

# Berkshire JEWISH VOICE

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

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## Major Donors Celebration 2024

*Bringing comfort, care, and connection to our Jewish community across the Berkshires, in Israel, and around the world*



Penny and Claudio Pincus

PITTSFIELD – Jewish Federation of the Berkshires will host its annual Major Donors Celebration on Sunday, July 21 at 9:30 a.m., at Berkshire Hills Country Club.

“Our Major Donors are the cornerstone of our campaign and critical partners in meeting the essential needs across the Berkshires, in Israel, and beyond. Their compassion, generosity, and leadership truly drive our community forward,” says Federation president Arlene Schiff. “Our co-chairs for this celebration, Penny and Claudio Pincus, have been steadfast supporters and we are grateful that they have

stepped up. They have put together a terrific host committee to help connect with donors to share the importance of Federation’s work of building and sustaining Jewish life in the Berkshires.”

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

Donors will have the chance to see all that this small community accomplishes, and understand the impact their support has on sustaining the vital programs Federation provides – care services and social engagement for area seniors, Jewish education for our children, camp and Israel experiences for teens and young adults, security enhancements and training for our congregations, advocacy and support to combat antisemitism, and engaging programming to enrich Jewish identity and connection for people of all ages.

**MAJOR DONORS,**  
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## Celebrate the Strength and Resilience of our Jewish Berkshires!

*Summer concert with Noah Aronson to support LiveSecure initiative and honor Dara Kaufman*

LENOX – Come celebrate our strength and resilience with an evening of *ruach* and community spirit! Join Jewish music sensation Noah Aronson and his powerhouse band for an interactive community concert filled with harmony, rhythm, friendship, and connection.

The concert will take place at 7:30 p.m. on Sunday, August 4 at the Duffin Theater at Lenox Memorial High School.

**This year, concert proceeds will help launch the Jewish Berkshires LiveSecure Initiative and the community will also honor Federation’s Executive Director Dara Kaufman for her 10 years of dedicated service and leadership.**

The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, in partnership with the Secure Community Network (SCN), is creating a comprehensive security program to address the current security challenges and needs across the Berkshires.

The Jewish Berkshires LiveSecure Initiative includes contracting with SCN for the services of a highly experienced Security Advisor to oversee the initiative and provide ongoing support and guidance to local Jewish community leaders, and their institutions. The Security Advisor will play a key role in bolstering site security for all Berkshire Jewish organizations, delivering community trainings, strengthening relationships and intelligence sharing with local law enforcement, facilitating community-wide emergency communications and incident responses,

**SUMMER CONCERT,**  
continued on page 4



Noah Aronson

## Jews, Ivies, and Antisemitism: The American Dream on Trial

*Mark Oppenheimer on the campus controversies roiling elite universities*

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Friday, July 19 at 10:45 a.m., Knosh & Knowledge welcomes scholar and journalist Mark Oppenheimer, whose topic will be “Jews, Ivies, and Antisemitism: The American Dream on Trial.”

This free Federation program will be presented at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, 270 State Road in Great Barrington. Please register at the calendar of events page at [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org).

About 100 years ago, Columbia University pioneered anti-Jewish admissions measures, which quickly spread around the Ivy League. Ever since, the welcoming of Jews has been a litmus test for the openness of a college campus — never more than today. Come learn about the history of Jews in higher education, from the alleged quotas of a century ago through the sense of unease after the Hamas attacks of October 7, 2023.



Mark Oppenheimer

**Mark Oppenheimer** is the Vice President of Open Learning at American Jewish University. He holds a Ph.D. in religious studies from Yale, where he was the founding director of the Yale Journalism Initiative. From 2010 to 2016, he wrote the “Beliefs” column, about religion, for the New York Times, and he has also written for publications including The New Yorker, The Nation, GQ, Slate, and many more. He created *Unorthodox*, the world’s most popular podcast

**MARK OPPENHEIMER,**  
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## Celebrating Federation’s Work at Our 84th Annual Meeting

*Jewish Berkshires LiveSecure Initiative, with the national director of the Secure Community Network*



Michael Masters

LENOX – On Tuesday, June 25, at 7:30 p.m., join us in celebrating our community’s incredible accomplishments over the past year at Jewish Federation of the Berkshires 84th annual meeting, which will take place at Shakespeare & Company’s Elayne P. Bernstein Theatre.

Community members are invited to meet and schmooze at a celebratory reception, followed by highlights of our work together, board elections, and the presentation of the Simkin Schiller College Scholarship. The special guest speaker will be Michael Masters, National Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Secure Community Network, who will explore the complex

security challenges facing the American Jewish community and discuss Federation’s new Jewish Berkshires LiveSecure Initiative to expand and strengthen security across our Jewish community.

This event is free and open to all members of the Jewish community. The Elayne P. Bernstein Theatre is at Shakespeare & Company, 70 Kemble Street in Lenox. Please visit our calendar of events at [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org) for further details about this event.

### About LiveSecure

Jewish Federation of the Berkshires is committed to addressing the issues of antisemitism and acts of violence targeting Jews and Jewish institutions. Federation has provided trainings, grants, and other resources to support the security of our local Jewish organizations. However, as the threat landscape

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OP-ED

RABBI REFLECTION

# Carrying the Sacred Chain of Torah Transmission Forward – Something Worthy of Deep, Profound Joy

By Rabbi Neil P.G. Hirsch



Jewish Federation of the Berkshires wishes the Hirsch family – Mikah, Rabbi Neil, Rabbi Liz, and Lior – nothing but success and happiness. Thank you for being such devoted partners with Federation and leaders in the Berkshire Jewish community.

A highlight of my week is “Boker Tov Hevreh,” the first thirty minutes of religious school each Sunday. *Boker Tov Hevreh* is our morning school *t’filah*. Students and parents attend together. Congregants have formed a band that plays each week, including a couple of fiddles, a banjo, and a ukulele. While Rabbi Jodie Gordon and I lead the service, the whole community sings— and they *really* sing. Upcoming B’nai Mitzvah students present their mitzvah projects and encourage community-wide participation in whatever they are organizing.

The service is the same each week, which reinforces the students’ prayer knowledge. This year, after October 7, we included a prayer for the safe return of the Israeli hostages, a prayer for Israel, and one for those in harm’s way. We always conclude with

the song “Sweet As Honey,” by Dan Nichols, to celebrate the Torah learning the students will do once dismissed to their classrooms.

The cornerstone of the morning for me is when we offer a freeform version of *Nissim B’khol Yom*, the blessings for the miracles we experience daily. This is a chance to express gratitude for all the regular and fantastic experiences that come our way. After offering the first blessing, I turn to the students, inviting them to share the things for which they are grateful. Somehow, over the last year or so, we have ritualized this unscripted moment.

One student always shouts out *Chocolate!*

Another, *Everything sugary!*

It is silly, but seriously so.

The students are learning how to express gratitude through prayer. These joys beget others. They say they are grateful for family, friends, the comfort of pets, the blessing of a good book, and the ability to excel in sports or academics. When the students offer these prayers for gratitude, they learn by practice how to

count their blessings. They think through the world in which they live and name that which matters most. It is deep, and it is joyful.

Which, especially in a year like 5784, is crucial. We adults have had a growing sense of how it is difficult to be a Jew today, with antisemitism on the rise. But as parents, perhaps we have been able to shield our children from that. After October 7, masking the realities of the world from our children is getting harder. That is why I feel strongly that our students understand that engaging in Torah, learning how to pray, and being in community is to be joyous. Jewish joy is the organizing principle for the Hevreh religious school, and I have become more convinced that it should also rule the other arenas of Jewish communal life.

Years ago, Rabbi David Hartman z”l wrote a column called “Auschwitz or Sinai?”. In thinking about what the rebirth of the State of Israel means,

*I feel strongly that our students understand that engaging in Torah, learning how to pray, and being in community is to be joyous. Jewish joy is the organizing principle for the Hevreh religious school, and I have become more convinced that it should also rule the other arenas of Jewish communal life.*

Hartman writes, “In the 20th century we have again become a traumatized nation. The ugly demonic forces of anti-Semitism have horrified our sensibilities. We can never forget the destruction of millions of Jews in World War II. Many, therefore, justify and interpret the significance of our rebirth in terms of Jewish suffering and persecution.” We lean on the slogan *Never Again*. We continue to practice Judaism and organize our community because, after the trauma of the Holocaust, God forbid we should see the further devolution of our people and our tradition. Yet, “Israel is not only a response to modern anti-Semitism, but is above all a modern expression of the eternal Sinai covenant that has shaped Jewish consciousness throughout the millennia. It was not Hitler who brought us back to Zion, but rather belief in the eternal validity of the Sinai covenant,” Hartman continues.


We gather in Jewish circles, continue to celebrate life’s highs and lows according to Jewish practice, and continue to engage in Torah study because we serve as the inheritors of “the eternal Sinai covenant.” Our destiny as Jews is best expressed when we do not think of ourselves first as the ever-dying people. Rather, we are the ones who carry the sacred chain of Torah transmission forward, which, to me, is something worthy of deep, profound joy.

For the past nine years, I have served Hevreh and been honored to be a part of the Berkshire Jewish community. I have observed and participated in joyous Jewish life here. From Shabbat Across the Berkshires to Super Tzedakah Week and High Lawn Farm Community Days, I have come to understand that we, the Berkshires Jewish community, take joy in all that we do. I want to think that this is the norm across the American Jewish community, but I fear it is more precious than we realize.

As of July 2024, I have closed out my time in the Berkshires, leaving Hevreh to become the next Senior Rabbi at the Isaac M. Wise Temple in Cincinnati, Ohio. Wise Temple is an historic and vibrant Reform synagogue. It is the fountainhead of Reform Judaism, being the congregation out of which the institutions of the Reform movement were founded. It is also the spiritual home to generations of Cincinnati Jews who take joy in their congregation’s heritage and in who they are today. I will serve as the eighth senior rabbi in their 180-year history.

Serving Hevreh and the Berkshire Jewish community has been an honor and a joy. Being granted the sacred trust that congregants give their rabbis has meant the world to me, and I pray I have served this community well. Hartman concludes his piece by writing, “The model of Sinai awakens the Jewish people to the awesome responsibility of becoming a holy people.” When we find ourselves awake to that spiritual awesomeness, joy floods in.


May we be like the students who gather every Sunday for *Boker Tov Hevreh*. May we find joy in community and give gratitude for our many blessings. As I look at my years in the Berkshires, I certainly am doing so.



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## Letters to the Editor



we continued to persevere through unimaginable atrocities and hatred while maintaining a deep connection and longing for the land of Israel. It is only in our generation after 2,000 years of exile that in 1948 we reestablished our homeland in the State of Israel, creating a safe refuge where all Jews can live free from these persecutions.

The current rise in antisemitism is not something new. It is something we as a people have experienced time and again through the ages. What is new is that we now have the State of Israel as a homeland for the Jews with an army to protect the Jewish people. We are no longer defenseless as we have been through our long history. That is why I am an avid Zionist.

I urge you to be curious and look at a timeline outlining what the Jews have endured over the millennium. Let this history of the Jewish people remind you that a strong State of Israel is the best guarantee that our future can be different from our past.

Harold Grinspoon  
Founder, Harold Grinspoon  
Foundation  
Founder, PJ Library

### Why I Am an Avid Zionist

To the Berkshire Jewish Community:

I have lived through World War II, and I'm fearful that it is happening again. As I think about the tragedy of what Israel has gone through and is going through today – the Hamas invasion of Israel on October 7 – 1,200 innocent Israelis slaughtered, tortured, and raped and over 200 hostages brutally abducted, my belief in Zionism – the idea that Israel must serve as the homeland for the Jewish people – has strengthened and grown to new heights.

Now more than ever, the Jewish people need to be able to live peacefully in their historic homeland, building a thriving democracy that they can govern, protect, and enhance, ensuring that it remain a safe haven for Jews the world over.

The Jewish people first settled in the land of Israel over 3,000 years ago. Yet our tragic history shows that we have unfortunately been forced into exile and scattered again and again over the years. While powerless in exile,



Jewish Federation  
OF THE BERKSHIRES

THE STRENGTH OF A PEOPLE  
THE POWER OF COMMUNITY.

### On June 3, the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires issued the following message to the Jewish community regarding an antisemitic incident that took place at Fuel Coffee in Great Barrington.

We are deeply disturbed and saddened by the blatantly antisemitic targeting of a local business and its Jewish owners by anti-Israel protesters outside of Fuel Coffee in Great Barrington on Saturday, June 1. The protesters disrupted sidewalk traffic in front of the business holding signs and chanting that Fuel Coffee supports genocide. One sign specifically targeted the owners by name.

The owners believe this incident was instigated by a disgruntled employee who had recently been let go after multiple requests by management to refrain from sharing his political opinions with patrons during working hours. The employee's behavior was deemed inappropriate for a business setting and made customers uncomfortable.

This incident is deeply unsettling to the Jewish community and harmful to the welcoming and supportive environment that Southern Berkshire businesses and leaders have worked so hard to create. In response, the Federation will be meeting with local Jewish business owners and has reached out to other civic leaders regarding this and other incidents impacting our community.

If you are looking for a cup of coffee or a bite to eat this summer, please consider Fuel. Your patronage, of them and the other businesses in Great Barrington, will be a meaningful way to show support and strengthen bonds within the community.

Let us remain united and resilient in the face of such challenges, continuing to build a community rooted in mutual respect and understanding.

### MARK OPPENHEIMER,

*continued from cover*

about Jewish life and culture, with over 7 million downloads to date. More recently, he hosted an eight-part podcast called *Gatecrashers: The Hidden History of Jews in the Ivy Leagues*, which explored how Jews fought for entry into elite institutions of higher learning in the 20th century, and how this struggle for inclusion transformed American society. Understanding this history provides context for the current moment, following the recent Supreme Court ruling over college admissions practices.

He is the author of five books, including his most recent, *Squirrel Hill: The Tree of Life Synagogue Shooting & the Soul of a Neighborhood*. He is now at work on biographies of Judy Blume and Ann Landers. He has also taught at Stanford, Wesleyan, Wellesley, the NYU journalism school, and Boston College, where he was the Corcoran Visiting Professor of Christian-Jewish Relations. With his wife, daughters, dog, and two cats, he lives in New Haven, CT.

## Major Donors Celebration

Sunday, July 21  
9:30-11:30 a.m.

Berkshire Hills Country Club  
500 Benedict Road, Pittsfield, MA



SPECIAL GUEST  
Maya Beiser  
American-Israeli Cellist

### REGISTER BY JULY 12

jewishberkshires.org/celebration or (413) 442-4360, ext. 16

### MAJOR DONOR CHAIRS: PENNY AND CLAUDIO PINCUS

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## Berkshire JEWISH VOICE

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**Dara Kaufman:** Publisher and Managing Editor

**Albert Stern:** Editor

**Jenny Greenfeld:** Advertising Sales Representative and Copy Editor

**RB Design Co:** Graphic Design and Layout

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# Your Federation Presents

## MAJOR DONORS,

*continued from cover*

The program will include a special performance and remarks by American-Israeli cellist **Maya Beiser**, whose acclaimed album *Infinite Bach* was recorded in the studio constructed in her barn here in the Berkshires. Named the “Cello Goddess” by The New Yorker, Maya brings a bold and innovative presence to contemporary classical music, reimagining solo cello performance in the mainstream arena and performing on the world’s greatest stages. The Berkshire Jewish Voice featured an interview with Maya on the cover of its January 2024 issue.

**Alex Lederman**, a young adult leader from our Berkshire Jewish community, will share how Federation helped shape his Jewish journey, as well as his insights on Israel after spending the last months traveling and speaking with young adults across the US and in Israel. Alex is currently a Senior Policy and Communications Associate at Israel Policy Forum and an op-ed contributor to The Forward, TIME, Jewish Telegraphic Agency, and The Times of Israel blog.

This event is open to leadership donors who make a gift of \$1,000 or more to Federation’s 2024 annual campaign. Register online at [online at jewishberkshires.org/celebration](https://www.jewishberkshires.org/celebration). Berkshire Hills Country Club is located at 500 Benedict Road in Pittsfield.

### Our Major Donor Celebration Co-Chairs – Penny and Claudio Pincus

“The Little Engine That Could,” is what Claudio Pincus says comes to mind when he thinks about Jewish Federation of the Berkshires. He and his wife, Penny, have been longtime supporters of this Federation, first connecting with us 25 years ago, not long after the couple purchased a second home in the Berkshires. “What struck us then was the enormity of the tasks this Federation faced and the leanness of the organization,” says Penny.

Together, Penny and Claudio have supported, as board members and funders, major Jewish philanthropies such as the JDC, American Jewish Committee, Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano, the Israel Philharmonic, and Friends of Israel Scouts/Tzofim. They have also supported synagogues, Israel education programs, and the Jewish Federation of MetroWest NJ, near their primary residence.

“The impact that our funds have here in the Berkshires is so much greater,” asserts Penny. “This Federation, and what it represents to the Jewish people of Western Massachusetts, is far more important than some of the larger federations in communities with many other support systems – day schools and JCCs and things like that. Yes, there are fewer people in the Berkshires, but that doesn’t mean that supporting this community is any less important than supporting larger institutions.”

