

Berkshire JEWISH VOICE

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

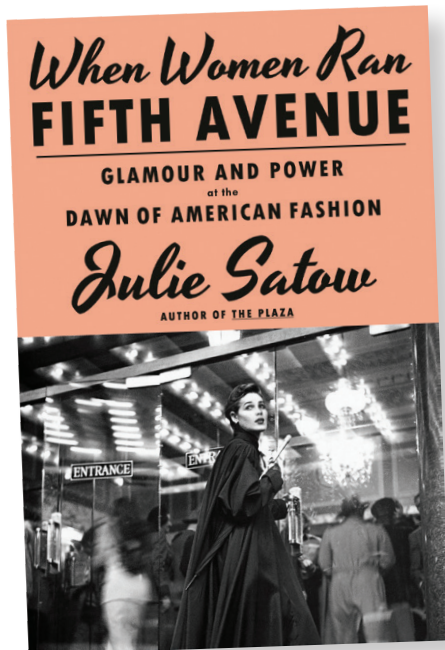
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U.S. POSTAGE
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Pittsfield, MA
Permit No. 19

Volume 33, No. 2

Shevat / Adar /Nisan 5785

February 24 to March 30, 2025

jewishberkshires.org



When Women Ran Fifth Avenue: Glamour and Power at the Dawn of American Fashion, with Julie Satow

On Thursday, March 27 at 7 p.m., learn about the women who left their marks on retail in 20th century New York when Julie Satow discusses her book, *When Women Ran Fifth Avenue: Glamour and Power at the Dawn of American Fashion*.

This free program will be presented via Zoom and is part of Jewish Literary

Voices: A Federation Series in collaboration with The Jewish Book Council. Register on the calendar of events page at jewishberkshires.org.

In *When Women Ran Fifth Avenue*, award-winning journalist and author of *The Plaza* Julie Satow chronicles the rise of the department store through dazzling portraits of three visionary women who took great risks, forging new paths for the women who followed in their footsteps. This stylish account, rich with personal drama and trade secrets, captures the department store in all its glitz, decadence, and fun, and showcases the women who made that beautifully curated world go round.

This history of American fashion and the department store is inextricable from Jewish history, from the Jewish immigrants who worked in New York's Garment District to influential designers and creators like Hattie Carnegie and Lena Himmelstein (better known as the creator of Lane Bryant). These stories are interwoven throughout Satow's glittering account of a bygone era of innovation and glamour.

Julie Satow is an award-winning journalist and the author of *The Plaza*, a *New York Times* Editor's Choice and NPR Favorite Book of 2019. She is a regular contributor to *The New York Times*.

"The Shtetl Kitchen: Ashkenazi Foodways Past and Present," with The Gefilteria's Liz Alpern

On Thursday, April 3 at 7 p.m., foodies will want to join Federation online as we welcome Liz Alpern of The Gefilteria, a food venture launched in 2012 with a manifesto and a mission to reimagine eastern European Jewish cuisine. Her topic will be "The Shtetl Kitchen: Ashkenazi Foodways Past and Present."

This free Federation program will be presented via Zoom. Register on the calendar of events page at jewishberkshires.org.

The roots of the Jewish deli and bagels comes from small town life in Eastern Europe, known as the shtetl. In this lecture, explore the roots of this beloved cuisine in the Old Country and the wisdom at the heart of it.

Join Liz Alpern (co-owner of The Gefilteria and co-author, with Jeffrey Yoskowitz, of *The Gefilte Manifesto: New Recipes for Old World Jewish Food*) for a dynamic discussion on Eastern European Jewish foodways, past and present. She'll discuss exciting discoveries about seasonal Jewish eating, holiday cooking and culinary wisdom that may transform everything you thought about Ashkenazi gastronomy. Dive into goose, gefilte fish, cabbage, kugel and more.



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THE SHTETL KITCHEN,
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Purim 5785

The Adloyada parade is a tradition dating back to the early days of Tel Aviv, in 1912.

During the days of the Yishuv, the Adloyada was a mass event; it was resumed after the state of Israel was established. The name is derived

from the rabbinic saying in the Talmud that one should revel on Purim by drinking "until one no longer knows" (ad de-lo yada, Aramaic: עד דלא ידע) the difference between "blessed be Mordecai" and "cursed be Haman." This 1960 Purim poster is available for purchase from the Farkash Gallery in Tel Aviv, purveyors of vintage Jewish and Israeli posters (online at farkash-gallery.com).



Hersh Goldberg-Polin's High School has Lost 10 Graduates in the Gaza War. Where does it go next?

Jerusalem's Himmelfarb High School has long been a prominent avatar of religious Zionist idealism



At the shiva for Yuval Shoham, a graduate of Himmelfarb killed in Gaza.

By Deborah Danan / JTA

JERUSALEM – On the final night of shiva for Yuval Shoham, an Israeli soldier killed in Gaza in December, the atmosphere felt strangely lively.

Groups of people gathered in clusters chatting animatedly around the family – Yuval's parents and four brothers – under a large tent set up around the corner from their congregation in south Jerusalem's Baka neighborhood. It was a Saturday night, and the crowd was busy swapping cheerful stories about Shoham, who was 22 when he died.

HIMMELFARB HS,
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OP-ED

RABBI REFLECTION

Not So Much a Shiva Call as a Social Call

One year after Oct. 7 2023, Masorti rabbis sublimated grief into efforts to heal others and transform society

By Rabbi David Weiner / Knesset Israel



Rabbi Weiner leading minnah at Machon Schechter in the Neve Tzedek neighborhood of Tel Aviv

I attended the 2024 Rabbinical Assembly Convention in December, in Jerusalem. This was my first visit to Israel in about a year. In December 2023, I had joined a Rabbinical Assembly delegation that tended to our Israeli colleagues and bore witness to what had happened on and since October 7. This more recent trip was different – far less intense, not so much a shiva call as a social call. Though

many colleagues chose to visit sites related to the war – destroyed kibbutzim in the Gaza Envelope, the Sderot police station, the site of the Supernova Music festival, I chose other paths. The convention offered me a chance to reconnect with colleagues from all over the world, to share ideas, and to see how current events look from across the ocean.

It was safe to travel in the central and southern parts of Israel when I was there. Though combat was continuing in Gaza, new operations were underway in Syria, thousands of people were still displaced from destroyed homes, and the hostages were still in captivity, the world somehow was still turning. Buses and trains were running, and schools, restaurants, shops, and many hotels were open. Though it seemed premature for a typical tourist visit to Israel, anyone who has been delaying a visit to relatives, wondering whether it is safe to send a high school student for the summer, or considering joining a volunteer mission should feel confident booking flights and making arrangements. Visits strengthen connections between Israeli and American Jews and help stitch the Jewish people together.

The theme of this convention was “Bridging Dreams and Reality.” Sessions explored this moment of time and confronted its challenges from a variety of angles – Israel’s complicated and evolving context, the many pressures that are exhausting all of us and our communities, the rising antisemitism in many societies worldwide. Polarization has been stressful enough in the United States in recent years, reaching yet another crescendo in the recent election season. But even for someone accustomed to such rancor, the animosity among “tribes” in Israel seemed remarkably, frighteningly intense. Tensions have attenuated. Who serves in the army? Who is exempt? Who makes sacrifices? Who lives off the back of others’ sacrifices? Who has a voice? Who is preserving democracy, and who is undermining it? Israel’s politics have never been simple or calm, but dropping in from abroad to hear such intense mutual distrust was disconcerting.

Many speakers and workshop leaders focused on incremental ways to heal the growing gaps. In contrast to my visit a year ago, when messages centered around grieving and paralysis, today it struck me how many of my colleagues are sublimating their grief into efforts to heal others and transform society. Though they are still bereft, every Masorti (as the Conservative Movement is known in Israel) rabbi is also focusing on “doing something.” Masorti rabbis convene a daily prayer circle at the Hostages Square in Tel Aviv, carving out a place for egalitarian, responsive, modern, traditional, community-based spiritual support. One colleague has conceived of a new way to support Lone Soldiers – young people from abroad, disproportionately alumni from Camp Ramah, who choose to make aliyah to join the Israel Defense Forces – by starting the first pluralist *hesder* yeshiva community at the Masorti Kibbutz Hanaton. Masorti synagogues have taken in people displaced from towns north and south, organized drives for food, clothing, and other needs; and set up education and youth movement programming for Israelis whose lives have been upended. Several of my colleagues have made the transition from simply providing services to survivors to helping survivors access their own sense of independence and agency. These Israeli rabbis are remarkable – they are helping their people, our people, to grieve and heal.

Efforts for healing and rebuilding are happening not only in the Masorti movement but also across many sectors of Israeli society. An innovative not-for-profit called Project 24 Israel (project24israel.com) connects the devastated

Israeli communities of the South and North with North American Jewish communities. The startup creates tailor-made projects that offer support and healing for everyone involved. Some projects have focused on turning children who have become victims into community heroes – exactly what a community would do for a young person who endured a family tragedy or survived an illness. Others have been more ambitious – a dozen cyclists from the Gaza Envelope rode with American Jews in New York and Ohio; a club scattered from a destroyed southern town swam together with the Princeton University swim team for a week, then stayed a few days in the homes of congregants of a Westchester synagogue. Like reintegration programs for young IDF veterans, such as wilderness experiences in the American West, these programs provide unique, concrete healing experiences for Americans and Israelis alike. I wonder if the Berkshire County Jewish community is able to “do something” this summer. If you think we are, I hope you’ll email me to let me know that you’re interested in helping to put something together.

