and



The National Food Bank

to donate, visit <https://www.leket.org/en/online-donation/>.

These presentations are part of Etz Hayim Synagogue's Adult Continuing Education Program, "Hot Topics and Cool Contemporary Stuff." All programs are held at Etz Hayim Synagogue, 1 1/2 Hood Road, Derry, NH 03038. Please visit [www.etzhayim.org/learn/adult-learning](http://www.etzhayim.org/learn/adult-learning) for a complete listing of Hot Topics. For more information, please contact Stephen Soreff, MD, at [soreffs15@aol.com](mailto:soreffs15@aol.com) or 603-895-6120.



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## A Summer Filled with Wisdom and Song

As the Bethlehem Hebrew Congregation (BHC) enters its 106th summer season, we welcome our new spiritual leader, Rabbi Hazzan Jeremy Lipton, who holds Master's degrees in Jewish studies and Music/Vocal Performance. Rabbi Lipton has over 25 years of pulpit experience as a rabbi, hazzan and Jewish communal leader in congregations in Akron, Ohio; Los Angeles, California; San Antonio, Texas; and Toulouse, France. His presence in Bethlehem promises to fill our summer with both wisdom and song. We also warmly welcome his wife, Dr. Kay Lipton, a noted musicologist, to our community.

BHC's long running "Building Community Through the Arts" summer program continues to thrive: The Books of Jewish Interest discussion group, the Sounds in the Sanctuary classical music series, and the White Mountain Jewish Film Festival all have exciting line-ups for 2026.

This summer, Books of Jewish Interest (BJI) returns with a thoughtful set of readings centered on a theme that has shaped Jewish history and identity for generations: the search for a homeland. Shlomo Shyovitz will join us in person to discuss his novel *Borne Back*, a journey through time to the Israel of his youth. Alina Adams, a New York Times best-selling author, will join us via Zoom to talk about her novel, *My Mother's Secret*, which follows an idealistic young woman through harrowing adventures as she struggles to help establish a Jewish homeland in Russia.

In *My Hijacking*, Martha Hodes recounts her experience as a twelve-year-old traveling with her older sister when their flight, TWA 741, was hijacked en route from Frankfurt to New York in 1970. Finally, Rachel Cockerell's richly researched book, *Melting Point*, traces the development of the Zionist movement and the early ideas that contributed to the founding of today's Jewish state. Co-sponsor Bethlehem Public Library will be hosting BJI again this year, in person at the library and on Zoom, on Wednesday afternoons at 4 p.m., July 8, July 22, August 5, and August 19.

Sounds in the Sanctuary opens its season on Friday, July 17, welcoming back pianist Bernard Rose for a program of works by Bach, Beethoven, and Copeland. July 31, the "Odesa Boys," clarinetist Julian Milkis and pianist Maxim Lubarsky, will perform pieces by Piazzolla, Pärt, Silvestrov, Lubarsky, and



Kancheli. Dr. Richard Kogan, acclaimed for his programs delving into the minds and music of great composers, will present "Schumann: Music, Mood Swings, and Madness" on August 14. Violinist Isabelle Durin, accompanied by pianist Maxime Zecchini, will present a performance entitled "Exile to Hollywood: Jewish Composers in the Golden Age of Film" on August 28. Our concerts are held in the BHC sanctuary at 39 Strawberry Hill Road, Bethlehem, on Fridays at 4:00 pm (note the new time this year) with a reception following.

Furthermore, Sounds in the Sanctuary joins Bethlehem's Colonial Theatre to present a special performance by Israeli jazz clarinetist-saxophonist Anat Cohen at the Colonial on Sunday, September 6 at 2 pm. We hope that jazz enthusiasts throughout New Hampshire will take

this opportunity to come north of the Notch, spend a day in lovely Bethlehem, and attend an amazing concert.

The 2026 White Mountain Jewish Film Festival features five deeply moving depictions of tormented souls struggling with past secrets. We open on July 9 with *For the Love of a Woman* (2025), which follows a woman in 1970s Israel unearthing family secrets from 1930s Palestine. The guest speaker is Dr. Shayna Weiss, Senior Associate Director of the Schusterman Center for Israeli Studies at Brandeis University.

On July 23, we'll screen *Mr. Klein* (1976), in which an opportunistic art dealer in Nazi-occupied Paris is mistaken for a Jewish man of the same name. Joining us as guest speaker is Dr. Kate Gibbeault, Director of the Cohen Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Keene State College.

The film on August 6 is *Next Stop, Greenwich Village*, which also debuted in 1976. Modeled on writer-director Paul Mazursky's own experiences, the main character is Larry Lapinsky, an aspiring actor in his early twenties who leaves his Brooklyn home, kvetching mother, and hen-pecked pop to move to 1950s Greenwich Village, a few subway stops and several worlds away. The guest speaker is WMJFF's favorite film historian, Rick Winston.

The next film, on August 20, is *Un-*

*spoken* (2024), which follows the story of Noam, a closeted teenager in a religious community who discovers that he might not be alone. When he finds a love letter written to his grandfather by another man before the Holocaust, he sets out to find this mysterious person and uncover his grandfather's identity as well as his own.

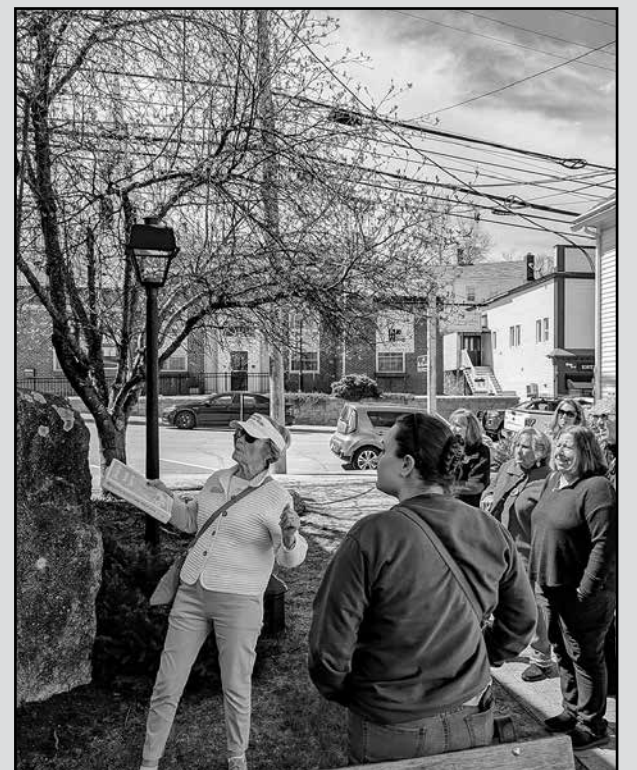
Finally, the film festival concludes with a classic on September 3: *Save the Tiger* (1973). Jack Lemmon won an Oscar for his portrayal of Harry Stoner, a businessman who juggles the books, supplies women for clients, and even sets fire to his own dress manufacturing factory in the name of getting ahead. He is drawn to the idea of an earlier America, in which morality mattered, but is frightened to break away from the emptiness of his seemingly successful life.

