

# Berkshire JEWISH VOICE

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

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Pittsfield, MA  
Permit No. 19

Vol. 34, No. 5

Sivan / Tammuz / Av 5786

June 15 to July 26, 2026

[jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org)

## Major Donors Celebration 2026

*Sustaining and strengthening Jewish life across the Berkshires, in Israel, and around the world*



Major Donors Celebration co-chairs Mimi and Ken Heyman

PITTSFIELD – Jewish Federation of the Berkshires will host its annual Major Donors Celebration on Sunday, July 26 at 9:30 a.m. at the Berkshire Hills Country Club. The event honors the individuals and families whose leadership gifts help sustain and strengthen Jewish life across the Berkshires, in Israel, and around the world.

This year's celebration is chaired by Mimi and Ken Heyman, longtime supporters of Federation, Legacy supporters, and champions of the Berkshire Jewish community. Together with a dedicated host committee, they are helping to bring donors together to celebrate the impact of Federation's work and the power of collective giving.

"Our major donors are dedicated leaders whose generosity, vision, and commitment help shape and sustain a vibrant Jewish community in the Berkshires," says Federation's president Arlene Schiff. "At a time when the needs are growing and challenges are becoming more significant, that kind of dedication and support has an extraordinary impact. We are grateful to Ken and Mimi Heyman for stepping up as co-chairs. They are helping ensure that Jewish life in the Berkshires continues to thrive today, tomorrow, and for generations to come."

The Major Donors Celebration is an opportunity to bring together community members who care deeply about the future of Jewish life in the Berkshires – from year-round residents to those who spend their summers here and remain strongly connected to our community. The gathering offers a chance to reflect on the collective impact of Federation's work, exchange ideas, and deepen understanding of the unique role Federation plays in sustaining Jewish life in a smaller, rural community with significant and growing needs.

**MAJOR DONORS,**  
*continued on page 6*

## "Antisemitism: What Everyone Needs to Know"

*Knosh & Knowledge with David Harris, former CEO of the American Jewish Committee*



GREAT BARRINGTON – On Friday, July 17 at 10:45 a.m., Knosh & Knowledge hosts David Harris, former Chief Executive Office of the American Jewish Committee (1990-2022), in conversation with columnist Jeff Robbins, for a timely, incisive and impactful discussion of antisemitism and the issues currently confronting the Jewish people locally and around the globe.

Federation's free monthly Knosh & Knowledge programs are held at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, 270 State Road in Great Barrington. Register at the calendar of events page at [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org).

Described by the late Israeli President Shimon Peres as "the Foreign Minister of the Jewish people," **David Harris** has spent nearly 50 years in global Jewish advocacy. Meeting with thousands of world leaders, he has grappled with some of the toughest challenges facing the Jewish people, Israel, and liberal democracies.

His first book, *On the Front Lines*, is his gripping and very personal account, in conversation with Agnieszka Markiewicz, of a life journey that began in the home of wartime survivors, landed him in Soviet detention, and led him to be honored more than 20 times by foreign governments for his international work, making him the most decorated American Jewish organizational leader in U.S. history. A second book, on antisemitism, is due out soon.

**Jeff Robbins**, litigator and former US Delegate to the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva, Switzerland is a weekly columnist for the Boston Herald, writing about politics, foreign policy and national security issues. He is the former Chairman of the New England Board of the

**DAVID HARRIS,**  
*continued on page 2*

## Rain, Rain Stayed Away from This Year's Jewish Community Day...

*Hundreds Showed Up Though Skies were Grey*



CREDIT: JULIA KAPLAN

The forecast was dodgy and the clouds seemed ready to let loose at any moment – *but they didn't*. And all who made it out to High Lawn Farm on Sunday, June 7 had an enjoyable and dry afternoon celebrating community and the kickoff of Federation's annual campaign with Super Tzedakah Week. For pics and more, please see page 14.

## Carole King: She Made the Earth Move, with Jane Eisner

*Knosh & Knowledge returns!*



GREAT BARRINGTON – On Friday, June 26 at 10:45 a.m., Jewish Federation of the Berkshires presents journalist and author Jane Eisner for a lively Knosh & Knowledge program on her biography, *Carole King: She Made the Earth Move*.

Federation's free Knosh & Knowledge programs are held at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, 270 State Road in Great Barrington. Register at the calendar of events page at [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org).

Jane Eisner will explore the extraordinary life and career of Carole King, whose music has shaped American popular culture since the early 1960s. From her early days in Brooklyn to her rise as a defining voice of 1960s songwriting – writing hits like "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow" with musical partner and then-husband Gerry Goffin – King helped define a generation's soundtrack.

She later emerged as a central figure in the 1970s singer-songwriter movement, with chart-topping success and multiple awards, including her landmark album *Tapestry*, which earned four Grammy Awards. Eisner's talk also examines King's personal journey, including her struggles to balance fame with family life, her retreat from public life, and her reemergence as a political activist and cultural icon. Her story has also been celebrated on Broadway in *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*.

Drawing on interviews and historical sources, Eisner places King's life in a broader cultural and Jewish context, illuminating her Brooklyn roots, creative genius, and lasting contributions to the American songbook.

**CAROLE KING,**  
*continued on page 2*

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## OP-ED

## RABBI REFLECTION

## Deuteronomy: A Book for America's 250th

By Rabbi David Weiner / Knesset Israel



Visiting London last summer, my son Joe and I visited the British Museum, which houses artifacts from across the ancient world, especially spoils of the former empire. We viewed the Parthenon Marbles, soon to be repatriated, and the extraordinary Egyptian collection, before exploring several upstairs rooms containing relics from ancient Canaan. But for me the highlight was the wing of sculpture and friezes from ancient Assyria. Guarded by colossal winged bulls with human faces and magnificent heads of long, curly hair, the recreated treasury and throne rooms of Nineveh and Nimrud were especially thought-

provoking. Much of the Torah coalesced while our ancestors were living either under or adjacent to the influence of this first ancient empire, and some of the earliest archaeological corroborations for the stories our people tell sit in the Assyrian wing of the British Museum. It is hard to overstate the impact of living in the Assyrian Empire on our Israelite and Judean ancestors. In the same way that we are immersed in contemporary culture, our ancestors were enveloped by Assyrian language, laws, iconography, and culture.

Life in the Assyrian Empire inspired the content and discourse of the book of Deuteronomy, which we read each summer in synagogue. The Assyrian emperor related to his vassals through covenants, promising protection and prosperity in exchange for obedience and fealty. He wrote laws that subjects were to adopt and follow, with blessings the consequence for obedience and curses the risk of rebellion. The Assyrians kept treaty and covenant documents in prominent places like the throne room of the king. Throughout, the emperor unfailingly presented himself in Akkadian as 'šar kiššati'. In English, that phrase translates to, 'king of the world,' and, in Hebrew, to 'melekh haolam.'

The Torah, especially the book of Deuteronomy, adopted much of the Assyrian imperial idiom but subversively transformed it into a uniquely Israelite religious and political vision. Our ancestors reframed the 'king of the world,' demoting the emperor of Assyria in favor of a transcendent God. They taught that covenant, law, and moral authority flow not from human whim but from a very powerful deity who cares deeply about justice and the plight of the vulnerable. The people of the covenant are called to aspire not to loyalty to a mortal dynasty but instead to a set of values, practices, and ways of life that keep us distinctive and on the right path. Ancestry and land are important elements of Israelite and later Jewish identity, but so is proper behavior informed by mitzvot. And the king? He will be subject to God's law, just like every other person, his legacy depending as much on his ethics as on his ability to succeed on the battlefield. Today we tend to take the way Deuteronomy redefines peoplehood for granted, but in its time it was subversive, even revolutionary.

Deuteronomy's transformation of the concept of national identity resonates strongly with the history of the founding of the United States. While we were in London, Joe and I also visited the British crown jewels – the crowns, the diamonds, the sceptres, the orbs – all on display in the Tower of London. These symbols communicate how British national identity, authority, and pride

*What defines us: Ancestry? Land? Rights? Values? Aspiration? Responsibilities? Vision? Democracy? Power? Extraordinarily polarized, Americans are again fighting over who we are and what we ought to be.*

emanate from the royal family. When they rejected imperial rule, the founders of America sought to define the new nation and a people instead by its shared beliefs, responsibilities, relationships and aspirations – inalienable rights, equality under the law, sovereignty of, by and for the people. The display in the United States most similar to the pageantry of the crown jewels is a showcase of documents in the rotunda of the National Archives: the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights. Unlike the gallery at the Tower of London, however, the National Archives have more in common with Deuteronomy than with an Assyrian throne room.

As the United States celebrates its 250th anniversary this summer, questions of national identity are once again at the fore: What defines us: Ancestry? Land? Rights? Values? Aspiration? Responsibilities? Vision? Democracy? Power? Extraordinarily polarized, Americans are again fighting over who we are and what we ought to be. As stewards of this powerful tradition of the Torah, and especially of Deuteronomy, we have an opportunity to imbibe its wisdom and share it widely: A people or a nation may define itself by a shared commitment not only to soil and clan but also to ideals, values, justice, obligations, and a way of life.

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



EMIL ALADJEM/ISRAEL ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY

*Per the Times of Israel: In 2025, "an Assyrian inscription dating to around 2,700 years ago was unearthed in an archaeological excavation near the Temple Mount in Jerusalem's Old City – the first time written evidence of the relations between the Assyrian Empire and the Kingdom of Judah was discovered in the city... According to the experts who studied it, the inscription was likely a tax notice from the Assyrian emperor to the Judean king, echoing the biblical description of how the powerful empire had turned Judah into a vassal kingdom after destroying the bordering Kingdom of Israel."*

## CAROLE KING,

continued from page 1

This Knosh & Knowledge program at Hevreh is part of Jewish Literary Voices: A Federation Series, presented in collaboration with the Jewish Book Council. Books will be available for purchase and signing following the event.

Following the program, participants are invited to enjoy conversation and community.

*Jane Eisner is an accomplished writer, editor, educator, non-profit leader, and public speaker. She was editor-in-chief of The Forward for more than a decade, and recently was director of academic affairs at Columbia Journalism School. Her work has appeared in The Washington Post, The New Times, The Atlantic, and numerous other publications. Her first book was Taking Back the Vote: Getting American Youth Involved in Our Democracy.*

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## DAVID HARRIS,

continued from page 1

Anti-Defamation League, and the former President of the World Affairs Council of Boston.

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## Letters to the Editor

### Helping Hilltown Families in Need

Dear Jewish Federation of the Berkshires:

Thank you for your incredibly generous donation to the Hinsdale Food Pantry!

We are so grateful for your generosity to help us in our mission to provide ongoing weekly food/supply distributions to our Hilltown families in need.

With appreciation,  
The Hinsdale Food Pantry Board & Volunteers

### A Valued and Loved Ongoing Partnership

To Jewish Federation of the Berkshires,

Words cannot express the gratitude I and the student leaders and members of the Williams College Jewish Association feel for receiving your generous financial support to support the Jewish community at Williams. We all deeply value and love our ongoing partnership and are so excited to continue developing our programming together in the new academic year!

Warmly,  
Rabbi Seth Wax  
College Chaplain and Director of Jewish Life  
Williams College



Ahavath Sholem Cemetery on Churchill Avenue in Pittsfield was established in 1912.

### Maintaining a Sacred Space

Dear Jewish Federation of the Berkshires:

Thank you so much for your allocation to the Ahavath Sholem Cemetery Fund. We have very little income, so it was very appreciated.

I have recently had requests from two families that want to be buried next to relatives at the cemetery. Your help to maintain this sacred area is so important and needed.

Thank you,  
Judith Cook, Ahavath Sholem Cemetery Fund  
Pittsfield



**CHEERS**  
FOR  
*Volunteers!*

**AUGUST 6, 2026**

**4:00-6:00 PM**

**ONOTA LAKE CONTROY PAVILION  
BURBANK PARK, PITTSFIELD**

**CELEBRATING THE PEOPLE THAT  
MAKE COMMUNITY HAPPEN**

A special invitation for Federation's many incredible volunteers who help our community thrive by giving their time to support our events, serve on committees, help in our office, and deliver meals, care packages, and the *Berkshire Jewish Voice*.

**Join us for a relaxed lakeside gathering as we come together to celebrate your generosity, dedication, and impact.**

Registration: [tinyurl.com/cheersforvolunteers](https://tinyurl.com/cheersforvolunteers)  
Extended family and friends welcome.



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by Matthew Barber  
Directed by Daniela Varon

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**JULY 4-26**  
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## 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  
an Anonymous honorary publisher.**

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

Next issue publication date: **July 27, 2026 – August 30, 2026**

Press deadline: **June 16, 2026**

Advertising deadline: **July 9, 2026**

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Phone: (413) 442-4360, ext. 11 Fax (413) 443-6070

## Your Federation Presents

### Halleluyah! Laura Wetzler Explores the Soul of Leonard Cohen



WIKIMEDIACOMMONS. PHOTO BY TAKAHIRO KYONO

PITTSFIELD – Jewish Federation of the Berkshires is proud to welcome back acclaimed singer, songwriter, and guitarist Laura Wetzler for a profound musical journey through the life of a legend. On Thursday, June 18 at 10:30 a.m., Wetzler will present “Halleluyah: The Music and Poetry of Leonard Cohen” at Knesset Israel.

*Please note the early start time of 10:30 a.m. for this special multimedia event.*

In this presentation, Wetzler will explore how Leonard Cohen’s hauntingly beautiful body of work was fed by his deep Jewish roots and his later Buddhist branches. Attendees can expect a soulful blend of performance and storytelling that illuminates how Cohen’s spiritual identity shaped the “musical cultural heritage” of America.

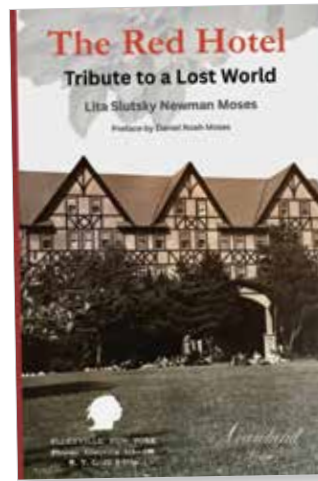
Following the program, the spirit of connection continues with a home-cooked lunch served around our community table. To join us for lunch, advance reservations are required. Please call the Federation at (413) 442-2200 no later than 9 a.m. on Wednesday (the day before the program). A suggested donation of \$3 is requested for adults over age 60, and \$7 for all others.

This program is made possible through the generous support of our community donors. We look forward to seeing you there for a morning of music, poetry, and community.

### Catskills Memories: *The Red Hotel – A Tribute to a Lost World*

PITTSFIELD – On Thursday, June 25 at 10:45 a.m., step back into the vibrant, soulful era of the Catskills with Jewish Federation of the Berkshires as we welcome Lita Moses and her son, historian Daniel Noah Moses, for an intimate look at a unique chapter of American Jewish history. Their discussion centers on *The Red Hotel: Tribute to a Lost World*, a memoir decades in the making.

This free program is part of the Federation’s Connecting With Community series at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield. It will be followed by a kosher hot lunch. Lunch is a \$3 suggested donation for adults over 60 years of age or \$7 for all others. Advance reservations are required for lunch and can be made



by calling (413) 442-2200 by 9 a.m. Wednesday, the day BEFORE the program.

Lita Moses, who vowed at age twelve to tell this story, offers a rare glimpse into life at The Arrowhead Lodge in Ellenville, NY, during the 1940s and 50s. This wasn’t just any “Borscht Belt” resort; it was a left-wing enclave and a home for the Slutsky family – immigrant Jews who built a legacy of hospitality while navigating their new lives in America.

More than just a coming-of-age story, the book is a meditation on a historical moment that mirrors our own. Through the eyes of the proprietor’s daughter, readers encounter a “song of persistent hope” for a humane and inclusive democracy.

*Lita Slutsky Newman Moses, whose 45-year career as a psychoanalyst informs her deep reflections, is joined by her son Daniel Noah Moses. An educator and community builder formerly with Seeds of Peace, Daniel provides the broader historical context that brings this family’s journey into sharp focus.*

The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires makes these programs possible through the generous support of our community. All are welcome!