I suppose there are two ways to look at the psychological transformation that is underway in Israel. It is disconcerting to see how people can get used to just about anything, no matter how awful. On the other hand, the urge to heal demonstrates our adaptability and capacity to change and grow. The pain and trauma of October 7, though still with us today, will not last forever. Although things will never be as they were before, the Jewish people will not, from now on, always be walking in the valley of the shadow of death. We might argue about politics and policy but still find common ground through song, prayer, and values. The path forward travels by way of community, Torah, and hope.



Scene from the Rabbinic Assembly in December

The convention took place on the eve of Hannuka, which suggested a message for rabbinic work and Jewish life in general at this moment. Hannuka always falls at the darkest time of year, close to the winter solstice, and the core message of the holiday is that a Jewish response to darkness is to light a flame. Crucially, the custom of the holiday is for the person kindling the menorah to use a shamash, a helper candle, to provide the energy to ignite the other candles. This adds a layer of meaning – the shamash, with devotion, dependability, and generosity, lights other candles. Its own light is not diminished, but the world becomes brighter and brighter as light begets light.

Rabbi David Weiner is the spiritual leader of Knesset Israel in Pittsfield.



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IN MY VIEW

Israelis' Resounding Message – “We are strong. We will endure. We will rebuild. We will not give up.”

A visit to the Afula-Gilboa region showed the impact of your support for Israel reeling from the ongoing conflict

By Dara Kaufman / Executive Director, Jewish Federation of the Berkshires



Dara Kaufman meets with a parent & mentor from Youth Futures Afula

For the past nine years, Jewish Federation of the Berkshires has supported a vibrant partnership that connects the Berkshire Jewish community with the city of Afula and the Gilboa region through The Southern New England Consortium (SNEC)—an alliance of ten Jewish Federations in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. This partnership connects our communities through people-to-people exchanges while providing vital funding for social services and critical needs of the people of the Afula-Gilboa region. Our

support has grown especially urgent since October 7.

In January, I had the privilege of joining fellow Federation leaders on a five-day mission organized by the Jewish Agency for Israel to meet with our partnership grantees, express our unwavering support, and witness firsthand the impact we are making together.

It was an incredibly emotional time to be in Israel. I arrived early, spending two days with my in-laws just as the ceasefire began and the first hostages were set to be released.

The news channels were running 24/7 with interviews and commentary on the complex emotions of the moment. The overwhelming feeling was one of elation and hope for the anticipated return of the hostages, but it was also bittersweet for the families whose loved ones were not on the list of hostages to be returned. You could hear a tense pain and sorrow, that went hand-in-hand with their optimism and gratitude that other hostages were being released. And there was also a lot of anger, and even some fear, expressed by families whose loved ones had been murdered or injured by many of the prisoners that Israel would soon set free as part of the exchange deal.



The Northern Border with Lebanon

As our group gathered for dinner that first evening, we saw the first clips of hostages Romi Gonen, Doron Steinbrecher, and Emily Damari returning to loving embrace of their families. It was a surreal moment. As we stood in silence, glued to the TV, someone quietly suggested we recite the *Shechiyanu* blessing: *Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season.* There was not a dry eye in the room. We all felt the magnitude of what we had just witnessed – the pain, the hope, the sacrifice, and, above all, the love.

Over the next few days, I found myself deeply moved by a series of recurring themes that emerged from my interactions.

Everywhere we went, all the people we met expressed an overwhelming gratitude that we were there. They spoke of how much it meant that we took the time to visit and genuinely understand the immense challenges they are facing.

They shared their deep appreciation for the care and support they're receiving from us, and from the broader American Jewish community – especially through the Israel Crisis Fund. While many were aware of the American Jewish community's philanthropy prior to October 7, they had never fully grasped the strength of the bond we share or the unwavering commitment we have to one another.

Each person we met had a personal story that needed to be told – stories of family members murdered or injured in the attack and the war, spouses and adult children separated for months while fighting on the front lines. Young children traumatized by non-stop sirens and rocket attacks; missing their parents and siblings; unable to sleep separate from their families; and haunted by the fear that their world is no longer safe. Hearing these heart-wrenching stories, all I could do was listen with empathy and offer a caring hug of support. I gave and received many hugs.

Israelis are acutely aware of the rising antisemitism and anti-Israel sentiment in the U.S., and expressed real concern for the hatred and isolation that is being directed at Jews, particularly Israelis, in the Diaspora.

But what struck me the most during my visit was the extraordinary strength and resilience of the Israeli people. Time and time again, I heard a resounding message: “We are strong. We will endure. We will rebuild. We will not give up.” Despite the devastation, there is an unshakeable sense of hope and determination – an unwavering belief that they will return to their lives and businesses, though they know it will never be the same as it was before October 7.

Over the next few days we met with many organizations supported by our collective funding who are providing essential and impactful programs and services in the Afula-Gilboa region and beyond.

- The attack of October 7, the sexual violence involved, and the ongoing rocket and missile attacks, dramatically increased the incidence of PTSD in the Israeli population, especially among former Israel veterans, Holocaust survivors and women who have suffered sexual abuse. **Merhav Nishima B'Emek, Dorot BaGilboa, and the Haifa Rape Crisis Center** (Afula branch) are each providing support, counseling, and safe spaces for these populations to connect and work through this often overlooked side effect of the war.
- Afula's regional hospital, the **Emek Medical Center**, is a model of coexistence, with an equal number of Jewish and Arab staff and patients. We toured their expanded rehabilitation center and heard from

one of their patients, Nitzan, a tank commander whose tank was hit by an RPG which killed his tank mate. We also heard from Mohammad and Shalia, on how the hospital navigated the challenge of Arabs and Jews working together to create a safe and respectful space for staff and patients. The hospital recently added eight surgical rooms and a cancer center, and has plans to exchange trauma care expertise with U.S. doctors.

- We met two mothers who lost their sons in the war. They shared how the support of student volunteers from **B'Meitav - The Ruth Vrobel Foundation** has helped them cope and find purpose. These postgraduate students, working towards their degrees in social work and psychology, support families of fallen soldiers through personal connections, grief counseling, and help families find ways of memorializing lost loved ones.
- **Pnina Agenyahhu**, the director of the Patnership2Gether Global network, shared how she, together with dozens of Jewish Agency staffers, were mobilized to bring immediate financial assistance from the **Jewish Agency's Fund for Victims of Terror** to thousands of people evacuated to the Dead Sea hotels from the most impacted communities. These families arrived with only the clothes on their backs. It was very clear that the Jewish Agency played and continues to play a crucial role in supporting impacted Israelis, especially in the south and the north of the country.
- At **Youth Futures** – an organization that pairs at-risk students with mentors who can support their academic, social, and emotional development – we heard story of Hadar and her young son, Yoav. They were visiting family near Gaza on October 7 when they witnessed the murder of Hadar's cousin and endured 30 harrowing hours trapped in her parents' home near Gaza. That experience has created a host of challenges for Yoav. Through it all, Hadar has worked with Gali, her son's Youth Futures mentor, who has been by their side connecting Yoav with the academic and emotional support and that he has needed. “I know this project has an impact,” said Hadar. “I know, after our difficult experiences, how vital Youth Futures is in our lives.”

Beyond social services, the Afula-Gilboa region faces serious security threats along the northern border with Lebanon, and from nearby cities in the West Bank. Since October 7, there has been a rising concern in the Gilboa region because of its proximity to the West Bank city of Jenin which has become a hotbed of terrorist activity.

We toured the security center in the community of Gan Ner, as well as the soon-to-be-launched security headquarters for the entire Gilboa region. Gan Ner has been dealing with sniper fire coming out of Jenin, requiring the erection of concrete barriers and a new reinforced shelter to protect children in their kindergarten and early childhood spaces. The Gilboa Regional Council, with support from the partnership communities, has significantly strengthened security detection and response measures to counter these threats. They are still in need of additional shelters for kindergartens in other communities in proximity to the border.



Security barrier protects a kindergarten class in Gan Ner – a stark reminder of the ongoing threat

IN MY VIEW,
continued on page 14

Berkshire
JEWISH VOICE

A publication of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, serving the Berkshires and surrounding NY, CT and VT. Published 9 times a year.

The color photography in this issue is made possible through the generosity of Harriet & Bob Miller and Dr Lynne B Harrison, honorary publishers.

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To have the *BJV* mailed to your home, please send a minimum donation of \$18.

Next issue publication date: **March 31, 2025 – May 3, 2025**

Press deadline: **February 25, 2025** • Advertising deadline: **March 13, 2025**

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Your Federation Presents

“An Introduction to Beer in Judaism,” with Rabbi Drew Kaplan



On Thursday, February 27 at 7 p.m., we are happy to host Rabbi Drew Kaplan, on tap for “An Introduction to Beer in Judaism.”

This Jewish Federation of the Berkshires presentation will be presented via Zoom. Register on the calendar of events pages at jewishberkshires.org.