As always, the film festival will be held on Thursday evenings at Bethlehem's historic Colonial Theatre. Your ticket includes our famous patio party and the guest speakers who introduce each film and lead a Q&A after the screening.

Please see the BHC website, [www.bethlehemsynagogue.org](http://www.bethlehemsynagogue.org) for more information on all our summer events.



Temple B'nai Israel of Laconia's Sisterhood enjoyed each other's company and the sunshine during their first event of 2026, while spending the afternoon taking a tour through the annual Meredith NH Sculpture Walk. For more information about Temple B'nai Israel, email [info@tbinh.org](mailto:info@tbinh.org).



## Secrets Revealed: How Your Rabbi Writes Their High Holy Day Sermon

By Joshua Kail, *America's Rebbitzman*

It may seem like the High Holy Days are a lifetime away, but for your Rabbi, the prep for sermon writing starts now! But how does a Rabbi go about writing these sermons? What is their process? How do they constantly crank out this content again and again and again?

America's Rebbitzman is about to peel back the parchment and expose the secrets the Rabbis have used for ages to create their High Holy Day sermon. Buckle up, things are about to get weird!

### Step 1: Planning

While the exact dates of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur change from year to year, they generally fall between early September and mid-October. This means that every May, your Rabbi will say the following sentence:

"This year, I will get all my High Holy Day sermons done by July, and then I will be able to just edit or update them closer to the date to reflect any changes in the world."

Once this plan is put into your Rabbi's mind, they will immediately abandon it and never speak of it again, until the following May.

**Expert warning:** If you ever ask your Rabbi, a month prior to Rosh Hashanah, "I thought you started writing this in May," you will immediately have to sleep on the couch...erm, I mean, be assigned Hagbah on Simchat Torah for your weak arm.

### Step 2: Ideation

The last week of August, your rabbi will come up with exactly 135 ideas for the 5 sermons they have to give (depending on how sadistic your congregation is). These 135 sermon ideas will then be broken down into 482 sub-ideas, and finally into 14,329 satellite ideas. Once these 14,946 sermon ideas are written down, cataloged, and itemized, they will be promptly crumbled up and thrown out. The result of this process means that they will settle on the following sermons:

- A year-in-review sermon
- A sermon about the State of Israel
- A sermon about a current event as it pertains to forgiveness, repentance, or acceptance
- A sermon about a social or community issue as it pertains to the binding of Isaac or Jonah
- A sermon about Beyonce's or Taylor Swift's latest album, just to see if you

are still paying attention after being there for 4 hours

**Expert Warning:** Never say "didn't you do that last year" or "why not give a sermon calling board members out for giving you guff" or else you will immediately have to sleep on the couch...erm, I mean, be assigned apples and honey duty for the religious school during Yom Kippur.

### Step 3: Building a Foundation

The research stage of writing a sermon is critical to the success of that sermon. If you have ever entered your Rabbi's office at shul in the weeks leading up to the holy days, you may notice the bookshelves look a bit bare. That is because they take most of them home and add them to the much larger collection of books strewn around their house.

Most rabbis will then proceed to take all of these books, prayer books, Torah commentaries, stories from the shtetl, etc, and build a small structure out of them. This takes about a week to construct, and once finished, your rabbi will live within this book dwelling, much like a hobbit home. Living off of nothing but stale rugalach left over from Shabbos and by the light of their computer monitor, a Rabbi will do all the needed research for each of the 15 sermons they need to write for the Holy Days (depending on how sadistic your congregation is).

**Expert Warning:** Never ask if your

copy of Garfield's I Hate Mondays collection accidentally got built into the book house, or you will end up sleeping on a couch made of discarded Maxwell House Haggadot, erm, I mean, you will be assigned a new seat in the middle of the row between two known temple gossips.

### Step 4: Writing the Sermon

It is now a week before Erev Rosh Hashanah, and the sermon writing can begin! This part of the process would be very similar to how you, a normal person, would write something for work or school. The research is done, the ideas are outlined, and you sit down at your computer and start writing.

For your rabbi, however, this is the exact moment when a war breaks out, there is a natural disaster, or a popular TV show is canceled without reason. At this moment, all of the above is immediately forgotten, and a new sermon that addresses these sudden events is created. These sermons are worked on night and day, into the wee hours of the morning, until it is the night before Erev Rosh Hashanah.

The night before the first service, your rabbi will experience doubts about everything they have written and, at 3:28 am, without fail, will throw out the new sermon and start fresh. They will then, in less than 2 hours, write all 27 sermons needed (depending on how sadis-

tic your congregation is). Somehow, these new sermons will be spot-on perfect and hit all the notes each individual in the congregation needs to hear, even if they are contradictory from one person to the next!

**Expert Warning:** Do not ask your Rabbi if you can turn off the lights so you can go to sleep, or you will end up sleeping on the couch, erm, I mean, you will be escorted out of the rabbi's house. Why are you even there that late?

This Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, keep all of this in mind as you sit, listen, and then complain about how the sermon slightly hinted at some political ideology that you don't agree with, even though it was a sermon for the children's service, where the Rabbi was singing about the whale. The whale does not signify anything political; that's on you.

*Joshua Kail is a Jewish humor writer and America's Rebbitzman. He has been featured in outlets across the US, including The Jewish Fiction Journal, Chabad News, JNS, and several other non-Jewish outlets. He currently resides in Los Angeles with his Rabbi wife and two children. It is important to note that nothing he has written has not been approved by any rabbi, alive or dead, especially if he is married to her. More of his writing can be found on his Medium page, Ask The Rebbitzman*



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**PJ Library** 

Email Dinah at [dinah.berch@jewishnh.org](mailto:dinah.berch@jewishnh.org) with questions.



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Book Review

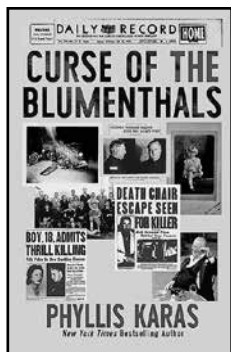
Reviewed by Merle Carrus

‘The Curse of the Blumenthals’ by Phyllis Karas

How many times have you sat around the holiday table with your many cousins, aunts and uncles and rehashed the family stories that have been passed down through the generations? Each person may remember different parts of the story, and over the years, the facts get muddled and no one is sure about the actual details.

*The Curse of the Blumenthals* is the story of how one family faced tragedy, and tried to rise from the ashes. Author Phyllis Karas employed her skills as a journalist to research her own family history, to expose the facts behind the family lore and bring justice to her ancestors.

Karas comes from a large family that came to America from the Riga, which was once part of the former Tsarist Russian empire in the 1890s. The Blumenthal family are Lithuanian Jews. They settled in Providence Rhode Island. The family starts with the marriage of Philip and Rose who had eleven children.