### Theater Talkback: “Relationships, Identity, and Jewish Stories”

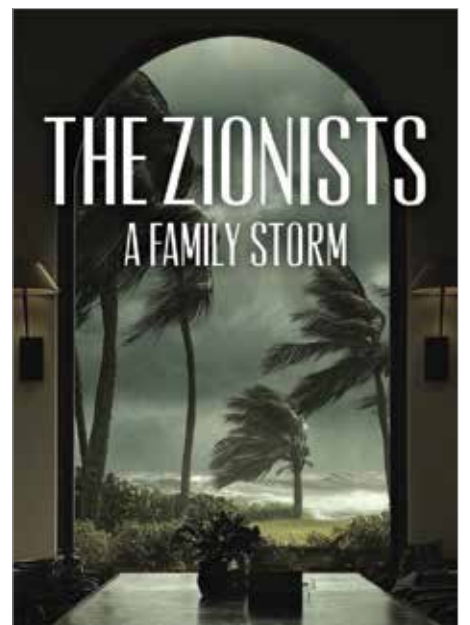
PITTSFIELD – On Tuesday, June 30 at 11 a.m., the Deeper Look Discussion Series at Barrington Stage Company will feature a panel discussion centered on the theater groups world premiere play *The Zionists: A Family Storm*, by S. Asher Gelman. The topic of this program, presented in collaboration with Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, will be “Relationships, Identity, and Jewish Stories.”

Explore the complexity of Jewish identity, family dynamics, and the challenges and opportunities of portraying Jewish themes authentically on stage. Panelists include:

- Alan Paul, Artistic Director of Barrington Stage Company
- Jeff Robbins (moderator and panel participant), columnist and author (*Notes From the Brink*)
- Letty Cottin Pogrebin, novelist (*Single Jewish Male Seeking Soul Mate*) and memoirist (*Shanda*)
- S. Asher Gelman, playwright

This event will be held at Barrington Stage Company’s Boyd-Quinson Theater at 51 Union Street in Pittsfield. Tickets are \$5 and can be reserved by scanning the QR code or visiting [barringtonstageco.org/events](http://barringtonstageco.org/events).

This event honors the memory of Jane Braus.



**Major Donors Celebration**  
Sunday, July 26  
9:30-11:30 a.m.

Berkshire Hills Country Club  
500 Benedict Road, Pittsfield, MA

Program to include a behind-the-scenes sneak peek and live performance from *Rutka*, a bold new musical making its way to Broadway

#### REGISTER BY JULY 17

[jewishberkshires.org/celebration](http://jewishberkshires.org/celebration) or (413) 442-4360, ext. 16

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### “The ‘Jewish’ Musicals: Jewish Life on Broadway,” with Laura Wetzler



On Thursday, July 2, at 10:30 a.m. (please note early start time), join acclaimed performer and educator Laura Wetzler for a rich multimedia exploration of Jewish stories, characters, and themes in the Broadway musical. Through music, history, and storytelling, this engaging program examines how representation on stage has reflected – and shaped – Jewish identity in American society.

Enjoy selections and insights from beloved shows such as *Milk and Honey*, *Parade*, *Harmony*, *The Producers*, and more.

This free program is part of the Federation’s Connecting With Community series at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield. It will be followed by a kosher hot lunch. Lunch is a \$3 suggested donation for adults over 60 years of age or \$7 for all others. Advance reservations are required for lunch and can be made by calling (413) 442-2200 by 9 a.m. Wednesday, the day BEFORE the program.

*Laura Wetzler, a singer, songwriter, guitarist, and recording artist, has devoted years to the study and performance of multicultural world music, American popular entertainment, and European art music. She brings a particular passion to highlighting the contributions of Jewish-American and African-American artists to our shared cultural heritage.*

Federation programs are made possible through the generous support of our community.

## Your Federation Presents

### The Origin of New York Jews: Sampson Simson's 1800 Columbia College Commencement Speech

PITTSFIELD – On Thursday, July 9 at 10:45 a.m., Connecting With Community welcomes back a favorite presenter, Professor Michael Hoberman, who will enlighten us about “The Origin of New York Jews: Sampson Simson’s 1800 Columbia College Commencement Speech.”

This free program is part of Federation’s Connecting With Community series at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield. It will be followed by a kosher hot lunch. Lunch is a \$3 suggested donation for adults over 60 years of age or \$7 for all others. Advance reservations are required for lunch and can be made by calling (413) 442-2200 by 9 a.m. Wednesday, the day BEFORE the program.

Anyone who has ever listened to a commencement speech knows the familiar rhythm – words of wisdom, touches of humor, and, ideally, a brief delivery. In 1800, Sampson Simson (1780–1857) delivered a remarkably concise yet historically significant address at Columbia College – in Hebrew.

Simson, the institution’s first Jewish graduate and a future founder of Mount Sinai Hospital, offered what would become America’s first public expression of Jewish identity. His speech also introduced a defining cultural idea: the emergence of the “New York Jew” as a distinct national character.

Join Michael Hoberman for an illuminating look at this pivotal historical moment and its lasting cultural implications.



**Michael Hoberman** is a professor of English Studies at Fitchburg State University and adjunct professor of history at Yeshiva College. His books include *Imagining Early American Jews* and *New Israel/New England: Jews and Puritans in Early America*, and his essays appear in *Tablet Magazine* and other popular and scholarly venues. For the spring of 2026, he was a fellow at the Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, where he is completing his current book, which tells the story of Theodore Seixas Solomons, the San Francisco-born Jew who created California’s John Muir Trail.

Federation programs are made possible through the generous support of our community.

### Current Events Seminar, with Dr. Steven Rubin Returns for the Summer

PITTSFIELD – On Thursday, July 16 at 10:45 a.m., Federation presents the second of Dr. Steven Rubin’s summer-long current events seminars focusing on the latest world happenings. Participants will have an opportunity to examine and discuss topical and newsworthy national and international issues and problems, as well as possible solutions.

For each session, Dr. Rubin will suggest readings, introduce relevant topics, and offer discussion questions. The seminar will be conducted throughout in a collaborative and collegial manner, with all participants encouraged to voice their opinions.

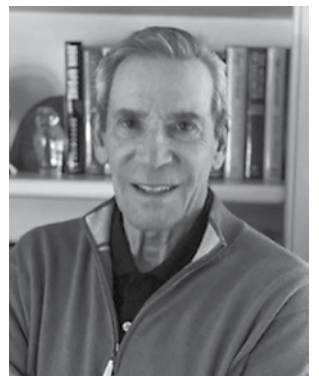
This free program will be presented as part of the Federation’s Connecting With Community Series at Knesset Israel (16 Colt Road in Pittsfield). Following the program, we will continue the conversation with a home-cooked lunch around our community table. All are welcome! Advance lunch reservations are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

An additional seminar will be held on August 20.

**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 also contributes a book column to the *Berkshire Jewish Voice*, “Dr. Steve Recommends...” (see page 22).

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 Tyngham and can be reached at [sjr@adelphi.edu](mailto:sjr@adelphi.edu).

Federation makes these programs possible through the generous support of our community.



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



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# 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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# Your Federation Presents

## MAJOR DONORS,

*continued from page 1*

Guests will gain a closer look at the extraordinary breadth of what this community makes possible through Federation support: essential care and connection for older adults, Jewish education and family programming, camp and Israel experiences for teens and young adults, security enhancements and training for congregations and institutions, advocacy and efforts to confront antisemitism, and cultural and community programming that fosters Jewish identity, belonging, and engagement across generations.

Attendance is open to all community members who make a household commitment of \$1,000 or more to the Federation's 2026 Community Campaign. Advance registration is required at [jewishberkshires.org/celebration](http://jewishberkshires.org/celebration).



PHOTO BY MIKKI SCHAFFNER

*The cast of the world premier musical RUTKA.*

Guests will also enjoy a special behind-the-scenes sneak peek from *RUTKA the Musical*, the acclaimed new indie rock musical currently on its path toward Broadway. Inspired by *Rutka's Notebook*, the diary of teenage Rutka Laskier written in the Jewish ghetto of Bedzin, Poland in 1943, the musical brings her story powerfully to life through an innovative contemporary score and emotionally compelling storytelling.

Praised by The New York Times as one of the "15 Shows to See on Stages Around the U.S. This Fall," *RUTKA* is an uplifting and deeply moving story of hope, courage, love, resistance, family, and community in the face of unimaginable darkness – and of a young girl determined not to be silenced.

Berkshire Hills Country Club is located at 500 Benedict Road in Pittsfield.

## "We Weren't Waiting to Be Found" Meet Our Major Donors Celebration Co-Chairs, Mimi and Ken Heyman

Taking on the role of co-chairs of Federation's Major Donors Celebration is just one expression of Mimi and Ken Heyman's commitment to giving back to the Jewish communities in which they have lived. Over the past four decades, both have assumed leadership positions at large Federations and other philanthropies to build community, and together they have left three separate legacy commitments to sustain Jewish continuity into the future.

Second homeowners in the Berkshires for more than 30 years, Mimi is a retired speech pathologist who owned a clinic in Livingston, NJ, and Ken worked as a certified financial planner and wealth advisor. Both are "roll-up-their-sleeves" contributors to the organizations they have supported over the years – most recently, they hosted one of Federation's mid-winter get-togethers at their home in South Florida. They hope their work as co-chairs of one of Federation's most impactful annual events in the Berkshires "will start a conversation," says Ken, "about the importance of an organized Jewish community to the future of Jewish life."

"I think of the Berkshire Federation as a jewel," says Mimi "It's small, it's intimate. The fact that it offers outreach and programs open to people outside the Jewish community, as well, is a wonderful aspect of its approach. I appreciate the difficult job they have in raising funds and keeping the community vibrant, and I really admire how they accomplish what's necessary."

The Heymans path in Jewish philanthropy is one that is easier to access from a large Federation such as the one in which they started, the Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest NJ. Mimi was newly single and a business owner working full-time; after a friend invited her to get involved, she became a member of that Federation's Business & Professionals Network (BPN) for women, and subsequently became its president. She went on her first Yachad young leadership mission to Israel in 1982, "and that really grabbed my heart." Mimi says she gradually increased her involvement and became the president of Women's Philanthropy, chair of numerous MetroWest committees and missions, in addition to being a member of National Women's Philanthropy.

Mimi's volunteer work with MetroWest allowed her to recognize, "that almost every beneficiary agency that my family participated in or benefitted from – a nursing home, Jewish Family Services, the JCC, and other community resources – received funding from a Federation. A lot of people don't realize the impact that Jewish Federations have on our communities – or the opportunities that are there for them to participate. You will see firsthand impactful and disturbing things on a mission, but also the very significant steps Federations are taking to address them. So, through my family and also through the missions, and then doing work in the community, I began to understand the full impact of Jewish Federations' work."

Ken says his parents were active Jewish leaders with Jewish Federation's precursor, the United Jewish Appeal, as well as with the YMHA, Jewish Family Service, and as a founding family of the first Reform synagogue in Monmouth County, New Jersey. However, as a young adult he had little involvement in the Jewish world until 1984. Like Mimi, he found himself once again single when he was invited to participate on a Federation mission to Auschwitz and Israel. "From there, I jumped in heavily," he remembers, becoming involved in what became the Young Leader Division of MetroWest and then joining Jewish Federations' National Young Leadership Cabinet for four years. Ken first served as campaign chair and then, from 2006 to 2008, he served as president of Jewish Federation of MetroWest New Jersey. Later, he led its gifts and endowments arm, Jewish Community Foundation, managing assets from donor-advised funds supporting foundations, life insurance gifts, and other vehicles.

The couple did not initially meet through their Federation work – "we got fixed up," says Mimi – but, Ken says, "doing that work together and enjoying it and supporting each other helped us continue to feel passionate about our work within the Jewish community."

"And it opened up our world," adds Mimi. "We have such wonderful friends who are like family that all came through Federation. That's a big part of it – connecting with like-minded people." Both remarked on how important it was that individuals within that community whom they liked and respected invited them to participate and encouraged them to get more deeply involved. Raising consciousness among their peers about what Jewish Federation of the Berkshires accomplishes is part of what has motivated them to take on the role of Major Donors co-chairs.

They say they understand that many people who are second or third homeowners in the Berkshires "choose not to have the Jewish community find them," says Ken, "or stay kind of quiet in order to do their own thing, even though they might be very, very involved in other communities." Additionally, due to the size of this Federation and the seasonal fluctuations in the Jewish populations, there are not as many entry points as there might be in larger communities. Nevertheless, the needs of the community are not inconsiderable and, in the absence of other Jewish organizations locally, Federation addresses many of those needs by offering social services, meals on wheels, outreach to seniors, security initiatives, family programming, cultural events, political advocacy, and funding for young people like religious school subsidies and camp and Israel scholarships.

*"I think of the Berkshire Federation as a jewel ... it's small, it's intimate. The fact that it offers outreach and programs open to people outside the Jewish community, as well, is a wonderful aspect of its approach."*

~ Mimi Heyman

The Heymans encourage others to make that call to Federation and participate in the life of the Jewish Berkshires. "We weren't waiting to be found," says Ken, and he urges others in the community to invite friends to Federation programs and events so that all can learn about the scope of Federation's essential work. "We hope that part of what we can do is to encourage at least a handful of people to at least get started," he adds, "as others did for us."

A strong example of the Heyman's commitment to Jewish continuity is their ongoing gifts and legacy endowments of the three communities to which they have been closely connected – Jewish Federation of MetroWest New Jersey, Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County (FL), and Jewish Federation of the Berkshires.

"Some people who, when they leave a community, take their gift to where they relocate," says Mimi. "We definitely do not believe in that, and so we continue to support all three. Because we have a house in the Berkshires, that's also our home and we should be there to support our Jewish community. I mean, that's a given."

Based on their long-term involvement in Jewish communal affairs, the Heymans recognize the imperative the older, established generation has to leave a lasting legacy. "Given the changing demographics in this country," says Ken, "succeeding generations since the Baby Boomers are not as connected to Jewish organizations and Jewish brick-and-mortar institutions, nor are they as tied to the State of Israel.

"There might be an institution or service of some type created by people who came before us we would like to preserve. On our own, we also might want to create the same opportunities for a strong and vibrant Jewish life in the future that we enjoyed. But I think it is important to acknowledge that the next generations are, writ large, just not as Jewishly connected. There's no way we can assume that they're going to be giving a gift, especially as major donors, to keep things going."

Ken adds: "I think the importance of legacy giving is that an organization will know that it has a certain percentage of its annual campaign that will be there in perpetuity. That was important 10 and 20 years ago also, but certainly grows in importance as we go through all the problems in the Jewish world that we're seeing today."

"Investing in a legacy gift is relatively easy if you have the resources," says Mimi. "You can include it in your will, you could arrange it through an insurance policy, as well as other instruments. A lot of it has to do with educating others to realize that when we're all gone, what we give is going to still make a tremendous difference in the community. It really is not complicated."

## Thank You, Host Committee!

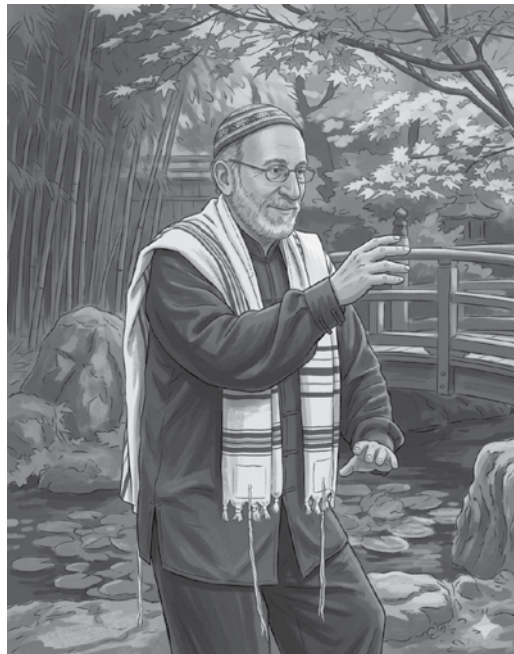
Federation is deeply grateful to this year's host committee, made up of both full-time and part-time residents who share a strong commitment to Jewish life in the Berkshires and to the work of Federation. Their leadership, enthusiasm, and generosity are helping make this celebration possible and reflect the strength and spirit of our community.