Says Claudio: “Why do we give and why should other people give? Penny and my family have benefited for generations from the institutions and capabilities of the Jewish community. Penny’s grandparents were aided to immigrate to America, where they lived around a JCC, synagogues, and schools. My grandmother grew up in a Jewish orphanage in Berlin, and my father escaped from Berlin as an orphan to Chile, supported by international Jewish organizations. Penny and I benefited from the existence of Jewish schools, Jewish communities, synagogues, and especially from the State of Israel.

“Given our journey, we have continued the philanthropic work started by both our parents. We recognized early in life that we had taken advantage of certain resources, and that a time would come to give back when our capacity allowed. Many people fail to recognize that the institutions, facilities, buildings, professionals, and all the resources were donated by many people in the past, often with fewer resources. And we now have the responsibility to make a great effort to continue their work.”

Claudio and Penny say that they are seeing more and more Jews retiring to the Berkshires, folks who may only be familiar with Federation’s cultural programs in the busy summer months. Newer residents, they feel, may not yet grasp all that Federation does to meet the community’s year-round needs. “Federation’s work needs real, continual support so it is sustainable in all types of conditions,” says Claudio, who adds that people who are thinking of retiring to the Berkshires should also be thinking about the Jewish lives they want to live as retirees, and to get involved and contribute accordingly.

The couple also recognizes the importance of Jewish institutions at present, when Israel is at war and Jewish individuals and communities are being assailed around the world. Claudio and Penny were in Israel on October 7, visiting family.

## SUMMER CONCERT,

*continued from cover*

and helping all local Jewish organizations access government funds for security enhancements. For more, see the Annual Meeting story on page 1.

### Honoring Federation’s Executive Director Dara Kaufman

In addition to raising funds to ensure a secure Berkshire Jewish community, the Federation will honor Executive Director Dara Kaufman at the concert for her dedicated service and leadership to the community.

“For over a decade, Dara has led our community with confidence, addressed challenging situations head-on, and exhibited strong leadership skills with commitment and passion for the Federation’s mission,” writes Arlene D. Schiff, Federation’s board president.

“The results of her efforts can be seen in the implementation of our strategic plan, the increased number of donors giving at the major donor level, improved and expanded programming that reaches a broader and more diverse audience, and collaborative initiatives with a broad range of the Berkshires’ Jewish and secular organizations. This year, especially, Dara stepped up to develop an immediate response to the events of October 7, dealt with multiple antisemitic incidents and security threats, created a Confronting Antisemitism Task Force, and served as the face and voice of the Jewish community with grace under difficult and stressful circumstances.”

Summing up, Arlene adds: “Now, at one of the most challenging times to be a Jewish leader, we need to show our appreciation and gratitude for all Dara has done for our community and the Jewish people.”

### About Noah Aronson

Noah Aronson has been creating and inspiring audiences with his heartfelt and soulful music for the last 20 years. His music is sung in communities and

“We had this wonderful Shabbat dinner with 20 people on Friday night,” remembers Penny. “We talk about this a lot – how we can’t believe we were so innocent not knowing what was going to transpire six hours later. But I think one of the things that we really began to understand is what Israelis go through and how they have to live. In past times of distress, we would call our family every day to talk to them, to empathize. But actually being there and feeling that sense of danger and the incapability to do anything about it, was something that I think we never would have been able to understand. It made us aware of the frailty of the security in Israel.”

Claudio, who first volunteered in Israel after the Six Day War, says that the current climate for Jews “made us even more aware of the importance of defending our institutions, which provide financial aid as this Federation did to the Israel Emergency Fund, but also representing us in the political arena and being the defense against antisemitism. We’ve realized that some institutions are frail and that Jews are very divided at this time.”

The couple says they get *nachas* from having been able to pass along to their children the Jewish values and the ethic of working for community that they inherited from their families. Their son, Daniel, is a national board member of American Jewish Congress and Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council, as well as president of American Friends of ANU – Museum of the Jewish People in Tel Aviv. Daniel helped a young Muslim refugee from Yemen, Mohammed Al Samawi, escape that war-torn country, a remarkable story detailed in a book called *The Fox Hunt*, written by Al Samawi. Their son Aaron is also active, serving on the board of his synagogue in Beacon, NY.

“We recognize the importance or obligation to be part of the Jewish people,” says Claudio in summation. “That our time has come to step up and that our philanthropy defines who we are and what we stand for. Together with our children and friends, we hope for a sustainable future, and I guess, pray that better times will shine on us again.”

### Thank You, Host Committee!

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

Marjorie & Barry Berg	Ellen & Stuart Masters
Helene Berger	Arlene & Garry Schiff
Cindy Chazen & Jay Leipzig	Elisa Schindler Frankel & Larry Frankel
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### About Our Guest Performer – Maya Beiser



Maya Beiser is an Israeli-American cellist best known for her work in new and avant garde music, who grew up on a kibbutz in Northern Israel. She is a founding member of the Bang on a Can All Stars whose solo albums include acclaimed interpretations of the music of Philip Glass and a reimagination of David Bowie’s final album, *Blackstar*. In May 2023, Beiser released her 14th solo album, *Infinite Bach*, her interpretation of

the master’s Six Cello Suites. It was recorded in the studio – The Art at Foothill Farm – that she and her sound engineer, Dave Cook, created in the barn outside her home in the Berkshires.

In January, she released the second album recorded in the studio, *Maya Beiser x Terry Riley, In C*. Composer Terry Riley describes Maya’s performance on the recording as, “stunningly beautiful. The overall shape flows so naturally and her cello sound is so warm and powerful.” According to the New York Times: “The intrepid cellist Maya Beiser has reimagined the piece ingeniously. The result is transfixing... moody and introspective, but also, by the end, quietly uplifting.”

summer camps around the world and he tours year-round giving concerts and leading music-driven prayer experiences. Noah graduated from Berklee College of Music in Boston with a degree in Piano and Jazz Composition. While studying, Noah simultaneously held the position of artist-in-residence at Temple Beth Elohim in Wellesley, MA, and continues to serve in this capacity. Noah also served as conductor of the Manhattan HaZamir choir from 2008-2010.

Noah has released 10 albums of original music including his debut solo album *Am I Awake* in 2011. His groundbreaking album *The Left Side of the Page* revolutionized the way contemporary Jewish communities engage with their liturgy. Noah attended rabbinical school at Hebrew College in 2013 and completed the Mechon Hadar yearlong fellowship in 2015.

Through the years, Noah has served on the faculty of Hebrew Union College of Sacred Music, *Hava Nashira*, *Shabbat Shira*, *Shrei Chagigah*, and the *Wexner Heritage Foundation* and has partnered with countless communities around the world to help people feel more connected in mind and body and spirit through music.

### If You Go

Tickets for this concert must be ordered in advance, and are priced at \$25, with \$20 tickets available for young adults under the age of 30. Children under 13 will be admitted free of charge. Special underwriting opportunities are available for those who wish to honor Dara Kaufman and support the Jewish Berkshires LiveSecure Initiative.

Tickets can be purchased online [@jewishberkshires.org](https://www.jewishberkshires.org) or by calling the Federation at (413) 442-4360, ext. 10.

All tickets will be held at the door. The Duffin Theater is located at Lenox Memorial High School, 197 East Street in Lenox.

# Your Federation Presents

## A Roundtable and Celebration with Governor Healey

Federation Executive Director Dara Kaufman was grateful to participate in an intimate roundtable conversation in May with Governor Maura Healey, Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll, and Education Secretary Patrick Tutwiler about Jewish experiences and concerns in this moment. After this important meeting, the Governor hosted a lovely reception, and also signed a proclamation recognizing Jewish American Heritage Month. Thank you to Governor Healey and the many elected officials, community leaders, and others who came together to celebrate the incredible contributions of Jewish Americans.



## Moving "Songs of the Lost Communities" at Yom HaShoah Commemoration

Thank you to all who gathered with us on May 5 at the Berkshire Museum to commemorate Yom HaShoah. Laura Wetzler performed a selection of "Songs of the Lost Communities" and Leslie Kozupsky shared her family's Shoah story, relating it to today's antisemitism and stressing the need for our community to remain vigilant. Thanks also to Rabbi Barbara Cohen of Congregation Ahavath Sholom for leading us in a moving memorial for those who perished.



# Community Celebration

## and 84th Annual Meeting

**LET'S MEET!**  
**84th Annual Meeting**  
**Tuesday, June 25 at 7:30 p.m.**  
**Elayne P Bernstein Theatre**  
**Shakespeare & Co, 70 Kemble Street, Lenox**

**Free and Open To All in the Jewish Community**

All are welcome to join a celebratory reception and schmoozing followed by highlights of this year's accomplishments, elections, the Simkin Schiller college scholarship award, and our speaker.

**Guest Speaker Michael Masters**  
**National Director and CEO,**  
**Secure Community Network (SCN)**

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**NOMINATED SLATE, 2024-2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

OFFICERS (2-year term)		
Arlene D. Schiff, President		
Josh Cutler, Treasurer*		
Stephanie Ilberg Lamm, Secretary^		
Judy Usow, VP*		
Natalie Matus, VP		
Elisa Spungen Bildner, VP		
Elisa Schindler Frankel, Immediate Past President		

TERM ENDING 2025 (3-year term)	TERM ENDING 2026 (3-year term)	TERM ENDING 2027 (3-year term)
Jane Glaser	Amy Blumkin	Kathy Fraker^
Leslie Kozupsky	Rebecca Cook-Dubin	Anne Falchuck*
Stuart Masters	Beryl Jolly	Kenneth Fishman*
Michael Wasserman	Hank Maimin	
Audrey Weiner	Elizabeth Miller	<b>RABBINIC APPOINTEE</b> (1-year term)
	Gail Orenstein	Rabbi David Weiner*
	Jennifer Sacon	
	Tom Sawyer	

\*Newly Appointed 1st term  
^Newly Appointed 2nd term

Per the Federation's bylaws, additional nominations may be considered when submitted by a petition signed by fifteen Berkshire Jewish Community members and received by the secretary at least ten days before the annual meeting.

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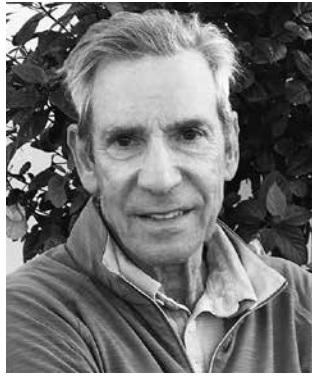
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## Your Federation Presents

### Current Events Seminar with Professor Steven Rubin Returns



Professor Steve Rubin

PITTSFIELD – On the Thursdays of June 20 and July 11 at 10:45 a.m., Jewish Federation of the Berkshires presents Professor Steven Rubin's summer-long series of current events seminars.

The current events seminar allows participants to examine and discuss topical and newsworthy national and international issues. The moderator will suggest readings for each session, introduce topics, and offer discussion questions. The seminar will be collaborative and collegial, with all participants encouraged to voice their opinions.

This free program will be presented as part of the Federation's Connecting With Community Series at Knesset Israel (16 Colt Road in Pittsfield). Following the program, we will continue the conversation with a home-cooked lunch around our community table. All are welcome! Advance lunch reservations are required and can be made by calling (413) 442-2200 before 9 a.m. on the day of the program. A suggested donation of \$3 for adults over 60 years of age is welcomed. \$7 for all others.

**Steve Rubin, Ph.D.** (moderator) is professor emeritus and former dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Adelphi University, Garden City, NY. His op-eds and opinion essays have appeared in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *The Berkshire Eagle*, *Tampa Bay Times*, *The South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, *Palm Beach Post*, and *The Hartford Courant*, among others. He is the editor of several anthologies, including *Celebrating the Jewish Holidays: Poems, Stories, Essays* (Brandeis University Press), *Telling and Remembering: A Century of American Jewish Poets* (Beacon Press), and *Writing Our Lives: Autobiographies of American Jews* (Jewish Publication Society). He lives in Tyringham and can be reached [atsjr@adelphi.edu](mailto:atsjr@adelphi.edu).

### Laura Wetzler Returns with Two Programs Celebrating Jews in Show Biz

PITTSFIELD – On Thursday, June 27, at 10:30 a.m., join singer, songwriter, guitarist, recording artist and lecturer Laura Wetzler for "Bernstein and the Hebrew Muse." It's a multimedia presentation that explores the enormous influence Leonard Bernstein's Jewish heritage had on his work as a composer.

Laura returns on Thursday, July 25 at 10:30 a.m., with "Fabulous Showbiz Divas: The Nice Jewish Girls," a multimedia presentation that explores the life, art and legacies of the first wave of Jewish women stars.



Laura Wetzler

**Laura Wetzler** has devoted years of study and performance to diverse, multicultural World music, as well as to the history of American popular entertainment and European Art Music. She takes particular joy in sharing the fascinating and beautiful contributions of Jewish-American and African-American artists to our musical cultural heritage. [www.laurawetzler.com](http://www.laurawetzler.com).

These free programs will be presented as part of the Federation's Connecting With Community Series at Knesset Israel (16 Colt Road in Pittsfield). Following the program, we will continue the conversation with a home-cooked lunch around our community table. All are welcome! Advance lunch reservations are required and can be made by calling (413) 442-2200 before 9 a.m. on the day of the program. A suggested donation of \$3 for adults over 60 years of age is welcomed. \$7 for all others.

Please note the *early start time of 10:30 a.m.* for these special programs.

### Yiddish Futures: Translation in the New Yiddish Moment

#### Be a part of the moment Yiddish is having at Knosh & Knowledge on July 26

GREAT BARRINGTON – In 2023, the New York Times boldly declared: "Yiddish Is Having a Moment." On the eve of World War II, Yiddish was the language of 10 million people. In America today, Yiddish survives and thrives in far different forms – most often mediated through translation.

In this presentation and moderated conversation on Friday, July 26 at 10:45 a.m., Knosh & Knowledge will welcome acclaimed scholars and translators of Yiddish Jordan Finkin, Ph.D. (HUC-JIR) and Madeline (Mindl) Cohen, Ph.D. (Yiddish Book Center). The program will take place at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, 270 State Road in Great Barrington. Please register via the calendar of events at [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org).

The scholars will discuss:

What challenges and responsibilities does the Yiddish translator have in America today? How are audiences for Yiddish translations created and what do they expect? How do translations reshape our understanding of the nature of Yiddish literature and culture?

This presentation will pursue these and other questions in a wide-ranging discussion of the importance and implications of translating Yiddish literature in 2024—one year into its officially declared "moment."

This Jewish Federation of the Berkshires program is presented in collaboration with the HUC-JIR in the Berkshires' weekend of Jewish Ideas.

#### Presenter Information



Jordan Finkin, Ph.D.

**Jordan Finkin, Ph.D.** is Deputy Director of Libraries and Rare Book Manuscript Librarian at the Klau Library, Cincinnati. He is the author of numerous academic articles as well as several scholarly monographs, most recently *Exile as Home on the work of the Yiddish poet Leyb Naydus*. In addition to his scholarly work, Dr. Finkin is a literary translator from Yiddish, German, and French. Dr. Finkin currently serves as the co-director of Hebrew Union College Press and is also the founder and director of *Naydus Press*, a non-profit publisher of Yiddish literature in English translation.



Mindl Cohen, Ph.D.

**Madeline (Mindl) Cohen, Ph.D.** is academic director of the Yiddish Book Center and director of the Center's fellowship program for Yiddish literary translators. Mindl has a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature with an emphasis in Jewish Studies from the University of California, Berkeley and is a visiting lecturer in Jewish Studies at Mount Holyoke College. Mindl also serves as president of the board of directors for *In geveb: A Journal of Yiddish Studies*.

### Life Can Present Challenges Sometimes, a little help along the way can make things easier

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

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

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



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

Jill Goldstein, MSW, LICSW  
(413) 442-4360, Ext 17  
[j.goldstein@jfswm.org](mailto:j.goldstein@jfswm.org)

All services are free and completely confidential



### Family Fun in the Summer Sun with PJ Library

By Molly Meador / Coordinator of PJ Library



Make a splash!

This summer, families are invited to join us at events across Berkshire County.

**Splash into Shabbat** on Friday, July 5 from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at Card Pond in West Stockbridge. Folks in the northern Berkshires and southern Vermont will have a chance to get wet at the **Splash into Shabbat** on Friday, August 9 at Margaret Lindley Park in Williamstown, also starting at 5 p.m.

Another summer highlight you won't want to miss is **PJ Library at**

**Tanglewood: BSO Family Concert.** That takes place on Sunday, July 21 from 10 a.m. to noon at Tanglewood in Lenox.

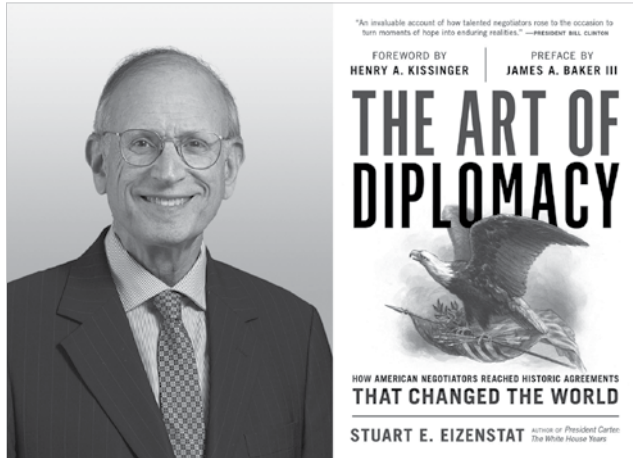
And of course, **Noah Aronson, Live in Concert!** on Sunday, August 4 at 7:30 p.m. – kiddos under 13 are free. See the story on page 1 for more.