Three of the children did not survive childhood, but the eight remaining children lived with their parents on Overhill Road with their parents, as a dedicated Orthodox Jewish family. Those four girls and four boys married and brought into the world eighteen offspring. This large family all lived in the same neighborhood and celebrated life together. However, they also experienced tragedy together when in 1935, six members of the family were tragically killed in what has come to be known as “The Accident.” Six members of the extended family were visiting a relative in a Hartford Connecticut hospital. On the drive home their car was hit, head-on, by a drunk driver.

All six passengers were killed in the crash. It was a devastating blow to the family. The accident was widely covered in *The Providence Journal*.

In this book, Karas suggests that this event changed the family in many ways that may not have even been realized back at that moment.

Six months after “The Accident” Ronald Blumenthal was born. He was the only child of Barney and his wife Edythe, from Boston. This small family left the larger family unit who stayed on

Overhill Road in Providence. Barney opened a liquor store and there were rumors that maybe he was involved with bootleggers. Could this selling of liquor during the Prohibition have led to the next family tragedy in the Blumenthal family? In this book, Karas attempts to find the links of the two family events.

Now a growing family, Ronald (now Ronnie) grows up with a bevy of eighteen first cousins, though two of them died in “The Accident” six months before his birth. The cousins are a close-knit group of kids growing up. Ronnie was a wild child—not a good student, and he loves fast cars, pretty girls, and drinking alcohol. In 1954, when he was nineteen years old, Ronnie was committed to Charlestown Prison to begin a life sentence for murder. The family would refer to this tragedy as “The Incident.”

Karas spends the rest of the book researching the murder of Ora Schonarth, who was strangled and stabbed in her Brookline, Massachusetts apartment. She tries to find a link between cousin Ronnie and the seamstress. She tries to find a reason for Ronnie’s behavior and a connection back to the first family event that caused so much heartache for the Blumenthal clan.

The story underlying all of *The Curse of the Blumenthals* is fascinating and keeps the reader turning the page. The facts are slim. Beyond newspaper articles, police reports and interviews from the original timeframe, there is not much new information that Karas can gather. There is no smoking gun she reveals. She interviews those of her fifteen first cousins that she can reach out to. She also interviews Ronnie’s ex-wife and his son. More than anything else, though, this is a memoir of people who came to America to build a family filled with love and find the America dream – which they did, but also found tragedy, flaws, and heartache of a new sort. In the end, the lesson is that having a large close family will help you through those difficult times.

Phyllis Karas is the author of a dozen books, taught Journalism at Boston University, and was a stringer for *People Magazine*. She wrote a popular column for the *Boston Herald* called “Wit, Wisdom and Woe.” An alumna of Boston University and George Washington University, Karas and her husband Jack, live in Marblehead, Massachusetts. They have two sons and three grandchildren.

Summer Titles To Catch – and a Fond Farewell

By Zach Camenker, NH JFF Steering Committee

In the eight years that I’ve served as a volunteer for the New Hampshire Jewish Film Festival, I’m convinced that I’ve had the chance to screen some of the best independent, foreign, and documentary films that the 21st century has to offer. It’s been incredible to watch our small, grassroots group bring such amazing features to our beloved Granite State for audiences to enjoy.

And so, it is with mixed emotions that I have decided to step away from the Film Festival. While I do not think this is a complete goodbye, I will not be involved during the next year and will also take a hiatus from writing these film reviews. This was not a decision I took lightly, but I am doing it at both an exciting time for the Festival and for me. Our Festival is alive and well, thriving more and more each year by delivering to numerous parts of the state in both virtual and in-

person screenings. I am deeply proud to have witnessed this great work under Pat Kalik and Ross Fishbein and all the incredible volunteers.

On the personal front, I have two big commitments moving ahead that will take up a good amount of time in addition to my teaching career. I’ve been accepted to New England College’s Educational Leadership CAGS (Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study) program, which will culminate in a School Principal License. While my coursework is online and quite flexible, it will require a lot of me and is something I want to do now rather than later. Also, I began serving as Vice President of the Board of Trustees of Temple Beth Jacob, Concord’s synagogue, this past fiscal year. This means that in three years, likely just as I finish my CAGS program, I will be President of TBJ. I suspect that this leadership opportunity will be a good, albeit different, way to prepare me further for school leadership down the line.

Work, grad school, and synagogue volunteerism will be major time commitments, but ones that I am excited for, each in their own way. Even still, I will miss the Festival work of writing articles, screening films, and helping to curate the line-up.

That said, I am not going anywhere! I will be an enthusiastic attendee next year and continue to watch movies for fun as I do now. Your recommendations are certainly always welcomed. My email address is at the bottom of this column. In the meantime, here are some titles for you to enjoy this summer!

I can’t say enough good about the 1964 film *The Pawnbroker*, which I reviewed a couple years ago after it was recommended to me. I recently saw it again and it did not disappoint. The first film to deal with such stark depictions of the Holocaust and featuring an Oscar-nominated performance from the inimitable Rod Steiger, it’s one that you’ll be thinking about for a long time (Available to rent on Apple and Amazon).

While it’s VERY dated and not her best performance by any means, what’s not to love about Barbra Streisand? The 1996 film *The Mirror Has Two Faces* is one of those “blast from the past” old school rom coms that has a stellar cast which includes Jeff Bridges, Mimi Rogers, and Brenda Vaccaro. Watch for Lauren Bacall, who steals the show as Streisand’s overbearing and opinionated mother! (Available on Netflix)

If you missed *Eleanor the Great* when it came out last fall, now’s your time to enjoy this heartfelt and beautifully made piece featuring nonagenarian June Squibb. A great tale about aging, loss, friendship, and resilience, you will laugh, cry, and smile throughout. Scarlett Johansson’s directorial debut is one for the ages! (Available on Netflix)

One of the most heartfelt documentaries I’ve ever seen, *Harold and Lillian: A Hollywood Love Story* was a previous NHJFF title that I wrote about during

*Summer Titles continued on page 20*

## Social Action “in Action” at Temple Adath Yeshurun

The TAY Social Action Committee works within the broader Manchester community to learn more about local agencies and organizations and collaborate by providing in-kind support to them whenever possible.

Activities this year included a winter clothing drive with carloads of donated clothing delivered to six different community organizations. With the generous support of the temple brotherhood, food donations were made to Webster House, a home for children who cannot live at home and to the City of Manchester Welfare Department food pantry. We worked with student leaders from Central High School to shop and fill their pantry for hungry high school students.

The MAZON (a Jewish Response to Hunger) Post Card Drive resulted in 350 post cards written by TAY members and their friends added to the 47,000 cards delivered to the US Dept. of Ag-



TAY SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE  
HELPING OUR COMMUNITY  
ONE MITZVAH AT A TIME



riculture in support of maintaining SNAP for 47 million people struggling with food insufficiency.

Ongoing spring projects include a seasonal clothing drive and our annual plastic zip sandwich bag collection for the Southern NH Services summer feeding program in the parks. This drive contrib-

utes several thousand bags each year which enables SNHS to spend more of their funds on food as they anticipate the need will be greater than ever this year.