Wine certainly gets the primary focus in Judaism when it comes to beverages, yet what about beer? Beer has been around in human existence longer than wine, so where does it fit into Judaism? Join Rabbi Kaplan for an introductory overview of the most overlooked

beverage in Jewish life. In this Zoom session, explore key texts on beer in the Bible, Talmud, and subsequent Jewish practice.

In addition to his trailblazing Jewish Drinking initiative (jewishdrinking.com), showcasing the wisdom tradition, history, and more on drinking in Jewish life, Rabbi Kaplan also hosts The Jewish Drinking Show podcast (now at over 165 episodes). It is a well-organized, user-friendly trove of information for anyone interested in alcohol and Judaism, from biblical times to the present.

He currently serves as the campus rabbi for Cincinnati Hillel.

A Walk through the Modern Collection of the Jewish Museum, with Carol Salus



Deborah Kass: OY/YO

On Thursday, March 20, at 7 p.m., we welcome back art historian Carol Salus, this time to take us (virtually) on “A Walk through the Modern Collection of the Jewish Museum” in New York City.

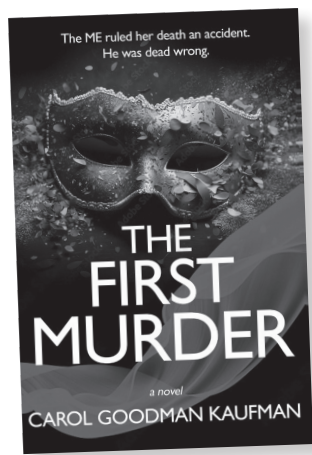
This free Federation program will be presented via Zoom. Register on the calendar of events page at jewishberkshires.org.

Join Dr. Carol Salus for a walk through the Modern Collection of the Jewish Museum. Founded in 1904, the Museum was the first of its kind in the US and one of the oldest Jewish museums in the world. Writes Dr. Salus:

We will focus on key works of art and media reflecting the Jewish experience in the 20th and 21st centuries. “The Steerage” by Alfred Stieglitz, a scene of Jewish immigration, will be discussed for its importance in the history of photography. We will also view appropriations of Warhol’s “Gold Marilyn” and “Liz” by Deborah Kass’s Jewish Jackie Series which features Barbra Streisand. Lastly, we will see photographs by the Israeli, Elinor Carruci, and her tributes to the great Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Carol Salus, PhD, retired after an accomplished career as a Professor at Kent State University’s School of Art. She has published on multiple artists including Picasso, Degas, R. B. Kitaj, Andy Warhol, and Roy Lichtenstein and she and has taught Art History and American Art and Architecture. Her work has been recognized by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

The First Murder, with Carol Goodman Kaufman



On Thursday, March 6 at 7 p.m., Federation welcomes local author (and longtime BJV columnist) Carol Goodman Kaufman, who will talk about her first novel, *The First Murder*.

This free program is part of Jewish Literary Voices: A Federation Series in collaboration with The Jewish Book Council. Register on the calendar of events page at jewishberkshires.org.

When Mary Jane Bennett is found dead in her bed—alone, strangled by her own scarf, and with every door in the house locked—the medical examiner rules her death accidental, the result of a sex game gone horribly awry. State police decline to investigate further, but Queensbridge Police Chief Caleb Crane doesn’t buy for a minute that his good friend died this way, so he undertakes his own investigation. Facing town councilors afraid of bad

publicity, an angry medical examiner, and his own personal demons, he labors to solve what he believes is the first-ever murder in his pastoral Berkshire Hills village. Complicating things: the list of suspects includes some of the people to whom he is closest—including his own wife.

Running throughout the book is the story of Purim and its messages. Who is the killer hiding behind a mask? Prepare for Purim together with Carol Goodman Kaufman! (And see her recipe for hamantaschen on page 20.)

Before evolving into a writer, **Carol Goodman Kaufman** worked as an industrial and organizational psychologist and criminologist. Her published works span multiple genres, including academic research, food history, travel, human interest, children’s literature, and mystery short stories.

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Your Federation Presents

Exploring the Two Most Valuable Websites for Jewish Genealogy

On Monday, March 10 at 7 p.m., learn about using internet resources to uncover your Jewish roots with two experts from the Western Massachusetts Jewish Genealogical Society

This free Federation program will be presented via Zoom. Register on the calendar of events page at jewishberkshires.org.

Jewish genealogy is one way we can "Honor our fathers and our mothers," and their parents before them. Beginners and experienced researchers all benefit from reviewing both the older and the newer features of online research sites. This presentation will offer some examples of value to people of all levels of experience.

Join Joel Novis, vice president, and Ken Elstein, treasurer, of the Western Massachusetts Jewish Genealogical Society to explore "The Two Most Valuable Websites for Jewish Genealogy." They will provide a sample of the kinds of valuable information that anyone can find in JewishGen.org and Ancestry.com.



Let's keep this post active to honor the military service of our local Jewish veterans. The Louis Green Post 140 of the Jewish War Veterans of the USA is an affiliate of Jewish Federation of the Berkshires.

THE SHTETL KITCHEN, continued from cover

Based in Brooklyn, **Liz Alpern** is passionate about reimagining tradition and bringing people together. She is also the creator of *Queer Soup Night*, a global event series highlighting the talent of queer chefs and raising tens of thousands of dollars for locally-based social justice organizations. Liz received her MBA from Baruch College's Zicklin School of Business and has been featured on the *Forbes 30 Under 30 List*, the *Forward 50* and *The Cherry Bombe 100*. She is committed to seeing a more just and equitable food system for all so when she's not in the kitchen with *The Gefilteria*, she's consulting for national non-profit organization, *Fair Food Network*.

You can find *Gefilteria's* artisanal gefilte fish online and in stores during major holiday seasons, though our work reaches far beyond a single dish. The *Gefilte Manifesto* features over 100 recipes and stories. Oh, and it's pronounced *ge-filte-ria*, like a taqueria but with gefilte fish instead of tacos.

Appeal to All Jewish War Veterans in Our Community

By Bob Waldheim / Commander, Louis Green Post 140 of the Jewish War Veterans of the USA

The future of the Berkshires' Louis Green Post 140 of the Jewish War Veterans of the USA is uncertain. Nationally, the Jewish War Veterans (JWV) is the premier voice for Jewish uniformed service members and veterans in the United States. The JWV defends the rights and benefits of all service members and veterans, combats antisemitism, and supports the State of Israel.

The Louis Green Post #140 of Pittsfield was founded in June 1935. Members honor deceased veterans by participating in their funerals, providing loved ones with the burial flags draped on their loved ones' caskets, and ensuring that medallions and American flags are placed by their graves around Memorial Day. Post #140 members long participated in Pittsfield's Veteran Day parade, as well.

Ten years ago, when Bob Shindler (z"l) passed away, I took over as commander of this post. At the time, there were five active members who were available to help me with the required paperwork necessary to keep the chapter in good standing. Four of the five members have since passed. It has been difficult to recruit new members and trying to devote the time necessary to keeping our chapter visible in the community.

I am asking anyone who is a member of the Jewish War Veterans in Berkshire County to contact me so that Post 140 can remain viable. New members are also welcome. There are three critical positions that need to be filled: commander, vice commander, and treasurer.

You can reach me by email: rjwaldheim@gmail.com. My phone number is: (413) 822-4546.

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Your Federation Presents

Kosher Community Seder 5785

Enjoy a traditional Passover experience on the second night of the holiday

PITTSFIELD – The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires will host a kosher community Passover Seder at 6:30 p.m. on Sunday, April 13 at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road.

Participants will enjoy a traditional kosher Seder experience with plenty of explanation, insight, song, and inspiration. Enjoy all the ritual foods, ceremonial wine, and a delicious four-course Passover meal. Vegetarian and gluten-free options are available upon advance request. Attendees are invited to bring their own kosher for Passover table wine.

Rabbi David Weiner of Knesset Israel will serve as Seder leader. Children of all ages, extended family, and community friends are welcome.

The cost is \$45 for adults and \$22 for children ages 6 through 17. Children 5 years and under are free of charge, but need to be registered. **Advance reservations and payment are required by April 6.**

Financial assistance is available to all who might need it – please contact Dara Kaufman at Federation at dkaufman@jewishberkshires.org or by calling (413) 442-4360, ext. 12.

Reservations can be made by calling the Federation at (413) 442-4360, ext. 10 or online at jewishberkshires.org.

The Seder is sponsored by Jewish Federation of the Berkshires.

Festive In-Person Purim Lunch!

PITTSFIELD – On Thursday, March 13 at noon, come together in community for a delicious East-meets-West kosher lunch of salmon saloona (a sweet and sour stew from the Middle East), kasha varnishkes (Eastern European comfort food), Romanian sweet chickpeas, salad, challah, and (of course) hamantaschen for dessert.

This Connecting With Community event will be held at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield.

RSVP required by Wednesday, March 12 at 9 a.m.

Call (413) 442-2200 to reserve your meal. \$3 suggested donation for older adults aged 60 yrs+, \$7 for all others.



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APPLICATION DEADLINE: APRIL 30

Download an application at jewishberkshires.org or email federation@jewishberkshires.org to receive the link.