Please contact me at [mmeador@jewishberkshires.org](mailto:mmeador@jewishberkshires.org) to find out more. Register for these family-friendly events on the calendar of events at [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org).



## LOCAL NEWS

## Ambassador Stuart E. Eizenstat on “The Art of Diplomacy”



PITTSFIELD – On Thursday, July 18 at 7:30 p.m., expect an insightful evening with Ambassador Stuart E. Eizenstat as he discusses topics from his new book, *The Art of Diplomacy: How American Negotiators Reached Historic Agreements that Changed the World*.

This free event – presented by Knesset Israel in cooperation with Jewish Federation of the Berkshires and OLLI at BCC – will take place at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield.

In his book, Ambassador Eizenstat delves into America's most significant negotiations over the past fifty years, addressing conflicts such as the Middle East peace process, “The Troubles” in Northern Ireland, and lingering World War II issues. Drawing on his extensive experience as a former top White House aide, U.S. ambassador, and undersecretary of state, Eizenstat provides valuable insights into the use of American military force as a diplomatic instrument, with lessons applicable to contemporary conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza.

As a leading figure in several historic negotiations and having personally interviewed over 130 U.S. and international leaders, Ambassador Eizenstat offers a comprehensive view of international diplomacy, highlighting the personalities, issues, and breakthroughs that have shaped the world today. Don't miss this opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of American leadership in global negotiations.

Books will be available for purchase at the event. For more information and to RSVP, please visit [knessetisrael.org/rsvp](http://knessetisrael.org/rsvp).

### BJV Interview: Ambassador Stuart E. Eizenstat

In May, Ambassador Eizenstat spoke to the BJV about his new book. Our conversation was edited for length and clarity.

#### What was your intent in writing *The Art of Diplomacy*?

I wrote it for three reasons. We're living at a turbulent time where the world is beset with challenges and conflicts seemingly incapable of positive resolution, and that makes diplomacy more important than ever. First, I wanted to show how US-led diplomacy resolved difficult and seemingly insoluble problems in the past to create a better world. Second, with the hot wars in Gaza and Ukraine, I wanted to take a hard look at when and how US military force can be used as an element in diplomatic negotiations in light of a mixed record during our lifetimes – to draw lessons for when military force should be used, when it shouldn't, and if you use it, how to use it to back up diplomacy. And third, to make a broader point about the need for continued US engagement and avoidance of a growing isolationism, which can lead to a vacuum that might be filled by Russia and China and countries that have very different values and interests than ours. I am concerned about a growing feeling that somehow our leadership doesn't make a difference.

**I was reading just today [May 28] about how the pier in Gaza constructed by our military seems to have broken apart [leading to four US Navy vessels running aground, as well]. The US government made this promise of going in to help the people of Gaza and yet it did not have the ability to pull things off successfully – moreover, most of the aid that had been delivered seems to have been commandeered by Hamas. In the wake of this and other displays of US weakness, such as in Afghanistan, how does a diplomat work around the inability to deliver, to project strength, to project competence?**

Well, one of the things that I stress throughout the book is the importance of making sure that our military is supporting our political goals and that our political goals are supporting the military.

I quote Steve Hadley, who was George W. Bush's National Security Advisor, saying that we too often get it backwards. We lead with our military without thinking through what the political consequences are and what the political goal is we hope to achieve. That needs to be the other way around. Now, on the particular matter you mentioned about the piers, this seems to be some technical problem, which is surprising because the Corps of Engineers are highly competent; obviously, anything like this creates a negative impression of US military.

But there are two problems on the humanitarian side. One is the lack of corridors, particularly in Rafah, to get supplies in. The second is the absence of a distribution system internally. The major institution for humanitarian goods and social and educational services in Gaza for the last 50 to 60 years has been the United Nations Work Relief Agency. Elements of UNWRA were implicated in the October 7 attacks, but UNWRA is the only major game in town. Sure, there are plenty of NGOs but they don't have the internal distribution

system that UNWRA has. So, you're in a situation where even when goods come in, they don't get into the proper hands.

**Is that a failure of planning or could that have been foreseen and negotiated diplomatically before investing funds and putting our reputation on the line?**

Israel repeated mistakes that we made in Iraq and Afghanistan, which I stress in my book, which is going in without a plan of how you get out or of what government you intend to put in place when the military phase is over. You have to have good intelligence to understand the culture and the internal politics of the country in which you're intervening, which we did not have in Afghanistan and Iraq. Now, you would think that Israel, which is cheek to jowl with Gaza, would. But the Israeli government allowed, without knowing it and right under its eyes, for Hamas to morph from a terror group into a formal terrorist army of 30,000 to 40,000 people who are well-trained, well-armed, well-disciplined.

*I stress throughout the book the importance of making sure that our military is supporting our political goals and that our political goals are supporting the military.*

General David Petraeus told me in one of 130 interviews I did from that book, that what turned the Iraq war around was this concept – to clear, hold, and build. Clear an area from terrorists. Continue to hold that area. And third, and most crucial, is the build phase. And he stressed that it was essential that while the fighting was going on, there was an effort of reconstruction and helping civilians.

**Is that going to be possible in Gaza in your estimation?**

Well, it has to be done, not by Israel alone; it has to be done with a coalition of moderate European countries and the EU and the US. Now, I want to put the Gaza War into a broader context. This really is part of a battle between Iran's axis of resistance – with Syria, the Houthis, Hezbollah, and Hamas – to establish a radical order in the Middle East, against a potential coalition that the US would take a lead in along with Israel and the EU and moderate Arab countries like Egypt, Jordan, UAE, Morocco, Bahrain, and ultimately Saudi Arabia. That would help with the reconstruction and with the new governance. The problem now is that the moderate Arab countries are insisting that as a condition of joining such a coalition with Israel, there be some prospect – and it doesn't have to be tomorrow – of an ultimate Palestinian state. And that's something that the prime minister of Israel can't agree to with his current coalition. That will vastly complicate a postwar resolution. But the glue that will hold this anti-Iran coalition together is antipathy toward Iran, concern about its nuclear capacity, its support of terrorism, and its undermining the more modernized states in the region. This is Israel's great opportunity because it has the chance of being part of that broader coalition.

**You identify a failure to follow through on agreements as a recurring weakness of US diplomacy over the decades. Can you speak a little bit to that?**

It's one of our failings as a country – the reliability of the agreements we make. Take, for example, climate change agreements. I was a lead negotiator at the 1997 Kyoto climate change negotiations, what was called COP 3, in Kyoto, Japan and then in Buenos Aires the next year. The history of US involvement in climate change changes almost every four to eight years, depending on who the president is. When it's a Republican president, it tends to be less active and sometimes totally inactive, like with President Trump. With Democrats, [the US is] engaged. So, we go in and out, in and out, in and out, and that does not create a reliable negotiating partner. People, they ask, well, is the agreement we're about to reach only as good as the next election?

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## LOCAL NEWS

**Given American politics and our system of government, is that something that can be addressed in any formal way? Or will our diplomats have to show more discipline in persevering with agreements despite changes in the political landscape?**

Commercial agreements between two businesses who make a deal are enforceable by law. But international agreements are not enforceable by law. They depend on the trust and confidence of the countries [making them]. So, when Trump pulled out of the [Obama administration-negotiated Iran deal], there was nothing that anyone else – not just Iran, but the so-called P5+1 (the United Nations Security Council members, plus Germany) – could do. Therefore, it's very important that there be more bipartisan foreign policy along that concept Senator Vandenberg voiced during the Roosevelt administration: politics should end at the water's edge. We should not politicize foreign policy and diplomatic agreements as we do domestically.

One of the things that I stress in my book is that international agreements are not like a game of poker, where one side wins and the other side loses. In order for an international agreement to be effective, it has to be a win-win for both sides. There is an art to it that I liken to an artist creating a painting. The frame is negotiation, so the other side is convinced it is in their interest to reach an agreement that is also in our interest. It's not like a real estate deal, where you squeeze out everything you can because you're not going to have to deal with the person on the other side again. [International agreements] are ongoing relationships. When you deal with a country on one issue, you may need them as allies on another issue, like China on climate change. And because there's no legal enforcement, you can't go into a court to enforce it, you've got to make sure that it serves the interests of both sides. Therefore, diplomacy is a unique type of negotiation and agreement.

## Lunch and Learn All Summer Long with Temple Anshe Amunim

PITTSFIELD – Wednesdays at noon through the summer, Temple Anshe Amunim hosts a robust series of Lunch and Learns. All events are free but registration is required. Please see the website for details: [ansheamunim.org](http://ansheamunim.org).

**June 26:** "Historic Homes of our Neighborhood, with Alice Wislocki." Learn about some of the historic homes near Temple Anshe Amunim and share information about ages and architects. Bring lunch to eat in Alice's garden at the conclusion of the walk. Meet at TAA at noon. Rain date: June 27.

**July 3:** *Fly Already*, by Etgar Keret, who is speaking on July 25 at Shakespeare & Company. He is a contemporary Israeli author, a recipient of the French Chavalier des Arts et des Lettres, the Charles Bronfman Prize, and the Camera d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival. Come discuss his short stories with Rabbi Scott Saulson. This week's story will be "Glitch at the End of the Galaxy."



TAA will explore the work of Etgar Keret at three of its Lunch and Learn programs

**July 10:** *Fly Already*, by Etgar Keret. This week's stories will be "GooDeed" and "Evolution of a Breakup".

**July 17:** *Fly Already*, by Etgar Keret. This week's story will be "Pineapple Crush".

**July 24:** "The Value of Jewish Film," with Lisa Reznik, who writes: "Films can be excellent vehicles to promote empathy, meaningful dialogue and universal cross-cultural understanding. Jewish movies, both dramatic and documentary, offer the opportunity to explore Jewish experience and history with wide audiences. Jewish films can play a role in breaking down negative stereotypes, altering perspectives and building bridges of understanding with other ethnic and cultural groups."

**July 31:** "Medical Aid in Dying," with Dr. Larry Pellish, who writes: "Medical Aid in Dying (MAID) is a process in which a physician provides drugs to a terminally ill person that the person self-administers, resulting in a rapid and painless death. Oregon made such a process legal 26 years ago. Since then, several states have passed similar laws. What has been the experience in these states and Canada? What is the status of the proposed law in Massachusetts? MAID is available to non-residents in Vermont! What does that mean to you?"

## TAAnglewood This Summer

LENOX – On Saturday, July 13 at 7 p.m., join Temple Anshe Amunim for the evening's concert, free with a ticket to Tanglewood.

Pack your picnic gear, dinner and beverages and join TAA on the lawn at Tanglewood for a brief Havdalah service followed by a BSO concert at 8 p.m. Look for the blue and white balloons.

A ticket to the concert may be purchased at the gate or in advance online.



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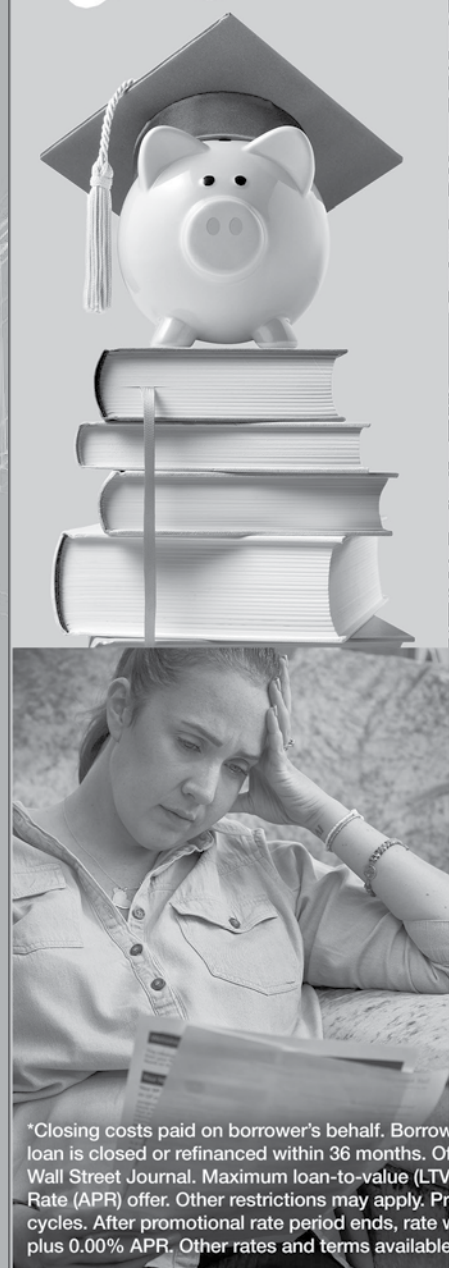
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## As my parents planted for me before I was born, so do I plant for those who come after me. – Talmud

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

Anonymous (10)  
Ed Abrahams  
Norman Avnet\*  
Barbara Bashevkin\*  
Robert Bashevkin\*  
Linda J. L. Becker  
Robert Berend\*  
Shelley Berend  
Helene Berke  
Lawrence Berke\*  
Lee & Sydelle Blatt  
Betty Braun\*  
Cipora Brown  
Barbara Cohen  
Mark Cohen\*  
Mimi Cohen  
C. Jeffrey & Judith Cook  
Gerry & Lynn Denmark  
Jonathan & Lara Denmark

Sheila K. Donath  
Melva Eidelberg  
Monroe England,\* *in memory of Monroe B. & Isabel England*  
Dr. Armand V. Feigenbaum\*  
Dr. Donald S. Feigenbaum\*  
Steven Feiner  
Diana & Stanley\* Feld  
Lynn & William\* Foggie  
Larry Frankel & Elisa Schindler Frankel  
Elaine Friedman  
Eiran Gazit  
Jeffrey Goldwasser & Jonquil Wolfson  
Jordan & Laura Green  
Harold Grinspoon  
Ellen Heffan

Ed Jaffe\*  
Phil\* and Rhoda\* Kaminstein  
Elihu Katzman  
Marilyn Katzman  
Dara Kaufman  
Howard\* & Nancy\* Kaufman  
Lawrence Klein  
Sarah Klein  
Arthur Kriger\*  
Fred & Brenda Landes  
Beth Laster-Nathan  
Andrew S. Levine\*  
Toby H. Levine  
Erna Lindner-Gilbert\*  
Amy Lindner-Lesser  
Allan and Nan Lipton  
Helen Maislen\*  
Ellen Masters  
Stuart Masters

Jeffrey May\* & Kara Thornton  
Bob & Harriett Miller  
Estelle Miller  
Robert Newman\*  
Wendy Robbins  
Ken\* & Fran\* Rubenstein  
Stella Schechter\*  
Arlene D. Schiff  
Gary Schiff  
Stephen & Deborah Schreier  
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## BERKSHIRE JEWISH CONGREGATIONS & ORGANIZATIONS

### Welcome to the Jewish Berkshires

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

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

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

**JEWISHBERKSHIRES.ORG**

**Berkshire Minyan**  
*Lay-led, Traditional, Egalitarian Minyan*  
South County  
[berkshirereminyan.org](http://berkshirereminyan.org)

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

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

**Chabad of the Berkshires**  
450 South St., Pittsfield, MA  
(413) 499-9899,  
[jewishberkshires.com](http://jewishberkshires.com)

**Congregation Ahavath Sholom**  
*Reconstructionist*  
North St., Great Barrington, MA  
(413) 528-4197, [ahavathsholom.com](http://ahavathsholom.com)

**Congregation Beth Israel**  
*Reform*  
53 Lois St., North Adams, MA  
(413) 663-5830, [cbiberkshires.com](http://cbiberkshires.com)

**Hevreh of Southern Berkshire**  
*Reform*  
270 State Rd., Great Barrington, MA (413) 528-6378, [hevreh.org](http://hevreh.org)

**Israel Philatelist Society**  
c/o Dr. Ed Helitzer,  
(413) 447-7622

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

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

**Knesset Israel**  
*Conservative*  
16 Colt Rd., Pittsfield, MA  
(413) 445-4872, [knessetisrael.org](http://knessetisrael.org)

**Temple Anshe Amunim**  
*Reform*  
26 Broad St., Pittsfield, MA  
(413) 442-5910, [ansheamunim.org](http://ansheamunim.org)

# Your Federation Presents

## An evening of Jewish cuisine and support at Williams College

Federation board members traveled north to support Jewish students at Williams College at a special dinner celebrating the Jewish culinary diaspora. Juniors Sam Magid and Sophie Bellwoar presented dinner guests, students, and Williams College President Maud Mandel with a "bite-sized" history about culinary traditions of the Diaspora communities of Hungary, Ethiopia, Yemen, Morocco, and Rome. Each presentation was followed by traditional dishes prepared and served by the students. Williams College Jewish Association receives an annual grant from Jewish Federation of the Berkshires to support Shabbat and holiday celebrations and expand opportunities for deeper engagement between Williams students and the Berkshire Jewish community.