Our synagogue is always searching for ways to further assist our community. Please share your ideas and join us in fulfilling our mission.



## Randi Gelfman Continues Her Search for a Living Kidney Donor: Please Consider a Gift of Life

By Randi Gelfman

My name is Randi Gelfman, I live in Parsonsfield, Maine, and I have been a member of Congregation Bet Ha'am in South Portland, Maine for many years. Some of you may know that I have kidney disease. Over time, my kidney disease has gotten worse, causing my kidneys not to work well enough to keep me alive. My treatment options at this time are limited to dialysis or a kidney transplant. I have been on dialysis since May 2023 – 3 days a week for 4 hours each day, which is helping my kidneys do their job of removing wastes, toxins, and extra fluids. But the longer you are on dialysis, the less time you have to do the things you love, and the more your kidneys deteriorate.

However, a life-giving living donor kidney transplant would offer me much



more freedom and the ability to live a longer, healthier, and more meaningful life. A t r a n s p l a n t would also give me more time to do the things I love most, such as spending time with my family and friends, my partner Nick, my pets, helping others, and being outdoors.

Finding a kidney is not easy. People who are on a wait list for a kidney from a deceased donor often have to wait 5-10 years, and the kidney lasts on average only 10-15 years. But the wait list for a living kidney donor is often shorter, and the kidney typically lasts 15-20+ years. It

also has much better function.

In order to donate, living kidney donors get a careful and thorough evaluation with their own team of health professionals to see if you could be a match for me and to ensure that living donation is as safe as possible for you.

I want to share with you some basic information about kidney donation:

1. You only need one kidney to live a long, healthy life.
2. The surgery for a donor is done laparoscopically, meaning through tiny incisions, and the recuperation period is fairly quick, generally only a few weeks.
3. The cost of an evaluation and surgery would be covered by my insurance.
4. Although my blood type is O+, you do not necessarily need to have the same blood type or tissue type to be a match.

5. There is no age limit to be a donor.

You just have to have a healthy kidney.

In order to express your interest in becoming my kidney donor, you can fill out the form at this link: [www.mghlivingdonors.org](http://www.mghlivingdonors.org). Upon submission, the Mass General Living Donor Team (617-643-7193) will be in touch with you. To learn more about kidney donation, you can call Randi's Transplant Navigator, Jullie Hoggan at 702-530-4156, or go to the National Kidney Foundation's website: [www.kidney.org/livingdonation](http://www.kidney.org/livingdonation). There are also many other websites that can help you learn about kidney disease and donation. Thank you for taking the time to read my story. Major ways you can help me are to share it with your friends, family, and on social media.

With appreciation and gratitude,  
Randi Gelfman  
[rsselfman@gmail.com](mailto:rsselfman@gmail.com)

### Summer Titles

continued from page 19

the pandemic. Tracing the lives of dynamic duo Harold and Lillian Michelson throughout their storied Hollywood career and marriage, there is something in this for everyone. Featuring interviews from showbiz folks far and wide, it's a great tribute to two artists whose behind-

the-scenes contributions are unmatched! (Available to rent on Apple and Amazon)

On a darker but informative note, I had never seen the 2015 Oscar-winning documentary film *Amy*, which chronicles the short yet influential life of British rocker Amy Winehouse. I forgot that she was Jewish and while the film does not cover much in the form of her religious roots, it's a well researched and

expertly filmed tribute to someone who had a lot more to offer the world (Available on Netflix).

Lastly, *Remembering Gene Wilder* remains a favorite of the documentaries that the NHJFF has offered during my time. A brilliant homage to one of my favorite actors, the movie traces his monumental career as a comedian through the ups and downs of love and loss. Its depic-

tions of Wilder's battle with Alzheimer's disease, kept private until his death in 2016, resonate deeply for anyone impacted by it (Available on Netflix).

To quote the Looney Tunes, "That's all, folks!" I appreciate your time and support of my endeavors both here and in the future. Please reach out anytime at [zcamenker@gmail.com](mailto:zcamenker@gmail.com). See you down the road at the movies!

## Boost LGBTQ+ Inclusion in Your Jewish Community with Keshet

By Eli Lurie Sobel, Greater Boston Education & Training Manager, Keshet

Keshet, a national nonprofit dedicated to LGBTQ+ equality in Jewish life, is excited to announce an upcoming opportunity for Jewish organizations in New England who are interested in joining in this important work. Shivyon: Keshet's Equality Project is a year-long cohort learning program for organizations committed to advancing LGBTQ+ equality and belonging in their communities.

Shivyon offers a low-cost, highly-supported avenue for organizations interested in positive institutional change. Participating organizations identify 2-4 staff leaders as representatives in the

Shivyon cohort. Each organization begins their year in Shivyon with an internal self-assessment, where organizational representatives take stock of their unique strengths and potential growth areas. Participants then create Action Plans, developing a series of measurable, time-bound goals related to advancing LGBTQ+ inclusion and belonging in their own communities. Over the course of the year, Keshet experts meet regularly with each organization's representatives to provide expert coaching and education tailored to their specific goals and circumstances.

A comprehensive Action Plan examines multiple areas of community life—programming, policy, and culture—in order to create sustainable change. Or-


ganizations set goals based on their identified needs and priorities: for example, they may form a LGBTQ+ working group, refresh policies and forms using best practices for protecting and affirming LGBTQ+ people, or implement regular programming on LGBTQ+ themes throughout the year. Many organizations incorporate training on LGBTQ+ topics from Keshet into their Action Plans.


Rabbi Eliana Jacobowitz, whose synagogue Temple B'nai Brith recently participated in a Greater Boston Shivyon cohort, reflected, "[Keshet] offered real tools for engaging with resistance, not as a wall, but as something we can work with, around, and through...I now feel like we have a new path forward. With


the Shivyon initiative that helped us create an entire team of volunteers in the shul, I finally don't feel like it's my personal project, but a community-wide effort with much more buy-in and energy."



Applications are now open for the New England Shivyon cohort, which will run virtually and is open to all Jewish organizations in NH, VT, MA, ME, RI, and CT. This cohort kicks off on Zoom with a two-part launch on August 12 and 19 from 1-3:30pm both days. Thanks to the generous support of Keshet's partners, this year-long program is offered at the deeply subsidized rate of \$180 per organization. Apply today at [www.keshetonline.org/shivyon-apply-now](http://www.keshetonline.org/shivyon-apply-now). Questions? Contact [eli.lurie.sobel@keshetonline.org](mailto:eli.lurie.sobel@keshetonline.org).

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**\$1000**  
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FIRST YEAR!



Questions: [dinah.berch@jewishnh.org](mailto:dinah.berch@jewishnh.org)

# Jewish Journeys

## Rebuilding Jewish Life in Poland

By Dina Michael Chaitowitz

Hang in there. This isn't a story about the Holocaust. It's a story about renewal.