With gratitude, we recognize:

Jan and David Ball	Pommy and Gerald Levy
Marjorie and Barry Berg	Nancy and Norman Lipoff
Helene Berger	Ellen and Stuart Masters
Nancy and Steven Bernstein	Penny and Claudio Pincus
Elisa Spungen Bildner and Robert Bildner	Arlene and Gary Schiff
Cindy Chazan and Jay Leipzig	Anne Schnesel
Phyllis Cohen and Jeffrey Lazarus	Carole Siegel
Ada Beth and Charles Cutler	Hope and Gene Silverman
Hon. Amy Dean and Alan Kluger	Carol and Irving Smokler
Terry and Melvin Drucker	Carol and Steven Targum
Marsha and David Edell	Judy and Mark Usow
Elisa Schindler Frankel and Larry Frankel	Harriet and Mel Warshaw
Jane Glaser	Lisa Wendell and Ken Fishman
Marilyn and Elihu Katzman	

## Your Federation Presents

### “Judaism and Tai Chi: Finding Balance in an Unbalanced World,” with Dr. Joel Friedman



AI comes for Dr. Joel Friedman

PITTSFIELD – On Thursday, July 30 at 10:45 a.m., Connecting With Community presents Dr. Joel Friedman, who will lead an engaging and interactive program, “Judaism and Tai Chi: Finding Balance in an Unbalanced World.”

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 BEFORE the program (Wednesday). Suggested donation of \$3 for adults over age 60, \$7 for all others.

In this workshop, Dr. Friedman explores how Judaism and Tai Chi

can help cultivate a more balanced life by teaching effective responses to the constant stream of verbal, physical, and internal stresses of daily living. These skills, he emphasizes, must be learned and practiced, centering on a dynamic balance between what we take in and what we express outwardly – whether in conversation or conflict.

Drawing on teachings from the Torah, Jewish mystical traditions, and meditative practices rooted in Daoism, the session offers a compelling roadmap for achieving greater equilibrium. Participants will also learn a simple movement exercise that evolves through progressive modifications, illustrating key concepts while promoting holistic health and mindfulness.

**Dr. Joel Friedman**, a research scientist at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, brings a unique interdisciplinary perspective shaped by decades in science and medicine, more than 40 years of training and teaching Taoist-based internal martial and healing arts, and a deep commitment to Jewish learning.

Federation programs are made possible through the generous support of our community.

### Antisemitism and Democracy with Amy Spitalnick



Amy Spitalnick

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Friday, July 31 at 10:45 a.m., Federation’s Knosh & Knowledge welcomes Amy Spitalnick, CEO of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) for an important and timely conversation, “Antisemitism and Democracy.”

Federation’s free monthly Knosh & Knowledge programs are held at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, 270 State Road in Great Barrington. Register at the calendar of events page at [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org).

In the months following the October 7 attacks, the rise in antisemitism has prompted urgent questions about how best to ensure Jewish safety while strengthening democratic values and building broader coalitions. Spitalnick will explore which strategies are proving effective – and which are falling short – in addressing antisemitism in today’s complex social and political landscape. A special conversation partner will join her for this discussion.

As CEO of the JCPA, Spitalnick leads efforts to convene national and local coalitions focused on advancing a just and inclusive democracy and addressing the issues most affecting the Jewish community. Previously, as executive director of Integrity First for America, she helped lead the landmark lawsuit holding white supremacists and hate groups accountable for the violence in Charlottesville – an effort widely seen as a model for combating extremism through the courts.

With extensive experience in government, advocacy, and public policy, Spitalnick is a nationally recognized leader in the fight against antisemitism, hate, and political extremism.

Federation’s Knosh & Knowledge programs are held throughout the summer at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire and are made possible through the generous support of our community.

### From the Lake to the Lawn – Building Community with the Berkshire Jewish Collective

By Sarah Singer



On May 3, we had 17 people including families, couples, kids, and dogs come together despite a windy day to enjoy quality time outdoors by Onota Lake, learn about Lag Ba’Omer, and build community.



Join the Berkshire Jewish Collective 20s–40s group for a festive picnic at Tanglewood on Sunday, July 12 in the afternoon. Couples, singles, and families are all welcome to relax, connect, and enjoy a beautiful summer day together. Please RSVP at [tinyurl.com/20s30s40sTanglewood](http://tinyurl.com/20s30s40sTanglewood) so we can plan accordingly, as Federation will be providing yummy food and drinks!

We’ll be meeting at 1:45 p.m. on the lawn for snacks and schmoozing. The concert featuring Brahms Symphony No. 2 and Chopin Piano Concerto No. 2 starts at 2:30 p.m. We ask that you purchase your own ticket to the concert.

For any questions, feel free to contact us at [bjc@jewishberkshires.org](mailto:bjc@jewishberkshires.org).

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July 26th at 7PM

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Ari Isaacman Beck, violin  
Anthony Devroye, viola  
Yehuda Hanani, cello  
Kivie Cahn-Lipman, cello  
Alexander Shtarkman, piano  
Max Levinson, piano  
Shiyu Wang, piano  
Tatiana Lokhina, piano



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# Your Federation Presents

## Celebrating Our Work Together at Federation's 86th Annual Meeting

**Our Berkshire community partnerships combat bias and promote tolerance**

LENOX – On Monday, June 22, at 7:30 p.m., join us in celebrating our community's incredible accomplishments over the past year at Jewish Federation of the Berkshires 86th 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 (see the house ad below for the slate of nominees), and the presentation of the Simkin Schiller College Scholarships.




### Community Partnerships: Combating Bias and Promoting Tolerance

We'll have an inspiring conversation to learn how Federation builds relationships and funds programs to combat bias and promote tolerance in our schools and community. Conversation partners include Bill Ballen (Berk12 and Berkshires Standing Together Alliance), Phil Fogelman (Changemakers for Good), and Lindsey Berkowitz Brown (Teacher, Mount Everett Regional School)

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.

# 86th ANNUAL MEETING



## Celebrating Our Work Together

Monday, June 22 at 7:30 p.m.

Elayne P. Bernstein Theatre, Shakespeare & Co, Lenox

All are welcome to join a celebratory reception and schmoozing, followed by highlights of this year's accomplishments, elections, college scholarship awards, and a conversation with community partners.

**Community Partnerships:**

**Combating Bias and Promoting Tolerance**

Join us for an inspiring conversation to learn how Federation builds relationships and funds programs to combat bias and promote tolerance in our schools and community. Conversation partners include

**Bill Ballen, Berk12 and Berkshires Standing Together Alliance**

**Phil Fogelman, Changemakers for Good**

**Lindsey Berkowitz Brown, Mount Everett Regional School Teacher**

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**NOMINATED SLATE, 2026-2027 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The nominating committee of Jewish Federation of the Berkshires presents the following slate for election at the Annual Meeting.

**OFFICERS (2-year term)**

Arlene D. Schiff, President<sup>^</sup>

Josh Cutler, Treasurer <sup>^</sup>

Elisa Schindler Frankel, Secretary

Judy Usow, VP<sup>^</sup>


Stephanie Ilberg Lamm, VP

**DIRECTORS (3-year term)**

Amy Blumkin <sup>^</sup>	Leslie Kozupsky	Richard Simons*
Ann Falchuk*	Hank Maimin <sup>^</sup>	Donna Spector*
Elisa Spungen Bildner	Natalie Matus	Audrey Weiner
Kenneth Fishman	Elizabeth Miller	Harriet Warshaw*
Kathy Fraker	Sanford Reback*	Rabbinic Appointee (1-Year):
Jane Glaser	Lisa Reznik	Rabbi Rachel Barenblat*
Beryl Jolly <sup>^</sup>	Anne Schnesel*	

\*Newly Appointed 1st term. <sup>^</sup>Newly Appointed 2nd term

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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## LOCAL NEWS

### The Gift of the Grant: Establishing 'A Caring Committee'

By Susan Hicks / Congregation Ahavath Sholom

The small and intimate community that is Congregation Ahavath Sholom cares deeply for each of its congregants. We are exploring 'caring' through a new lens – one that supports and accompanies our members through all life cycle events.

When The Hadar Institute granted us seed money to explore the concept of developing a 'caring community within our shul', Rabbi Jennifer Rudin and I asked eight congregants to meet with them monthly for eight sessions.

Our meetings are extraordinary. We are thrilled to be together – and to be able to focus on our fellow congregants. Because of the structure spelled out by the grant, we sing (a new melody each meeting, which is often related to the day's study topic) and we study (Torah which is often based on the prior month's discussion). We creatively imagine and explore novel ways to connect with - and support - each other. Our process-driven discussions have led us to realizations about our community, individuals within it, and relationships in general.

Over the course of the past several months, we have come to the realization that supporting one another in times of need would be enhanced if we established a norm of sharing moments of joy and celebration. This regularized accompaniment encourages relationship-building which, in turn, better enables us to support one another, as deep and meaningful connection is already in place.

We are now creating experiences that lead us to moments of connection-in-community (impromptu social and cultural events). These shared experiences and events give birth to deep connection...which leads to the desire to share our moments of joy and celebration with one another. We are also finding that we are learning about the challenges and needs of the members of the Ahavath Sholom congregation organically. All of this sets us up to better – and more gracefully – support one another in times of need.

### Tisha B'Av Remembrance

Join Congregation Ahavath Sholom for a Tisha B'av remembrance at 4:30 p.m. on Friday, July 24. Kabbalat Shabbat services will follow.

Services will be at the Unitarian Universalist Meeting, 1089 Main Street in Housatonic.



## Create a Jewish Legacy Campaign



Please remember the Jewish Community in your will.

## MUSIC AT HEVREH PRESENTS

# “A Classical Conversation”

An intimate evening of Jewish music and discussion featuring members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and composer Jakov Jakoulov.



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Viola



Thomas Martin

Clarinet



Yak Bjerken

Piano



Jakov Jakoulov

Composer

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**LOCAL NEWS**

**TAA Joins the Berkshire Pride March and Festival**

PITTSFIELD – On Saturday, June 20 at 11 a.m., join the Temple Anshe Amunim community walking from Pittsfield’s Park Square to the Commons. Stick around for the Pride Fest in the Commons or visit the TAA booth to decorate your own King Crown, Queen Crown or Monarch Crown and pick up candy and other giveaways.

Register for the march and/or sign up to staff the TAA table at the festival at [ansheamunim.org/event/taa-pride](http://ansheamunim.org/event/taa-pride).

Please contact the office for further information – (413) 442-5910.

**CBI Book Club to Discuss *This is Not About Us***

The Congregation Beth Israel Book Club meets Thursday, June 25 at 7:30 p.m. on Zoom to discuss to discuss *This is Not About Us* by Allegra Goodman. Goodman’s newest novel is a kaleidoscopic portrait of a modern American family – steadfast, complicated, begrudging, and loving – centering on the strained relationship between two sisters, with a simple misunderstanding causing a rift that spans generations.

RSVP via the CBI website at [cbiberkshires.com/series/book-club](http://cbiberkshires.com/series/book-club) in order to receive the Zoom information. *This event was rescheduled from last April.*

**Perspectives in Practice: Chabad Series Explores Art, Advocacy, and the Media**

LENEX – Chabad of the Berkshires has announced a high-profile summer speaker series, bringing together leaders in diplomacy, the arts, and journalism to discuss the pressing issues facing the Jewish world today.

The following programs are open to the entire community, regardless of affiliation. Each

**CHABAD OF THE BERKSHIRES,**  
*continued on page 16*

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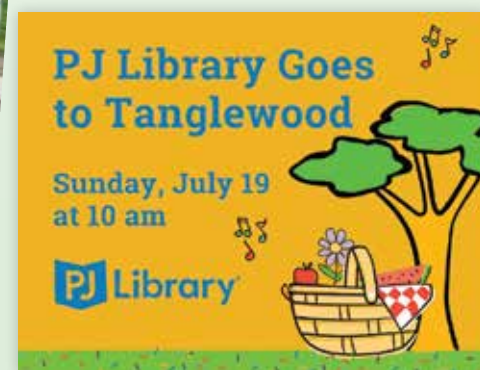
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# Cream Cheese & JAHM for Shavuot – Something Newt Under the Sun

On May 16, Federation families celebrated Shavuot and Jewish American Heritage Month (JAHM) with PJ Library on a steamy Sunday afternoon at Mass Audubon's Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary in Lenox. They enjoyed bagels with a sweet topping, a walk in the Great Outdoors, a Shavuot story, decorating kindness stones, and close encounters with a newt. Good fun!



Visit [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org) to RSVP.



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*-Lance Vermeulen*

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Is a loved one or friend finding it difficult to live alone? At Geer Village Senior Community, we provide personalized assisted living and memory care. Our programs address the many stages of dementia, offering compassionate support and a safe, engaging environment tailored to each resident's needs.

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

**ENSURE A VIBRANT, CARING, & SECURE JEWISH COMMUNITY**  
**2026 CAMPAIGN LAUNCHES JUNE 7—HELP US REACH \$1.6 MILLION**  
**MAKE YOUR GIFT OR PLEDGE TODAY!**

Your gift to Jewish Federation supports the most vulnerable, strengthens Jewish identity in our youth, fights rising antisemitism, and builds joyful Jewish life for people of all ages across the Berkshires, in Israel, and beyond.



**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 support young people to stand up against hate through anti-bias education in our public schools. You also combat antisemitism through our Hate Has No Home Here campaign, community programming, and local advocacy.

**DIGNITY & COMPASSION**

You provide older adults and homebound individuals with nutritious meals and 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 summer camp, and Israel experiences, as well as leadership development and holiday meals on college campuses.

**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 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. And state



**A SECURE JEWISH COMMUNITY**

You 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 Jewish life.



**CRISIS RESPONSE WORLDWIDE**

When a crisis hits in Israel or around the world, you mobilize local resources to respond with immediate relief and longer-term recovery. From the October 7 attacks in Israel, to the war with Iran, to the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, to the LA wildfires, you help deliver an SOS humanitarian response.

**A CLOSE & CARING RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL**

You 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.



**YOUNG ADULT INITIATIVE**

You support adults in their 20s, 30s, and 40s to create meaningful Jewish community and the next generation of Jewish leaders from the ground up with the Berkshire Jewish Collective, through Shabbat dinners, social meet-ups, and holiday celebrations.



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

# Your Federation Presents

## Jewish Community Day 2026

Thanks to all of you who braved the threat of rain, Jewish Community Day 2026 was another smashing celebration of Jewish Federation of the Berkshires' work and the kickoff of our annual campaign. Thank you, too, to our amazing volunteers, without whom we could not make a day like this happen. High Lawn Farm once again proved to be welcoming hosts and Baladi of Great Barrington served up their delicious and authentic Israeli sandwiches. And many thanks to our generous raffle donors:

Barrington Stage Company  
Clark Art Institute  
Concepts of Art  
Hancock Shaker Village  
High Lawn Farm  
MASS MoCA

Norman Rockwell Museum  
PJ Library  
Shakespeare & Company  
Spirited Wines  
The Trustees of the Reservations



## Newish & Jewish in the Berkshires

### Are You a Newcomer to the Berkshires?

Welcome! Join us for a casual gathering to meet others who are "Newish and Jewish," enjoy refreshments, and learn more about the Berkshire Jewish community. We look forward to connecting.

**Tuesday, July 14, 5:00-6:30 pm**

Hosted by Jane and Howard Jacobs, Great Barrington

**Thursday, September 3, 5:00-6:30 pm**

Hosted by Melissa and Fred Kleiman, Otis

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:** [tinyurl.com/NewishJewish2026](http://tinyurl.com/NewishJewish2026)  
ktodd@jewishberkshires.org, (413) 442-4360, ext. 16



THE STRENGTH OF A PEOPLE  
THE POWER OF COMMUNITY.



PHOTOS BY JULIA KAPLAN,  
DAVID ROLLE,  
AND CAROL SMOKLER.

# Your Federation Presents



**SIX13**  
A CAPPELLA

## AWARD WINNING JEWISH A CAPPELLA

SUN, AUG 16 | 7:00 PM at Lenox Memorial High School

An unforgettable night with Six13, where jaw-dropping vocal percussion, intricate arrangements, and unparalleled harmonies transform six voices into a full-band experience.

**General Admission: \$25. Kids 13 and under are free.**  
Purchase tickets: [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org)

Proceeds to benefit Federation's Initiatives to combat antisemitism  
Funded in part by generous underwriters and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation



## LOCAL NEWS

### CHABAD OF THE BERKSHIRES,

*continued from page 9*

presentation will be followed by a Kiddush luncheon. Chabad of the Berkshires is located at 17 West Street in downtown Lenox.