### REAL ESTATE/HOME IN THE BERKSHIRES



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# LOCAL NEWS

## Summer Speakers at Chabad will Discuss Global Politics and Current Events

LENOX – This summer, Chabad of the Berkshires will host compelling speakers at noon after Shabbat services, which are held in July and August at the Lenox Community Center.



Poland's Ambassador to the United Nations Krzysztof Szczerski

On Saturday, July 13, meet **Asaf Romirowsky** the executive director of Scholars for Peace in the Middle East (SPME) and the Association for the Study of the Middle East and Africa (ASMEA). Trained as a Middle East historian he holds a PhD from King's College

London, UK and has published widely on various aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict and American foreign policy in the Middle East, as well as on Israeli and Zionist history. His topic will be: "U.S. Campuses and the War Against Hamas."

Romirowsky is co-author of *Religion, Politics, and the Origins of Palestine Refugee Relief* and a contributor to *The Case Against Academic Boycotts of Israel*. Recently, he co-edited "Word Crimes: Reclaiming the Language of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," a special issue of the journal *Israel Studies*.

Romirowsky's publicly-engaged scholarship has been featured in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The National Interest*, *The American Interest*, *The New Republic*, *The Times of Israel*, *Jerusalem Post*, *Ynet* and *Tablet* among other online and print media outlets

On Saturday, July 20, Chabad hosts **Krzysztof Szczerski**, a Polish political scientist and politician who has been serving as Poland's Ambassador to the United Nations in New York since 2021. Szczerski previously served, among other positions, as deputy to the Sejm of Poland (2011–2015) and Under Secretary and Secretary of the Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland, Andrzej Duda (2015–2021).

## "Stories My Grandfather, Rabbi Jacob Axelrod, Told Me"

*How a Polish rabbi ended up in a 60-year pulpit in the Berkshires and other tales told by JTA correspondent Toby Anne Axelrod*

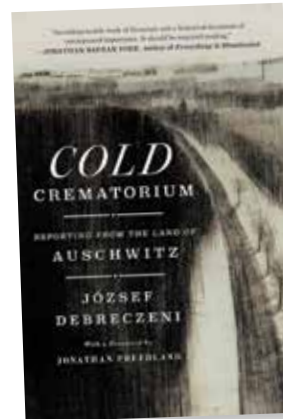
GREAT BARRINGTON – On Sunday, July 21 at 2 p.m., Congregation Ahavath Sholom hosts Toby Anne Axelrod, the granddaughter of Rabbi Jacob Axelrod, spiritual leader of Congregation Ahavath Sholom from 1927 until 1984. She will give a talk about the life of her grandfather and her memories of growing up as a part of Congregation Ahavath Sholom.

Toby Anne Axelrod is a freelance journalist for JTA (Jewish Telegraphic Agency) based in Berlin, Germany, and lives part-time in Great Barrington. She writes, "My *zeyde*, an Orthodox rabbi, found the job at this small synagogue in Great Barrington, MA in 1927. He answered an ad in a Jewish newspaper two years after he came to America and was the congregation's rabbi for 60 years until 1984. He also served as the religious leader and *shochet* (kosher butcher) of Great Barrington's small Jewish community. The building that became the synagogue had been sold to a Jewish junk dealer (Mr. Broverman) who had made a promise to open a shop at that location. Instead, to the chagrin of town officials, the little, white, two-story frame house became Ahavas Sholom – Love of Peace Synagogue."

The historic building on North Street in Great Barrington is still the home of the congregation and is the longest synagogue building in continuous use in the Berkshires.

**Toby Axelrod** is JTA's correspondent for Germany, Switzerland and Austria. A former assistant director of the American Jewish Committee's Berlin office, she has also worked as staff writer and editor at the *New York Jewish Week*. She has won numerous awards from the *New York Press Association* and the *American Jewish Press Association*.

## Knesset Israel and OLLI at Berkshire Community College Present: "Cold Crematorium: The 'Lost' Holocaust Masterpiece"



PITTSFIELD – On Wednesday, July 10 at 3:30 p.m., Knesset Israel, in collaboration with OLLI at BCC, presents an exploration into Holocaust literature with "Cold Crematorium: The 'Lost' Holocaust Masterpiece," featuring Alexander Bruner.

Alexander Bruner is the nephew of veteran journalist, poet, and Holocaust survivor József Debreczeni, whose

memoir *Cold Crematorium: Reporting from the Land of Auschwitz* was first published in Hungarian in 1950. When Debreczeni arrived at Auschwitz, he was one of the fortunate few sent to a life of slave labor, enabling him to survive the Holocaust. Following the war, he penned *Cold Crematorium*, a poignant indictment of Nazism hailed as one of the harshest critiques ever written. Now, for the first time, this seminal work is available in English, with translations into 15 languages forthcoming.

Alexander Bruner will provide insight into his uncle's deportation to Auschwitz, recounting the harrowing journey through multiple slave labor camps. Through personal anecdotes, photographs, documents, and audio recordings, Bruner will illuminate the historical and familial context of "Cold Crematorium," offering an examination of its significance. He will delve into his uncle's motivations for writing the book, its initial reception, and the reasons behind its delayed translation into world languages.

**COLD CREMATORIUM**, continued on page 18



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Want more info? Schedule a Call



# Your Federation Presents

## Jewish Community Day 2024

### Hundreds Celebrated Doing Jewish in the Berkshires

What a day! Thanks to all of you who came out on May 19 to celebrate the Super Tzedakah Week kickoff of our 2024 Annual Campaign at High Lawn Farm in Lee. Jewish Community Day gave nearly 500 attendees the chance to connect with old and new friends on a lovely spring day, in a beautiful setting, and learn about Federation and the vital role it plays in our vibrant Jewish community. Special thanks to Super Tzedakah Week chair Josh Cutler and his son, James, and our welcoming board members and volunteers.

We hope to see you at other Federation events all summer long!

#### Thank You, Raffle Donors!

- Berkshire Museum
- CARR Hardware
- Clark Art Institute
- Concepts of Art
- Hancock Shaker Village
- High Lawn Farm
- Mass MOCA
- Norman Rockwell Museum
- PJ Library
- The Trustees

#### Thank You, Volunteers!

- Bernie & Beth Abramson
- Robin & Ken Baer
- Joan & Larry Brotman
- Nance & Andy Ebert
- Paula Farbman
- Julie & Peter Gale
- Ellen Heffan
- Cindy Kaplan
- Elie Katzman
- Ofer Kaufman
- Ed & Susan Kopelowitz
- Gail Lansky
- Bob Lezberg
- Emma Lezberg

- Ellen Masters
- Roger Matus
- Cameron Miller
- Wendy Robbins
- Shira Sawyer
- Suzanne Sawyer
- Anne Schnesel
- Howie Stier
- Ray Tourgeman
- Judy Turtz
- Lisa, Josh, & Saul Warren
- Jay Weintraub
- Rebecca Wolin



# Your Federation Presents



PHOTOS BY JULIA KAPLAN AND CAROL SMOKLER (THE GOOD ONES) AND THE BJV STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



## Join us at the Community Table

**ALL ARE WELCOME:** Enjoy a delicious kosher lunch while making meaningful connections! Meals are available Monday and Thursday for pick up, in addition to **Thursday in-person lunches around our Community Table**. Thursday in-person lunches are often preceded by a free program or include a special theme and light program at the table. Check the schedule below.

Suggested donation of \$3 for adults over age 60; \$7 for all others.

**RESERVATIONS REQUIRED:** Call the Federation's kitchen at (413) 442-2200 before 9 a.m. on day of lunch to reserve your spot at the table or to reserve a meal for pickup.

### What's for Lunch?

(GF) Gluten-Free entree • (DF) Dairy-Free entree

#### MONDAY, JUNE 17

**Noon, Lunch...**Vegetable lasagna, carrot lentil soup, salad, pumpkin bread, and chocolate chip cookies.

#### THURSDAY, JUNE 20

**10:45 a.m. program:** Current Events Seminar with Professor Steve Rubin.

**Noon in-person lunch...**Mediterranean chicken (GF) (DF), asparagus cuts n tips, rice pilaf, salad, hearty white bread, and Mandarin oranges.

#### MONDAY, JUNE 24

**Noon, Lunch...**Mushroom and cheese tart, California blend vegetables, butternut squash soup, roll, and tapioca pudding.

#### THURSDAY, JUNE 27

**10:30 a.m. program:** Bernstein & The Hebrew Muse with Laura Wetzler.

**Noon in-person lunch...**Fish Veracruz (GF) (DF), meadow blend vegetables, couscous, salad, multi-grain bread, and butterscotch pudding.

#### MONDAY, JULY 1

**Noon, Lunch...**Meatloaf (GF) (DF), peas and carrots, tater tots, salad, white bread, and peaches.

#### THURSDAY, JULY 4

Closed for Fourth of July.

#### MONDAY, JULY 8

**Noon, Lunch...**Nicoise salad (GF) (DF), gazpacho, baguette, and apricot fool.

#### THURSDAY, JULY 11

**10:45 a.m. program:** Current Events Seminar with Professor Steve Rubin.

**Noon in-person lunch...**Turkey burgers (GF) (DF), potato salad, hamburger bun, and pear crisp.

#### MONDAY, JULY 15

**Noon, Lunch...**Veal "sausage" and peppers (GF) (DF), roasted Brussels sprouts, salad, sub roll, and tropical fruit salad.

#### THURSDAY, JULY 18

**10:45 a.m. program:** Lessons from the Olive Tree for Families, Jewish Unity, and the Social Security System with Jon Greenberg.

**Noon in-person lunch...**Roasted cod with tomato relish (GF) (DF), green beans, vegetable soup, multi-grain bread, and peach cobbler.

#### MONDAY, JULY 22

**Noon, Lunch...**Hot dogs (GF) (DF), baked beans, corn, three bean salad, hot dog bun, and parve cookie.

#### THURSDAY, JULY 25

**10:30 a.m. program:** Fabulous Showbiz Divas: The Nice Jewish Girls with Laura Wetzler.

**Noon in-person lunch...**Salad trio – tuna, coleslaw, and macaroni, cold cucumber soup, white bread, and brownie.

#### MONDAY, JULY 29

**Noon, Lunch...**Potato pierogies with mushroom and onions, California blend vegetables, salad, multi-grain bread, and tapioca pudding.

#### THURSDAY, AUGUST 1

**10:45 a.m. program:** Current Events Seminar with Professor Steve Rubin.

**Noon in-person lunch...**Chicken Caesar salad (GF) (DF), sweet corn gazpacho soup, whole wheat bread, and pineapple.

#### MONDAY, AUGUST 5

**Noon, Lunch...**Meatloaf (GF) (DF), peas and carrots, French fries, salad, roll, and tropical fruit salad.

### Knesset Israel – 16 Colt Road, Pittsfield



#### ONGOING MINYANS

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

#### CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

Friday, June 21 ..... 8:15 p.m.  
Friday, June 28 ..... 8:16 p.m.  
Friday, July 5 ..... 8:14 p.m.  
Friday, July 12 ..... 8:11 p.m.  
Friday, July 19 ..... 8:06 p.m.  
Friday, July 26 ..... 8:00 p.m.

You can now read and share *Berkshire Jewish Voice* feature stories online!

Visit [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org) and select **Community & Events>Berkshire Jewish Voice** for links to highlights of current and past issues.

### MAZEL TOV!

**Ben Gross**, the recipient of the 2024 Daniel Pearl Berkshire Scholarship. Ben is a recent graduate of Monument Mountain Regional High School who plans to study music and music education at Syracuse University. An accomplished jazz drummer, Ben volunteers at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire as a music teacher and youth leader, and also established the Students of Color Association at his high school. Mazel tov to proud mom **Betsy Gross**.

**Emma Lezberg**, chosen to present at The Migration Conference, the largest scholarly conference on migration in the world, this year in Mexico City. She will present on updating "liminal legality," the uncertainty faced by those on temporary immigration statuses for the last two decades. Emma is a PhD candidate at Harvard University School of Education, concentrating in culture, institutions, and society. She is the daughter of **Jenny Greenfeld and Bob Lezberg** and the granddaughter of **Barbara Greenfeld**.

...and *yasher koach* to **Dr. Joshua Yurfest**, who served with Sar-El in southern Israel in May.

### Recovering from an illness or injury? Cooking becoming difficult?



#### KOSHER MEALS ON WHEELS:

Meals are available for delivery to qualified individuals to help extend their home independence and health. There is no income requirement, just a simple assessment through Elder Services will get your meal deliveries started, if you qualify.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Jill Goldstein at (413) 442-4360, Ext 17, [j.goldstein@jfswm.org](mailto:j.goldstein@jfswm.org).

#### WANT TO VOLUNTEER?

Meals-on-wheels drivers are always appreciated. Contact Molly Meador at (413) 442-4360, Ext. 14, [mmeador@jewishberkshires.org](mailto:mmeador@jewishberkshires.org) to inquire.

Meals and programs are made possible by the generous support of our community. The kosher lunch and meals on wheels program is in collaboration with Elder Services of Berkshire county.



**Jewish Federation**  
OF THE BERKSHIRES

THE **STRENGTH** OF A PEOPLE.  
THE **POWER** OF COMMUNITY.

## ENSURE A VIBRANT, CARING & SECURE JEWISH COMMUNITY MAKE YOUR GIFT TO FEDERATION'S 2024 CAMPAIGN TODAY!

Your gift will help bring dignity and care to the vulnerable, build and strengthen the Jewish identity of our youth and young adults, support vital community programs, confront rising antisemitism, and create meaningful and secure Jewish life across the Berkshires, in Israel, and around the world.



### JEWISH LIFE FOR YOUNG FAMILIES

You help young families embrace Jewish values and traditions while building a supportive community with Jewish peers through family programming, PJ Library, and volunteer opportunities.



### RESOURCES TO FIGHT ANTISEMITISM

You help young people stand up against hate through anti-bias education in our public schools. You also combat antisemitism and the BDS movement through community programming, local advocacy, and security resources.

### DIGNITY & COMPASSION

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



### JEWISH EDUCATION & VALUES

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



### A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

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



### A STRONG JEWISH IDENTITY

You help young people build strong Jewish identities and become future leaders through scholarships for Jewish camp and Israel experiences, as well as leadership development and holiday meals on campus.

### EMOTIONAL SUPPORT & EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

You help individuals facing unexpected challenges and life transitions receive the support and resources they need. You also provide a safety net of emergency assistance in our local community.



### COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND ADVOCACY

You help provide a proactive voice in our community, schools, government, and media, as well as advocacy to address and respond to antisemitism and anti-Israel sentiment in our community.



### A SECURE JEWISH COMMUNITY

You help keep our community and our institutions safe through ongoing security trainings, building assessments, security grants, a community alert system, and the sharing of best practices to ensure we can freely and securely celebrate our heritage, faith, and culture.



### ISRAEL IN TIMES OF CRISIS

When crisis hits in Israel or around the world, you help mobilize local resources to respond with immediate relief, advocacy, and longer-term recovery. From the Israel Crisis to the war in Ukraine, you help deliver an SOS response.

### A CLOSE & CARING RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL

You help connect the Berkshire Jewish Community with Israel through our Afula-Gilboa partnership. You also provide programs for at-risk students, shelter for abused women, and support services for disabled youth in Israel.



### FOOD SECURITY, HEALTHCARE, & WINTER RELIEF

The war in Ukraine and safe resettlement of Jews fleeing the region has been difficult, but you help provide shelter, transportation, blankets, and heaters. You also bring food, home health aides, and medicine to those who need it most.



**DONATE ONLINE AT JEWISHBERKSHIRES.ORG. THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE!**

**LOCAL NEWS**

**COLD CREMATORIUM,**

*continued from page 13*

Attendees will gain valuable insights into the enduring lessons embedded within a book that the Wall Street Journal calls “a treasure...Debrezeni's memoir is a crucial contribution to Holocaust literature, a book that enlarges our understanding of 'life' in Auschwitz.” The memoir was translated from the Hungarian by the late Paul Olchvary, the publisher of New Europe Books, who passed in 2024; he resided in Williamstown and was a friend to many in the Berkshires.

This event is free and open to all. Please register at knesetisrael.org/RSVP.

**Song and Study: Shabbats at Knesset Israel**

PITTSFIELD – This summer, Knesset Israel will host special Shabbat programs.

**Shabbat Afternoon Learning at KI**

“The Changemakers,” with Rabbi Becca Walker: Join KI on July 20 after services at 12:30 p.m. for an engaging session of learning led by Rabbi Walker, KI’s director of Lifelong Learning. This session will explore models of women driving change found in Jewish texts, offering insights into navigating change in our own lives.