I went to Auschwitz-Birkenau ("Auschwitz") two years ago. I had never wanted to go to any place connected with the Shoah, from which members of my family escaped...or did not. But it became clear to me that friends of mine who are not Jewish knew more about these locations than I did, and so when I had the opportunity to go with the Cohen Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies and my brilliant friend, Dr. Kate Gibeault, the director of the Institute, I signed up. I persuaded another friend of mine to go as well, and I felt that the visits to Auschwitz and Dachau would be tolerable with my husband and friend at my side. When family circumstances prevented the latter from going, my anxiety resurfaced. It then happened that my

husband and I ran into Rabbi Krinsky (of Chabad of New Hampshire). I told Rabbi Krinsky that I was apprehensive about the trip; he told me not to worry – that I actually might experience a sense of renewal.

Auschwitz, the largest of the Nazi concentration camps and extermination centers, was even more horrible than I thought it would be. The enormity of the place—a veritable city of death blocks, torture chambers, and dehumanizing barracks—was shocking. I was shaking by the time we got back to the hotel.

It may have been the next day that Dr. Gibeault suggested that we go to the New Jewish Cemetery at Miodowa Street in Kraków. It is there that Rabbi Krinsky's suggestion proved true.

The cemetery was established in the 19th century. By the beginning of the 20th century, its 11 acres were nearly full. So you can imagine the extent of its de-

struction when the Nazis excavated many of the tombstones for sale to local masons or to use for construction purposes, including for paving the supply road to Auschwitz and the courtyard of the sadistic commandant, Amon Göth, known for taking target practice with his rifle on prisoners as they moved about the camp and training his dogs to torture prisoners on command. But Jews survive. In 1957, the grounds were renovated with funds from the Joint Distribution Committee, a global Jewish humanitarian organization. Stones that were used for roads were returned and assembled into walls, and moss and ferns and all manner of greenery grow out of and over everything. The cemetery is now in the register of historical monuments of Kraków. More importantly, it is a place of calm and beauty and, as Rabbi Krinsky might say, of renewal. Adding to this theme of renewal: on the day we visited, as if on cue, a cat plopped herself down on the path we were traveling and gave birth to a litter of kittens.

Rebirth isn't just happening at the cemetery. It is happening right now in Kraków, thanks in large part to Kraków's Jewish Community Centre ("JCC"). At the outset of the German occupation of Poland in 1939, there were approximately 60,000 Jews living in Kraków, 90 percent of whom were murdered in the Holocaust. Of the remaining 10 percent, some fled, others hid. By the end of the war, approximately 4,000 Jews resurfaced in Kraków. Pogroms in Soviet-occupied Kraków in 1945 and 1946 reduced that number to a few hundred, however. Today, despite growing antisemitism worldwide, the number of Jews in Kraków is increasing. The JCC, opened in April 2008, serves as the focal point for the resurgence of Kraków's Jewish life. The JCC aims to rebuild Jewish life and culture in Kraków through arts and cultural programs, weekly Shabbat dinners and holiday celebrations, other social activities, education (it runs a Jewish preschool), and welfare services, and to help people, previously in hiding, to rediscover their Jewish identities. Of its 1,000-plus members, over 55 are Holocaust survivors. The JCC has also been assisting Ukrainian refugees. To date, it has helped

over 500,000 Ukrainian refugees (98 percent of whom are not Jewish) with resources such as food, accommodation, and psychological help. And, after October 7, 2023, it supported Israelis with emergency aid (housing, psychosocial support, and evacuation).

Despite my love of the New Jewish Cemetery and for the delicious obwarzanek krakowski (a Polish pretzel/bagel), I was not planning to return to Kraków. But then David Eisenberg, co-chair of the Israel Ride (which I was lucky to do in the fall of 2025), posted information on his Facebook page about the Ride for the Living, a 60-mile bike ride from Auschwitz to the JCC – a ride from darkness to light. The ride is a fundraiser for the JCC and it is also emblematic of Jewish resilience. As expressed on its website: "In a city where a Jewish future was once unimaginable, there now exists an open, tolerant, and nurturing environment in which our Jewish community is experiencing rebirth." I feel blessed that I can participate in this effort, and that I will be riding along with two Holocaust survivors. Maybe you will join me on the bike ride; it isn't too late to sign up. But if you can't ride with me, I hope you will consider making a contribution to the JCC through my fundraiser. The minimum fundraising requirement is \$2,500, but I am hoping to raise at least \$5,000. No worries; I won't be spending the money on obwarzanek krakowski. Rather, your donation will go directly to the JCC (which, by the way, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization). This link will direct you to my fundraising page or aim your cell phone's camera at the QR code: <https://secure.qgiv.com/event/rft12026/account/2236907/>.

As Jonathan Ornstein, Executive Director of JCC - Krakow, says: "We cannot change the number of Jews murdered by the Nazis during the Holocaust. We can, however, affect the number of Jews lost to the Jewish World due to the Holocaust." Thank you for whatever you can do to participate in this revitalization.



### Shavua Tov Story Time

A program for families with children ages 2-5

Join us for a 20-minute interactive story time on Zoom one Sunday each month from 8:30am to 9:00am. Register once for \$18.00 per family to receive monthly crafts in the mail for the year! The zoom link will be provided to registered families each Monday ahead of the program. Scan QR code to register or go to <https://bit.ly/shavuatovNH>.



April  
19

**April Theme: Lag B'omer**

Sunday, April 19th, 8:30am  
Register by April 10th for craft.



May  
17

**May Theme: Shavuot**

Sunday, May 17th, 8:30am  
Register by May 10th for craft.



June  
7

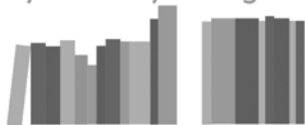
**June Theme: Mitzvot**

Sunday, June 7th, 8:30am  
Register by June 1st for craft.



No Shavua Tov Story Time July or August for Summer Vacation

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## The Weight and Light of Being Jewish

By Ariel Berger

I can still remember what it felt like to notice, for the first time, that being Jewish made me different. It was never a single moment, but a series of them. Small experiences that accumulated quietly until they became impossible to ignore. At school during December, holiday parties were filled with stockings, candy canes, and carols that everyone knew by heart. I joined in the fun, but deep down I knew that while my classmates would spend Christmas morning unwrapping presents, I would be at home lighting the menorah for another night of Chanukah. On Sundays, while they swapped stories of weekend plans, I trudged off to Hebrew school, sitting in a classroom that smelled faintly of pencil shavings and old books, learning the letters of a language most of my peers had never seen.

That difference followed me through childhood. December was always the hardest. Walking down the streets at night, I would see lights twinkling in every window, inflatable Santas waving from lawns, and songs blaring in every store. At school, we decorated paper stockings, rehearsed for holiday concerts (which were essentially Christmas concerts), and exchanged gifts in Secret Santa games. Chanukah was lovely at home with the menorah's glow, the scent of frying latkes, and the crackle of dreidels on the table, but outside our front door, it felt invisible. I would often ask my mom questions I did not yet know how to fully articulate.

"Mom, why do I need to go to Hebrew school? There is no point. It is stupid."

"What is the point in being Jewish?"

"Why do I need to be different? I just want to be 'normal' like everyone else."