#### Media Narratives and the Jewish Community

Kicking off the series on Saturday, July 11, at noon, renowned journalist **Ari L. Goldman** will address the critical question: "Are Israel and the Jewish people being covered fairly in the media?" Goldman, a Professor Emeritus at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism and a former New York Times religion writer, will draw on decades of experience to offer an insider's perspective. His talk, "Jews in the News: How the Press Covers Israel and the Jewish Community," will examine how media narratives are framed and the influences that shape today's fast-moving news landscape.



*Ari Goldman*

#### Art and Identity Post-October 7



On Saturday, July 18, at noon., internationally acclaimed artist **Zoe Buckman** will lead a powerful conversation on the intersection of creative expression and Jewish identity. Buckman will share personal insights into how the global art world responded to the events of October 7 and the tensions that have emerged within cultural and academic spaces. Her talk will emphasize the increasing importance of standing confidently in one's Jewish identity within contemporary cultural settings.

#### AIPAC President on Pro-Israel Advocacy

The series continues on Saturday, July 25, at noon, with a timely community address by Dr. Bernard Kaminetsky, president of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). His theme will be "Confronting Reality on Capitol Hill: Pro-Israel Advocacy in a Post-October 7 World."

A member of AIPAC's National Board and

Executive Committee, Dr. Kaminetsky will provide a rare look at the shifting political climate in Washington and the urgent challenges currently facing pro-Israel advocates.

For more information or to RSVP for these events, community members are encouraged to visit [jewishberkshires.com](http://jewishberkshires.com).

### Faith and History: Hevreh Explores Sacred Texts and the Atomic Age

GREAT BARRINGTON – Continuing its commitment to deep learning and community dialogue, Hevreh of Southern Berkshire has announced two high-profile educational events this summer, ranging from ancient interfaith scholarship to the modern ethics of the atomic age.

#### Sacred Texts, Shared Questions: Hevreh Joins Interfaith Bible Study

In an era that often feels divided, local clergy are inviting the community to find common ground through the pages of the prophets. Rabbi Jodie Gordon will join fellow clergy members for a three-part interfaith exploration of the texts that shape our collective moral imagination.

The series, "Sacred Texts, Shared Questions," will be held on Friday mornings – June 12, July 10, and August 14 – from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the First Congregational Church on Main Street in Great Barrington.

Participants will engage with the Book of Jonah, the prophet Isaiah, and other biblical voices through Jewish, Christian, and interfaith lenses. The program is designed for all, regardless of prior study experience. Organizers emphasize that the only requirements are curiosity and a willingness to listen across differences. Each session will feature close readings followed by facilitated community discussion.

#### From Los Alamos to Today: Author Galina Vromen to Discuss Nuclear Legacy

The secret history of the Manhattan Project and its enduring impact on global policy will take center stage

on Wednesday, July 29, at 2 p.m., as author Galina Vromen visits Hevreh for a provocative author talk.

Drawing on the extensive research for her historical novel, *Hill of Secrets*, Vromen will transport the audience to the clandestine world of WWII Los Alamos, New Mexico. Her presentation will go beyond the "how" of the first atomic bomb to explore the complex ethical considerations surrounding its use on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Vromen will also trace the line from those momentous wartime decisions to the nuclear policies that shape our world today. The talk offers a unique look at how historical fiction can illuminate the most pressing moral questions of the modern era.

Hevreh is at 270 State Road in Great Barrington.

### Trail Talk: Rabbi Levi Volovik to Lead Summer Hiking Series

LENOX – For those looking to combine fresh air with meaningful connection, Chabad of the Berkshires is taking its summer programming to the trails. Rabbi Levi Volovik will lead two guided community hikes this season, offering participants a chance to explore some of the region's most iconic vistas in a relaxed, informal setting. The series is designed as an opportunity for community members to unwind, slow down, and enjoy the natural beauty of the Berkshires while engaging in easygoing conversation.

#### Exploring Olivia's Overlook

The first excursion is set for Monday, June 29, at 10 a.m. at Olivia's Overlook. Hikers will traverse the scenic trails of the Yokun Ridge, known for its sweeping views of Stockbridge Bowl and the surrounding hills. The atmosphere is centered on nature and neighborly connection.

#### A Morning in Kennedy Park

The second hike will take place on Monday, July 27, at 10 a.m. at Kennedy Park in Lenox. This outing offers another chance to explore the local landscape and enjoy the outdoors in the company of friends and fellow community members.

For more info and to RSVP, please visit [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org).

# 59<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL HILDA VALLIN FEIGENBAUM MEMORIAL FOUNDATION LECTURE

## Sunday, August 23

### 7:30 PM

## THE CURRENT POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

With Guest Speaker

### MAGGIE HABERMAN

White House Correspondent, *The New York Times*

Funded by The Hilda Vallin Feigenbaum Lecture Endowment

The lecture is free and open to the public. Seating is limited.

**Pre-registration is required.**

**For more information, visit [ansheamunim.org](http://ansheamunim.org).**

There will be a reception immediately following the lecture. Temple Anshe Amunim is an accessible building.



*Maggie Haberman*



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**ANSHEAMUNIM.ORG**

**TEMPLE ANSHE AMUNIM**  
26 Broad Street, Pittsfield, Mass.

LOCAL NEWS

### The Berkshires Go to the City of Brotherly Love

In this 250th year of America, Rabbis Pam Wax of Knesset Israel, Val Lieber of Temple Anshe Amunim, Jodie Gordon of Hevreh, and Rachel Barenblat of Congregation Beth Israel are inviting their synagogue memberships, as well as the larger Jewish community of the Berkshires, for a community trip to Philadelphia from Monday, October 12 to Thursday, October 15.

This immersive experience is being created in

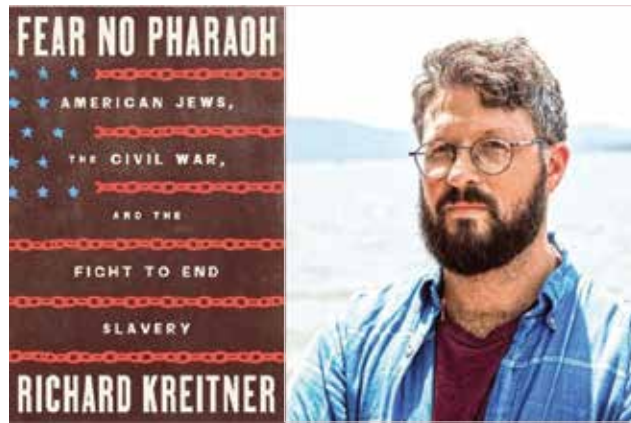


partnership with Tivnu, known for its innovative and intellectually rich programming. Together, explore questions of democracy, justice, and the ways Jewish history, texts, and communities intersect with these themes – through walking tours, conversations with scholars and activists, and visits to museums and historic landmarks throughout the city.

This approximate cost of \$1,550 includes double-occupancy lodging, transportation within Philadelphia, site visits, tour guides, expert speakers, and all meals except for one lunch and one dinner. Most programming will be within walking distance of our hotel. Anticipate traveling by Amtrak from either Albany or Hudson.

If your own rabbi is not participating, please contact Rabbi Pam Wax ASAP at rabbipwax@knessetisrael.org to express interest or for further information. The rabbis look forward to the possibility of learning, traveling, and exploring together with members of the larger Berkshire community. At least one pre-trip gathering will be planned to help build community prior to our travel.

### National Jewish Book Award Finalist Richard Kreitner a Visiting Scholar at TAA



PITTSFIELD – On Wednesday, July 15 at 10:30 a.m., Temple Anshe Amunim welcomes visiting scholar Richard Kreitner, the journalist and historian who wrote *Fear No Pharaoh*, finalist for the 75th National Jewish Book Award.

Kreitner's presentations set this question at the heart of the Civil War era: Since ancient times, Jews have recalled the Exodus and reflected on having been slaves. Did tradition teach that Jews should speak out against slavery everywhere, or act to protect themselves in a hostile world?

Kreitner will share a dazzling account of the range of Jewish opinions on the morality of slavery in the antebellum south featuring six Jews who spoke out about the issue at that time. He will further address the shifting dynamics of Jewish life in America then and now.

After the program, a light lunch will be served at noon, followed by a further discussion centered on primary sources from the Jews of the antebellum period at 12:45 p.m.

Register at [ansheamunim.org/event/kreitner](http://ansheamunim.org/event/kreitner). Cost: TAA and Knesset Israel Members: \$20 either the morning or afternoon program and lunch. Non-members: \$30 either the morning or afternoon

program and lunch. TAA and KI Members: \$25 for both programs and lunch. Non-members: \$36 for both programs and lunch.

### Runway to the Days of Awe 5787

Starting on Tuesday July 28 through September 8, join Rabbi Rachel Barenblat (Congregation Beth Israel of the Berkshires) and Rabbi David Markus (Shir Ami, Greenwich CT) for their third annual joint runway to the High Holidays.

Between Tisha b'Av and Rosh Hashanah, prepare heart and soul for transformation through a deep dive into some of the core prayers of the Days of Awe, including Psalm 27, *Avinu Malkeinu*, and *Unetaneh Tokef*. All of these invite us into theology (what is God for us?), theodicy (why do bad things happen, and what agency do we have to change?), and *teshuvah* (what is repentance, and how do these words help us in it?)

This Zoom program is free to members of CBI and Shir Ami; \$120 for non-members. Register on the CBI website, [cbiberkshires.com](http://cbiberkshires.com) or email the CBI office for more information at [office@cbiberkshires.com](mailto:office@cbiberkshires.com)

### A Summer of Spirit and Sun: Chabad of the Berkshires Announces Youth Programming

LENOX – This summer, the streets of downtown Lenox will be filled with the sounds of laughter and Jewish spirit as Chabad of the Berkshires launches a robust season of youth programming. From hands-on Shabbat mornings to an action-packed day camp, the local Chabad is offering children ages 5–12 multiple ways to connect with their heritage while building lasting friendships in a warm, welcoming environment.

CHABAD OF THE BERKSHIRES, continued on page 18



**ISRAEL TENNIS & EDUCATION CENTERS**

# BERKSHIRES WEEKEND

July 24-July 26, 2026

Be part of the second annual Berkshires Weekend supporting the children of Israel

The Israel Tennis & Education Centers exists to shape a more resilient, inclusive, and hopeful Israeli society – one child at a time – through the transformative power of tennis.



LIVE IN CONCERT!

# MATISYAHU

AT THE BUTTONBALL BARN!

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FEATURING A SPECIAL LIVE PERFORMANCE BY

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SCAN TO SEE FULL SCHEDULE!

☆ TOGETHER, WE'RE BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL ☆

## LOCAL NEWS

### CHABAD OF THE BERKSHIRES,

*continued from page 17*

#### Shabbat Fun at the Jewish Kids Club

The Jewish Kids Club invites local youngsters to a vibrant Shabbat program where Judaism comes alive through creativity and play. Held on select Saturdays from 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., the club offers an engaging mix of games, interactive learning, and Shabbat-themed experiences designed to spark curiosity and Jewish pride. Upcoming sessions are scheduled for July 4, July 18, and August 8. The program is open to children of all backgrounds, with no prior experience necessary – just a readiness for an inspiring morning of exploration and friendship.

#### Adventure Awaits at Camp Gan Izzy

For those seeking a high-energy summer experience, Camp Gan Izzy returns to downtown Lenox from July 13 through July 31. The three-week session promises an unforgettable schedule of exciting trips, sports, music, swimming, and creative arts and crafts. Beyond the daily activities, the camp focuses on building a strong sense of identity through engaging stories and hands-on traditions. Under the care of a dedicated staff, campers are guaranteed a safe and joy-filled summer. Organizers also noted that scholarships are available, thanks to the generous support of community donors, ensuring that the camp remains accessible to all families.

For more information on youth programs or to register, visit [jewishberkshires.com](http://jewishberkshires.com).

## The Return of JTS in the Berkshires



Rabbi Ayelet Cohen

LENOX – Join Knesset Israel and The Jewish Theological Seminary this summer for two scintillating lectures as part of the annual JTS in the Berkshires series. For over 130 years, The Jewish Theological Seminary has served as the intellectual and spiritual center of Conservative Judaism.

On Friday, July 11, Rabbi Ayelet Cohen, Pearl Resnick Dean of The Rabbinical School and Dean of the Division of Religious Leadership at JTS, will present the first lecture on “Cultivating Resilience and Joy in Difficult Times.” Constant exposure to bad news, communal and family divisions, and the fear that things are getting worse can take a spiritual toll. Rabbi Cohen will share classical Jewish texts that can help us navigate the turbulence of our reality, reawaken joy, and help us build practices to strengthen us and our communities.

The second JTS in the Berkshires lecture, on Friday, August 7, will be offered by Dr. Shira Billet, Assistant Professor of Jewish Thought and Ethics at JTS, on the topic of “A Jewish Ethics of Creativity for a Technological Age.” The age of Artificial Intelligence forces us to ask old questions with new urgency – questions about the power, limits, dangers, and opportunities of human creativity – that lie at the nexus of ethics, religion, and science. Dr. Billet will explore the timely wisdom for our technological age that is found in classical Jewish philosophical reflection on the cosmos and the place of the human being in the divinely created world order, presenting a starting point for a Jewish ethics of creativity in the age of AI.

Each lecture will take place from 10:30 a.m. to noon at the Elayne P. Bernstein Theatre at Shakespeare and Company, 70 Kemble Street, Lenox.

It is highly recommended to purchase tickets online ahead of time at \$40 for both talks, or \$25 for one at [tinyurl.com/JTSBerkshires2026](http://tinyurl.com/JTSBerkshires2026). (Note new start time.)

The JTS in the Berkshires program, in partnership with Knesset Israel, is generously co-sponsored by Jewish Federation of the Berkshires and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. Please contact Tani Schwartz-Herman at JTS with questions about this program, [tanischwartz@jtsa.edu](mailto:tanischwartz@jtsa.edu) or (212) 678-8996.

## Far From the Tsar - Jewish American Culture, History, and Politics 1880 – 1935

Lecture series with TAA's Rabbi Val Lieber



The last emperor of Russia, Tsar Nicholas II (center with beard), and his friends just being dudes circa 1899

PITTSFIELD – On five Wednesdays at noon starting on June 17, Rabbi Val Lieber leads a lecture and discussion class to consider causes and challenges of mass migration to the United States from Eastern Europe.

Topics include: challenges of assimilation and acculturation; friction between the German and Eastern European Jews; advancement in labor rights led by Jews; legions of cultural contributions in music, theater, and sports; and the rise of the America First movement and antisemitism in the 1920s and 1930s.

Additional classes are on June 24, July 1, July 8, and July 22. Classes will be held at 26 Broad Street in Pittsfield.

No cost, but please register in advance at: [ansheamunim.org/event/far-tsar](http://ansheamunim.org/event/far-tsar).

## Get Crafty with TAA this Summer

PITTSFIELD – On Mondays in June and early July at 6:30 p.m., all are welcome at Temple Anshe Amunim to come and either bring their own projects or join in the fun of making Jewish ritual and decorative objects together. This will be led by lay-leaders along with Rabbi Val Lieber.

Suggested donations for materials fees listed below:

June 15: Bead bracelet with Hebrew name – \$10

June 22: Seder plate - paint glass dish – \$10

June 29: Mezuzah \$18 (more for additional kosher scroll)

July 6: Rosh Hashanah or other holiday table runner \$25

Register in advance by session at [ansheamunim.org/event/craft-night.html](http://ansheamunim.org/event/craft-night.html).

## Sustenance for the Soul and the Table: Chabad of the Berkshires Announces Summer Programming

LENOX – From the deep wisdom of the weekly Torah portion to the rhythmic clacking of tiles and the aroma of fresh dough, Chabad of the Berkshires has unveiled a summer calendar designed to nourish the mind, the body, and the community.

This season's lineup at 17 West Street invites women from across the Berkshires to gather for a series of events that blend ancient tradition with modern social connection.

#### Torah & Tea: Monday Midday Inspiration

Every Monday at noon, the “Torah & Tea” luncheon offers a warm and uplifting space for study and sisterhood. Led by Chabad's co-director Sara Volovik, the gathering provides a delicious lunch accompanied by an exploration of the weekly Torah portion. Volovik guides participants through classical commentary and kabbalistic insights, emphasizing the text's practical guidance for contemporary life. The program is designed for women of all backgrounds and levels of experience, offering a weekly oasis for reflection and growth.