**Shirei Shabbat and Community Dinner**

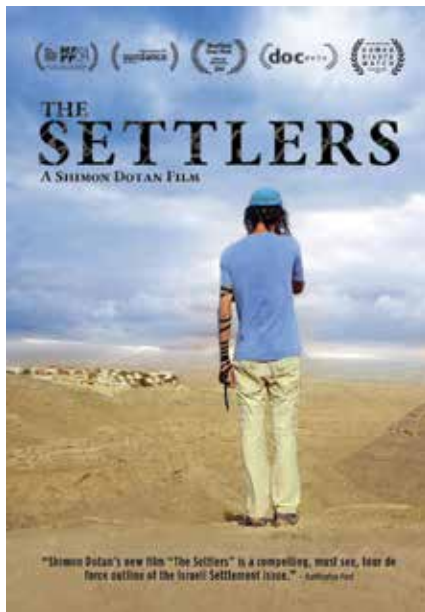
On Friday, July 12 and Friday, August 9, all are invited to musical, family-friendly ‘Shirei Shabbat’ services at 5:45 p.m. Services will be followed by a kosher dinner at 6:45 p.m. Registration necessary for dinner. Sponsored by Knesset Israel and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. Adults \$20, Under 18 Free. Knesset Israel is at 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield. Register online at knesetisrael.org/RSVP.

**“Israel-Palestine Summer Film Series” at CBI**

NORTH ADAMS – This summer, join Congregation Beth Israel of the Berkshires for free screenings of the second and third films in its “Israel-Palestine Summer Film Series,” followed by discussion and dialogue about each film.

CBI invites the Berkshire Jewish community to learn more about the history and current affairs through films that confront difficult and controversial topics.

The films are:



*The Settlers* – Sunday, July 14 at 2 p.m.



*Broken Cameras* – Sunday, August 11 at 2 p.m.

Following each film screening, the audience will be invited to engage in facilitated discussion that will follow the Public Conversations Project’s model for “a conversation in which our primary goal is to pursue mutual understanding rather than agreement,” as well as communication guidelines from Encounter, a program that introduces rabbis and rabbinical students to Palestinians and teaches participants to hear one another in meaningful ways.

RSVP for each film at [cbiberkshires.com/series/film-series/](http://cbiberkshires.com/series/film-series/)

**CBI This Summer**

**Kabbalat Shabbat Services** – Fridays, June 21, July 12 and July 19 at 7 p.m. All are welcome to celebrate Shabbat with prayer, song, poetry, and heart. The CBI band and choir bring beautiful harmonies to Kabbalat Shabbat.

**Shabbat Morning Services**, June 15, June 29, July 6 and July 27 at 9:30 a.m. Spiritual tools include traditional liturgy, contemporary poetry, chant, and song... as well as spectacular views from the sanctuary, which connect all with the natural world and with our Source.

RSVP for all services at [cbiberkshires.com/calendar-of-events](http://cbiberkshires.com/calendar-of-events).

**PJ LIBRARY FAMILY FUN**  
**SAVE THE DATES, SUMMER & FALL 2024**

**Sunday, June 9, 2024**  
**PJ Library Shavuot Celebration: Climbing and Crafts!**  
 10-11:30 am at French Park, Egremont

**Friday, July 5, 2024**  
**Splash into Shabbat**  
 5-6:30 pm at Card Pond, West Stockbridge

**Sunday, July 21, 2024**  
**PJ Library at Tanglewood: BSO Family Concert**  
 10 am–12 pm at Tanglewood, Lenox

**Sunday, August 4, 2024**  
**Noah Aronson, Live in Concert!**  
 7:30-9 pm at Lenox Memorial High School, Lenox

**Friday, August 9, 2024**  
**Splash into Shabbat**  
 5-6:30 pm at Margaret Lindley Park, Williamstown

**Sunday, September 15, 2024**  
**PJ Celebrates Rosh Hashanah**  
 10:30-12 pm at a Location to be Announced

**Sunday, October 27, 2024**  
**PJ Library Fall Sukkot Festival**  
 2-4 pm at Whitney’s Farm in Cheshire

Receive FREE Jewish books and meet local families by becoming a part of our Berkshire PJ Library Program. Visit [jewishberkshires.org/pj-library](http://jewishberkshires.org/pj-library) to enroll your child today!

**PJ Library** Jewish Federation OF THE BERKSHIRES

**Holy Rollers!**

GREAT BARRINGTON – On the Sundays of July 14 and August 18, join with the Hevreh community for a casual 15-25 mile bike ride through the beautiful Berkshire Hills. Each Holy Rollers ride is the chance to meet others from the community, get some exercise, and enjoy the beautiful scenes where we live. Meet at Hevreh, 270 State Road, Great Barrington, between 8:30 a.m. and 9 a.m. – rides will leave promptly at 9 a.m. and return to Hevreh by 11 a.m. For more information visit [hevreh.org](http://hevreh.org) or call the office at (413) 528-6378.

**Afternoon Tea and Concert with Seth Josel and Lucia Mense**

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Tuesday, July 30 at 4 p.m. Hevreh of Southern Berkshire hosts an Early Music concert and afternoon tea. Recorder and traverse flute player from Cologne, Lucia Mense, will be joined by guitarist Seth Josel (originally from New York, now living in Berlin and better-known for his work in the contemporary music field), in a special benefit concert for Hevreh.

The artists have assembled a colorful program, consisting of duos and solos, and will be also performing on seldom-heard concert instruments, such as mandolin and “voice flute.” The program will include Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque works by diverse composers such as Hildegard von Bingen, Bach, Handel, and Telemann.

For more information and to purchase tickets (\$36), visit [hevreh.org](http://hevreh.org) or call the office at (413) 528-6378.

**Death Cafe: Group-Directed Discussion at Hevreh**

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Thursday, August 15 at 5:30 p.m., Hevreh of Southern Berkshire invites the community to talk about death over a shared before-dinner snack. From Hevreh:

At Death Cafes, people worldwide are talking about death in group-directed discussion with no agenda. The only goal is to increase death awareness with a view to helping people make the most of their (finite) lives. With death being a universal happening, we each have something to bring to the conversation regardless of our age and wellness. Join us for your first conversation or to see where our next death chat takes you along your own journey.

Hosted by Hevreh members Heidi Katz and Dave Halley. For more information visit [hevreh.org](http://hevreh.org) or call the office at (413) 528-6378.

Check out our website!  
[www.jewishberkshires.org](http://www.jewishberkshires.org)  
 For calendar listings and events

## LOCAL NEWS

### Lunch N' Learn: Communities of Meaning

GREAT BARRINGTON – On the Wednesdays of July 24, July 31, August 7, and August 14 at noon, Hevreh of Southern Berkshire's Rabbi Jodie Gordon will conduct a series of seminars to explore:

How, where and why do people pray? What does Jewish life look like on the ground today, and what might the future hold? How do Jews engage with people of other faiths? How can our faith shape our actions and commitments? These questions animate a new volume of essays by 34 of today's community leaders and theologians called *Communities of Meaning: Conversations on Modern Jewish Life Inspired by Rabbi Larry Hoffman*.

This summer's lunch and learn series will use this book as its core text, and each week, explore important themes related to the essential questions facing our Jewish community today.

It is recommended to purchase a copy of the book to use for the full series; Rabbi Gordon will also make excerpts available during the class.

This series is free. You do not have to commit to attending each class.

For more information visit [hevreh.org](http://hevreh.org) or call the office at (413) 528-6378.

### Broadway Bible 2.0: An Evening with Rabbi Deborah Zecher

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Wednesday, August 14 at 7 p.m., Hevreh of Southern Berkshire's Rabbi Emerita Deborah Zecher will deliver an entertaining night of song under the musical direction of Tracy Stark, called *Broadway Bible 2.0*.

Writes Rabbi Zecher:

Cantillation (or trope) makes our sacred texts sing but what if we turn those texts into a great musical? What if Joseph had responded to

Pharaoh's troubling dream by singing, "Put on a Happy Face?" That's *Broadway Bible!* In 1995, Dr. Alan Gold and I created *Broadway Bible* by combining beloved stories from the Bible and Midrash with familiar Broadway tunes. Almost 30 years later, we're back with *Broadway Bible 2.0*, a new spin on an ancient text.

For more information and to purchase tickets (\$36), visit [hevreh.org](http://hevreh.org) or call the office at (413) 528-6378.

### Reimagining Shabbat this Summer at Hevreh – "Vayinafash"

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m., Hevreh of Southern Berkshire invites the community to celebrate Shabbat. From the congregation:

Shabbat invites us to refill our souls (*vayinafash*) through rest, song, meditation, movement, creativity, and inspiring Torah. This summer, all are invited to join Rabbi Jodie Gordon and a team of lay leaders for a newly reimagined Shabbat morning experience: one hour of stillness, song, prayer, movement, creativity and inspiring Torah. Throughout the summer, we will begin promptly at 9 a.m. with a blessing of gratitude, before moving into a Shabbat morning experience designed to refresh and revive your soul. Each week, *Vayinafash* will offer one unique pathway into Shabbat, including our signature Creative Beit Midrash Shabbat program led by Rebekah Jordan and Heidi Katz, as well as Shabbat Yoga, led by Elisa Spungen Bildner.

#### Shabbat Yoga for The Jewish Spirit

June 22, July 13, and August 31: Shabbat Yoga practice is an ideal way to learn a bit of Torah, pause in our often hectic lives, rest and re-center. By slowing down, one becomes open to experiencing body, mind and soul as one. These yoga sessions are led by Elisa Spungen Bildner. All levels are welcome. No previous yoga experience is required. Please wear comfortable clothes and bring a mat.

#### Creative Beit Midrash

June 29, July 20, and August 24: Join Creative Beit Midrash ("Creative House of Study") this summer! No artistic experience necessary. Study the themes that emerge out of Jewish tradition, spirituality, and story, to create your own reflections through art, music, dance, and writing. This new summer session is led by Rebekah Jordan and Heidi Katz. All are welcome.

Please note: on Saturday, July 27th, join the Hebrew Union College for their Trails and Torah experience at Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary in Lenox. The hike begins at 9:30 a.m. There will be no service at Hevreh.

For more information visit [hevreh.org](http://hevreh.org) or call the office at (413) 528-6378.

### 21st Century Jewish American Literature: An Update with Dr. Steve Rubin

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Thursday, August 8 at 4 p.m., Hevreh of Southern Berkshire welcomes Hevreh member Dr. Steve Rubin for an engaging talk about the writing of the latest generation of Jewish American authors: Allegra Goodman, Nathan Englander, Joshua Cohen, Dara Horn, Nicole Krauss, Jonathan Safran Foer and others.

Writes Dr. Rubin: "After the phenomenal success of Roth, Malamud, and Bellow it was generally assumed that Jewish American literature would cease to exist as a definable entity. Fortunately, this was not the case. Jewish writing in 21st century America has not only endured, but has flourished. Far from casting their religion aside, writers such as Englander, Horn and Goodman have chosen to explore and define in new and imaginative ways their relationship to Judaism, feminism, America, and their heritage. The results have been exciting, challenging, and rewarding for a new generation of readers."

*Dr. Steven Rubin is professor emeritus and former dean at Adelphi University in Garden City, NY. He has written and lectured extensively both here and abroad on topics related to Jewish literature.*

For more information visit [hevreh.org](http://hevreh.org) or call the office at (413) 528-6378.

### JTS in the Berkshires Returns for Summer 2024



Dr. Shuly Rubin Schwartz

LENOX - The Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in the Berkshires series is back with an exciting lineup of thought-provoking events for the summer of 2024.

These 90-minute lectures promise to engage audiences with insightful presentations on various aspects of Jewish history, literature, and tradition. All will take place at the Elayne P. Bernstein Theater at Shakespeare & Company at 70 Kemble Street in Lenox starting at 11 a.m.

These events in this series are presented by JTS in partnership with Knesset Israel and in cooperation with the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, with support from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.

On Friday, July 12, join **Dr. Shuly Rubin Schwartz**, Chancellor and Irving Lehrman Research Professor of American Jewish History at JTS, for an illuminating discussion

titled "Nine Months Later: New Frameworks for Confronting Contemporary Antisemitism." Drawing on the recent spike in antisemitism globally, Chancellor Schwartz will delve into the historical roots of this phenomenon and explore pathways for moving forward.

On Friday, August 9, **Dr. Sarah Wolf**, Assistant Professor of Talmud and Rabbinics at JTS, leads a captivating discussion on "Living with Uncertainty: Truth and Doubt in Rabbinic Literature." Discover how ancient rabbinic texts grappled with timeless questions of truth and uncertainty, and explore their relevance in today's world.

On Friday, August 23, join **Dr. Yitz Landes**, Assistant Professor of Rabbinic Literatures and Cultures at JTS, for an insightful exploration of the concept of Torah throughout Jewish history. Delve into the ways ancient rabbis defined and preserved Torah, and reflect on its significance for contemporary Jewish life.

Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased online at [inspired.jtsa.edu/Berkshires2024](http://inspired.jtsa.edu/Berkshires2024).

Tickets may also be purchased day of, but advance registration is highly recommended. For questions, please contact Alisa Braun at (212) 678-8819 or [sabraun@jtsa.edu](mailto:sabraun@jtsa.edu). For more information about the speakers and sessions, visit [jtsa.edu/event/jts-berkshires-summer-2024/](http://jtsa.edu/event/jts-berkshires-summer-2024/).

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## LOCAL NEWS

## Roots and Reinventions: A Weekend of Jewish Ideas

## Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in the Berkshires



From Thursday, July 25 through Sunday, July 28, join Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in the Berkshires for engaging programs on and around Shabbat that explore roots and reinventions of Jewish life. Experience:

- Enriching Torah study, book talks, workshops, and exhibitions
- Inspiring prayer, song, and community gatherings throughout Shabbat
- Restorative outdoor experiences involving music, study, and meditation
- Unique experiences at cultural institutions including the Norman Rockwell Museum and Tanglewood
- One-of-a-kind learning opportunities with experts and innovators of Jewish life, including HUC-JIR faculty, senior leadership, and alumni

Programs will be held with local Reform synagogues, community partners, and cultural institutions.

Most events are free (except as noted), but advance registration is required.

Questions? Contact Ilana Goldberg, events@huc.edu or (212) 824-2207. For more information about programs and presenters, visit huc.edu/Berkshires-2024.

## Programs

Program locations, dates, and times are subject to change.

*Creativity in a Time of Crisis: An Evening with Israeli Writer and Filmmaker Etgar Keret* – Thursday, July 25 at 7:30 p.m. Shakespeare & Company, Lenox. Known for his short stories,



Etgar Keret

Etgar Keret fuses the bizarre with the banal, and offers a window on a surreal world that is both dark and comic. Keret will speak about creativity in the current moment. Following his remarks, Professor Wendy Zierler will join Keret on stage for a discussion about his innovative voice and perspective across his body of work. Advance registration encouraged; event tickets are \$20 each.

*Yiddish Futures: Translation in the New Yiddish Moment* – Friday, July 26 at 10:45 a.m. Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, Great Barrington. A collaboration with Jewish Federation of the Berkshires' Knosh & Knowledge program. In this presentation and moderated conversation, acclaimed scholars and translators of Yiddish Jordan Finkin, Ph.D. (HUC-JIR) and Madeleine (Mindl) Cohen, Ph.D. (Yiddish Book Center) will discuss: How can Yiddish translations help us understand Jewish roots and reinventions in the United States? For more on this program, see story on page 6.

*Alumni-Only Event: Lunch and Learn* – Friday, July 26 at 12:30 p.m. Crissey Farm, Great Barrington. Continue the conversation about writing and filmmaking in the current moment with acclaimed Israeli author and filmmaker Etgar Keret and Professor Wendy Zierler. The program will begin with reading and study of Etgar Keret's short-short stories led by Professor Zierler, after which Keret will join us for a conversation about his writing and what the current moment calls for.

*Musical Kabbalat Shabbat and Welcome Reception* – Friday, July 26 at 5 p.m. Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, Great Barrington. An uplifting and musical Friday night service with Rabbi Jodie Gordon '14, featuring HUC-JIR cantorial faculty, students, and alumni under the leadership of Cantor Jill Abramson '02, Director of the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music. The evening will begin with an informal reception, to which all

are invited for hors d'oeuvres and conversation in community, and include a *d'var Torah* by President Andrew Rehfeld, Ph.D.

*Trails and Torah with Temple Anshe Amunim and Hevreh of Southern Berkshire* – Saturday, July 27 at 9:30 a.m. Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary in Lenox. A restorative and thought-provoking Shabbat morning experience exploring Jewish roots and reinventions, choosing between two options in the Berkshires' Pleasant Valley: 1) Torah study and gentle hike, led by HUC-JIR faculty members Rabbi Andrea Weiss, Ph.D. (Provost) and Daniel Fisher-Livne, Ph.D., or 2) A meditative exploration of nature and Jewish thought, led by HUC-JIR alum Rabbi Rex Perlmeter '85. All are welcome, comfortable shoes encouraged.

*Optional Time for Professional Organization Gathering* – Saturday, July 27 at noon. Locations to be announced. For alumni and colleagues time set aside within the schedule for partner professional organizations to engage with their constituents. Be on the lookout for more details from the organizations with whom you are affiliated.