Her answer never changed

"As Jews, we are a minority."

"You will understand when you are older."

At the time, I did not understand. It wasn't only about holidays. It was about identity, history, and a sense of belonging. When kids in school threw around stereotypes like, "I thought all Jews had a big nose," or joked, "You probably only eat bagels and lox," I laughed along so I wouldn't stand out more, but those words left little bruises which I didn't know how to name back then. Being Jewish often felt like living in two parallel worlds, one in which my traditions mattered deeply,

and another in which they barely seemed to exist. I was not ashamed of that difference, but I felt it constantly, as though I were carrying something invisible that no one else could quite see. It was older, steadier, and it lived inside me. It took me years to realize that what my mom had said was right, what sometimes felt like loneliness was also a thread tying me to something more vast.

My grandmother used to tell me stories about her childhood while we sat in the kitchen. A small room, warm with the scent of our freshly baked lemon meringue pie cooling on the counter, sunlight glimmering through the glass doors. She would sit at the wooden table, hands resting lightly on its worn surface, with her eyes distant yet alive with memory, as she told me how her parents clung tightly to tradition, even when it set them apart. Her voice carried a mixture of pride and heaviness, always reminding me that our people had carried this identity across countries. Across both joy and persecution.

"You are never alone when you are Jewish," she would say.

"You are standing with everyone who came before you. It is up to you to preserve their memory."

I later learned that historian Simon Schama described Jewish identity as a "portable homeland," something that the 0.2% of Jews worldwide carried with them wherever they went, no matter the country or era. Hearing my grandmother's words, like a gentle drumbeat of belonging, and later reading Schama's words echoed the same truth: the very thing that sometimes made me feel different also gave me a home I could never lose.

That idea became real to me during the four months I spent in Israel with a bunch of other kids like me. I was anxious before going. I had never traveled so far from home for such a long time, and I wasn't sure what to expect. But the first night, when we sat in a circle singing Hebrew songs, something shifted inside me. The voices around me rose and fell like waves in the ocean, carrying a warm and somewhat thrilling familiarity. The room buzzed with the rhythmic stomping of feet on the floor, while the glistening blue and white Israeli flags we held swayed in unison, echoing the beat of our song. For the first time, I wasn't the odd one out. The energy was overwhelming in the best

way, as if something in me finally aligned with something greater than myself. Before the trip, I could count on one hand the number of Jewish kids I knew, but now I was immersed in a community of fifty kids like myself who had traveled to the Jewish homeland together. While 2.4% of the population in the United States is Jewish, here, surrounded by peers who shared my traditions, I didn't have to explain why my holidays were different or hide my true identity. Instead, I was a part of a chorus, a living thread of culture and memory, blending old and new, carried by the desert wind and echoing in my chest.

There was a moment at the Kotel, the Western Wall, that still lives in my memory like it happened yesterday, a moment like a breath of fresh air. I pressed my forehead against the warm stone and slipped a folded piece of paper into the cracks. The Wall felt alive, its ancient stones worn smooth by centuries of whispered prayers, grief, gratitude, and hope layered into its surface. Around me, people stood in quiet reverence; some prayed softly in different languages, while others simply leaned against the stone as if searching for something ancient and unbroken. The Wall is more than a remnant of history or architecture. It is a living link to generations of Jewish faith, resilience, and survival, a place where Jews across centuries have mourned, celebrated, questioned, and left pieces of themselves behind. Historians note that it has stood for nearly two thousand years, enduring conquest, exile, and destruction, yet it continues to draw Jews from around the world back to its stones. Standing there, I thought of my grandmother, her parents, and every generation before them who carried Judaism forward with unwavering devotion so that I could exist in that moment, connected to a history far greater than myself. The loneliness I used to feel melted into something different, a kind of belonging that wasn't dependent on my school friends or the world around me. It was older, steadier, and it lived inside me.

Back home, the feeling didn't disappear, though differences remained.

Christmas lights always go up in the neighborhood, and I still have to explain why I can't eat certain foods at certain times or why I have to take off school for Yom Kippur. But instead of feeling like a burden, it feels like a badge. I now realize that being Jewish means carrying a story. One that stretches further back than I can fully comprehend. That story is filled with pain, yes, but also with resilience, joy, humor, music, and food that smells like memory itself.

Sometimes it is lonely. There are still moments when I feel like the odd one out, when people don't understand, or when antisemitism quietly creeps into the corners of everyday life. But there is also a comfort knowing that every Shabbat candle I light, every Hebrew word I stumble through, every holiday meal I share connects me not only to my family and friends, but to millions of Jews across the world and across time. The connection matters because it reminds me that difference does not mean isolation. It means inheritance.

Looking back, I see that the loneliness I felt as a child was never the full story. Yes, being Jewish set me apart in ways that sometimes hurt. But it also gave me strength, community, and perspective. I know what it means to carry history in my veins, and to belong to something larger than myself. Something that cannot be erased by ignorance or indifference. Being Jewish, I have come to understand, is about holding onto identity even when it would be easier to let go. It is about lighting candles in the dark, telling stories that refused to be silenced, and finding connection across oceans and generations. It is about recognizing that even in moments of differences, no one is ever truly alone.

*A high school student from Bedford, New Hampshire, Ariel is a Kenneth Leventhal Intern with StandWithUs, a student leader within BBYO, and a recipient of a Scholastic Writing Honorable Mention. Her semester studying abroad with Alexander Muss High School in Israel has deeply influenced her perspective on Jewish identity, history, and community.*



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## June-July Hadassah Report

By Michele Bank

Members of the Manchester Hadassah Book Club gathered together to have a luncheon discussion of the *Shopkeeper of Alsace* by Laura Knoy. Some members also heard the author discuss the background of the book and her decision to write the historical novel. The next book the group will read is *Invisible City* by Julia Dahl.

A few members of the chapter attended the Northern New England Donor Brunch at Café Escadrille in Burlington, MA. In addition to the brunch, we heard from three very accomplished Jewish women. The first was Dr. Tali Friedman-Korn, an Israeli neurologist who trained at Hadassah Medical Center. She is doing a fellowship at Mass General Brigham in women's neurology, studying how neurological diseases affect women differently than men and developing specialized approach to their care.

The next speaker was Kimberly Bookman, a journalist working for WHDH channel 7 news. She spoke candidly about her experience being a Jewish woman in the media, sharing both the challenges she has overcome and meaningful stories she has helped bring to light.

The last speaker was Nancy Falchuk, past Hadassah National President, currently the Chair of the Hadassah National Nursing Resource Committee. She gave the history of Hadassah and inspiring updates about HMO and its worldwide impact.

In HMO research news: Before your heart can pump blood to the rest of the body, it first has to fill up. When the heart loses that ability to fill properly, it results in a dangerous, and until now, incurable form of heart failure called HFpEF. Short for "heart failure with preserved ejection fraction," this affects 13 million

people, causing sob, loss of energy, fatigue and swelling.

Now there's an out-of-the-box solution, developed at the Hadassah Medical Organization (HMO). It's a treatment for the gut, which ultimately protects the heart.