#### Mah Jongg Mondays

Following the “Torah & Tea” luncheon, the atmosphere at Chabad shifts to friendly competition with “Mah Jongg Mondays.” Starting at 1:30 p.m. each week, women are invited to join a relaxed game in a welcoming social setting. Whether a seasoned “cracker” of tiles or a beginner looking to learn the game, all levels are welcome to pull up a chair, unwind, and connect with neighbors.

#### Artisan Challah & Babka Bake

On Friday, July 17, at 10:30 a.m., the Chabad kitchen will transform into an artisan bakery for a hands-on Challah and Babka Bake. This immersive experience goes beyond a simple cooking class, inviting participants to discover the symbolism behind each ingredient as they mix, knead, and braid from scratch. Admission is \$36 per person, and participants will take home their own creations ready to bake for Shabbat. As space is limited, advance registration is encouraged. Men are also welcome at this event.

#### Plus Chabad brings fresh homemade challah and babka back to downtown Lenox farmers market

After strong demand at the Lenox Farmers Market, where fresh homemade challah and babka sold out quickly, Chabad is bringing its baked goods back to downtown Lenox.

Fresh challah and babka will once again be available in a tent located in front of Concepts of Art, 65 Church Street in Lenox. Sales will take place on Friday, June 17 and Friday, July 3, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Registration for the Challah Bake and information regarding weekly programs can be found at [jewishberkshires.com](http://jewishberkshires.com).

## MAZEL TOV!

**Jenny Greenfeld and Bob Lezberg** on their 30th wedding anniversary.

**Joel Radskan** on his special birthday.

**Cindy Helitzer** on her special birthday.

**Jane Rosen** on her special birthday.

**Ed Kolodny** on his 90th birthday.

**Noah Denmark**, who celebrated his bar mitzvah on May 2 at Knesset Israel. Proud family are parents **Jonathan and Lara Denmark**, brother **Levi**, grandparents **Bobbi and Mike Cohn**, **Lynn and Gerry Denmark**, and **Neil Siegel**. Noah is a 4th generation KI member and a high honor student at Herberg Middle School.

**David Wise** on becoming the first president of Chabad of the Berkshires.

**Jayda Kaufman** on her bat mitzvah at Chabad of the Berkshires. Proud parents are **Dr. Kevin and Jodi Kaufman**.

**Elaine Friedman** who celebrated her 95th birthday at Shabbat services on April 11 with her fellow congregants at Congregation Ahavath Sholom. She chanted the week's parshah, Shemini, and delivered a D'var Torah on Kashrut – Judaism's dietary laws.



Elaine Friedman

## Stories and Poems – Two Literary-Themed Courses with Rabbi Pam Wax

*Plus a contemplative Shabbat service*

PITTSFIELD – This summer, Rabbi Pam Wax – an accomplished poet in her own right – will lead two series of classes around literary themes at Knesset Israel.

#### Shir Hadash: A Jewish Poetry Salon

Calling all Jewish poets and poetry-lovers! Bring a favorite poem by a Jewish poet and/or one of your own. Share poetry, talk poetry, and write poetry for two sessions this summer: Monday, July 6 and

## LOCAL NEWS

Monday, August 10 from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. To RSVP or for more information, contact Rabbi Pam Wax, rabbipwax@knesetisrael.org.

### Aggadah: Stories for Their Time and Ours

Join Rabbi Wax for six Tuesdays from 10:30 a.m. until noon starting July 14 to look at aggadic stories. Aggadah – the non-legal, narrative, and homiletic portions of the Talmud – is filled with a diverse array of stories. Some are historical tales, some are parables, some are mystical flights of fancy, and some are connected to the legal discussions they surround.

In each session, look at a few stories (in translation, with Hebrew handy for those with Hebrew skills) and unpack what they might have to teach us today. Pre-register at knesetisrael.org/rsvp. \$50 for non-members. This course will be hybrid – come in-person or join via Zoom.

### Summer Contemplative Shabbat Services

Join Rabbi Pam Wax from 9:15 a.m. to 10 a.m. in the KI library on the Saturdays of July 11 and August 1 for spacious and contemplative prayer to include meditation, poetry, chanting, and reflective text study. The service will conclude in time for those who wish to join the congregation in the sanctuary for the Torah service. All are welcome. Be curious, try something new! Please try to arrive early enough to settle in before 9:15 a.m.

Kneset Israel is at 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield.

## Tradition, Remembrance, and Renewal with Chabad of the Berkshires

LENOX – This summer, Chabad of the Berkshires invites the community to expand their spiritual horizons with events designed to deepen connection and understanding.

### A New Chapter: Grand Mikvah Opening

Marking a significant moment in the community's history, Chabad of the Berkshires will celebrate the grand opening of its brand-new Mikvah – the first in Lenox in the town's 250-year history. This landmark addition represents a major step forward for a further flourishing of the Jewish presence in the region.

The community is invited to gather for the celebration on Sunday, July 5, at 5:30 p.m. at 17 West Street. The evening will feature a special ceremony followed by a festive outdoor grilled dinner, offering a warm and joyful atmosphere for friends and families to celebrate this historic achievement together.

### A Testimony of Survival: Sora Vigorito on Tisha B'Av

On Thursday, July 23, at 7:30 p.m., Chabad will host a solemn evening of reflection and remembrance to observe Tisha B'Av. The event will feature Holocaust survivor Sora Vigorito, one of the youngest known survivors of Dr. Josef Mengele's experiments on twins at Auschwitz. Ms. Vigorito will share her powerful personal testimony, offering a rare firsthand account of resilience under persecution and enduring faith through unimaginable hardship. Admission is \$25, and in keeping with the traditions of the day, the evening will conclude with a modest break-fast gathering.

### Making Prayer Meaningful: A New Weekly Class

Beginning Saturday, June 27, at 9:15 a.m., a new weekly learning experience arrives to bring fresh depth to the sanctuary service. "Making Prayer Meaningful," led by Hershey Volovik, will explore the deeper layers of *tefillah* (prayer) through Chassidic and Kabbalistic teachings. The class aims to uncover the meaning behind the words we recite, making the experience more personal and intentional. The sessions, which continue throughout July and August, will include coffee and fresh pastries in a relaxed environment. No prior background is necessary – just curiosity and an open mind.

For more information or to RSVP for any of these programs, please visit jewishberkshires.com.

## Deepen Your Shabbat: 'Acharei Kiddush' Returns to Kneset Israel this Summer

PITTSFIELD – Kneset Israel is inviting the community to nourish both body and mind this summer with the return of "Acharei Kiddush" (After Kiddush).

On the Saturday mornings of July 11 through August 22, the congregation's standard Shabbat

morning services will be followed by a community sit-down lunch and a series of high-level learning sessions featuring guest scholars, local leaders, and congregant panels.

Services begin at 9:30 a.m., with the catered kiddush lunch and learning sessions commencing at approximately 1 p.m. The programs are free of charge and open to the entire Berkshire community.



Serge Lippe

The summer lineup kicks off on July 11 with **Rabbi Serge Lippe**, spiritual leader of the Brooklyn Heights Synagogue and a longtime Berkshire seasonal resident. Rabbi Lippe will present "What in Heaven is the *Olam ha-Ba*? Ideas about the Afterlife and End of History." This session will dive into the often-misunderstood Jewish concepts of the "World-to-Come," exploring how the Sages viewed death, history, and the resolution of personal matters beyond our physical world.

On July 18, the focus shifts to a more earthly – but equally vital – topic: "Aging Well: Crafting Your Future." A panel of KI congregants will lead an intimate discussion on the logistics and emotions of aging. Panelists will share personal stories regarding the decision to move to retirement communities, relocating to be near family, or the choice to age in place.

The July series concludes on July 25 with a spotlight on the local arts scene. **Alan Paul**, the celebrated Artistic Director of Pittsfield's Barrington Stage Company (BSC), will join Rabbi Pamela Wax, KI's Director of Adult Education, for "Mission-Driven Theatre."

Whether you are a regular congregant or a summer visitor to the Berkshires, "Acharei Kiddush" offers a unique space for community connection and intellectual exploration. Programs later in the summer are:

August 1: "Local Journalism in 2026 and Beyond" with Fredric Rutberg

August 8: "Unpacking Second Isaiah" with Rabbi David Weiner

August 15: "Einstein's God: Science, the Universe, and Holiness" with Rabbi Val Lieber

August 22: "What's Next for America's Jews" with Dr. Hal Lewis

For more information on the full August schedule, contact the Kneset Israel office or visit the website at knesetisrael.org. Kneset Israel is located at 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield. No pre-registration required, but feel free to contact Rabbi Pam Wax at rabbipwax@knesetisrael.org if you have questions about any of these programs.

### Plus Shirei Shabbat!

On the Fridays of July 10 and August 7, join friends old and new for an energizing, musical Shirei Shabbat Friday evening service at 5:45 p.m., then stay for a delicious kosher Shabbat dinner at 6:45 p.m. Registration necessary for dinner. Adults \$25, under 18 free. Kneset Israel is located at 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield. RSVP at knesetisrael.org/rsvp.

## Welcome the Sabbath with Communal Dinners at TAA

PITTSFIELD – Through the summer months, join Temple Anshe Amunim for special dinners after Friday evening services at 5:30 p.m.

Cookout Dinner on Friday, June 26 – Enjoy a summer menu of burgers and dogs, coleslaw, etc.

Gilded Age Feast on July 10 – Feast on roast hen and seasonal greens

Age of Aquarius Dinner on August 14 – Hark back to the Age of Aquarius for a veggie meal.

Each dinner includes dessert and costs \$18 for adults; kids free. Register at ansheamunim.org

## "My 738 Days in Hell": Held Hostage in Gaza – Bar Kupershtein's Story of Survival



Bar Kupershtein

LENOX – Bar Kupershtein, a hostage who was held in Gaza for 738 days, will share his extraordinary and deeply personal story of survival, faith, and resilience at a special event on Tuesday, June 16 at 7 p.m. at Chabad of the Berkshires, 17 West Street in Lenox.

Abducted during the October 7 attacks while serving as head of security at the Nova festival, Kupershtein was taken hostage into Gaza, where he endured 738 days of brutal and unimaginable conditions. Sustained by unwavering faith, he emerged with a powerful message of strength, courage, and hope that continues to move audiences wherever he speaks.

This is more than a talk – it is a rare and unforgettable opportunity to hear firsthand from a hostage held in Gaza, to witness a story of survival against all odds, and to be profoundly inspired. Light refreshments will be served. Seating is limited.

Admission is \$45 per person, with sponsorship opportunities available.

RSVP REQUIRED at JewishBerkshires.com

## Shabbat Outdoors with TAA

PITTSFIELD – This summer, enjoy Saturdays in the beautiful Berkshires with Temple Anshe Amunim.

On June 27, Rabbi Val Lieber leads an excursion to The Mount to enjoy the gardens and a brownbag lunch together.

Starting in July, congregants will be hiking at various scenic locales in the central Berkshires. On July 11, the destination is Canoe Meadows in Pittsfield and on July 18, Olivia's Overlook in West Stockbridge. August hikes include the Old Mill Trail in Hinsdale and then Pleasant Valley Audubon and Kennedy Park in Lenox.

Meet at Temple Anshe Amunim, 26 Broad Street in Pittsfield, on Saturdays at 10:40 a.m. Free and open to all, but pre-registration is required – visit the TAA website at ansheamunim.org.

### Picnic and Havdalah at TAAnglewood

LENOX – On Saturday, July 11 at 6:30 p.m., gather with TAA for a Havdalah service and picnic at Tanglewood. Each attendee will have to buy their own tickets to the performance featuring Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 4 and Mozart's Concerto No 25, with pianist Emanuel Ax. (Ax is a Jewish son of Holocaust survivors, and Mahler was Jewish too!) Find the TAA group gathered around the pool noodles. Bring picnic food to share. Let TAA know you are coming by registering at: ansheamunim.org/event/tanglewood-26.

## Congregation Beth Israel Summer Shabbats

NORTH ADAMS – Congregation Beth Israel of the Berkshires (CBI) continues its rich schedule of Shabbat worship, learning, and community programs through the summer, with offerings both in person and on Zoom.

CBI,

continued on page 20



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## LOCAL NEWS

**CBI,***continued from page 19***Shabbat Services**

Regular Shabbat Morning Services will be held Saturday, June 27 at 9:30 a.m. at CBI. Services will feature words of Torah, prayer, study, and song in the spirit of Shabbat's sweetness, framed by the sanctuary's sweeping views of the natural world.

Kabbalat Shabbat Services take place on the Fridays of July 10 and 24 at 7 p.m. at CBI. All are welcome to usher in Shabbat with prayer, music, poetry, and Torah teaching. On some weeks, the CBI choir and musicians will join Rabbi Rachel Barenblat in leading services, offering a reflective transition from the week into sacred time.

**Soul Spa Torah Study**

A weekly Zoom "Soul Spa" Torah Study meets Saturdays at 10 a.m. on June 20 & 27 and July 4, 11, & 18. Jointly led by Rabbi Rachel Barenblat (CBI) and Rabbi David Markus (Congregation Shir Ami), the group explores the weekly parashah through women's commentaries and midrash. Mourner's Kaddish is included when there is a yahrzeit.

RSVPs for all services are requested at [cbiberkshires.com/calendar-of-events](http://cbiberkshires.com/calendar-of-events). Some dates may be subject to change; congregants are encouraged to check the calendar for updates.

## There are Never Too Many Chefs in the Kitchen of Kindness

### Join Chabad in nourishing those experiencing life's most challenging moments

LENEX – Chabad of the Berkshires invites you to be part of Kitchen of Kindness, a hands-on volunteer initiative where community members come together in the kitchen to prepare meals that bring comfort far beyond the plate.

These meals are delivered to individuals and families going through life's most vulnerable moments – welcoming a new baby, facing illness, grieving a loss, or simply needing to feel remembered and supported.

"There is something powerful about showing up, rolling up your sleeves, and turning compassion into action," says Chabad's co-director Sara Volovik. "Every meal prepared sends a message: you are not alone."

No experience is needed – just a willingness to help. "All are welcome to join, and every act of kindness makes a real difference in someone's life," says Sara.

Please save the dates July 9, July 30, August 6, August 20 for volunteering in the Kitchen of Kindness. RSVP at [Jewishberkshires@gmail.com](mailto:Jewishberkshires@gmail.com).

## Hebrew Union College in the Berkshires Returns with "Songs Ascending"

On Friday, July 24 and Saturday, July 25, Hebrew Union College in the Berkshires will feature the vibrant music of the Reform movement and beyond. From soulful song-filled Shabbat services to a rich conversation between two HUC scholars, this year's

fifth annual gathering will celebrate the sounds of the Jewish world past, present, and future.

On Friday, July 24 at 11 a.m. at Temple Anshe Amunim in Pittsfield, Dr. Judah Cohen (Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Provost) and Dr. Gordon Dale (Dr. Jack Gottlieb Scholar in Jewish Music Studies; Associate Professor of Jewish Musicology) will be in conversation about exciting developments and trends in contemporary scholarship in Jewish music. At 6 p.m., Shabbat services will be held at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire in Great Barrington featuring HUC faculty and leadership.

On Saturday, July 25, meet at 10 a.m. for "Trails and Torah" at Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary in Lenox. Then, at 6 p.m., gather for Havdalah at Tanglewood in Lenox.

Register at: [huc.edu/berkshires-2026](http://huc.edu/berkshires-2026)

*Hebrew Union College in the Berkshires is a collaboration with Hevreh of Southern Berkshire and Temple Anshe Amunim.*

## Celebrate the Jewish Festival of Romance – Tu b'Av

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Monday, July 27 at 4:30 p.m., Hebrew College of Newton brings a program titled "An Evening of Love, Music & Community Celebration: Learning and Love Songs for Tu b'Av" to Hevreh of Southern Berkshire.

In ancient times, on the 15th of Av, unmarried women dressed in simple white and danced in the vineyards – opening their hearts to love, to joy, and to one another.

Hebrew College invites the Berkshire community to gather in that same spirit – for an evening of music, dancing, and celebration of the love that binds us together.

"Come as you are. Bring who you love. And celebrate Berkshire blessings under the summer sky." Invitation to follow.

Presented by Hebrew College with remarks from Rabbi Sharon Cohen Anisfeld, president; teachings from Rabbi Daniel Klein, dean of the Rabbinical School; and a concert led by Rabbi Jessica Kate Meyer, Rosh Tefilah and Artist in Residence.