*Afternoon Text Study* – Saturday, July 27 from 4:15 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. Tanglewood in Lenox. End Shabbat with text study led by Alyssa M. Gray, J.D., Ph.D., discussing how the theme of roots and reinventions plays out within rabbinic literature. Alumni-focused event; open to the public for those interested in deep study of Jewish classical texts.

*Havdalah and Concert* – Saturday, July 27 starting at 5:30 p.m. at Tanglewood Music Center. Concert at 8 p.m. Enjoy an evening of contemporary music, beginning with Havdalah led by Cantor Jill Abramson, who will lead a conversation with Rabbi Dan Freeland '79 and Cantor Jeff Klepper '80 as part of the launch of their new book and collection celebrating 50 years of songwriting that began at HUC-JIR as students in the 1970s. The inspiring volume and recordings show the possibilities of collaboration between HUC-JIR's rabbis and cantors, with a long-lasting impact on the Reform movement. All guests will need a ticket for access into Tanglewood for the Boston Symphony Orchestra's performance. During registration, please make sure to let us know if you have season passes or a ticket to the show already.

*Progressive Judaism in Today's Political Environment* – Sunday, July 28 at 12:30 p.m. Berkshire Botanical Garden, Stockbridge. Meet Nachman Shai, Ph.D., former Israeli Minister of Diaspora Affairs and the new dean of the HUC-JIR Taube Family campus in Jerusalem. Nachman, in conversation with HUC-JIR President Andrew Rehfeld, Ph.D. and Provost Rabbi Andrea Weiss, Ph.D., will reflect on the past, present, and potential futures of progressive Judaism in Israel and North America, and HUC-JIR's role in it.

*What, Me Jewish? MAD and Jewish Political and Cultural Engagement* – Sunday, July 28 at 2:30 p.m. Norman Rockwell Museum, Stockbridge. When it launched in 1952, MAD Magazine expressed a fresh and arguably deeply Jewish political and cultural critique under editorial director Harvey Kurtzman and publisher William Gaines. MAD has even been called a "Secular Talmud." Join us at the Norman Rockwell Museum for curator-led tours of their new exhibition, "What, Me Worry? The Art and Humor of MAD." The program will feature a panel situating MAD in the context of Jewish political and cultural engagement, exploring its varied roots and reinventions across time and space.



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## OBITUARIES

### Burton David (Burt) Shapiro, 88, cherished his family, was so loved in return

STEPHENTOWN, NY – Burton David (Burt) Shapiro died peacefully on Monday, April 29, at Berkshire Medical Center, surrounded by his loved ones. He will now join the light of his life, Melinda Tanzman, who died just this past year on December 21, 2023.

Burt loved life and made the most of each day while overcoming many challenges. Most of all, Burt cherished his family. He put all of his family first and foremost.

Born on May 26, 1935, in Pittsfield, a devoted son to his parents, Isadore and Lillian Oglensky Shapiro, Burt was the oldest of four children. He grew up in North Adams and became involved in the fabric of the town. He graduated from Union College in 1957, served in the U.S. Army stateside, and upon discharge, joined the family business, A. Shapiro & Sons, which had fascinated him from the time he was a little boy. He just loved going to the shop and working with his father. He often quoted his father's maxim in business: "Dad taught me honesty, and he taught me to always give the customer the best deal he can get."

He was a long-time member of Congregation Beth Israel, always active in its social fabric and in the community it served. He served as president for many years, continuing the work begun by his grandfather Abraham and his father Isadore.

When he and Melinda married in 1980, they moved to Williamstown. They played tennis regularly, Burt tended to his amazing garden, and they had a wonderful life together. Later, when Burt's business wasn't as all-consuming, they moved to Stephentown, NY, so they could be closer to Melinda's work in Albany.

Burt cheerfully embraced his now much longer commute to North Adams, usually listening to classical music, an audiobook, NPR, or simply spending the time catching up on the phone with any one of his children or siblings. He loved their life and home in Stephentown, surrounded by beautiful birch trees and his even more expansive garden that overflowed with amazing vegetables every year. He had a passion for hanging flowers, which he hung all around the outside of their home.

While they weren't working, Burt and Melinda regularly traveled to Southwestern Florida for as much time as their busy careers allowed.

Burt was a devoted brother to his sister Selma and brothers Edward and Stuart; husband to his cherished wife, Melinda Tanzman; father, grandfather, and great-grandfather to their large, blended, and beautiful family. He cherished his children unequivocally; his sons, Andrew and Loren from his first marriage to Linda Herbits in 1959; and Melinda's children from their marriage in 1980, Beth, George, David, and Jayson. He also devoted himself wholeheartedly to his children's spouses; Christine, Jeanie, Craig, Phelia, Jenifer, and to his grandchildren, Max, Nina, Casey, Leah, Rachel, Ben, and Kaitlin, and two great grandchildren, Alexis and Sam. He was a man with an endless capacity to love and he was so loved in return.

In addition to his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, he is survived by his cherished sister and brother, Selma and Stuart. A younger brother, Edward, and son, David, predeceased him.

A graveside service was held on Wednesday, May 1, at Beth Israel Cemetery, Clarksburg. Donations in his honor may be made to Congregation Beth Israel and

Berkshire Medical Center, which treated him with care, dignity, and respect in his final days. Donations may be sent to Flynn & Dagnoli Funeral Home, 521 West Main Street, North Adams, MA 01247.

### Leonard (Lenny) Tabs, 82, successful financial career, left a positive impact on everyone he met

WEST STOCKBRIDGE – Leonard (Lenny) Tabs, 82, passed peacefully in his sleep on Wednesday, April 17.

Born in 1941 to parents Louis and Pauline, Lenny spent his childhood in Paterson, NJ, where he met and fell in love with Ellen Solomon, his adoring wife and high school sweetheart. Ellen and Lenny shared a 55-year-long marriage before her passing in 2020, filled with mutual admiration, a true partnership, and vibrant celebration.

After graduating high school at an accelerated pace, Lenny enlisted in the military where he aided in protecting civil rights demonstrators. He graduated from Rutgers University and earned an MBA from Farleigh Dickinson University, launching a long and successful financial career as the CFO of Fortunoff and later as a financial consultant for Premier Benefit Plans, Inc. After enjoying a long life in New York City, Ellen and Lenny retired to the Berkshires in 2008, where they had lived part-time since 1998.

For many years, Lenny led "Today's Headlines," a current events class at Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) that amassed a loyal fan following. His passion for politics was contagious. In every conversation, Lenny met you with a keen listening ear, always saving a little room for levity. He loved his NY sports teams – Giants, Rangers, Knicks, Yankees – and the Wisconsin

Badgers. "In the Still of the Night" by the Five Satins often played at home, where Lenny loved to spend time with family and friends. Most importantly, Lenny was a very special man, loved by all, who left a positive impact on everyone he met.

Lenny is survived by his two children, Nancy Tabs and husband Zach Young of New York City and Mark Tabs and wife Lisa Tabs of Katonah, NY; five beloved grandchildren, Halle Young 25, Emily Young 25, Sam Tabs 23, Jacob Tabs 23, and Jordan Tabs 15; and brother Ben Tabs of North Caldwell, NJ. He will be missed terribly by his friends and family, who cherished him.

A memorial service was held on Sunday, April 21 at Finnerty and Stevens Funeral Home, Great Barrington. Memorial donations may be made to The People's Pantry in the Berkshires at [thepeoplespantrygb.org/donate](http://thepeoplespantrygb.org/donate).

### Elinor S. "Lynne" Leavitt, 92, big believer in the power of quality public education

LENOX – Elinor S. "Lynne" Leavitt, 92, died peacefully at her home on Monday, April 29.

Born June 27, 1932, in Springfield, MA, to the late Calvert and Lucille Weinstein Stein, Lynne was a 1949 graduate of Classical High School. She attended Smith College, earning her bachelor's degree in 1953. She began her career as a public school teacher and was a big believer in the power of quality public education. She was head of the Longmeadow School Committee and, in her later years, an interior designer. She was very passionate and fought hard for women, civil, and gay rights. One of her proudest achievements was introducing the A Better Chance Program into the Longmeadow public school system. She also started the Art Goes to School Program

and presented famous art in both the Springfield and Longmeadow public schools. She was active at both Sinai Temple in Springfield and later in life at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, where she had a bat mitzvah at the age of 75.

Lynne married Dr. Aaron M. Leavitt in 1953 in Springfield. He predeceased her on May 22, 2020.

She is survived by her children, Mark (Taryn) of New York, NY, Robert (Donna Fisher) of Longmeadow, MA, Joyce Leavitt (Grant Fine) of Orinda, CA, and Peter (Marie) of Falmouth, ME; thirteen grandchildren, Alec and Perry Leavitt, Samuel, Benjamin, and Lucille Leavitt, Breton Boudreaux (Samantha), Eric Boudreaux (Jennifer), Todd Boudreaux, Nicolette (Shaun Willkenfield), Coleman and Isabel Fine, and Jacob and James Leavitt; and five great-grandchildren.

A graveside service was held on Thursday, May 2, in Sinai Memorial Park in Springfield. Memorial donations may be made to either Jacob's Pillow or Hevreh, both in the care of the Roche Funeral Home, 120 Main Street, Lenox, MA 01240.

### Claire Adler, 93, forever young at heart and always had a twinkle in her blue eyes

BONITA SPRINGS, FL - Claire Adler, 93, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, April 30, surrounded by her loving family and caregivers.

Claire was known for her love of the arts, style, beauty, interest in social causes, fondness for cats, playfulness, adventurous spirit, and sense of humor. She was forever young at heart and always had a twinkle in her blue eyes.

Claire Saffer and her twin brother, Walter, were born on

**OBITUARIES,**  
*continued on page 22*



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## OBITUARIES

### OBITUARIES,

*continued from page 21*

April 13, 1931 in Manhattan, NY to Benjamin Saffer and Sadie (Bykowsky) Saffer. She grew up on the Upper West Side of Manhattan and was confirmed at Congregation B'nai Jeshurun. A talented artist, at the age of 12, she was the youngest student at The Art Students League of New York. A graduate of Julia Richman High School in Manhattan, Claire then attended Syracuse University. After Claire married, she lived in Manhattan, Northern NJ, and the Berkshires. In 2014, she moved to Naples, FL to be close to her daughter and son-in-law. She loved the warm weather and beach, frequently attended performances at Artis Naples, and was a member of Temple Shalom.

Claire's love of the arts included classical music, opera, ballet, dance, and theatre. She traveled the world visiting opera houses. Claire was a longtime volunteer and patron of the Metropolitan Opera in NYC as well as Tanglewood and The Boston Symphony. While living in the Berkshires, she dedicated her time to numerous cultural and nonprofit institutions. Claire excelled at and had a natural talent for drawing, sculpting, and craftwork. She made beautiful knit clothing, needlepoints, petit points, beadwork, and sewn clothing.

When her son, Bruce, was born deaf, Claire dedicated her life to teaching him to

speak, his education, and advocating for him and the deaf community.

Claire was the president of Temple Avoda's Sisterhood in NJ and was active at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire. In 2010, Claire became a bat mitzvah in Israel.

Claire is survived by her loving family including her daughter, Laurie Adler, and husband, Joe Walker, of Naples; son, Bruce Adler, and wife, Janice Lee, of Hartsdale, NY; son, Robert Talbot, of Santa Rosa, CA; granddaughter, Shannon Talbot, and husband, Matthew Shewfelt, of Los Angeles, CA; and devoted and beloved twin brother, Walter Saffer, and wife, Helen Saffer, of Morristown, NJ. She is also survived by her nephews, nieces, and other loving family members. Her husband, Irwin E. Adler, predeceased her in 2014.

Claire adored and was most grateful for her wonderful loyal caregivers who were always by her side.

A graveside funeral and burial took place on Friday, May 3, at Beth David Cemetery, Elmont, NY. Donations can be made in her honor to The Metropolitan Opera in NYC - [metopera.org/support/gift-forms/give-a-gift/](https://metopera.org/support/gift-forms/give-a-gift/).

**Sheldon Saul Goldberg, varied interests, involved in the community**  
LENOX - Sheldon Saul Goldberg (Shel) passed away Sunday, April 28, after a brief illness.

Born in Brooklyn and raised in Flushing, NY, Shel

earned his undergraduate degree and MBA from New York University. He worked for the New York Telephone Company and for AT&T in various posts including as Director of their School of International Business. An avid runner, he ran in the New York Marathon three times, meeting his objective of under four hours.

Shel was an enthusiastic golfer, photographer, and lifelong supporter of the New York Yankees. He and his beloved wife, Barbara Sussman Goldberg, met at the ages of eighteen and sixteen, respectively, and were married for 62 years. They began coming to Lenox in 1992 and moved there permanently in 2014. Once established in Lenox, Shel quickly became part of the community, including being a volunteer photographer for Tanglewood, president of the Lenox Club, board member of OLLI, and actively participating in several men's groups.

He leaves his wife, Barbara; daughters, Jennifer Saftler (Luca Ferrari) and Pamela Goldberg (Giorgio Caniato); and three granddaughters, Sarah, Elisa, and Luci.

A graveside service was held in Mountain View Cemetery. Memorial donations may be made to The Lenox Library Association or Volunteers In Medicine (VIM), both in the care of the Roche Funeral Home, 120 Main Street, Lenox, MA 01240.

**Dr. Jason A. Reder, 91, respected local OB/GYN, active in the community**  
BONITA SPRINGS, FL - Dr. Jason A. Reder, 91, devoted husband, loving father, grandfather, and compassionate physician, died peacefully in his sleep on Thursday, May 16.

Born October 4, 1932, in Pittsfield, the youngest of five, son of Morris and Adele, and nephew to seven, Jason garnered much joy from his extensive family.

Jason attended Pittsfield public schools, graduated from Harvard College in 1954, and from the University of Buffalo Medical School in 1958. While attending medical school, he met Norma Jean Munter, who was completing her degree in Art at Buffalo State College. Norma and Jason were married on June 8, 1958, the same day he graduated medical school and she graduated college.

Upon completing his residency in Albany, NY, Jason and Norma returned to the Berkshires where he established his OB/GYN practice and raised their children. Jason served as a Major in the Army Reserve Medical Corps, was a congregant of Temple Anshe Amunim, a member of the Free and Accepted Masons, and volunteered in his community teaching emergency responders the basics of childbirth. He welcomed new partners into his growing practice to better

serve the community. He was a well-respected physician, but more importantly, he was an exceptional listener. At his retirement party in 1998, his medical colleagues, nurses, and patients spoke of his remarkably kind approach to medicine.

In his free time, Jason enjoyed reading, gardening, fishing trips to treasured places, meetings with his stock club, traveling with Norma and close friends and never missed completing a New York Times crossword. In the early 70s, he discovered the peacefulness of Block Island, where he spent countless hours fishing, clamming, and storytelling with family and friends. He looked forward to spending time with his children and grandchildren, often attending their school concerts, athletic events, and celebrating milestones.

Jason leaves his children Andrew and Jennifer Reder of Villanova, PA; Suzanne Reder-Delano of Montague, MA; Melissa and Michael Armitage of Fort Meyers, FL; grandchildren, Lindsey, Colin, Sara, Cassy, Jason, Harry, Madalyn, and Morgan.

A celebration of Jason's life will be held on October 19 in the Berkshires. Donations in his honor may be made to the Block Island Medical Center <https://bihealthservices.com/> or Hospice.



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Graphics provided by HGF's Life & Legacy Program



## Newish & Jewish in the Berkshires

**Are you a newcomer to the Berkshires?**  
Welcome! Join us at one of these casual gatherings to meet others who are also "Newish and Jewish" in the region, enjoy a glass of wine, and learn more about the Berkshire Jewish community. We look forward to connecting.

**Thursday, June 20, 5:00 -6:30 pm**  
Hosted by Donna Jakubovitz Spector, Lenox

**Thursday, July 18, 5:00-6:30 pm**  
Hosted by Paula Bernay, Great Barrington

**Thursday, August 8, 5:00-6:30 pm**  
Hosted by Cindy Chazan and Jay Leipzig, Pittsfield

**Sunday, September 15, 5:00-6:30 pm**  
Hosted by Lisa Wendell and Kenneth Fishman, Lenox

Space is limited. Registration is limited to two events. Host address will be shared with registered guests the week before the event. There will be no solicitation of any kind.

**Advanced registration required:**  
[www.tinyurl.com/NewishJewish2024](http://www.tinyurl.com/NewishJewish2024) or  
[ktodd@jewishberkshires.org](mailto:ktodd@jewishberkshires.org), (413) 442-4360, ext. 16.



Jewish Federation  
OF THE BERKSHIRES

THE STRENGTH OF A PEOPLE  
THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

## BERKSHIRE JEWISH VOICES

### TRAVELING WITH JEWISH TASTE

## In Search of World Peas

By Carol Goodman Kaufman / Special to the BJV



*"How luscious lies the pea within the pod."*

– Emily Dickinson

It's summertime and the living is easy. Easy peasy. As in, it's time to harvest the peas in your garden – or get them at the farmers market.

Legend has it that Abigail Adams served her husband, founding father John, a meal of salmon, peas, and new potatoes to celebrate our new nation's first Independence Day. Perhaps she served the peas because the veggie had been considered a sign of love for generations. After all, the term "sweet pea" is a term of endearment.