Funding for this program is made possible by donors to Federation's annual campaign. Donate Today!



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LOCAL NEWS

This American Jewish Life

A 4-session mini-course at KI with Dr. Hal M. Lewis



Dr. Hal Lewis

On the Wednesdays of February 26 and March 5, 19, & 26 from 10:45 a.m. to noon, Dr. Hal Lewis will teach a four-part mini-course entitled "This American Jewish Life."

Key trends and patterns that have informed American Jewish life since the late 19th century will be explored. Particular focus will be given to developments affecting American Jews since the turn of the 21st century, including changes in affiliation, philanthropy, gender issues, relationship with Israel and related matters.

Dr. Hal Lewis is the Principal Consultant at Leadership for Impact LLC, a leadership-consulting firm serving the needs of nonprofit organizations. He served for a decade as the president and CEO of Spertus Institute in Chicago, where he continues as professor of Contemporary Jewish Studies. He has been visiting professor at universities around the world and has served as a member of the on-call faculty of the Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, NC. Free for members of Kneset Israel and Anshe Amunim; \$50 course fee for others.

Please pre-register at knesetisrael.org/rsvp.

Paid advertisements do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires or its members.



Attention Music Fans and Film Buffs – The KI Band Returns for a Movie-themed Purim Concert!

PITTSFIELD – The Kneset Israel Band is pleased to announce its 16th annual Purim concert! On Saturday, March 8, please join the party in the KI social hall at 7:30 p.m. for Purim 2025: Film Night.

Inspired by an annual summer highlight at Tanglewood, the band will present an array of iconic songs from hit movies over the past six decades. From '60s classics *The Graduate* and *Easy Rider* to '70s hits *Grease* and *Saturday Night Fever* to '80s blockbusters such as *Top Gun* and *Back to the Future*, all the way to more modern box office sensations like *Frozen*, there will be something for everyone in this year's revue!

Once again, the "house band" will feature a rotating cast of special guests, including musicians from Temple Anshe Amunim and Hevreh, as well as children from the KI Hebrew School, performing over 15 songs with parody lyrics telling the Purim story. The Purim concert is a highlight of the year, promising great fun, silliness, dancing, conviviality, and a joyous celebration for all ages!

Please RSVP as soon as possible! Tickets are \$15 (\$5 for ages 13-20, and kids 12 and under are free) and can be reserved online at knesetisrael.org/rsvp or by contacting Diana Macfarlane (office@knesetisrael.org, [413] 445-4872). Snacks and drinks will be available and are included with your ticket purchase.

Kneset Israel is at 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield.

Shabbat Community Dinners at Kneset Israel

PITTSFIELD – On the Fridays of February 28 and March 28, join friends at Kneset Israel at 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield for an energizing, musical Friday evening service at 5:45 p.m., then stay for a delicious kosher Shabbat dinner at 6:45 p.m.

The Musical Minyan service on February 28 is an acoustic, more meditative musical service.

Shirei Shabbat on March 28 includes electric guitars and keyboard for a more energized and lively service. The Membership Committee of Kneset Israel will be hosting this event. Kneset Israel will celebrate new members and welcome prospective members. They would love to have anyone who is interested in experiencing the joyous community at KI to join them for this evening! Please reach out to Jilly Lederman or Elisa Snowise, co-chairs, by contacting Kneset Israel at office@knesetisrael.org. Kneset Israel is the Berkshires' only conservative congregation, an inclusive and flourishing community. We hope to see you soon!

Registration is necessary for dinner. Adults \$25, free for those under 18.

Register at knesetisrael.org/rsvp.

Aleph Isn't Tough: A Beginning Hebrew Class for Adults

PITTSFIELD – Do you want to learn to read Hebrew? Join Jenny Gitlitz for a beginning Hebrew course for motivated adults.

The course will take place at Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield on Monday evenings from March 3 through April 7 for six weekly sessions from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. The \$50 enrollment fee includes the textbook. Jenny's love of the Hebrew language, instilled by her two years at a Youth Aliyah village, will inspire all aspiring Hebrew learners.

This class will take place in person only. Please register at knesetisrael.org/rsvp.

Chabad of the Berkshires Invites You to a Thrilling Purim Party: "Purim in Israel"

PITTSFIELD – Chabad of the Berkshires is delighted to announce the upcoming Purim celebration on Friday, March 14 at 5:30 p.m. This year's theme is "Purim in Israel," promising an evening filled with joy, laughter, and community spirit.

Take a photo at the Western Wall! Squeeze orange juice in Jaffa! Grab dinner at the Shuk! Create art in Tzefat! Masquerade in your favorite costume! Send a card to a soldier in the I.D.F.!

"We extend a warm welcome to everyone in the Berkshire community to join us for this exciting event as a symbol of unity and support for Israel," says Chabad's co-director Sara Volovik. "Let's celebrate Purim by expressing our support of Israel."

Prepare your taste buds for a mouthwatering experience! The party will feature delectable Israeli-style cuisine that will transport you to the vibrant streets of Israel. Savor the flavors as a community comint together to celebrate Purim.

In addition to the delightful food, Chabad arranged entertaining activities for all ages, something for everyone to enjoy.

The Purim Party will take place at Chabad of the Berkshires, 450 South Street in Pittsfield from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Chabad requests RSVPs to ensure sufficient arrangements are made to accommodate all.

For further information, please contact Sara Volovik (413) 499-9899 Adults \$20 per person. Children \$10 per person. Sponsor \$360.

About Chabad of the Berkshires

Chabad of the Berkshires is a welcoming Jewish organization dedicated to serving and enriching the Berkshire community. Through its diverse programs and events, Chabad of the Berkshires aims to inspire Jewish pride, promote unity, and foster educational opportunities for individuals and families. For more information, visit jewishberkshires.com

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LOCAL NEWS

Mitzvah Opportunity – Bake Hamantaschen and Deliver to Local Community Members

BENNINGTON, VT – On Saturday, March 8 at 10 a.m., join Congregation Beth Israel of the Berkshires to bring Purim joy to homebound seniors and community members by baking fresh hamantaschen and delivering *misloach manot* packages! This event will be held in Bennington, VT. Please RSVP at cbiberkshires.com/event/hamantaschen-2025 if your family plans to attend.

For more information, please contact learning@cbiberkshires.com.

This event is a partnership between Congregation Beth Israel & NEFESH, with major financial support from Sally Gottesman & the Harold Grinspoon Foundation as well as funding from other private donors.

Shabbat Celebrations this Winter at CBI

With Purim fun on March 14

NORTH ADAMS – This winter, Congregation Beth Israel of the Berkshires continues to offer ways to connect through Shabbat celebrations. CBI is at 53 Lois Street in North Adams.

Kabbalat Shabbat Services on the Fridays of March 14 & 28 at 7 p.m.

All are welcome to celebrate Shabbat together with prayer, song, poetry, and heart. The CBI band and choir bring beautiful harmonies to Kabbalat Shabbat.

At Kabbalat Shabbat services on March 14, CBI will also celebrate Purim with a spirited re-enactment of the Purim story – come in costume, or pick up a few items from the synagogue costume box upon arrival! With a nod back to the silent film era, interstitial title cards will walk participants through the journeys of Esther and Mordechai. After the story, enjoy hamantaschen and other potluck dessert treats.

Regular Shabbat Morning Services continue on the Saturdays of March 15 and March 22 at 9:30 a.m.

First Friday Shabbat Zoom Gathering on Friday, March 7 at 7:30 p.m. around the Virtual Shabbat Table. Gather together to share community and conversation online and celebrate the Jewish traditions of Shabbat, light the candles, and bless the wine and challah. Stay connected with CBI friends and neighbors, or meet new ones, as you enjoy the joys of fellowship and comfort of camaraderie. Zoom link will be sent after you RSVP.

RSVP for all services and programs at cbiberkshires.com/calendar-of-events.

Late Winter at Hevreh

GREAT BARRINGTON – Hevreh of Southern Berkshire invites all to participate in its late winter programs.

Community Shabbat – On Friday, February 28 at 6 p.m., join Hevreh for a Community Shabbat dinner, partially sponsored by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. The service will be led by Rabbi Jodie Gordon and the Religious School students in grades K-2.

Deep Dive into Torah: Trope Training! – On the Wednesdays of March 5 through April 16 from noon to 1:30 p.m. Have you always wanted to be able to chant from the Torah? Or, did you learn Torah trope years ago, but feel like you could use a refresher? Join Rabbi Gordon for a deep dive into Torah, and then, plan to use your new trope knowledge to chant Torah at a Shabbat service to be scheduled for Spring 2025!

Learner's Minyan at Hevreh – Saturday, March 22 at 10 a.m. Want to learn more about the Shabbat service? What the different parts of the service and key prayers are? When to stand and when to sit, and more? Join Rabbi Gordon at Hevreh for a journey through the morning prayers with explanations along the way, and lots of opportunity for questions as we go. All are welcome.

Purimspiel Cabaret and Megillah Reading at Hevreh

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Thursday, March 13 at 6 p.m., Hevreh of Southern Berkshire is excited to announce that this year's Purimspiel will be a truly special and inclusive event! For the first time, the entire congregation has been invited to participate.