Dr. Rabea Asleh, HMO's director of the Heart Failure Unit & Cardiovascular Research Center stated, "Currently, there has been no treatment that improves the prognosis of the disease, and that's a very big unmet need. But with this new treatment, patients could take it at an early stage and prevent the advancement of the disease."

Dr. Asleh's research team findings were so significant they were recently published in major medical journals like *PubMed* and the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology (JACC)*.

Via Hadasit, the venture building and innovation company of HMO, the team is developing a new way to treat the disease. This invention involves a special mixture of "good" gut bacteria and healthy byproducts (metabolites) that HFpEF patients are missing. It also uses agents to lower the levels of "bad" bacteria that these patients have in excess. By balancing the gut this way, the treatment improves heart function. This technology is already protected by an international patent application. It is currently in the commercialization pipeline, transitioning from the research lab toward becoming a treatment available in clinics worldwide. While similar gut-based solutions have been used for other conditions, this is a world-first for patients with HFpEF.

For the 13 million people suffering from HFpEF, this discovery is lifechanging, thanks to research done at Hadassah Medical Org. For chapter meeting dates, please see JFNH's calendar. For additional information about Hadassah, please contact Michele.bank@gmail.com.

## The Druze of Israel

By Richard England

In April, the Federation sponsored a culinary and cultural event featuring Raif Rashed, New York City chef and an Israeli Druze. The story of the Druze is a fascinating one: They are an Arabic-speaking religious minority that began as an offshoot of Shia Islam in the 11th century C.E. Often persecuted as a heretical sect, the Druze have survived for a thousand years in the mountains of southern Lebanon and Syria and northern Israel. Today, roughly 900 thousand Druze live in Lebanon and Syria and another 150 thousand in the Galilee, Carmel and Golan regions of Israel.

During Israel's 1948 war of independence, many Druze villages inside Mandatory Palestine remained neutral or even cooperated with Jewish forces. In 1956, Druze leaders negotiated an agreement with the Israeli government that included Druze service in the Israeli Defense Forces. Since then, members of the Druze community have served in elite combat units, achieved high ranks, and received numerous commendations for bravery. Druze have also served as Israeli cabinet ministers and ambassadors to other nations.

After Israel's 1981 annexation of the



Druze delights at Nurah's Kitchen.

Golan Heights that it had captured in the 1967 War, the government offered Israeli citizenship to its Druze residents. Most declined because they feared that the Golan might eventually return to Syrian authority. Today, things are changing rapidly. Following a 2024 rocket attack by Hezbollah that killed a dozen Druze children and after the 2025 massacre of Druze in southern Syria by Islamist militias, a growing number of Golan Druze are applying for Israeli citizenship. This is one bit of evidence that Israel is not an "apartheid" state.

If you want a deeper dive into Druze cuisine, be sure to visit Daliyat al-Karmel during your next visit to Israel. This village lies on the slopes of Mount Carmel and is largely surrounded by a national park. There are a number of highly rated restaurants from which to choose. Nurah's Kitchen is even kosher! Bon appetit!

## Simchas

Mazal tov from the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire to our former Shaliach, Ra'anana deHaas, and Keren Berger on their wedding on Friday, May 8, in Yad HaShmona — wishing them a lifetime of love, joy, and shared blessings together.



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## Antisemitic Incidents in New England Decreased in 2025, Yet Remain Nearly Double Pre-October 7 Levels

First regional decrease since October 7, 2023; K-12 incidents remain a growing concern

BOSTON, May 6, 2026, ... ADL's (the Anti-Defamation League) annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents, issued today, recorded a total of **400 incidents** of assault, harassment and vandalism in 2025 within the New England region (covering Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont). While this marks the first regional decrease since October 7, 2023, the total remains nearly double the number of incidents recorded annually in the region prior to that date. Even as overall numbers fell, incidents at non-Jewish K-12 schools across the region rose, with Massachusetts alone seeing an increase from 50 in 2024 to 75 in 2025.

### New England

ADL New England tracked a total of 400 incidents of assault, harassment and vandalism in 2025, compared to 638 in 2024, a decrease of 37 percent. Incidents included 230 cases of harassment, 164 cases of vandalism and 6 cases of assault. Of all incidents in New England, 41 percent were related to Israel or Zionism.

In Massachusetts, non-Jewish K-12 schools saw the most reported incidents of any location type in the state and were the only physical location category to see an increase from 2024 to 2025, rising 50 percent from 50 incidents to 75. At the same time, college campus incidents in Massachusetts fell 65 percent, from 107 in 2024 to 37 in 2025, the sharpest decrease of any location type in the state. ADL offered support and resources to college administrators with the goal of improving the campus climate. Massachusetts ranked fourth nationally for incidents at universities and non-Jewish K-12 schools.

"The decrease in antisemitic incidents over the last year is a clear sign of progress," said Samantha Joseph, ADL New England's Regional Director. "But 400 incidents in a single year is still nearly double what this region saw before October 7, 2023, and K-12 incidents have increased. Our communities remain concerned for their safety, and our work is far from done."

- Massachusetts – 279 incidents
- New Hampshire – 34 incidents
- Rhode Island – 26 incidents
- Vermont – 29 incidents
- Maine – 32 incidents

The following cities recorded the highest number of incidents in each state:

- Boston, MA – 57 incidents
- Portland, ME – 12 incidents
- Burlington, VT – 11 incidents
- Providence, RI – 11 incidents
- Manchester, NH – 6 incidents

Antisemitic incidents took place across a variety of locations throughout the region. Public areas including parks, streets, transit and buildings saw the highest concentration of incidents with 100 reported. Jewish institutions and schools recorded 62 incidents, including 41 at synagogues. Non-Jewish K-12 schools across the region saw 85 incidents, including 38 at high schools and 25 at middle schools. There were 49 incidents on college campuses, 37 at business establishments and 20 online.

### Incidents Across the Region

The following incidents illustrate the range and impact of antisemitism across New England in 2025 and ADL New England's response:

**Massachusetts:** A brick reading "Free Palestine" was thrown through the window of a kosher grocery store, sending a threatening message to the local Jewish community. ADL New England responded with onsite support, mobilized the community to rally around the business and launched a digital solidarity campaign that drew more than 400 signatures.

**Maine:** After a public restroom at a local grocery store was repeatedly vandalized with swastika graffiti, ADL New England contacted the store manager directly, secured a commitment to remove the graffiti and monitor the space and worked alongside the Jewish Community Alliance of Southern Maine to ensure the community felt heard and supported.

**Vermont:** After a swastika was carved into a school computer at a Vermont high school, ADL New England engaged school administrators, facilitated staff conversations about response protocols and connected district leaders with peer educators from similar school environments.

**Rhode Island:** Following a string of antisemitic bullying and graffiti incidents at a Rhode Island high school, ADL New England provided advocacy over several months, facilitated direct conversations between the affected family, school administration and guidance staff and continues to partner with the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island to ensure lasting support.