In fact, peas and their pods have been tiny symbols of love, romance and fertility for centuries. According to one 19th century Scottish writer, David Moore, "Peas and peasecods are connected with wooing the lasses." As he noted, if peas remained in the pod after a hopeful beau had picked them, he would present the pod and its contents to his beloved.

The association with love and marriage may well be why Danish author Hans Christian Andersen chose the pea for his "The Princess and the Pea" fairytale. You will recall that a certain prince was in search of a wife but could not find one he liked. Then, one dark and stormy night, a wet and bedraggled young woman,

claiming to be a princess, appeared at the castle. The prince's mom, the queen, thought her a phony and decided to test her by placing a pea in the bed in which she was to sleep. The young woman was so sensi-



*To be buried under a front gate in Hertfordshire...*

tive that even twenty mattresses and twenty eider-down quilts could not prevent the pea from thwarting her sleep. Having proof of her princess-hood, the prince then chose her as his wife.

That must have been one hard, dried pea.

But back to John and Abigail: Alas, legends being what they are, this one is false. Abigail and John were actually in different cities on that legendary Fourth of July. And food historians date the salmon-and-peas dish to the mid-1860s, making the meal more likely something served to celebrate the end of the Civil War – decades after the couple's deaths. Regardless, it has become a traditional Fourth of July meal for New Englanders.

And here, you always thought it was hamburgers and hot dogs we crave for our annual summer barbecue.

But why the pairing of the fish with the pea? The most likely explanation is that salmon used to run up New England rivers at around the same time as the first harvest of peas. In the early days of our country's history, the fish were abundant, with as many as 300,000 running upstream every year. Unfortunately, the Industrial Revolution polluted our rivers to such an extent that they have yet to recover, so these days we must rely on wild ocean salmon and the farm-raised variety.

Speaking of world peas, these little legumes have traveled the globe extensively. But their origins are in the Fertile Crescent, where wild peas were part of the human diet as early as 23,000 years ago. Before domestication, these so-called field peas were probably eaten dried.

Agronomists believe that domestication of the wild pea probably began along with that of wheat and barley, making it one of our most ancient edible plants, one of the eight so-called "founder crops." And they are an important one for health, rich in phosphorus, potassium and vitamins A, B and C, plus fiber, folic acid, amino acids and protein. So, they provided sustenance to early humans, including our ancestors.

From the Middle East, the pea spread throughout the Mediterranean, Europe, Scandinavia, India, and China. As evidence of the fruit's globe-trotting (and they are a fruit), archaeologists digging in Sweden discovered peas they've dated from 10,000 BCE; in Turkey and Iraq peas from around 7,000 to 6,000 BCE; and in Switzerland from 3,000 BCE.

According to *The Encyclopedia of American Food & Drink*, Christopher Columbus brought peas with him when he traveled to the West Indies in 1492. But it wasn't until 1629 that colonials in Jamestown, Virginia and our own Plymouth, Massachusetts would try cultivating them, making peas one of the first crops planted in the New World.

Let's fast-forward now to the mid-20th century, when Utah plant breeder Calvin Lamborn set to work on solving the problem of twisting and buckling

snow pea pods. After many years in the laboratory, in 1979 he introduced the sugar snap variety by crossing snow peas with garden peas. The new sugar snap, like its snow pea parent, was sweet and crunchy, but also still had a pesky fibrous string that had to be removed before eating. Over time, researchers have figured out a way to make the sugar snap stringless. That product is on the shelf in your grocery store.

Since we're talking about hybridizing, what's all this about "two peas in a pod"? Are they really alike? Well, if you recall junior high school biology, Gregor Mendel (of pea and fruit fly fame) discovered that peas in a pod can be similar, but they are not identical. In fact, he identified eight distinct traits among the little green orbs. Over time scientists have determined an even greater number of distinct traits.

Due to its beloved and ubiquitous presence on world menus, it's no surprise that the pea has appeared in everything from legends to poetry. For example, Norse mythology tells us that when the god Thor felt that mortals had disrespected him, he decided to punish them by sending dragons to fill up their wells with peas. However, the dragons managed to drop a few peas onto the soil, where grew a wonderful new food. In thanks to Thor (and probably trying to appease him), the mortals honored Thor by eating them only on his namesake day, Thursday (Thor's Day).

According to food writer Jeri Quinzio, English lasses in Hertfordshire looking for husbands counted the peas in a pod. If there were nine, they would bury the pod with its contents under the front gate. The first man to walk through it would supposedly be Mr. Right. (Fathers and brothers were presumably relegated to the back door.)

We encounter the number nine again among the English, in the old rhyme:

*"Pease porridge hot, pease porridge cold,  
Pease porridge in the pot, nine days old;  
Some like it hot, some like it cold,  
Some like it in the pot, nine days old."*



### Bazela: Peas with Allspice and Rice

In Syria and Lebanon, this dish is made with beef or lamb. The Jewish Food Society's version is meatless. Mine is a combination. Let me know what you think.

#### INGREDIENTS:

1 medium onion, chopped	3 cups chicken or beef broth
1 pound ground beef	1 tablespoon tomato paste
2 tablespoons olive oil	1 teaspoon allspice
20 ounces frozen peas and carrots	1 teaspoon sea salt

#### DIRECTIONS:

Heat oil and sauté onion over medium-high heat until softened.  
Add meat over onions and cook until browned.  
Mix the tomato paste with the broth.  
Add one cup of the broth to the pan at a time, waiting until each is absorbed before adding the next.  
Add spices and salt and cook until the meat is thoroughly cooked.  
Add the peas and carrots.  
Stir everything well together and let it simmer uncovered on low heat for about 15-20 minutes.  
Adjust for seasoning.  
Serve with rice. (I like basmati or jasmine.)



Carol Burnett as Princess Winifred in the original Broadway production of *Once Upon a Mattress*, a spoof of Hans Christian Andersen's fairytale "The Princess and the Pea."

Under the name Carolinda Goodman, **Carol Goodman Kaufman** has just published her third picture book for young children. Detective Bears and Friends introduces readers to the whimsical names that various animal groups are called. In addition to her work for children, Kaufman also writes under her "real" name about food history (including for the *Berkshire Jewish Voice*). Her first novel, *The First Murder*, is set in the Berkshires. It will be released April 2 by TouchPoint Press.

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# CULTURE & ARTS

## Berkshire Jewish Film Festival



LENOX – The Berkshire Jewish Film Festival (BJFF) will be held this July and August at the Duffin Theater at Lenox Memorial Middle and High School, 197 East Street in Lenox. Films will be screened on Mondays at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m.

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

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

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

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

### July 8



4 p.m. – *Vishniac*: The story of this brilliant and flamboyant ground-breaking 20th century photographer Roman Vishniac comes to life in this feature-length documentary, made by Laura Bialis.

8 p.m. – *Seven Blessings*: A bitter-sweet comedy focuses on the family secrets and lies at the heart of what should be a celebratory wedding week. Winner of Israeli Academy awards, and a rich and knowing portrait of Moroccan Israeli culture in the '90s. **Rabbi David Weiner** of KI will speak on the origin and various expressions of Seven Blessings throughout the Jewish culture.

### July 15

4 p.m. – *The Caretaker* (short): Based on a true story, this suspenseful 18-minute film celebrates the bravery of an otherwise ordinary caretaker in a Hamburg museum in the '30s who rescues art that is designated "degenerate" and slated for confiscation by the Nazis.



*Children of Peace*: Documenting the Israeli experiment of *Neve-Shalom* or Oasis of Peace – utopians who sought in the 70s to create a community between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem where Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel could grow up and live side by side governed by the principles of equality, mutual respect, and partnership. Director

Ma'ayan Schwartz was one of the member "children."



8 p.m. – *Supernova: The Music Festival Massacre*: This 52-minute film documents in harrowing, minute by-minute detail the cold-blooded and methodical Hamas massacre of young revelers at the Israeli Supernova music festival on October 7. The documentary weaves retrospective interviews of survivors with real-time footage. Made by veteran Israeli documentarian Duki Dror, this is disturbing to watch but compelling in its demand that history not look away. **Jeffrey Robbins** will lead a talkback on current ramifications of the October 7 massacre.

### July 22

4 p.m. – *The Anne Frank Gift Shop*: How can the gift shop at this iconic house museum in Amsterdam be reimagined in a way that will appeal more to Gen Z? How do you update the "brand" for Anne Frank? Answering these questions is the charge of the motley crew in the design firm who are at the center of this dark comedy.

*Without Precedent: The Supreme Life of Rosalie Abella*: A Holocaust survivor's daughter becomes Canada's first female Jewish Supreme Court judge, reshaping the legal world with landmark decisions on inclusivity, diversity, and equity.



8 p.m. – *Kidnapped*: Edgardo Mortara, a six-year-old Jewish boy in mid-19th century Italy, is abducted and forcibly converted to Christianity by virtue

of a papal decree after it comes to the attention of authorities that his housekeeper secretly baptizes him. This richly filmed and suspenseful period drama is based on true events that created an international scandal.

### July 29



4 p.m. – *Unbroken*: Against all odds, the seven Weber siblings manage to stay together through the Holocaust. After their mother is deported from Berlin to Auschwitz for being Jewish and part of the resistance, the children are slated to follow days later on a different transport. Instead, their father arranges to baptize and then hide them on the farm of a Christian couple outside the city, where they fend for themselves for two years before ending up in a displaced person's camp. A Zoom talkback with director **Beth Lane** follows.



8 p.m. – *Catskills*: A loving and nostalgic tribute to the family-run Jewish resort and bungalow culture that became known as the Borscht Belt. Through the archival film footage and reminiscences of patrons and proprietors, we see the legendary comedians, the all-you-can-eat meals served by eligible college-boy waiters, and the seductive dance instructors. A talkback follows with **Jeffrey Cook, Esq.**, a local resident who grew up in the Borscht Belt.

### August 5

4 p.m. – *Shadow of the Day*: A dramatic story of love and redemption set in a turbulent Italy amid the antisemitic racial laws promulgated by Mussolini's fascist government



8 p.m. – *How Saba Kept Singing*: David Wisnia had never told his family the whole story of how he survived Auschwitz – while his parents and younger brother were murdered – and this film by Sarah Taksler fills in the gaps. As he travels with his grandson Avi back to Poland to mark the 75th anniversary of the camp's liberation, Wisnia, a cantor, recounts how his operatic singing entertained the Nazi guards and saved his life. He had also found love with a fellow inmate, a Jewish woman who was kept alive because of her skills as a graphic artist and mandolin player. After the film, grandchild **Avi Wisnia** will perform the legacy of his grandfather.



### August 12

4 p.m. – *Jack & Sam* (short): Jack Waksal and Sam Ron met in 1943 as teenagers when they were sent to a Polish labor camp. Day after day they shoveled coal into boilers to power a factory making munitions for the Nazi war effort. Sam escaped in 1944, surviving in a forest, while Jack was liberated by U.S. troops the following year. Unbeknownst to them, they both landed in Ohio after the war, and they did not see each other until a chance encounter at a Florida Holocaust event 80 years after their last meeting.



*Less than Kosher*: This is a look at contemporary Jewish life at its most irreverent – hence its "less-than-kosher" title and a comic film in which Jewish norms are turned on their head in a lighthearted, very modern and sometimes absurd take on the spiritual journey and self-discovery of a secular Jew.

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## CULTURE & ARTS

# Yidstock: The Festival of New Yiddish Music Returns to the Yiddish Book Center

**Spectacular Lineup Including The Klezmatics, Eleanor Reissa, Socalled, Daniel Kahn, and Judy Bressler**

AMHERST – Yidstock: The Festival of New Yiddish Music is back at the Yiddish Book Center from Thursday, July 11 through Sunday, July 14. Now in its 12th year, Yidstock is a celebration of klezmer and new Yiddish music, featuring luminaries and rising stars in the genre. In addition to seven concerts, the four-day festival includes four workshops, nine talks, and one special film screening, all in celebration of Yiddish music, language, and culture.

This year's lineup, curated by Yidstock artistic director Seth Rogovoy, includes favorites like Hankus Netsky alongside rising stars making their Yidstock debut, including Levyosn, featuring Adah Hetko and Kaia Berman Peters. Basya Schechter and Avi Fox-Rosen will return to the Yidstock stage with a brand-new program, featuring guitarist Yoshie Fruchter and singer-instrumentalist Eleonore Weill.

To purchase tickets and explore lodging recommendations, visit [yiddishbookcenter.org/yidstock](http://yiddishbookcenter.org/yidstock) or call (413) 256-4900.

"We are thrilled to be bringing old favorites, new performers, and familiar artists with new programs and new collaborations," said Rogovoy. "We look forward to the magic and surprises that can only happen at a live event, which often provides a platform for spontaneous cross-pollination and jamming between performers."



**The Klezmatics**, the Grammy Award-winning modern klezmer outfit, will kick off the festival on Thursday, July 11, at 7:30 p.m. The internationally acclaimed group was founded in New York City in 1986 and has been performing its trailblazing blend of traditional and progressive klezmer and Yiddish music around the world since then.



Hankus Netsky

**Judy Bressler**, for a special duo concert featuring an intimate, cabaret-style performance of Yiddish folk and theater songs on Friday, July 12, at 2

**Hankus Netsky**, founder of the path-breaking Klezmer Conservatory Band, will reunite with the group's founding vocalist,



Judy Bressler

p.m. Judy Bressler will also be in residence throughout the festival, leading a dance workshop and fostering **Levyosn**, a new quartet specializing in Yiddish song and klezmer, will make its Yidstock debut on Friday, July 12, at 5 p.m. Levyosn's repertoire includes



Levyosn

traditional music and original songs presented in intricate arrangements with rich vocal harmonies.



Socalled

Perennial favorite **Socalled** will bring his Montreal-based group, **Gephilte**, a jam-band experiment in Yiddish funk, to Yidstock on Saturday, July 13, at 8 p.m.

Detroit-born, Hamburg-based troubadour and multi-instrumentalist **Daniel Kahn** returns to Yidstock

on Sunday, July 14, at noon, in a concert featuring master fiddler **Jake Shulman-Ment** and klezmer percussionist **Richie Barshay**. Drawing on Daniel and Jake's acclaimed 2023 duo album "The Building & Other Songs," this intimate and powerful program ranges from original polyglot ballads, radical treatments of modern Yiddish songs to new Yiddish translations of lyricists such as Dylan, Cohen, Brecht, and more. **Basya Schechter and Avi Fox-Rosen** have been busy composing settings for 20th-century Eastern European Yiddish poet Itzik Manger's collection of "khumesht lider," tragicomic retellings of Bible stories set to original music. The music weaves together a singer-songwriter aesthetic with theater, pop, and world music influences, arranged with lush vocal harmonies throughout. Concert on Sunday, July 14, at 3 p.m.



Klezmer Brass Allstars

The festival will culminate on Sunday, July 14, at 7:30 p.m., with the return of the soulful and inimitable Yiddish vocalist **Eleanor Reissa** and the great **Klezmer Brass Allstars** as they explore the world of Yiddish song from the obscure to the chestnuts, from the sacred to the profane, fueled by the best brass band in the land.

## NOAH ARONSON & BAND

Celebrate our Jewish strength and resilience with an evening of *ruach* and community spirit! Join Noah and his full powerhouse band for an interactive community concert of harmony, rhythm, friendship, and soulful connection.

**SUNDAY, AUG 4 | 7:30 PM**

Duffin Theater, Lenox Memorial High School

**GENERAL ADMISSION: \$25**

Young adults under 30, \$20. Kids 13 and under free.

**Join us in honoring Federation Executive Director Dara Kaufman for 10 years of dedicated service and leadership.**

All proceeds to benefit the Jewish Berkshires LiveSecure Initiative. Visit [jewishberkshires.org/LiveSecure](http://jewishberkshires.org/LiveSecure) for more information.



**TICKETS: JEWISHBERKSHIRES.ORG OR (413) 442-4360, ext. 10**

Funded in part by generous underwriters and a grant from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.

## CULTURE &amp; ARTS

## Mad About MAD: An Iconoclast Comes to the Norman Rockwell Museum

By Linda H. Davis / Special to the BJV

STOCKBRIDGE – “Spy vs. Spy.” “MAD’s Snappy Answers to Stupid Questions.” “The Lighter Side of...” Movie and TV parodies so marvelously drawn they shout from the page. The “What, Me Worry?” resident fool, Alfred E. Neuman.

For those of us who grew up in the age of MAD Magazine – the 1950s and up – MAD embodied the fun of breaking the rules without ending up in detention after school. If parents considered MAD a blight on their children, their children loved it.

Titled “What, Me Worry? The Art and Humor Behind MAD Magazine,” this exhibit at the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge will run through October 27. With original art by MAD’s core talent, known as “The Usual Gang of Idiots” – Mort Drucker, Al Jaffee, and Don Martin to name a few – along with such later contributors as Teresa Burns Parkhurst and Emily Flake, the show promises to be both comprehensive and fun. It will include interactive features, fan letters, and cover art starring the vacant-eyed, gap-toothed Alfred E. Neuman.