Purimspiel Cabaret will offer a lighthearted and fun telling of the Purim story, with musical interludes. Expect Purim-themed lyrics set to popular tunes, ranging from Billy Joel to songs from *Hamilton*—it's going to be a night to remember!

Medical Professionals from Coast-To-Coast Form 'American Jewish Medical Association'

Group created in the wake of October 7 to ensure a safe community for Jewish healthcare professionals and trainees

AJMA Message: Jewish Healthcare Workers Have a Voice Now

Thousands of medical professionals from coast-to-coast have announced the formation of the 'American Jewish Medical Association (AJMA). The AJMA is the sole nationwide US organization representing Jewish physicians, medical students, nurses, and other health professionals.



Formed in the wake of the October 7 terror attacks in Israel as well as the rise of antisemitic acts at medical facilities and medical schools across the country, the AJMA is a non-political, non-profit organization comprised of Jewish healthcare professionals. The association's mission is to be a safe, enriching community with a unified voice for Jewish healthcare professionals and trainees. The AJMA works to address issues affecting its members and society, including recently rising incidents of antisemitism and anti-Zionism that impact the workplace and patient care. AJMA provides opportunities for members to engage with Jewish colleagues around the world, to stand with Israel, and to celebrate Jewish identity.

A local chapter encompassing Connecticut and Western Massachusetts is being organized under the leadership of Dr. Mark Shekhman of Farmington, CT, and Dr. Ari Geller of Bloomfield, CT. Contact for this chapter is Evi Shekhman, who can be reached at evelineshekhman@gmail.com.

During the last decade, the Jewish community has seen a sharp uptick in antisemitic rhetoric and behavior. Medicine is not immune and may even be particularly prone to verbal attacks and even violence. The rampant adoption of antisemitic tropes infects a profession entrusted with healing to become a target for hatred. This is seen in patient care, hostile medical work environments, and alarming shifts in medical schools.

For more information about the American Jewish Medical Association: www.theajma.org

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Your Federation Presents

Music from the Jewish Diaspora Warmed Up a Frigid February Night

Thanks to everyone who joined Federation and co-host affiliates for a Community Havdalah on a bone-chilling mid-winter evening. Singer Laura Wetzler, backed ably by percussionist Robin Burdulis, shared some of her encyclopedic knowledge of World Jewish music, showing how diverse and international our culture truly is. Many thanks to Rabbi Scott Saulson and Temple Anshe Amunim for being such welcoming hosts, and to the Harold Grinspoon Foundation for its contribution to this event.



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About the Campaign

Jewish Federation is partnering with local chambers, businesses, cultural organizations, houses of worship, and schools to amplify the message that "Hate Has No Home Here" through posters and social media. In addition, billboards across the Berkshires feature the expanded message: "Antisemitism threatens us all – Hate Has No Home Here."

Download Poster, Social Media, and Educational Resources at Jewishberkshires.org/Hate-Has-No-Home-Here

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Thank you for helping ensure a vibrant and secure Berkshire Jewish community!

“It is not what one says, but rather what one does that makes all the difference in the world” – Pirkei Avot 1:17

Thank you to our 1,118 donors and many community volunteers who helped make Jewish Federation of the Berkshires’ 2024 campaign a resounding success! Together, we bring dignity and care to the vulnerable, engage the next generation, and create meaningful and vibrant Jewish life across the Berkshires and beyond.



Hate Has No Home Here

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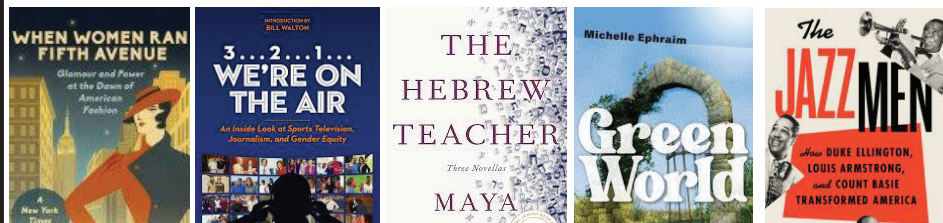
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IN MY VIEW, continued from page 3

On a tour along the northern border with Lebanon, we could see across to the rocket launch positions from which Hezbollah targeted Israeli homes and communities, giving residents only seconds to seek shelter. Seeing how close these launch positions are, you can truly understand the trauma people in the North have experienced and the destruction these attacks have had on their homes and businesses. At Moshav Betzet, we met with Idan from Idan Fruits. She and her husband grow and produce healthy dried fruits. They were hit twice by Hezbollah rockets which damaged their home and destroyed their factory and retail space. "We can rebuild our home, but it is much harder to rebuild our livelihood. But we will do it," Idan shared determinedly.

With our support, the Jewish Agency is investing in its existing small business loan program and has also created a new fund to incentivize small businesses within 30 kilometers of the border with Lebanon and 15 kilometers from the border with Gaza to encourage businesses to return to the area and rebuild the economy there.

As I reflect on the incredible resilience and strength of the people I met, I am reminded that our collective support goes beyond just providing aid. It is a lifeline empowering and lifting up the lives of people who have faced the most unimaginable challenges over the past year.

I am truly grateful to have had this opportunity to see firsthand how our support is serving the people of the Afula-Gilboa region. Thanks to you, the Berkshire Jewish community is indeed making a difference.

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By Molly Meador / Coordinator of PJ Library

Over 40 people gathered together at Bousquet Mountain for PJ Library tubing. Parents and kids alike zoomed down the hill, then warmed up by the fire with snacks and friends. Since we had this wonderful opportunity to build community with each other, we also took the opportunity to give back. In keeping with the Jewish value of *Areyvut* (community-mindedness) donations were made to The People's Pantry in Great Barrington.



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NEWS

HIMMELFARB HS,

continued from cover

If it felt like a high school reunion, that's because, in a sense, it was. Shoham, the 394th Israeli soldier to be killed in Gaza during this war, was also the 10th alumnus of Himmelfarb High School to fall in battle or in captivity since Oct. 7, 2023. The casualties range from young soldiers to a beloved teacher to the most well-known Israeli hostage to be held by Hamas, Hersh Goldberg-Polin.

"There was a point where we were all like, OK, who's it going to be this week?" said Yishai Reich, whose brother, Ariel, was the second Himmelfarb graduate to be killed. The deaths, Reich said, are a testament to the school's ethos of service, and its tight Jerusalem community.

"Everyone loves everyone there," said Reich, who himself will enter the army shortly. "They drill into us that studies and grades aren't the most important thing – being a good person is. Maybe that's why so many good soldiers come out of there."

In January, with the war in the midst of a truce designed to last at least six weeks, a battered nation is gaining a new vantage point from which to reflect on its losses. And those felt at Himmelfarb, founded a century ago and now serving a student body of about 900 boys from seventh to 12th grade, are particularly intense, with ramifications for the rest of Israel.

Himmelfarb is among the most prominent religious Zionist schools in the country. Its roster of alumni ranges from Herzi Halevi, the outgoing chief of Israel's military, to leading journalists, rabbis, and businessmen.

It also occupies a unique place among the 10 percent or so of Israelis who identify as religious Zionist – a typically modern Orthodox community that, in its fealty to Jewish law as well as the Jewish state, has historically seen itself as a bridge between Israel's secular Jews and the strict religious observance of the Haredi Orthodox. The school's location in Jerusalem means that it serves a relatively diverse student body, and has striven to maintain the religious Zionist bridge-building ethos even as other segments of the community have moved further right.

The losses Himmelfarb has suffered accentuate what Yair Ettinger, a former student at the school who is a leading Israeli religion journalist, calls the "heavy, heavy price" religious Zionists have paid in blood during Israel's multifront war. But at a time when Israeli society is exhausted and riven by conflicts foreign and domestic, Ettinger and others in the school's orbit said its drive to bind the country together has grown only stronger.



Rabbi Jeremy Stavisky hugs a teacher and scribe who wrote a Torah scroll in honor of the fallen alumni.

"People are really thirsting, trying to get some comfort or reconciliation in Israeli society," said Ettinger, author of *Frayed: The Disputes Unraveling Religious Zionists*. "And when they look at religious Zionists during the war fighting alongside secular people, they say, 'This is something we used to know. Maybe this is something we can rebuild.'"

He went on, "And I think in that sense, people are

saying, 'Himmelfarb is the kind of bridge that we can build on.'"

Still, the cascade of deaths has created some dismal rituals among the school's alumni and parents. Every time Ariella Bernstein has seen the words "cleared for publication" – which, in the Israeli press, precedes the announcement of casualties – she has rushed to check her son's Himmelfarb yearbook to see if the name matches anyone in its pages.

And when, at Shoham's funeral, his father Effie said he had "been writing this eulogy in my head for 15 months," since the beginning of the war, it resonated with Bernstein.

Her son Benji, who graduated from Himmelfarb, has served 227 days of reserve duty during the war. Prior to the ceasefire deal, he was set to return to Gaza for another four months in March; it's unclear where the war will stand by then.

"Effie had the strength and the capacity to say what I couldn't say out loud. That yes, he's been planning this in his head for 15 months," she said. "I told my husband, 'You see, I'm not the only one.'"