**New Hampshire:** A constituent experiencing a pattern of antisemitic harassment from a neighbor, including being

chased and subjected to antisemitic slurs, contacted ADL New England. ADL met directly with the constituent, notified the New Hampshire Jewish Federation and escalated the matter to the New Hampshire Senior Assistant Attorney General's Civil Rights Unit.

### Factors that Explain the Decrease in Overall Antisemitic Incidents in 2025

The decrease in national antisemitic incidents was driven largely by a significant drop in Israel/Zionism-related incidents and a steep decline in campus antisemitism. Nationally, the share of antisemitic incidents related to Israel or Zionism fell from 58 percent in 2024 to 45 percent in 2025. Of all incidents in New England, 41 percent were related to Israel or Zionism in 2025, a decrease from 63 percent in 2024.

Antisemitic incidents on college and university campuses fell 66 percent nationally and 61 percent in New England (from 151 in 2024 to 49 in 2025), in part because schools took concrete steps to address antisemitism — motivated by pressure from ADL's Campus Antisemitism Report Card, which has led universities to adopt stronger policies, and from ADL's legal actions. ADL's Campus Antisemitism Report Card showed that New England schools showed significant progress in protecting Jewish students. Notably, Northeastern University improved from a B to an A. Tufts University improved from a C to a B.

### United States

This regional data reflects broader national trends. Nationally, 2025 marked one of the most violent periods for American Jews, with physical assaults reaching record high levels and antisemitic attacks resulting in fatalities on American soil for the first time since 2022 and in Jewish fatalities for the first time since 2019, according to ADL's annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents, released today.

Across the country, there were 6,274 incidents of antisemitic assault, harassment and vandalism in 2025, an average of 17 incidents per day. While this total represents a 33-percent decrease from 2024, it remains considerably higher than the total in years prior to the October 7, 2023, Hamas massacre in Israel, and ranks as the third-highest year for antisemitic incidents (after 2023 and 2024), since ADL began tracking in 1979.

Even as overall incidents decreased nationally, physical assaults increased by 4 percent, and incidents of assault involving a deadly weapon increased by **39-per-**

**cent.** Moreover, **three people were murdered in antisemitic attacks this past year:** two victims in the May 21, 2025, shooting outside the Capital Jewish Museum in Washington, D.C., and one victim who died from injuries sustained in the June 1, 2025, firebombing attack at a "Run for Their Lives" event in Boulder, Colorado.

### Methodology

The ADL Audit includes both criminal and non-criminal acts of harassment, vandalism and assault against individuals and groups as reported to ADL by victims, law enforcement, the media and partner organizations and evaluated by ADL's experts.

The complete dataset for antisemitic incidents for 2016-2025 is available on ADL's H.E.A.T. Map, an interactive online tool that allows users to geographically chart antisemitic incidents and extremist activity. The full dataset can also be downloaded by anyone who would like to take a closer look at individual incidents.

ADL is careful to not conflate general criticism of Israel or anti-Israel activism with antisemitism. Legitimate political protest, support for Palestinian rights or expressions of opposition to Israeli policies is not included in the Audit. As an example, slightly fewer than half of anti-Israel rallies assessed by ADL contained antisemitic content that qualified to be counted within this Audit. ADL's approach to Israel-related expressions comports with the IHRA definition of antisemitism. The complete Audit methodology is included in the report on our website.

The Audit offers a snapshot of one of the ways American Jews encounter antisemitism, but a full understanding of antisemitism in the U.S. requires other forms of analysis as well, including public opinion polling, assessments of online antisemitism and examinations of extremist activity, all of which ADL offers in other reports.

Individuals who experience an antisemitic incident can report it to ADL: <https://www.adl.org/report-incident>.

*ADL is the leading anti-hate organization in the world. Founded in 1913 to protect the Jewish people, ADL works to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and secure justice and fair treatment to all. In the face of rising antisemitism and extremism, we protect, advocate, and educate, through a mix of programs and services using the latest innovations and technology, and seek to create a world without hate. More at [www.adl.org](http://www.adl.org).*



## JFNH Tributes

*Received by May 10, 2026*

### Annual Campaign

In memory of Beverly Noble Gerson - Charles Gerson  
 In honor of Mara Friedman's birthday - Your Seacoast Friends

**Correction:** Last month's tribute listing incorrectly stated "In memory of Rikki Bornstein - Carol Pressman." We apologize for the mistake.

**The correct tribute is:**

"In memory of Jeffrey Mark Tillman - Carol Pressman."

### Film Festival

In honor of Pat Kalik - The Film Festival Committee  
 In honor of Ross Fishbein - The Film Festival Committee

### Kushner-Tumen Family Children's Fund

In honor of Florita Sonnenklar's special birthday - Norm and Andrea Kushner

**Correction:** Last month's tribute listing incorrectly listed the following in the JFNH Annual Campaign. They were in fact donations made to the Kushner-Tumen Family Children's Fund.

In memory of Bernice Taube - Norman and Andrea Kushner  
 In memory of Deb Feins - Norman and Andrea Kushner  
 In memory of Jeffrey Tillman - Norman and Andrea Kushner

### PJ Library

In memory of Ivonilde Felix Marques - Evellyn Schumacker

### How to submit an obituary

The Reporter publishes obituaries for any member of the community, past or present, for a \$36 fee. Please send obituaries and one photo, if desired, as a separate jpg attachment to thereporter@jewishnh.org or to the office along with payment at: JFNH, 273 S. River Road Unit 5, PO Box 10041, Bedford, NH 03110

### Simchas

**New!** B'nai mitzvah, engagement, wedding or new baby in the family? Share your happiness with the community with a notice in the Reporter's new *Simchas* section. Your \$36 payment will support JFNH's nonprofit mission. Submit a short notice and photo to thereporter@jewishnh.org or JFNH, 273 S. River Road Unit 5, PO Box 10041, Bedford, NH 03110

When submitting a Letter to the Editor, please include your name, town of residence, and contact information. Letters to the Editor must be under 300 words in length to be considered for publication. Send your letter by email to the reporter@jewishnh.org with "letter to the editor" in the subject line.

### Do you live in Keene, Laconia, Bethlehem, Hanover, or another NH community and want to help produce the Jewish Reporter?

We are looking for people all over the state who are interested in writing about their local Jewish community.

**To get involved, contact thereporter@jewishnh.org**

## JFNH Tribute Cards: A Double Mitzvah

Sending a tribute card from the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire is one of the best ways to honor someone for any *simcha*, e.g. birthday, anniversary, bar/bat mitzvah. It is also the perfect way to say "Thank you" or to send your condolences.

Your JFNH tribute card serves double duty by helping to support the vital programs serving the New Hampshire Jewish Community.

All tributes will be listed in The Reporter.

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- NH Jewish Film Festival
- PJ Library
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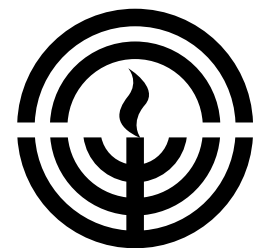
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