Registration will be available at [www.hebrewcollege.edu](http://www.hebrewcollege.edu) although the link was not live at press time. To hold a spot, email [mtavan@hebrewcollege.edu](mailto:mtavan@hebrewcollege.edu) and you will be informed about when you may register.

## Tiles, Trails, and Two-Wheelers: Hevreh Announces Summer Lineup

GREAT BARRINGTON – From the clack of tiles in the sanctuary to the quiet hum of bicycle tires on country roads, Hevreh of Southern Berkshire has announced a summer lineup designed to bring the community together through play, prayer, and the great outdoors.

The congregation invites neighbors of all ages to participate in the following upcoming programs:

**Mahjong Through the Seasons**

The community is invited to help fill the sanctuary with the rhythmic sounds of mahjong tiles on select Thursdays this summer. Games will be held at

1 p.m. on June 18, July 16, and August 20. Players of all levels, from beginners to seasoned experts, are welcome. While registration is appreciated, a suggested donation of \$5 is requested.

**Holy Rollers Bike Rides**

Cyclists looking for community and exercise can join the "Holy Rollers" for casual 20- to 25-mile rides through the scenic Berkshire Hills. Rides are scheduled for June 21, July 19, and August 9. All excursions depart from Hevreh at 9 a.m. Helmets and advance registration are strictly required for all participants.

**Hevreh Hikes**

For those who prefer a slower pace on the trails, the congregation's hiking series offers approachable treks for all fitness levels. While most paths are easy, hikers should expect some hills. All hikes begin at 9 a.m., and participants are encouraged to bring water, sturdy footwear, and bug spray. Registration is required for the following dates:

July 12: Basin Pond Trail Loop

August 16: Bidwell House Museum Trail

September 20: Steepletop Reserve

Register for all events at [hevreh.org](http://hevreh.org).

## Ramblin' with the Rav Hikes Continue



Ramblin' with the Rav hikes feature a morning of enjoying the Berkshires – exercise, a beautiful view, good company, a bit of Torah, and fantastic conversation on the trail. This is a wonderful opportunity to build relationships and community while enjoying the outdoors. Rabbi

David Weiner, spiritual leader of Knesset Israel, leads the hikes, which typically take place on weekday and Sunday mornings in the warmer months of the year.

Prospective participants must register in advance for each hike at [knessetisrael.org/rsvp](http://knessetisrael.org/rsvp). Participants must be responsible and realistic regarding their pace, fitness and stamina.

Questions? Please contact Rabbi Weiner by email at [rabiweiner@outlook.com](mailto:rabiweiner@outlook.com).

*Hopkins Memorial Forest, Williamstown*

*Wednesday, July 15*

*Moderate, 4.1 miles, 613', 2+ hours*

The Hopkins Memorial Forest is a reserve with hiking trails spread out over an extensive 2,600 acres. We will walk a relatively smooth trail through a dense, subtly beautiful forest – sunny glens, cascading streams. Leashed dogs are welcome.

Rain date, Thursday, July 16. Register for meeting place (carpool or trailhead) and time.



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## OBITUARIES

### Lawrence A. Strauss, 90, top executive, volunteer, tutor, loved the outdoors

LENOX - Lawrence A. Strauss, 90, died on Friday, May 2, 2025, from a head injury sustained in a fall in his home. Taken immediately to Berkshire Medical Center, Larry was placed in hospice care; he died five days later.

Larry's early years were spent in New York City, Westchester County, and Stamford, CT, where his family moved in 1941. He attended St. Luke's School in New Canaan, CT and later Phillips Academy Andover, graduating in 1952. Larry graduated from Yale University in 1956, majoring in history.

In the U.S. Navy from 1957 to 1960, he attended Officer Candidate School in Newport, RI, commissioned as a lieutenant. Assigned to the naval base in Key West, FL, Larry served aboard a destroyer escort ship.

He married Susan Chieveley-Williams, an Englishwoman, in 1957. Their children were Lawrence C. Strauss, born in 1958, Michael J. Strauss in 1961 and Jeremy R. Strauss in 1967.

After his discharge from the Navy in 1960, Larry worked in Asheville, NC, for his family's clothing business, before moving with his young family to NYC to pursue opportunities in the financial world, later moving to Montclair, NJ.

Larry's first marriage ended in divorce in 1974.

In 1995, after 21 years together, Larry Strauss and Francine Weinberg married and continued to live in Manhattan until 2004, when they moved to Lenox. Larry reported that his years in the Berkshires were his happiest.

Larry, who earned an MBA at NYU, had a rich and multifaceted career in several industries including nearly a decade as a top executive at Phillips-Van Heusen Corp., a clothing maker; a period spent in commercial real estate; and many years in finance at various firms, including Lehman Brothers.

After retirement, he volunteered for Literacy Network, tutoring students in English as a second language. An avid reader, always with a book or two in hand, he loved nature and enjoyed outdoor activities such as hiking and snowshoeing. He was an enthusiastic attendee of concerts, theater, and dance performances in the Berkshires.

A moving memorial service took place last summer in A Better Place Forest, Drury, MA, a 200-acre conservation woodland. Larry would have

loved the beauty and peace of the natural setting where his family and friends gathered to honor and remember him. A tree there, around where his ashes were spread, now carries a plaque inscribed with a quote by John Muir: "The clearest way into the universe is through a forest wilderness."

Besides his beloved wife, Fran, of Lenox, with whom he shared more than a half century of happy years, survivors include his son Lawrence and daughter-in-law, Erin, both of Millburn, N.J.; son Jeremy of Edinburgh, Scotland; son Michael of Pemberton Township, N.J.; sister and brother-in-law, Marjorie and Max Power of Rochester, NY; brother-in-law Kenneth Weinberg of Philadelphia; and two grandchildren, Hannah and Alex Strauss, of Millburn, N.J.

Larry was predeceased in 1956 by his brother, Richard Strauss.

### Lorraine S. Shapiro, 97, active volunteer, store owner, avid golfer

NORTH ADAMS - Lorraine Sisselman Shapiro, 97, passed away on Monday, April 13.

Born April 27, 1928 in Cedarhurst, NY to Nathan Sisselman and Nettie Lipman Sisselman, Lorraine's early years were surrounded by many cousins, filled with joy and close family connections.

At age 12, she moved to Pittsfield, attending public schools before continuing her education at Linden Hall, a private boarding and day school in Lititz, PA.

She went on to attend the University of Wisconsin, graduating in 1949 with a major in sociology. In a reflection of her independence, Lorraine began her college journey by boarding a train alone in Pittsfield, traveling to Chicago, and transferring to Madison, WI. While in college, she was a member of the women's Dolphin swim team, performing the crawl stroke and participated in water ballet.

Lorraine loved visiting Chicago with friends where she met Allan Shapiro of North Adams, then a student at Purdue University. They married on June 27, 1949.

Lorraine devoted herself to her family as a homemaker, raising her three children. She was an active volunteer with Hadassah and later became a co-owner of Cassidy, a clothing boutique with retail store in Stockbridge, and manufactured a quilted cotton coat line. Creative and entrepreneurial, she designed and assembled beaded jewelry to sell in the store.

An avid golfer, Lorraine was part of a pioneering group

of ten women who were the first to play at Taconic Golf Course on Tuesdays. She cherished her time on the course and was a devoted follower of professional golf.

Alongside her close friend Irma, Lorraine developed a dollhouse kit business, creating and selling individual room kits. Her lifelong love of sewing and creativity stemmed from growing up in a family sewing business.

Lorraine was independent and self-confident. She would always say, "I will tell you what I think, then you do what you want." She was an avid reader and known for her meticulous nature where everything always had its place.

She and husband, Allie, enjoyed traveling together for automobile conventions. She made frequent trips to New York City and visited Israel several times.

She will be remembered for being devoted to her family, her brisket, zucchini casserole, kugel, and multiple desserts. She was also a master gardener of geraniums.

Lorraine leaves her children, Martin Robert Shapiro (Kathy), Edward Jay Shapiro (Margaret), Amy Beth Shapiro (Peter deceased); five grandchildren, Mathew Shapiro, Jeffrey Shapiro (Danielle), Scott Shapiro, Martha Rose Marsters, Emma Vail Marsters; and many nieces, nephews, and their spouses.

A graveside service was held on Wednesday, April 15 in Southview Cemetery, North Adams.

### Paula Lee Hellman, 81, Director of Religious School at Hevreh, loved teaching, learning

RIVIERA BEACH, FL - Paula Lee Hellman, 81, passed away on Saturday, April 4.

Born May 2, 1944, in New York City, she grew up on the Upper West Side with her parents and sister. She skipped several grades and graduated from New York University in 1965.

Paula worked as a consultant at Family Planning, as an educator, and for the last 17 years of her career as the Religious School Director for Hevreh of Southern Berkshire.

She loved teaching, learning, writing, and artwork. She loved curling up by the fireplace and reading. She and her husband David were so grateful for each other's presence in their lives.

Paula loved the world of ideas. She and her family were all educators. Books would be strewn about the dinner table at almost every family dinner. As the Religious School Director, Paula embodied such amazing enthusiasm for

learning, that a number of her students, so inspired by Paula, went on to become rabbis.

She met her husband David in 1983, and they had been joyously married for 40 years and spent 32 of those years together in the Berkshires before retiring to Florida in 2015. Unfortunately, shortly after relocating to Florida, Paula evidenced signs of cognitive issues which were later diagnosed as Alzheimer's Disease, a most horrible progressive disease with no known cure.

Her husband would like to thank Arden Courts, the memory care facility where Paula spent her last 7 years, for the care and compassion they showed Paula, and also David, her husband. Paula could not have received better care and was fortunate to have the same caregiver at Arden Courts for the duration of her residency.

Paula was preceded in death by her father Irving Lorge, PhD and her mother Sarah Wolfson Lorge, a senior high school educator.

Paula is survived by her loving husband David; stepson Adam; daughter Tara; son Jason; sister Beatrice; and four grandchildren.

Burial services were private, and a celebration of Paula's life will be held at a date to be announced.

### Milton (Milt) H. Reiss, 83, professor, avid athlete, loved music

SEATTLE, WA - Milton (Milt) H. Reiss, 83, a long-time resident of Becket and Princeton, NJ, passed away in Seattle on Tuesday, May 5.

Born in Brooklyn, NY, on May 28, 1942, Milt taught for many years as a professor of Computer Languages at Raritan Valley Community College in NJ. He was an avid athlete who ran several marathons. After his retirement, he enjoyed running, biking, swimming, and kayaking in the Berkshires, and participated several times in The Josh Billings Runaground.

Milt loved music, played the role of the Rabbi in a community theater production of *A Fiddler on the Roof*, and sang in the BerkshireSings! chorus.

He is survived by his wife, Dorothy David; children and their spouses, Karin Reiss and L. David Peters of Seattle, and David Reiss and Marlies Oostland, of Amsterdam, the Netherlands; grandsons, Sam and Eli Peters; sister, Arlene Canon; and a niece and nephew.

Donations may be made to Berkshire United Way or to your local member-supported classical music station.

### Robert Ascher Yawitt, 89, loved travel, gifted storyteller, infectious laugh

WELLESLEY, MA - Robert "Bob" Yawitt, 89, passed away peacefully in his sleep on Thursday, May 21, at his home. He was the devoted husband of Phyllis Yawitt, with whom he shared more than 57 years of marriage.

Born in Chicago, IL, on August 16, 1936, to the late Jacob "Jack" Yawitt and Helen (Gastwirth) Yawitt, who adopted him as an infant, by his own admission, Bob was a bit of a troublemaker. He loved spending time at his father's Oldsmobile dealership, although he more than once managed to damage a vehicle while driving around the shop at just ten years old.

Bob's family later moved to Florida, where he began high school. He earned his bachelor's degree and was a member of the AEPi fraternity at the University of Miami. Following college, Bob proudly served in the United States Air Force as a medic, achieving the rank of Staff Sergeant, receiving an honorable discharge in 1962.

Professionally, Bob lived many chapters. He owned a men's clothing store in Miami, spent years in the jewelry business as a personal jewelry shopper to notable clients, and later became a licensed realtor in Florida. In 1984, he and Phyllis moved to Massachusetts.

Bob is survived by his first wife, Stephanie Parnes; their children, Scott Osman and wife Alyson, and Bini Masin and husband Greg; Phyllis's children from her first marriage, Jon, Sher Hope, and Kara Faust and partner Kenny; and Bob and Phyllis's daughter, Jolie Helmbrecht and husband Todd; adoring grandchildren Becca, Chad, Zach, Hana, Rachael, Emily, Jason, Madison, Jennifer, Noa, and Asher; ten great-grandchildren and the many friends he made and cherished throughout his life. Bob was predeceased by his beloved grandson Joe.

A celebration of life is planned for later this year, with details to be shared at a later date.



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# CULTURE & ARTS



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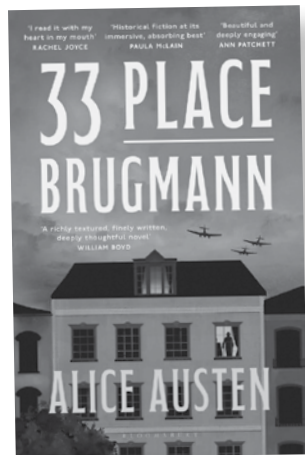


### A BJV column about Jewish books and authors

By Dr. Steve Rubin / Special to the BJV

Dear Readers,

June in the Berkshires is a wonderful time of year: warmer weather, flowers in bloom, and lots of cultural events. It's also a good time to catch up on your reading, whether it's sitting on your back porch or in your favorite living room chair. This month I am recommending two recently published, debut novels: Alice Austen's *33 Place Brugmann* and Sarah Yahm's *Unfinished Acts of Wild Creation*.



Published in 2025 Alice Austen's *33 Place Brugmann*, short listed for this year's National Jewish Book Award, is a Holocaust novel that takes a different approach from the many recent Holocaust-themed books. As the title indicates, *33 Place Brugmann* (an actual address in Brussels) does not take place in a concentration camp, but follows the occupants of said apartment building at the time of Nazi occupation of Belgium. As individuals adjust to their new reality, lives become intertwined, and relations become complicated and potentially dangerous. Neighbors learn who can be trusted and who cannot. Each must choose how to respond to the Nazi occupation: collaborate with their occupiers, resist passively or actively, or flee. Austen, a British writer who lived at 33 Place Brugmann Street as part of her research for the novel, has in short created an intriguing study of character, love, resilience, and difficult choices.

Also published last year (and also a finalist for one of this year's National Jewish Book awards), is Sarah Yahm's *Unfinished Acts of Wild Creation*. Although the

subject matter is often difficult (grief, family separation, hereditary disease) there is also love, devotion, and not a small amount of humor. The story follows the 40-year marriage of the Rosenbergs (Leon and Louise) as they navigate life from the time husband and wife meet, through their long marriage, the birth (and growth) of their daughter, and their eventual separation. The ethical core of the novel involves Louise's decision to leave her family (a complicated decision that can be viewed as either self-serving or incredibly generous) and the ramifications of that decision. Why she decides to depart and what proceeds after that, readers will have to discover for themselves. Suffice it to say, *Unfinished Acts*, a novel *The Forward* called "devastating and unforgettable," will engage even the most casual reader.



**Steven J. Rubin, Ph.D.** has written and lectured extensively both here and abroad on issues relating to Jewish culture and literature. He is professor emeritus and former dean at Adelphi University, Garden City, NY. He can be reached at [sjr@adelphi.edu](mailto:sjr@adelphi.edu) – or better yet, come to his Current Events Seminar on July 16 and August 20 at noon, a Connecting With Community program held at Knesset Israel in Pittsfield (see page 5 for more info).

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# THE ZIONISTS

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CULTURE & ARTS

Berkshire Jewish Film Festival Returns for Its 40th Season



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 3:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. from July 6 to August 18.

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.

Proceeds benefit the Hebrew School at Knesset Israel.

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

July 6

3:30 p.m. – *Our Neighbour's Ass* (short): When widow Ida inherits her late husband's beloved donkey Pablo, she inherits his chaos too. From pre-dawn braying to eaten shrubbery, Pablo has made himself the most infamous resident in the neighborhood. This warm Yorkshire-set comedy-drama is a beautifully balanced portrait of loss and grief that manages to make you laugh and pull at your heartstrings at the same time.