Bernstein lives in Baka, the same Jerusalem neighborhood as the Goldberg-Polins and Shoham family. Effie Shoham and his wife, Oshrat – an attorney who also taught sex education classes at Himmelfarb – are founders of the Hakhel synagogue, where the Goldberg-Polins are also members.

A viral photo has circulated during the war showing Goldberg-Polin, Aner

Shapira and Ben Zussman around the time of their bar mitzvahs. They all attended Himmelfarb; all would be killed by Hamas.

According to alum Shemaiah Rotenberg, the connections between Baka and Himmelfarb run deep. "You can't walk down the street without meeting friends from school," he said, adding that in the local chapter of the religious Zionist Bnei Akiva youth movement, only three boys were not students of Himmelfarb.

Within two months of Ariel Reich's death, four more Himmelfarb graduates died in combat in Gaza: Shachar Fridman, Dvir Barazani, Zussman, and Oriya Ayimalk Goshen.

In each case, students, alumni and staff gathered at the school before the funeral for a quiet moment of reflection and support before walking the half-mile to Mount Herzl Cemetery, carrying Israeli flags in a procession.

"The one advantage to the school being far away from home is that it's so close to Mount Herzl," alum Yoel Rockman commented wryly.

The school has also made accommodations for bereaved siblings. Reich, who was in 12th grade when his brother was killed, found it too overwhelming to attend class in the weeks following his death. The school arranged for teachers to meet with him one-on-one for private lessons. It also had him see a psychologist twice a week.

"They always looked after us – not just me, but my whole family. That's Himmelfarb," said Reich, who also lost his mother in fourth grade. "It's like a metaphorical hug. From the moment you enter the school, you understand that you've arrived home."

Teachers reached out constantly, he said. "They'd ask, 'When can we sit for a cup of coffee to talk?'"

"It's like a metaphorical hug. From the moment you enter the school, you understand that you've arrived home."

After Goshen's death in January, several months of respite followed, until August, when news arrived of Goldberg-Polin's death. As the first anniversary of the Oct. 7, 2023, attack approached, former student Almken Terefe was killed, and shortly afterward, the school community was devastated once more by the news that Rabbi Avi Goldberg, an alumnus and father of eight who returned to teach at the school, had been killed in southern Lebanon.

Goldberg's family lives just blocks from Goldberg-Polin's in Baka.

For Reich, Goldberg's loss hit hard; even while stationed in Gaza as a captain in the reserves, his former homeroom teacher had sent messages of condolence after hearing about his brother's death.

"He was such a dominant figure in my life," the younger Reich brother said. "We were shattered by his death. None of us ever imagined that anything could happen to any of the teachers."

Rabbi Jeremy "Yirmi" Stavisky, who served as principal for 23 years before stepping down four years ago to transition into a teaching role, said Goldberg's death was also a devastating blow for other staff members, who shared deep friendships with him. Those bonds are also what help carry all of them through the grief. "Our role is not to replace the students' homes but to give them another home," he said.

Stavisky himself suffered a personal loss when his son-in-law, Yinon Fleishman, was killed at the start of the war.

But according to Stavisky, his successor, Rabbi Shlomo "Shlomi" Danino, is cautious not to let grief define the school.

"First and foremost, school is a place of life. A place of learning, of sports, of play and of personal growth. We're very careful about that," he said.

He points to a plaque honoring the memory of 60 fallen alumni, dating back to 1969. The plaque is in a modest corner of the school's *beit midrash*, or Jewish study hall, and not in the main atrium.

Instead, the main hall is graced with a sign that reads, "In all your ways, know Him," a phrase from Proverbs. For Rockman, the phrase encapsulates the school's undaunted ethos.

"Of course, they want you to stay religious but, in the end, we are encouraged to find our own way." He noted that while more than 99% of graduates enlist in the army, their paths vary widely after graduation. Some study in yeshivas before and during army service, while others conscript right away. Some remain religious, others do not.

HIMMELFARB HS, continued on page 17



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.

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Jewish Federation OF THE BERKSHIRES



Kosher Meals to Go—Meals on Wheels

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

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 the day of lunch to reserve a meal for pick-up and to arrange delivery.

What's for Lunch?

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

FEBRUARY

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24

Baked chicken (GF)(DF), corn, quinoa, tomato cabbage soup, whole wheat bread, and Mandarin oranges.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25

Noon, Lunch...Ground beef tacos (DF), sautéed peppers and onions, Spanish rice, salsa, salad, flour tortillas, and pineapple.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27

Noon, Lunch...Roasted cod with tomato relish (GF)(DF), meadow blend vegetables, basmati rice, salad, sour-dough bread, and ambrosia.

MARCH

MONDAY, MARCH 3

Noon, Lunch...Meatloaf (GF)(DF), mashed potatoes, broccoli, salad, white bread, and apricots.

TUESDAY, MARCH 4

Noon, Lunch...Macaroni and cheese, Italian green beans, vegetable soup, corn bread, and baklava.

THURSDAY, MARCH 6

Noon, Lunch...Chicken cacciatore (GF)(DF), steamed carrots, egg noodles, salad, multi-grain bread, and peaches.

MONDAY, MARCH 10

Noon, Lunch...Spinach pie, California blend vegetables, cream of mushroom soup, pumpernickel bread, and vanilla pudding.

TUESDAY, MARCH 11

Noon, Lunch...Vegetarian jambalaya (GF)(DF), brown rice, salad, pita bread, and pears.

THURSDAY, MARCH 13

Noon, In-person and to go Lunch...Salmon saloona (sweet and sour) (GF)(DF), kasha varnishkes, Romanian sweet chickpeas, salad, challah, and hamantaschen.

Please RSVP for in-person lunch by 9am on Wednesday, March 12.

MONDAY, MARCH 17

Noon, Lunch...Corned beef and cabbage casserole (GF)(DF), sweet potato fries, chicken consommé, sourdough bread, and pumpkin loaf.

TUESDAY, MARCH 18

Noon, Lunch...Potato knish, steamed cauliflower, roasted Brussels sprouts, butternut squash soup, rye bread, and rice pudding.

THURSDAY, MARCH 20

Noon, Lunch...Eggplant parmesan, pasta, Italian green beans, salad, roll, and chocolate chip cookie.

MONDAY, MARCH 24

Noon, Lunch...Beef chili (GF)(DF), peas and carrots, white rice, salad, whole wheat bread, and tropical fruit salad.

TUESDAY, MARCH 25

Noon, Lunch...Spinach and mushroom lasagna, carrots, tomato soup, multi-grain bread, and tapioca pudding.

THURSDAY, MARCH 27

Noon, Lunch...Vegetable tart, potato puff, asparagus, celery rice soup, pumpernickel bread, and pineapple.

MONDAY, MARCH 31

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

APRIL

TUESDAY, APRIL 1

Noon, Lunch...Filet of sole Florentine (GF), meadow blend vegetables, rice, salad, sourdough bread, and sugar cookie.

THURSDAY, APRIL 3

Noon, Lunch...Veggie burgers (DF), sweet potato fries, bean soup, lettuce and tomato, bun, and tiramisu.

MONDAY, APRIL 7

Closed for Passover cleaning and preparations

TUESDAY, APRIL 8

Closed for Passover cleaning and preparations



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.

WANT TO VOLUNTEER?

Meals-on-wheels drivers are always appreciated. Contact Heidi Katz, (413) 442-4360, ext. 10, federation@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.

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, February 28 5:23 p.m.
Friday, March 7 5:31 p.m.
Friday, March 14..... 6:40 p.m.
Friday, March 21..... 6:48 p.m.
Friday, March 28 6:56 p.m.

MAZEL TOV!

The Honorable Richard A. Simons, the First Justice of Berkshire County Probate and Family Court, who was recently appointed to the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation's board of directors.

Jonathan Denmark on his promotion to executive vice president of MountainOne Bank. In addition to his new leadership responsibilities, Denmark will continue to serve as president and chief operating officer of MountainOne Insurance Agency.

HIMMELFARB HS, *continued from 16*

One constant the school imbues is the emphasis on service, Stavisky said. "A person cannot live for himself. A person always has to live to give meaning to his life and also has to see where he can contribute to the world," he said. "This is a deeply ingrained value, and even if it's not often explicitly discussed, students and alumni feel this expectation strongly."

That extends to military service and risking one's life, he said. "The school doesn't preach joining the army or pursuing combat roles – it's simply understood as an inherent civic and Jewish responsibility," he said.

The school's students, faculty and alumni know that that philosophy sometimes leads to grief. But Stavisky said faith and friendships have been a balm. Despite the sacrifice it may entail, they're not ready to give up on religious Zionism.

"Deep recognition of our religious Zionist identity helps," he said. "We believe in this story, the story of the people of Israel who returned to the land of Israel after 2,000 years."

He added, "But if we want a state in the midst of the barbarity of the Middle East, we have to be prepared to defend it."