Why now?

The BJV talked to the Rockwell’s chief curator, Stephanie Haboush Plunkett, and satirist and artist Steve Brodner, co-curator.

Stephanie Plunkett cited MAD’s place in our culture and its cultural influence, its nonconformity in the best sense: MAD was anti-smoking,

and never in the pocket of advertisers. (For

its first 44 years, with a brief exception, MAD made its own ads, satirizing such well-known brands as Crest Toothpaste – Crust Gum Paste, featuring a toothless punk.) It was sensitive about racial issues, Plunkett added, and able to make a point without being sexually explicit. “MAD was an aid toward greater mental health for millions,” said Steve Brodner.

From the beginning, MAD’s humor was fundamentally Jewish. Judith Yaross Lee, an American humor scholar, author, and adviser to the MAD exhibit, noted that the artists, including Al Jaffee (“Snappy Answers to Stupid Questions”) were all born in the 1920s. Some had been in the Army during the war. They had “had first-hand experience with antisemitism.” But they were “Americanized, not religious,” Lee added.

Steve Brodner, who got his own start doing caricatures at bar mitzvahs, explained that MAD appeared in the post-war era, after the Holocaust, when there was great goodwill toward Jewish Americans and a flowering of Jewish humor. Think of the Marx Brothers, Sid Caesar, and Milton Berle. There were Yiddish writers and actors, and Jewish humor – “this fatalistic idea that it’s all going to shit and we can make jokes about it” – was funnier then, said Brodner. He cites Nichols and May, Mort Sahl, Shelley Berman. “Jews were responsible for a huge vein of humor in America,” he said, adding that there was “a tremendous amount of satire” on TV.

You could trace a direct line from the 1960s, and the TV show “Laugh-In,” to the 1980s and beyond: “Saturday Night Live” and “The Simpsons.” (Bart Simpson passes a city building housing the MAD offices. He gasps with pleasure, and enters. MAD is located on the same floor as a Methadone clinic.)

Judith Yaross Lee said that Art Spiegelman credited MAD’s influence for his Pulitzer Prize-winning graphic novel, *Maus*, based on his father’s experiences during the Holocaust. An early version of Spiegelman’s book, *Breakdowns: Portrait of the Artist as a Young %@&!*, was a “tiny, less stylish” forerunner.

Not bad for an illustrated magazine born as a 10-cent comic book series. Titled “Tales Calculated to Drive You Mad,” MAD managed to elude the comic book censors of the 1950s by reinventing itself in the format that most fans remember best. Its 55-year run, from 1952 to 2007, exceeded 550 issues. With a peak circulation of 3 million, MAD reached its height during the anti-Establishment 1960s.

Actors and American presidents; musicians and physicians; the sacred and the criminal – all were MAD fodder. Norman Rockwell’s iconic portrait of a Thanksgiving dinner, “Freedom from Want,” became a meticulously drawn 2001 homage to the popular TV show, “Survivor.” In place of the aproned grandma presenting the turkey, grandpa dressed in a suit behind her, stood a woman in a sports bra framed by a bare-chested man. A portrait of Alfred E.



“Jack in the Box” (1967), by Norman Mingo (1896-1980).

Cover illustration for MAD #113

[James Halperin Collection, Courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com. MAD and all related elements™ & © E.C. Publications. Courtesy of DC]

Neuman laughs on the wall behind them.

Nixon slumps along the edges of “Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band,” called “Alfred E. Neuman’s What Me Worry Band.” Ronald Reagan is a senile king in ermine.

Always an equal opportunity offender, MAD ran a far more brutal take-down of Hillary Clinton. Borrowing from Andrew Wyeth’s stirring “Christina’s World,” “Hillary’s World: Carpetbagger for Senate” shows the blonde candidate from behind, clawing the grass as she regards the lofty Senate building on the Hill. (Richard Williams drew her unsparingly, with heavy calves and an ample posterior.)

Unapologetically sexist, a boys’ club with no female artists until its later years, MAD got no protest letters to speak of, though the magazine did run afoul of J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI – first with a story about a draft dodger (readers were told to write to the FBI for a membership card certifying that they were “a full-fledged draft dodger”) and again when they printed a fake extortion letter.

If the humor was of the stringing-toilet-paper-in-the-trees variety, it could also be seriously witty. A fine 1994 oil painting by Richard Williams, “Washington Cross-Dressing the Delaware,” showed America’s first president in a long pink dress, white fur wrap, and pearls; George Woodbridge’s 1991 drawing of a battered eagle in a wheelchair, titled “The Hymn of the Battered Republic” from 1991

seems depressingly timely.

MAD was, and remains, unique. Though it had many international editions, even today, said Judith Yaross Lee, there’s nothing like it anywhere.

Is it any wonder that MAD was a buoyant place to work? Type “MAD” into YouTube and old interviews with laughing men in dated long sideburns appear. Cartoonist Teresa Burns Parkhurst described her contributions to MAD as an utterly happy experience: She would come up with an idea and a number of ways to support it with the text. She enjoyed the collaborative experience, which forged “a real relationship” with her editor, with whom she remains in touch. (MAD also paid “really well,” by the page, the most money she’d earned at that point.)

Who didn’t love MAD? Last fall, when the Rockwell Museum team was kicking around exhibit ideas, and MAD popped up, they knew they had a winner, Stephanie Plunkett told the BJV.

MAD’s what-me-worry humor comes to the NRM at a time when we’re all worried. And the exhibit’s setting, in a museum devoted to the art of illustration, seems fitting, she added, as Norman Rockwell himself was “extremely funny.”

The great American illustrator was meticulous about his details. (He wouldn’t just draw a comb. Fine hairs would be coming out of it, noted Brodner, which could be as much a part of the storytelling as the primary image.)

In the marriage of MAD and Norman Rockwell, the talents are well-matched, the view of America balanced. Smirky MAD offers a sassy counterpart to the seriously patriotic Rockwell.

In its advertising for the exhibit, the NRM uses a homage to Rockwell’s famous triple self-portrait

by the brilliant Richard Williams showing Alfred E. Neuman smiling into a gold mirror as he paints his own self-portrait. Except for his red sneakers, he’s dressed like Rockwell, wallet and handkerchief protruding from his back pocket. Paint and paintbrushes litter the floor. But in place of the flag-bearing American eagle on Rockwell’s mirror sits a cuckoo bird.

Linda H. Davis is the author of three biographies, including Charles Addams: A Cartoonist’s Life. Her work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and other publications. She lives in Pittsfield with her husband, Chuck Yanikoski.



Richard Williams, Alfred E. Neuman and Norman Rockwell, 2002. Cover illustration for Mad Art: A Visual Celebration of MAD Magazine and the Idiots Who Create It. [James Halperin Collection, Courtesy of Heritage Auctions, HA.com. MAD and all related elements™ & © E.C. Publications. Courtesy of DC]

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## CULTURE &amp; ARTS

## An Appreciation of MAD and its Usual(ly Jewish) Gang of Idiots

By Albert Stern / BJV Editor

As a consumer of creative work, my tastes run decidedly toward the “trying to figure it all out” parts of a creator’s output than the “telling it like it is, *man*” parts of their oeuvre. The figuring-things-out works are often raw products of youthful exuberance. As artists mature, too many can’t resist the urge to foist the *very important truths* they’ve come to understand upon their audiences. Though I understand that impulse, I much prefer (for example) listening to the figuring-it-all-out Beatles tunes like “I Should Have Known Better” to the telling-it-like-it-is-*man* Beatles anthems like “All You Need is Love.” As I approach my golden years, I will take lightness, yearning, and cheek over weighty messages eight days a week.

So maybe this is the right time in my life for The Norman Rockwell Museum’s summer blockbuster, “What, Me Worry? The Art and Humor of MAD Magazine” – and perhaps it will be in yours, as well. Starting in the mid-1950s, MAD, as a book jacket blurb put it, delivered more than “60 Years of Humor, Satire, Stupidity, and Stupidity” to a young audience in their prime figuring-it-all-out years. For a lot of us as children and pre-teens, MAD was the next step up the ladder of subversive humor and visual complexity that we first connected with in the early-reader picture books of Dr. Seuss and Maurice Sendak – for me, only Charles Schultz’s “Peanuts” strips were more cherished and reread than my collection of MADs. You stopped reading MAD when your tastes changed along with other things, usually around the time of your bar mitzvah, and jokes that were once so hilarious stopped seeming so. But MAD never stopped *being* funny – it was just funny for someone else.

MAD’s Jewishness was particularly pronounced from the magazine’s inception through the era I was a devotee, the late 1960s and early 1970s. The mostly Jewish “Usual Gang of Idiots” contributing to each issue at the time were producing material for Baby Boomers, but were themselves members of my parents’ generation, born in the 1920s and 1930s. They experienced the Great Depression and WWII, as well as urban Jewish life in New York City and the Catskills resorts. As essayist Norman Abrams writes in “A Secular Talmud: The Jewish Sensibility of MAD Magazine,” MAD’s comedy was “grounded in Yiddishisms, sarcasm, and self-mockery, all defining features of Jewish humor.”

My study of MAD was nothing if not Talmudic. MAD was how Borscht Belt humor was infused into the Jewish sensibility of my generation – it transmitted the canonical jokes, the shtick of the Catskill tumblers, and the inbred underdog/outsider Jewish comic persona. After mainlining on MAD as a child, one forever retained the ability to discern the particular redolence of Jewish humor wherever it appeared, from Mel Brooks to Franz Kafka. What’s more, the research I did to understand the jokes that went over my head further broadened my informal education – I remember that my desire to sing along to a MAD song parody set to the tune of “You’re the Top” impelled me to dig through my parents’ record collection and listen, for the first time (and with a delight that has never ebbed), to the songs of Cole Porter.

But MAD contributors being of my parents’ generation had an additional effect. Everything about America culture was changing rapidly in the 1960s and early 1970s – fashion, music, movies, media, architecture, décor, and social mores – and usually in one direction, toward the more extreme, outlandish, and “new and improved.” Like our parents, the MAD contributors were not among the youthful cohort who embraced and drove the changes, but rather part of a generation reacting to the upheaval with bewilderment and skepticism. Another generation reacting to the sweeping transformations with a similar sense of helplessness was my own. Through MAD, we got a glimpse into how our parents were processing the cultural sea change, even as we were trying to figure it all out for our juvenile selves.

My MAD golden age also transpired at a time when there were fewer media options and Americans’ cultural frame of reference was more uniform. Unpestered by internets and iPhones, we had more time to reread and unravel the riot of jokes crammed into the pages of the magazine. What I particularly loved about MAD is that it went after both schlock and great art with the same irreverence. For example, MAD’s parody of *The Godfather* – “The Odd Father,” with Mort Drucker’s hilarious caricatures – skewered the movie and showed how even a cinematic masterpiece could also be infinitely mockable. MAD honed your ability to recognize the artifice and manipulation that underpins, well, everything – whether you’re being entertained or being sold something or being governed by politicians or simply engaging with your fellow human beings. As the magazine’s founder and longtime publisher William Gaines put it, “MAD’s philosophy is: We must never stop reminding the reader of how little value they get for their money.” Maybe that was self-deprecation about the magazine, maybe it was a metaphor about life in general – either way, *caveat emptor*.

Moreover, MAD was a textbook if you wanted to be creative or funny yourself. Check out the Wikipedia entry about MAD for the testimonials from the comedians, cartoonists, filmmakers, et al., of every stripe who acknowledge MAD’s indelible influence on their work. Many crossed boundaries of subject matter and good taste the magazine never would, but the transgressive spirit underpinning their work was, at its core, MAD Magazine.

When I’ve told people that I’m writing about this exhibit, their eyes light up as they share their stories of how much MAD meant to them at a time in their lives when they were trying to figure it all out. MAD fanatics – we are not alone. So, let me tell you like it is, *man* – this summer, the jolliest place in the Berkshires is going to be “What, Me Worry?” at the Norman Rockwell Museum.

## Israeli Designer on Artists in Israel Since October 7



GREAT BARRINGTON – Israeli contemporary art jewelry designer Shulli Goitein will have a booth at the Berkshires Arts Festival this July – some of our Berkshire snowbirds may have already met her last winter in Palm Beach or Boca Raton, or perhaps at one of the other crafts shows in North America she’s sold at over the last seven months. Under ordinary circumstances, the designer would be selling her creations in museums and at a shop in Jaffa, Israel – but alas, these are no ordinary times.

Like many artists who rely on the tourist trade and a stable Israeli economy, Goitein has had to pivot since Oct. 7 and the Gaza War in order to make living – and this challenge comes only a few years after the Covid-19 lockdowns. Goitein had to close down her shop in Jaffa during the pandemic and again during this time of crisis. Goitein has more options than many of her peers – she sells her work through museum gift shops and she was born in the US, possessing dual citizenship that allows her to travel and work more easily overseas. Her experiences offer a window into how Israel’s artists have had to cope.

In May, Goitein spoke to the BJV about her work and Israel’s artists. Our conversation was edited for length and clarity.

### What’s it like in Jaffa these days?

For the first half year, it was like what Covid used to be like – lots of stores closed. It was super quiet, nothing going on, even Israelis, especially in Jaffa, because it’s a mixed community. There is fear on both sides, the Arabs and the Jews. Israelis weren’t keen on going to have a beer in Jaffa. It was dead and still hasn’t much revived, although it’s better now. And for the first six months, there were zero sales in the museums as well, because they’re also dependent on tourism. Actually, what saved me and a bunch of my colleagues was an initiative by a man called Stuart Katz, who is a tour agent. During war, he organizes artists, especially from the war zone areas, and arranges sales in Jewish communities in the States. In November, we had a tour in New York and New Jersey. I had just closed my store and I had all of my inventory.

For the first three weeks, I was raising funds for war efforts and for the soldiers with my jewelry and with no income to me. I’m a single mom and I have two kids to feed, and at a certain point I said, ‘Well, okay, you can’t just make jewelry for nothing. You have to make a living.’ So, this opportunity came, they said that you have to buy your own a ticket to the States, and I said, I’m going, I’m doing this. I took my suitcases and left. I left my kids in the middle of a war where there were sirens here every day, and they had to run to the shelter every day. I arranged for an adult to be with them every day – they didn’t like it, but that was that. I was able to make a living for the next two months from that tour.

### How many artists participated? And how did you get around?

There were forty of us. The expenses were all on us. We shared car rentals because we had a lot of equipment and merchandise. There was a wonderful turnout and people were very supportive. Meanwhile, at home, anybody who didn’t have the guts to do this didn’t have an income for at least four months. The government, unlike during Covid (which was easier) didn’t support us at all. There was nothing. I think because the budgets are going all towards war efforts, there is nothing left for the civilians. Then, in February, something very strange happened to me. I sell in the Tel Aviv Museum, where the *Kikar Hatufim* [Hostages Square] is located. That’s the biggest *aliyah la’regel* (pedestrian) place in Israel at the moment. It’s very shocking. It’s very troubling. But Tel Aviv Museum is the only shop there is in the area. So suddenly, from February, I started selling at the Tel Aviv Museum because of the *Hatufim*, which is very macabre, I guess you could call it. The other museums only started selling during Pesach. A little bit of Jewish tourism, I would say, is coming in.

Everybody’s trying to figure out how to make a living. I’m fortunate to have a passport and to be able to do what I’m doing now legally. A lot of artists are asking me, ‘how do you do arts and crafts fairs in America?’ I just decided that since I lost 90 percent of my income here, I have to do this. I’m traveling five times to the States this year, and I’m doing shows, and I’m spending more time there and less time with my kids because I don’t know what’s going to happen next. I have a friend who asked me if I want to share a shop on Sheinken Street in Tel Aviv, and I said, ‘Thank you. I’m not doing adventures now. I’m going to be working hard, traveling, and being very conservative on any endeavors here in Israel.’

Some things I put up on social media, some things I don’t, because I don’t want to make people feel that I’m talking about happy things. It’s like the guilt of being able to survive this.

For more on Shulli Goitein’s work, visit [ShulliDesign.com](http://ShulliDesign.com). The Berkshires Arts Festival will be held on July 5-7 at Ski Butternut, Route 23 in Great Barrington ([berkshiresartsfestival.com](http://berkshiresartsfestival.com)).

CULTURE & ARTS

Of Earth and Sky

Group show to feature paintings by Pattie Lipman

WEST STOCKBRIDGE – The work of local artist Pattie Lipman has graced the pages of the BJV several times. From Thursday, June 20 through Sunday, June 30, her paintings will be on view in a group show (with John Huffaker and Kay Lerner) at The Guild of Berkshire Artists' Art on Main Gallery called "Of Earth and Sky: Bronze Sculptures and Oil Paintings." Here is a landscape that sweetly evokes the lush green Berkshire summer. The Gallery is at 38 Main Street in West Stockbridge; opening reception on Saturday, June 22 at 4 p.m. For more info: perllan.studio@gmail.com.




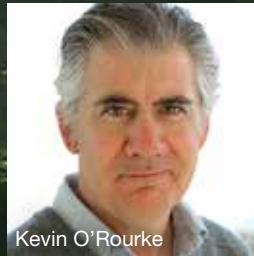
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