*Rosenthal the Great Showman*: In 1978 West Germany, Hans Rosenthal is the nation's most beloved TV host, adored by millions. But he carries a secret that could shatter everything. When a celebration of the anniversary of his blockbuster game show is scheduled for November 9, the 40th anniversary of Kristallnacht, he is expected to entertain millions rather than attend Germany's first official memorial for the victims. This biographical drama depicts Hans' reckoning with his buried past and the nation that has embraced him without ever truly knowing him.

7:30 p.m. – *The Stage Is Ours* (short): Nearly fifty of Broadway's most prominent Jewish voices converge at the storied Lyceum Theatre to reflect on what it means to tell Jewish stories on stage. *The Stage is Ours* is a joyful commemoration of the Jewish experience, in all its humor, heartbreak, and resilience, which has influenced American theatre culture for over a century.



*Tovah*: A biography of Tovah Feldshuh, a force of nature whose fearless talent, intellectual rigor, and commanding

presence have graced American theater and television for more than five decades. Through exclusive interviews, rare archival footage, and intimate behind-the-scenes access, this is not just a portrait of an actress, it's a celebration of what it means to dedicate your life to your craft.

July 13

3:30 p.m. – *The Road Between Us*: When Hamas terrorists storm his son's kibbutz on October 7, 2023, retired Israeli general Noam Tibon receives a desperate WhatsApp message: his son, daughter-in-law, and two young granddaughters are trapped in a panic room, listening to gunfire closing in. With no military rescue coming, Noam and his wife Gali arm themselves and drive ten harrowing hours across a country under siege, fighting through ambushes and chaos to reach their family. Told through raw footage and firsthand testimony, this is a pulse-pounding testament to the ferocity of a parent's love.



7:30 p.m. – *Tatami*: When Iranian judo athlete Leila arrives at the Judo World Championships with the prospect of winning her country's first-ever gold medal, her government delivers a chilling ultimatum – withdraw from the event or be branded a traitor. *Tatami* is a tense thriller that unfolds over a single day, putting Leila and her coach in an impossible fight for freedom and dignity where every victory on the mat brings a new and more terrifying threat off of it. This is the first film co-directed by an Israeli and an Iranian filmmaker.

July 20

3:30 p.m. – *Double Happiness* (short): After the death of her husband of 50 years, a Jewish widow and a Chinese restaurateur who serves her family every Christmas find themselves drawn into an unexpected late-in-life romance.

*Labors of Love: Henrietta Szold*: See the related story on page ##.

7:30 p.m. – *Beshert* (Short): The story of a grumpy care home resident and a reluctant bar mitzvah boy who develop an

unlikely friendship. Beshert, the Yiddish word for "destiny," is a heartwarming short film about two people at opposite ends of life who discover that some connections are simply meant to be.



*My Underground Mother*: A deeply personal reckoning with the secrets mothers keep, the silence that passes between generations, and one woman's determination to finally tell the truth. Twenty years after her mother's death, journalist Marisa Fox discovers that the woman she thought she knew had been living under a false identity. The fiery freedom fighter of British Mandate Palestine had concealed her past as a teenage prisoner in a Jewish women's forced labor camp in Nazi-occupied Sudetenland. At the heart of the film

is a secret journal written by the camp's teenage prisoners, unlocking a harrowing and largely untold chapter of Holocaust history. As Fox tracks down surviving women across the globe, they break decades of silence, illuminating a daring sisterhood that sustained them.

July 27

3:30 p.m. – *Among Neighbors*: A haunting story of a Polish town where centuries of coexistence between Jews and Catholics collapsed in the shadow of World War II. The discord culminated in a shocking massacre, not under Nazi occupation, but months after Germany's defeat. This powerful documentary plays like a real-life murder mystery, excavating buried truths of violence, complicity, and silence.

7:30 p.m. – *Dust Bowls and Jewish Souls*: Uncovers the surprising bond between legendary folk singer Woody Guthrie and his mother-in-law, renowned Yiddish poet Aliza Greenblatt. This movie reveals how Jewish history and culture quietly wove itself into the Guthrie songbook and family life.

The Klezmatics Celebrate 40 Years, Rising Star Riki Rose Joins Lineup, and English Supertitles Debut at Yidstock 2026

Seven concerts plus workshops and artist talks highlight a four-day celebration of Yiddish music, language, and culture in Amherst



AMHERST – The Klezmatics will mark their 40th anniversary with a special concert at Yidstock: The Festival of New Yiddish Music, the annual celebration of klezmer and contemporary Yiddish music presented by the Yiddish Book

Center. The festival takes place at the Center from Friday, July 9 to Sunday, July 12, bringing together beloved performers and a new generation of artists carrying Yiddish music forward.

"The Yiddish Book Center's Yidstock is one of the world's most important and *lebedik* (jubilant) festivals of Yiddish and klezmer music," said Frank London, trumpeter for The Klezmatics. "The Klezmatics have been fortunate to perform there many times, and there is no better way for us to celebrate our 40th anniversary – and the release of our latest recording, *We Were Made for These Times*."

Performers include returning favorites Levyosn and Midwood, acclaimed artist Eleanor Reissa, legendary folksinger Ethel Raim, genre-defying producer and performer Socalled, and emerging stars Riki Rose and Jordan Wax, both making their Yidstock debuts.

"Concertgoers will enjoy a mix of festival veterans and artists making their Yidstock debuts, plus familiar artists with new programs and new collaborations," said Seth Rogovoy. "It all adds up to a dynamic pageant of new, exciting, and ever-evolving Yiddish and klezmer music."

New this year, Yidstock will introduce projected English supertitles, giving audiences real-time translations of Yiddish lyrics and deepening their connection to the songs. For tickets and a full schedule of performers, concerts, and talks visit [yiddishbookcenter.org/yidstock](http://yiddishbookcenter.org/yidstock).



Peace of Mind

DURING TURBULENT TIMES

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**BERKSHIRE THEATRE GROUP**

July 2-16  
at The Colonial Theatre

**COMMUNITY PROJECT**

**1776**

America's Prize Winning Musical  
directed by David Adkins  
music direction by Erin White  
choreography by Kathy Jo Grover

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Berkshire Theatre Group  
**The SETH RUDETSKY Concert Series**  
at Williams College

**BONNIE MILLIGAN**  
July 11 • 7PM

**NORM LEWIS**  
August 8 • 7PM

**LILLIAS WHITE**  
August 22 • 7PM

62 Center for Theatre and Dance  
1000 Main Street, Williamstown, MA 01267

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July 22-August 23  
at The Unicorn Theatre  
The Larry Vaber Stage

**LOVESONG**

by Abi Morgan  
directed by David Auburn

Karen Allen    Rebecca Brooksher    Shawn Fagan    David Garrison

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July 31-August 16  
at The Colonial Theatre

**A MUSIC-FILLED COMEDY**

**THE LEGEND OF Georgia McBride**

by Matthew López  
direction and choreography by Isadora Wolfe

The Colonial Theatre  
111 South Street • Pittsfield, MA

The Unicorn Theatre  
6 East Street • Stockbridge, MA

**BerkshireTheatreGroup.org**  
**(413) 997-4444**



## Kosher Meals to Go—Meals on Wheels

**ALL ARE WELCOME:** Kosher lunch will be prepared on Mondays and Thursdays. Meals to go will be ready by noon for pickup at the Knesset Israel kitchen door, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield. All meals-on-wheels will be delivered by Federation volunteers in the early afternoon. Suggested donation of \$3 for adults over age 60; \$7 for all others

**RESERVATIONS REQUIRED BY 9 A.M. THE DAY BEFORE THE LUNCH:** Call Federation's kitchen at (413) 442-2200 the day before to reserve a meal for pick-up or to arrange delivery.

### What's for Lunch?

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

#### JUNE

##### MONDAY, JUNE 15

**Noon, Lunch...**Salad trio (GF)(DF), Tuna salad, egg salad, pasta salad, cream of mushroom soup, honey wheat bread, and chocolate pudding

##### THURSDAY, JUNE 18

**10:30 a.m. program:** Laura Wetzler, Halleluyah: The Music and Poetry of Leonard Cohen.

**Noon, Lunch...**Sweet and sour turkey meatballs (GF)(DF), rice, Asian vegetables, sesame cucumber salad, white bread, and Mandarin oranges.

##### MONDAY, JUNE 22

**Noon, Lunch...**Salmon loaf (GF)(DF), potatoes au gratin, meadow blend vegetables, carrot salad, honey wheat bread, and snicker doodle cookie.

##### THURSDAY, JUNE 25

**10:45 a.m. program:** Lita Moses and Daniel Moses, The Red Hotel: Tribute to a Lost World.

**Noon, Lunch...**Broccoli and cheese quiche, roasted potatoes, green beans, cold cucumber soup, roll, and Pistachio fluff.

##### MONDAY, JUNE 29

**Noon, Lunch...**Potato knish, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, borscht, rye bread, and apple sauce.

#### JULY

##### THURSDAY, JULY 2

**10:30 a.m. program:** Laura Wetzler, The Jewish Musicals: Jewish Life on Broadway.

**Noon, Lunch...**Chicken stir fry (GF)(DF), rice, sesame broccoli, salad, Chinese noodles, and brownie.

##### MONDAY, JULY 6

**Noon, Lunch...**Meatloaf (GF)(DF), mashed potatoes, peas and carrots, salad, white bread, and fruit cocktail.

##### THURSDAY, JULY 9

**10:45 a.m. program:** Michael Hoberman, The Origin of New York Jews: Sampson Simson's 1800 Columbia College Commencement Speech.

**Noon, Lunch...**Spinach and artichoke frittata (GF), hash brown potatoes, zucchini, spring pea soup, whole wheat bread, and marble bundt cake.

##### MONDAY, JULY 13

**Noon, Lunch...**Hard boiled egg (GF)(DF), hummus, roasted eggplant dip, vegetable dippers, gazpacho, pita bread, and rice pudding.

##### THURSDAY, JULY 16

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

**Noon, Lunch...**Rigatoni Bolognese (DF), zucchini, Italian green beans, salad, Italian bread, and fresh melon.

##### MONDAY, JULY 20

**Noon, Lunch...**Ratatouille (GF)(DF), quinoa, roasted sweet potato, salad, sourdough bread, and apricots.

##### THURSDAY, JULY 23 - CLOSED FOR TISHA B'AV

#### Knesset Israel – 16 Colt Road, Pittsfield



#### ONGOING MINYANS

Saturday, ..... 9:30 a.m.  
Sunday, ..... 8:45 a.m.  
Friday, ..... 5:45 p.m.

#### CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

Friday, June 19.....8:15 p.m.  
Friday, June 26.....8:16 p.m.  
Friday, July 3.....8:15 p.m.  
Friday, July 10.....8:13 p.m.  
Friday, July 17.....8:09 p.m.  
Friday, July 24.....8:03 p.m.

#### 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.

#### 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.

**BERKSHIRE JEWISH VOICES**



**A Semiquincentennial Journey Home**

By Albert Stern / BJV Editor

**Prologue: November 2025, Nearly 250 Years After the Signing of the Declaration of Independence**

ME: So, if this research is correct – and it might not be – then you and I are related to two presidents, James Madison and Zachary Taylor. We all share a great-grandfather, a wealthy planter named James Taylor.

[MY SON] ELIOT: Yeah. Okay.

ME: ‘Yeah. Okay.’? That’s all that it gets? I mean, to find out that not only are we descendants of some of the eminent families of Virginia, but that we are related to two presidents, one of them a Founding Father, and all you have to say is ‘yeah okay’?

ELIOT: Yeah.

ME: You’re not impressed.

ELIOT: Dad, you find out things like that all the time.

ME: All the...? Eliot, this is a pretty unusual thing to find out. I mean, not everyone, looking into their family history, discovers that they’re related to a Founding Father.

ELIOT: But you seem to.

ME: [Sound of teeth gnashing.]

**TO BE CONTINUED**

I visited Cherry Walk in Essex County, Virginia on a cool and cloudless November morning in 2025. The plantation, now on the National Register of Historic Places, is just a few miles west of the Rappahannock River, one of the four main watercourses that – along with the Potomac, the York, and the James – were the economic lifeblood of the region in the Colonial Era. The Virginia Department of Historic Resources website describes the property as “an unusually complete Tidewater plantation complex of the middling class, providing a rare, essentially undisturbed picture of a vanished lifestyle. With its gambrel roof, plain interior, and unadorned brick walls, the dwelling house is a

characteristic example of late-18th-century eastern Virginia architecture, built ca. 1795 for Carter Croxton whose family had settled there in 1739.”

The property was then on the market and there to greet me was the realtor’s husband, William Andrews, a descendant of Virginia settlers who arrived in 1614. He let me in through a side door and I started my tour in the living room. I was taking it all in when the heavy wooden door behind us slammed shut with the boom of a thunderclap. William and I jumped. We looked around. The windows and every other door were shut tight and the trees outside were not swaying in the wind.

“Um...hi, Grandpa!”, I exclaimed.

“That is exactly what I was thinking,” said William, and we both cracked up.

John Carter Croxton is a 6th great-grandfather on my birth mother’s side, and maybe he was or maybe he wasn’t welcoming me home. No doubt my arrival would have marked an exciting day for a ghost. Certainly, it was one for me. I’d been aware of my ties to Cherry Walk for years and had studied photos that a cousin shared. But to be inside its rooms traversing the spaces my Virginia ancestors inhabited was another unstuck-in-time moment of the kind that have recurred since I started visiting sites associated with my early American forbears in 2025.



At Cherry Walk

In May 2025, I visited Frederick, Maryland, and several of the Mid-Atlantic battlefields on which my probably Jewish paternal 6th great-grandfather David Levy had served as a quartermaster sergeant with the Continental Army. Grandpa David’s war record was impressive – he crossed the Delaware with General George Washington’s forces twice; was at key battles at Germantown, Trenton, Princeton, and Monmouth, among others;

saw Indian action with Gen. Sullivan in Pennsylvania; and spent time at Valley Forge, as well.

Grandpa Carter was no slouch, either, a Virginia militiaman who fought at the most decisive battles of the southern war – Camden (badly wounded), Cowpens (wounded again), Guilford Courthouse, and the siege of Yorktown, where he witnessed the British surrender. If you watched the Ken Burns PBS documentary on the war, you know how pivotal all those clashes were to victory and the founding of the United States – and also how vicious the fighting was in the southern theater, a true civil war among the colonists.

I began my southern swing the day before in Washington, DC, visiting the National Archives Museum to gape at the Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Bill of Rights. It roused me to a proper patriotic spirit. When I had visited the battlefields, home, churches, and cemeteries that are part of the Maryland Levy story, I fell into reveries imagining what it felt like to be a Colonial Era Jew. For someone who possesses an entirely Jewish sense of self, doing so

**SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL JOURNEY,**  
continued on page 26

**CULTURE & ARTS**

**“Music At Hevreh” Presents World Premiere Performances on July 7**  
**“A Classical Conversation” concert and discussion will feature BSO musicians playing new arrangements by noted composer/pianist Jakov Jakoulov**

GREAT BARRINGTON – The rich history of Jewish music in the Berkshires takes a fresh step forward this summer with the introduction of “Music at Hevreh,” celebrating the synagogue’s year-round musical programming and inviting the community at-large to join in.



Composer/Pianist Jakov Jakoulov

The premiere event on Tuesday, July 7 at 7 p.m., will be “A Classical Conversation,” an intimate evening of Jewish music and discussion featuring Boston Symphony Orchestra violist Michael Zaretsky and clarinetist Tom Martin accompanied by acclaimed chamber musician and longtime Cornell faculty member, pianist Xak Bjerken, and led by composer/pianist Jakov Jakoulov. All have deep ties to the Berkshires through Tanglewood and long-running artistic relationships in the region.

“For more than 50 years, Hevreh has hosted hundreds of talented vocalists and musicians whose joyful Jewish music has blessed our congregation and the greater Berkshires community,”

said the synagogue’s Senior Rabbi Jodie Gordon. “Music at Hevreh recognizes that legacy and turns up the volume for this and future generations.”

“A Classical Conversation,” a fundraiser for Hevreh programs and services, will feature the world premieres of three arrangements written by Jakoulov specifically for the trio of clarinet, viola, and piano.

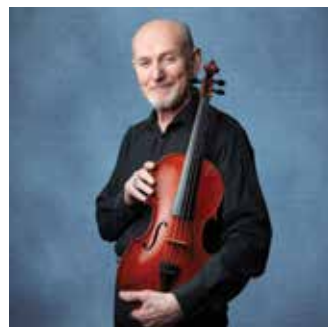
The first, *Paraphrase on Bloch’s “Nigun,”* starts with a familiar reference point and then moves somewhere unexpected.