CULTURE & ARTS

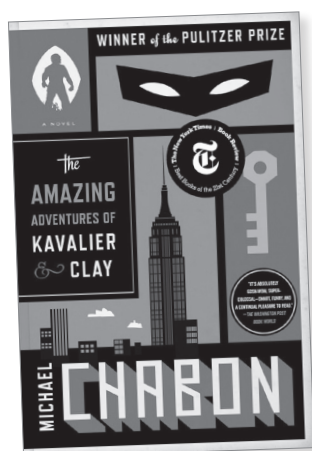
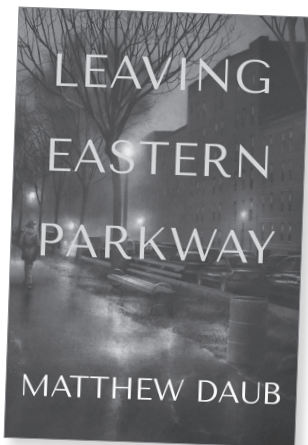
Dr. Steve Recommends...

A column about Jewish books and authors

Dear Readers,

I hope you had the time to check out last month's recommendations (*Long Island Compromise*, *The Confidante*, and *The Plot Against America*.) If not, there is still time to snuggle into your favorite winter spot and catch up on your reading. And here are three more recommendations to keep you engaged during those chilly winter evenings.

Mathew Daub's *Leaving Eastern Parkway* (2022) is an under the radar yet exciting coming-of-age novel that mixes fictional and real-life personalities from the history of competitive (and moneyed) handball. It shares with recent popular stories and films (Netflix's "Unorthodox" comes to mind) about young Jews casting off the constrictions of ultra-orthodox religion. Handball, for Daub's young protagonist, is a near-religious experience, a gift from God— and more fulfilling than the claustrophobic (and not so righteous it turns out) world of Brooklyn's Lubavitch community.



Michael Chabon's Pulitzer Prize winner, *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay* (2002), was recently named by the *NY Times* as the 16th best novel of the 21st Century and lauded as "a towering achievement." Whether you agree or not, I think you'll enjoy the story of two young cousins (one recently arrived in America) and their exploits as they navigate and eventually succeed in the emerging world of comic books. It's a novel take on the theme of "making it" in America and one that will capture your imagination.

On Being Jewish Now (2024), edited by Zibby Owens, the popular author and podcaster ("Mom's Don't Have Time to Read Books"; recently retitled "Totally Booked"), contains more than seventy very short essays by writers and "influencers" on subjects as varied as Jewish pride, faith, anti-Semitism, and most significantly, the effects of the October 7th Hamas attack. It's an ambition collection that explores a wide range of contemporary Jewish issues. You can dip in and read those essays that most interest you—or read the entire thought-provoking collection. You will not be disappointed.

As always, I would be happy to get your responses or to learn what you have been reading. I can be reached by email: sjr@adelphi.edu.

Steve Rubin, Ph.D. has written and lectured extensively both here and abroad on issues relating to Jewish culture and literature. He is the editor of, among other volumes, *Telling and Remembering: A Century of American Jewish Poetry* and *Celebrating the Jewish Holidays: Poems, Stories, Essays*. He is professor emeritus and former dean at Adelphi University, Garden City, NY.

Celebrate Jewish Books! Support Jewish Authors!

In December, we asked BJV readers to share some of the Jewish books that they thought our readers might enjoy. Here are some suggestions that **Linda Burghardt**, journalist and scholar-in-residence at the Holocaust Memorial & Tolerance Center (as well as BJV contributor and Federation presenter) has for us. Thank you, Linda!

The celebrated poet Muriel Rukeyser once said, "The world is made up not of atoms, but of stories." I have happily found this to be a belief worth holding close, and it has made me a devoted reader of fiction. To me, while non-fiction tells us facts about the world, fiction gives us truth.

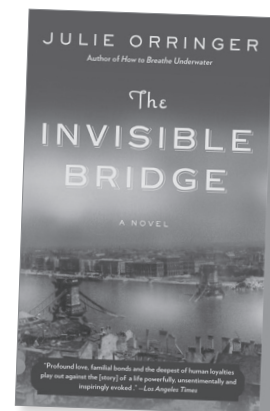
I find this to be especially relevant when it comes to difficult subjects, ones that are hard to take in, not only because of a plethora of names and dates and statistics, but also because of the emotions they bring up.

The Holocaust is one such subject. As the child of survivors, I found the idea of the Holocaust compelling but nearly impossible to approach. But then I found I could do so, as long as I was willing to embrace the characters, settings and stories in Holocaust-related fiction.

Here are a few of the books that made this terrible piece of reality knowable to me, and let me in to secrets that both enhanced my world and deepened my grasp of history.

The Invisible Bridge, by Julie Orringer

From a small Hungarian town to the grand opera houses of Budapest and Paris, Andras Levi travels through a world about to be lost to the Nazis, as 1937 opens and a harrowing saga of war unfolds around a jewel-box romance. Profound love, familial bonds, and deep personal loyalties will be tested as the young Jewish student faces the devastation of the Holocaust with nothing to shield him but the steadfastness of the human heart.



The Enemy Beside Me, by Naomi Ragen

As the head of an organization in Tel Aviv that seeks to bring Nazi war criminals to justice, Milia Gottstein has dedicated her life to making sure that the voices of Holocaust victims will never be silenced. But when she brings her work to Lithuania and tries to force the government to admit their historic responsibility for annihilating almost their entire Jewish population, including her own family, she is confronted with choices that threaten to betray all she has achieved.

Once We Were Brothers, by Ron Balson

A master storyteller, Ron Balson explores a number of critical themes that resonate deeply even today. Two boys, once as close as brothers, find themselves on opposite sides of the Holocaust, each struggling to survive in whatever way

CELEBRATE JEWISH BOOKS, continued on page 19

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

All services are free and completely confidential



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CULTURE & ARTS

Talmudic Curses and Insults

Before there was Shakespeare, there were some angry rabbis.

By Rachel Scheinerman / My Jewish Learning

The Talmud is one of Judaism's most sacred books, a sprawling collection of rabbinic legal arguments (as well as legends, sayings, biographical anecdotes, medical advice, recipes and many other things). On each and every page, the rabbis clash over fine points of law or practice or theology. Most of these disagreements are amiable and seen as praiseworthy, disputation *l'shem shamayim* – for the sake of heaven. Every once in a while, though, the rabbis lose their cool.

According to the Talmud itself, the rabbis living in Babylonia were particularly prone to heated exchange. *Pesachim 113b*: “Three hate each other: Dogs, roosters and sorcerers. Some say also prostitutes. And some say also the sages in Babylonia.” Despite the rabbis' best efforts, every now and then a Talmudic dispute descends from deferential disagreement to dog fight.

So how did they express their displeasure? The rabbis had no shortage of choice expressions. Here are some favorites.

Vinegar son of wine!

On *Baba Metziah 83b*, we learn that Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbis Shimon bar Yohai, voluntarily advises a law enforcement officer of the ruling empire on the best way to catch Jewish thieves. The king is so impressed with his ingenuity, he replaces the law enforcement officer with Rabbi Elazar himself. Now Rabbi Elazar is in charge of catching Jewish criminals and handing them over to the empire. This is seen as a huge betrayal of the Jewish people, who had suffered at the hands of these rulers and normally relied on their own internal law enforcement.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korha, a colleague of Rabbi Elazar, sends him a withering message about this betrayal: “Vinegar son of wine! How long will you inform on the nation of our God to be sentenced to execution?”

Wine is made from fermenting grapes. A wine that ferments too far becomes vinegar – which is less palatable and significantly less valuable. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korha is saying that while Rabbi Elazar's father, the vaunted scholar and mystic Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai, was a fine wine, the son has turned out a sour disappointment.

Firstborn of Satan!

One of the greatest rivalries in Jewish law was that between the school of Shammai, known for being particularly fastidious, and the school of Hillel, known for being more lenient. Though eventually the Hillelites won most of the legal arguments, the debate between the two was alive and well for centuries after their founders were gone – and it was acrimonious. On *Berachot 11a*, Rabbi Nahman bar Yitzhak says that one who follows the school of Shammai deserves to be put to death.

This intense rivalry even divided families. On *Yevamot 16a*, Rabbi Dosa ben Hyrkanos is under suspicion of being a Shammite. He answers question after question to prove that he subscribes to the teachings of Hillel, but one of his questioners asserts that he has heard a rumor otherwise: “But didn't they say in your name that the *halakhah* (law) is in accordance with the opinion of Beit Shammai?”

At this, Rabbi Dosa ben Hyrkanos, who must defend his reputation, parries: “Did you hear that 'Dosa ben Hyrkanos' issued this ruling, or did you hear that it was simply stated by 'ben Harkinas'? ... I have a younger brother who is the firstborn of Satan. And his name is Yonatan, and he is among the disciples of Shammai.”

Rabbi Dosa ben Hyrkanos (meaning he is the son of Hyrkanos) insists that he is not the ben Hyrkanos who ascribes to the teachings of Shammai, but rather it is his brother Yonatan. To emphasize the distance between them, he calls his brother “firstborn of Satan.” Which makes Hyrkanos who exactly?

Demented Ostrich!

On *Sanhedrin 59b*, we encounter a fabulous tale of Rabbi Shimon ben Halafta who was walking along, minding his own business, when he ran into some hungry lions. Thinking quickly, he uttered a verse from Psalms: “The young lions roar for their prey.” (Psalm 104:21) The verse works like a charm (literally) and two pieces of meat fall from heaven to satiate the lions. Not only that, but the lions are full after eating just one piece of the miraculous meat and Rabbi Shimon ben Halafta takes the other with him to enjoy.

Back at the academy, Rabbi Shimon recounts his remarkable adventure and then asks his colleagues whether they would deem the heaven-sent meat kosher. His colleagues at first respond in unanimous agreement: “Nothing unkosher descends from heaven.” Rabbi Shimon is in luck! Not only has he been spared a gory death, he now has a choice dinner to prepare.

But someone in the academy isn't willing to let the matter rest. Rabbi Shimon's colleague Rabbi Zeira turns to another colleague Rabbi Abbahu and asks: “If a piece of meat resembling a donkey (which is not kosher) falls from heaven, can it be eaten?” Perhaps because he is not in the mood to split hairs over such miracles, an incredulous Rabbi Abbahu spits back: “Demented ostrich! They already told you nothing unkosher descends from heaven!”

(Note: Ostrich is a guess. The animal here is a *yarud*, an unidentified desert bird which likely resembles an ostrich.)

Insults Heaped Up

These were just a few examples with particularly colorful phrasing. Throughout the Talmud, we see rabbis in heated exchange and the way they handle disagreement is often harsh, even violent. They call one another idiots (*Baba Kamma 105b*, *Baba Metziah 20b*, etc.), brainless (*Yevamot 9a* and *Menachot 80b*), fools (*Beitzah 16a*), lacking in sense (*Moed Katan 26b*), poor learners (*Zevachim 2a*), lazy (*Sukkah 26b*) and zeros (*Baba Batra 111a*). They frequently accuse one another of sleeping through lessons (*Yevamot 109b*, *Bechorot 23b*, *Niddah 60a*, etc.) and cruelly laugh at each other (*Nazir 42a*, *Beitzah 38a*, *Gittin 55b*, etc.). They use insults – such as “black vessel” (*Pesachim 88a*) – the full meaning of which is lost on us. (“Black vessel” may refer to someone who is dirty or ugly.)

The rabbis assert their own superior intelligence (*Hullin 137b*) and superior ancestry (*Baba Metziah 109a*). They sneer (*Sanhedrin 3b*), call one another unworthy (*Yevamot 95b*) and kick each other out of the beit midrash, the house of study (*Beitzah 12b*, *Yoma 42a*, *Berachot 30b*). They literally sling mud at each other (*Shevuot 18b*, *Pesachim 62b*) and sometimes excommunicate one another (*Menachot 37a*). They metaphorically toss ideas and each other in the garbage using the phrase “cast on thorns” (*Beitzah 29b*), curse one another's children (*Baba Metziah 108a*) and predict one another's deaths (*Pesachim 69a*). They even

kill each other – though the mode in which this is related is clearly folkloric: In several places, one rabbi gives another a withering stare (literally) and reduces the target to a “heap of bones” (*Berachot 58a*, *Shabbat 34a*, *Baba Batra 75a*, *Sanhedrin 100a*).

We find rabbis wishing their fellow rabbis to be stung by a scorpion (*Bechorot 31b*) and calling their colleagues' words “vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes” (*Taanit 4b*, *Kiddushin 45b*). In one case, a rabbi wishes that another will grow a horn out of his eye (*Shabbat 108a*). On *Gittin 41a*, Rabbi Nachman bar Yitzchak sounds more than a little jealous when he smarmishly asks: “Is it because Ami is pleasingly handsome that his teachings are not pleasing?”

What Should We Make of All These Insults?

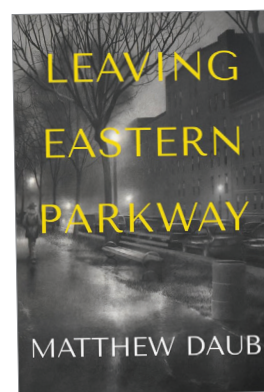
Were the rabbis simply rude brutes who couldn't handle conflict? Not at all. Throughout the 63 tractates (2,711 pages) that comprise the Babylonian Talmud, we see numerous examples of the rabbis treating one another with kindness, compassion, deference, reverence, sensitivity, vulnerability and remorse. Like family members, they can be both extremely loving and terribly rough with one another.

The Talmud likens public shaming to spilling blood (*Baba Metziah 58b*) and states that one who shames his fellow has no share in the World to Come. Though it states these ideals, the Talmud also presents the rabbis not as saints, but as fully flawed and human, and more than capable of launching a zinger. A teaching from Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba on *Kiddushin 30b* sums it up nicely: “even a father and son or teacher and student who study Torah at the same gate become enemies of each other; yet they do not leave from there until they come to love each other.”

Interested readers will enjoy Arthur E. Helft's delightful collection, *Talmudic Insults and Curses*. **My Jewish Learning** is part of 70 Faces Media, a not-for-profit digital media company that aspires to connect as many people as possible to all sides of the unfolding Jewish story. Visit myjewishlearning.com for more stories and to subscribe to newsletters on a wide variety of Jewish topics.

CELEBRATE JEWISH BOOKS,

continued from page 18



they can. Now, some 60 years later, a wealthy Chicago philanthropist is accused of being a former Nazi officer by a man who is sure he knows him. Is he right? Is this the poor abandoned child his family took in and raised as their own, the one who betrayed them all in the end?

Those Who Save Us, by Jenna Blum

When secrets from the past come down through the generations as hazy shadows that dim the natural light between mothers and daughters, the raw reality of an untold war can generate shame instead of love. All Trudy has of her silent mother's story is a single photo of the two of them together with a Nazi officer. Will she be able to recreate the past and understand what her mother had to endure to survive the Holocaust, and maybe even forgive her for the way she was raised?

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CULTURE & ARTS

TRAVELING WITH JEWISH TASTE

All Ears or Hats Off?

Either way, Purim's in the pocket

By Carol Goodman Kaufman / Special to the BJV

It's that time of year again, when we start to use up all our chametz in the great pre-Passover purge. And what better way to make use of the flour in our cabinets than with a nice big batch of hamantaschen?

The tradition of eating hamantaschen on Purim didn't actually take hold until the late 18th century, quite a bit after the story in the *megillah* takes place. It probably came about because the German branch of the extended Diaspora family enjoyed a particular pastry called "mohntaschen," or "poppy seed pockets." Our Jewish forebears, always fans of wordplay, decided to turn the pockets into triangles, stick Haman's name on them, and call them "hamantaschen."

The choice of the triangular shape for hamantaschen has several explanations. The first is that the triangular shape of the cookie reminds us of Haman's three-cornered hat. I find this a bit laughable. How do we even know what kind of hat Haman wore back in ancient Persia? Given the very hot desert sun of the place, he probably did wear something to cover his head, but a three-corner hat? Wasn't that the fashionable headgear in Europe in the late 18th century, precisely when hamantaschen became a popular Purim treat?



Haman's hat or Haman's ears?

As for the term "pockets," themselves, some say that the pastries represent the greedy Haman's pockets filled with ill-gotten gains.

But in Israel, of course, these tasty treats go by the name "oznei Haman," or Haman's ears. Some culinary historians believe that this term refers to the custom of cutting off the ears of condemned men before execution. Again, we may have a little problem with that interpretation. The *megillah* tells us that Haman and his sons were hanged, their ears presumably intact.

But why would we ever want to eat anything with Haman's name attached to it? Perhaps we do it for the same reason that we make lots of noise to block out his name while listening to the *megillah*. We eat the thing with his name on it to demolish it.

Or maybe the reason goes even further back. Haman is said to be a descendant of Amalek, the perfidious people who attacked the most vulnerable Israelites in the desert.

Which brings me to the three commandments related to that dastardly tribe. The Book of Devarim (25:17) tells us first to "Remember what Amalek did to you on your journey, as you left Egypt" and then not to forget. Finally, the third commandment requires an action: "...you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven." Hence, every time a scribe begins writing a new Torah scroll, he or she will write the name Amalek on a strip of parchment, then strike it out three times with black ink.

Again, we eat the thing with his name on it to demolish it – then send it into the sewer.

The traditional filling for hamantaschen is poppy seed, but other choices include prune, apricot, and even chocolate. And while the most common hamantaschen found in this country are based on a cookie dough (and we all know that Adele Goldblum's (z"l) recipe is tops), the Eastern European version my Bubbie made was based on a yeast dough, finished with a sweet glaze.

Having said all that, I got this new hamantaschen recipe from my friend Benita Ross, who got it from her sister-in-law. I think it's divine.



Gingerbread Hamantaschen

INGREDIENTS:

- 2½ cups flour
- 2 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp cocoa powder
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp allspice
- ¼ tsp kosher salt
- ¼ tsp black pepper (freshly ground if possible)
- 1 egg
- 2 sticks butter
- ⅓ cup molasses
- ⅓ cup sugar
- 1 jar lemon curd

DIRECTIONS:

- Beat everything except the lemon curd together until dough forms.
- Roll dough out onto floured board and cut into circles, using a large glass.
- Fill with 1 teaspoon lemon curd.
- Bake at 375 degrees for 12-15 minutes, rotating trays halfway through.
- Cool on racks.
- Enjoy! (Betcha can't eat just one!)



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.



BERKSHIRE JEWISH CONGREGATIONS & ORGANIZATIONS

Welcome to the Jewish Berkshires

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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:

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