“This is not an arrangement in the traditional sense,” Jakoulov explained. “It’s closer to a recomposition – an original piece built on Ernest Bloch’s material.”

Instead of leaning into the lush, lamenting quality of Bloch’s well-known work, Jakoulov pushes it into a darker, more mysterious space. “I wanted to move away from the sentimental character and create something more dramatic,” he said.



Pianist Xak Bjerken



Violist, Michael Zaretsky

The second piece, *Yiddish Lexicon*, shifts gears entirely. It’s playful, episodic, and full of personality, a series of short musical “entries” inspired by Jewish texts, folklore, and everyday life.

“Think of it as a kind of musical dictionary, where each movement captures a different image or idea,” the composer said. “To the religious Jewish mind, ordinary life is a continuation of biblical history. I tried to bring humor into that world.”

Audience members will be given a short glossary to follow along – covering a range of references from mystical figures to familiar Yiddish expressions (all a little bit *meshugeneh*), but the piece is designed to land intuitively, even without translation.

The program closes with a brand-new *Kol Nidrei* (2026), also receiving its first performance that evening. Built on the ancient melody associated with the Yom Kippur service, Jakoulov’s version steps outside the sanctuary and into the concert hall.

“It’s based on the traditional tune,” he said, “but conceived entirely as a concert piece.” In other words, it invites listeners to hear something deeply familiar with fresh ears.

After the music, the conversation begins – literally. Jakoulov will lead an informal discussion with the audience and performers, opening the floor to reactions, questions, and reflections. The premise is simple: what did you hear and what did it make you think about?

“This is how we teach, learn, and grow together as a community,” said Gordon. “Music at Hevreh puts a name to our tradition, and on July 7 ‘A Classical Conversation’ will bring it to life with music rooted in Jewish experience and plenty of room for curiosity, joy, and a little back-and-forth.”

*Hevreh of Southern Berkshire is located at 270 State Road in Great Barrington. For tickets and information visit hevreh.org.*



Clarinetist Tom Martin

## BERKSHIRE JEWISH VOICES

### SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL JOURNEY,

*continued from page 25*

was an entrée point into that world, my fantasies activated by landmarks and landscapes that my ancestors would recognize if they could be resurrected today.

Virginia was a different story. As a native South Floridian oriented toward the northeastern United States whose adopted family's identity was forged in Eastern Europe and later in Eretz Yisrael, Southern history never spoke to me at all. Certainly, I hold no attraction to the antebellum world portrayed in *Gone With the Wind* – I was taught to view the rarified world of the Southern elites romanticized by Margaret Mitchell as despicable, and to regard the subsequent Lost Cause mythologists, racialists, and segregationists as abhorrent. Slavery is America's original sin. But I also understand the power and sway of nostalgia – I mean, I grew up in (and in certain ways still inhabit) a community so nostalgic for a shtetl world in which its members were oppressed that we wrote a Broadway musical that celebrates our fondness for it. In Europe, we existed on the bottom rungs of society, and so it is not that difficult to imagine how a certain type of American might look back fondly at a social order in which people like themselves – people like me, I could say – were situated at the top.

My guide William tells me about the places his family has lived in for centuries, all within a few counties not far from Cherry Walk. My direct ancestors stayed put in Virginia for a century after the Revolutionary War. In the decades following the Civil War, my birth mother's family – Burnetts – moved first to Montana to work for the railroads and then settled in California in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

William couched his family history with a peculiar phraseology I nevertheless found familiar. "I've been here..." he says when talking about his ancestors and where they settled, which was kind of astonishing, because that's how I started to frame things in my inner monologues. I didn't realize that other people do it as well. For me, it had reinforced the reality that what happened in these places I visit – from Massachusetts south to Virginia – has something to do with what brought me to today.

I had created a list of some of the families connected with the Croxtons. Faulconer. Dunn. Broaddus. Catlett. Haile. Gaines. Taliaferro (which I pronounce as spelled and am corrected by William – "you mean 'Tolliver'"). Those families are still around and many are still prominent, William says, adding that he had business dealings with some Taliaferros and would tell them that he'd met their cousin.

William was amused when I told him that I was raised traditionally Jewish in the Sun and Fun Capitol of America, Miami Beach, Florida, and that all these American stories I'd been connecting to exasperated me. (My Californio Mexican birth father, Joe, also used to think it incredibly funny that he had a long-lost son who – get a load of this – is a *New York Jew*.) Who are these people, these Broadduses, Catletts, and 'Tuh-luh-vuhs' from whom I descend? At least Grandpa David was a Levy. I grew up with Levys. As the gabbai at my Chabad synagogue, I go around the shul on Shabbos asking visitors if they are Levites so I might call them up to the *bima* for the second *aliyah* when we read the weekly *parsha*. Quartermaster Sergeant Levy of the Continental Army's German Regiment might even have understood what *bimot*, *aliyot*, and *parshiyot* are.

... to understand the nature of the colonies,  
it is a mistake to think of them as an  
"outward-looking, future-anticipating"  
frontier in the way historians once thought  
of the American West.

Grandpa Carter might have checked Grandpa David's forehead to see if he had horns. It took America five centuries to reconstitute me as a 'rootless cosmopolitan,' as 20th century Marxists so charmingly slurred the Jews. Rootless is what I am, but also what I am not. Virtually every English, Scottish, and German line I can follow genealogically was in America by the 1600s and 1700s, with the Southern California and Native American ancestors going back a long stretch further. The Irish folk fleeing the Great Potato Famine arrived no later than the mid-1800s. I have roots here, there, and everywhere in early America, a reality that was brought home for me in a way it never had before when William led me out to the family plot behind the house. Carter Croxton is buried there, but he insisted that no gravestone mark his final resting place. As the dazzling morning sun shone on Cherry Walk, my ancestral home, I stood above his bones.

The fields of Cherry Walk are still farmed by contractors, but the crops had been harvested by the time of my November visit. The gardens were all bare and though leaves were still on the trees, the empty plantation seemed forlorn. Many people today would find it a less than an ideal place to inhabit, even as a country retreat. Cherry Walk retains an orderliness – parallel rows of trees line the shaded lane leading up to the big house, which, if not grand, is substantial and was assuredly a source of pride for my family of middling Virginia farmers. The outbuildings just beyond the house testified to the property's function – it was a place of work, not a place to relax. And not a place to be alone.

As happened to me when I visited the Levy home in Maryland, I began to imagine the landscape filling up with people and clamor, here amid abundant unharvested crops, with noises of dogs and barnyard animals and children, with steam and scents and loud work sounds emanating from the outbuildings. Carter Croxton had a large brood, (depending on which family tree you consult) six children with his first wife (my Grandma Nancy Dunn) and five with his second – the old goat kept fathering children until he was well into his long dotage (he lived to the age of eighty-three). There would have been a multitude of people working the property, some of them members of his immediate and extended families, some hired white farmhands or indentured servants, some enslaved Blacks. Although I've found no proof that Carter owned slaves, my research about the era indicates that a plantation owner of his station would have enslaved between three and twenty people. Standing in that small family graveyard, I felt the tension of several generations of human beings consigned to different strata of society, living together in fraught isolation on this backwater parcel of land.

The historian Bernard Baylin, in *The Peopling of British North America: An Introduction*, wrote that to understand the nature of the colonies, it is a mistake to think of them as an "outward-looking, future-anticipating" frontier in the way historians once thought of the American West. Instead, the early settlements

constituted a periphery, "a ragged margin of a central world, a regressive, backward-looking diminishment of metropolitan accomplishment" in ways that were both brutal and bizarre. As for the world of the southern colonies, Baylin writes:

*In plantation culture, and elsewhere where slavery was an important part of society, an accommodation was somehow made between brutality and progressive refinement. The savagery of chattel slavery was no new thing for people of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; brutality in human relations was commonplace, and took many forms. What was new was that chattel slavery, a condition considered appropriate for isolated work gangs at the remote margins of civilization, was here incorporated into a world of growing sophistication.*

This was the way of life that 20-year-old Carter Croxton would fight for. Virginia's plantation culture reached its apogee in the Piedmont region north and west of the coastal plain on which Cherry Walk is situated. The sophisticated ideas and achievements produced by that elite culture – by men like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison – will never be enough to define its character. These Founding Fathers were slaveowners who treated human beings as property they could deal with as they saw fit. Young men like my Grandpa Carter may have joined their revolution to preserve their own economic interests and social status, gambling that an independent American nation would be more felicitous to the middling classes than continued subjugation to the English crown. Whatever his motivation, Carter Croxton was a patriot who fought bravely for independence and the great nation United States of America was destined to become. You may be less sanguine – as for me, I believe in America. I have no choice but to embrace its contradictions as part of my personal history, beyond the received heritage that all Americans inherit no matter when their families might have arrived here.

Grandpa Carter's war began in disaster. He marched with 700 other Virginia militiamen with the army of Major General Horatio Gates into South Carolina in July 1780. The army led by British General Charles Lord Cornwallis met them outside of Camden, a British outpost created to control the surrounding back-country. The 18<sup>th</sup> century military custom was to place the best fighting unit on the right side of the frontline, which Gates did. It was a tactical error, as the general also put his least seasoned troops – the Virginia militia – on the left of his front line, where they faced the most adept British soldiers. The Redcoats made short work of the Americans once they fixed bayonets and charged. The Virginia militia broke and ran, and over 900 men in Gates's army were killed or wounded – Carter Croxton was among the latter. He was not among the 1,000 prisoners taken by Cornwallis, and somehow made it back home to Cherry Walk to recuperate.

Grandpa Carter was back in with the Virginia militia in January 1781, which was under the command of Brigadier General Daniel Morgan. Things were not going particularly well for the Americans – Charleston and Savannah were in British hands and all the while, a civil war between Patriot and Loyalist militias raged across the countryside. Major General Nathaniel Greene, who replaced Gates, directed Morgan to hamper British operations in South Carolina. Cornwallis tasked the infamous Lieutenant Colonel Banastre Tarleton – who at the Battle of Waxhaws in 1780 massacred hundreds of Continental Army troops who were trying to surrender – with stopping the Patriots.



"The Battle of Cowpens," by William Ranney

The armies met at Cowpens pasture. This time, the Virginia militia was positioned behind Morgan's third line of seasoned Continental Army regulars from Maryland and Delaware. Historians write that the Americans "[used] their poor reputation to their advantage" – the two front lines retreated strategically behind the Continental regulars, appearing to flee. The pursuing British were ensnared by the trap Morgan had set, flanked on both sides by infantry and cavalry that had been concealed. Fighting was vicious and hand-to-hand by the time the British reached the third line, which decimated the Redcoats.

Carter Croxton was wounded by a saber blow to the head, but was able to fight in March 1781 at Guilford Courthouse (near Greensboro, North Carolina) under the command of General Greene. Greene tried to replicate Morgan's flanking strategy – the Virginia militia was set as the second line – but by the time the British under Cornwallis made it to the third line, Greene retreated. It was a pyrrhic victory for the British – 28 percent of the army had been lost. Cornwallis then marched his army north to try and take Virginia. The Continental Army followed them to Yorktown.



A battlefield silhouette of a militiaman

**BERKSHIRE JEWISH VOICES**

Washington made it south by the autumn for the Siege of Yorktown, the battle that ended the Revolutionary War. On home soil, the by-then 3,700-man Virginia militia served mostly in support of nearly 18,000 American and French troops besieging redoubts held by the British. On October 17, 1781, Cornwallis sent out a white flag of surrender. Two days later, the British troops marched out of Yorktown between two lines of allied soldiers, one American and the other French, that stretched more than a mile, and laid down their arms on what is now known as Surrender Field.

As I drove down the Liberty Trail to Surrender Field, I happened upon the historical marker shown here, which identifies the site of Virginia Militia's encampment in the woods behind the Continental Army lines. The spot provided a strange coincidence – at Valley Forge, the recreated encampment is on precisely the spot where Grandpa David Levy's German Regiment would have stayed. For a second time, I had a chance to stand in a landscape that a 6<sup>th</sup> great-grandfather would have recognized.



Posted at the Virginia Militia's encampment at Yorktown

I was writing this story on Erev Shavuot, just before the holiday when Jews celebrate receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai. In Deuteronomy 29, Moses says: "I make this covenant, with its sanctions, not with you alone, but both with those who are standing here with us this day before the ETERNAL our God and with those who are not with us here this day." As *Midrash Tanchuma, Nitzavim* 3:1 explains the passage: "the generations that have yet to come were also there at that time." Even though I am technically a convert – an Ashkenazi Jew who is also not an Ashkenazi Jew – however long and twisting the history has been for me to arrive at this time, my rabbis assert that I was there at Mount Sinai, too, with the rest of y'all.

I actually thought about that idea as I continued my drive to Surrender Field. Like the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, this capitulation of the British Army is one of those historic moments at which all generations of Americans were in attendance. The National Parks Service has done a fine job in creating a pavilion with an audiovisual program that takes you back to that moment in time – you hear the clamor of the horses, the drums and fifes, boots marching, arms being laid down in piles, and the cheering crowds. I was able to follow the road down which the British prisoners of war walked on their way back to Yorktown.

At some point, I would have passed the spot where Carter Croxton stood along the American line.



"Surrender of Lord Cornwallis" by John Trumbull, which hangs in the rotunda of the United States Capitol.

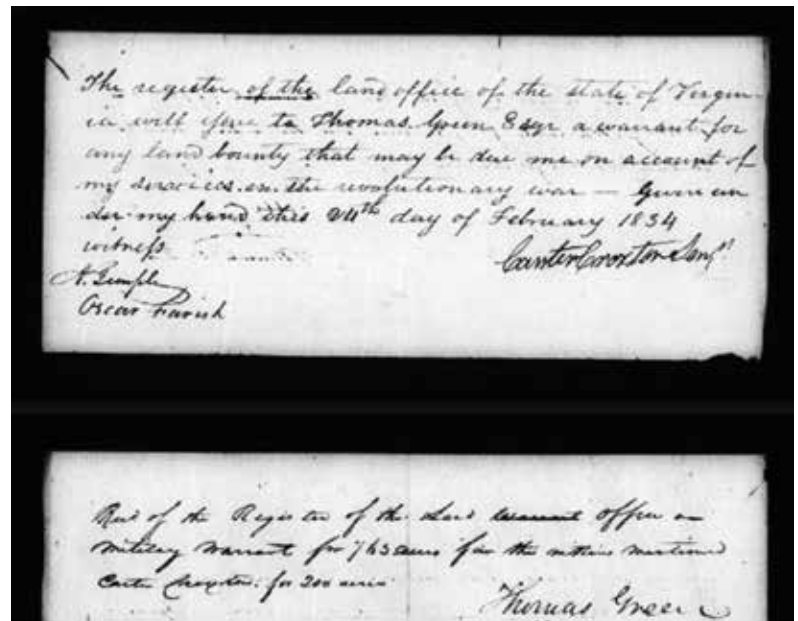
On my 50th birthday nearly a decade-and-a-half ago, I arranged myself on some floaties in the swimming pool behind the house I used to live in, and gave my mind over to drifting and dreaming. A few months before, I'd taken my first DNA test, and so I knew I was part Native American and also related to families who had been in America for a long time. But that was all I knew – I only matched with distant blood relations and thought I had arrived at another dead end. On that milestone birthday, I felt a great despair, because I believed that I would never know my truth. An adoptee's life is bounded by mysteries and secrets. Mysteries are easier to abide – for example, I always knew I had a birth father, but could not know whether he knew I existed. Knowing that I had a birth mother out there who did not avail herself of the abundant opportunities I gave her to find me was much harder – as far as I knew, I was her great secret. In keeping her secret, she kept where I came from a secret from me. No matter what I did or who I became, there would always be a part of me hidden from myself.

A half-century after I was given up for adoption, I came to see my life as a square divided into four smaller squares, two of them filled, two of them empty. One square was filled with the family stories and Jewish history that shaped my identity; the adjacent empty square was devoid of any biological connection



Posted at Camden

to that past and the people who inhabited it. The other square was filled by my flesh and blood – the person I recognize in a mirror who was a mix of two people I would never recognize. The vacant square beside it was bereft of stories. The project my adoptive parents and fate-assigned community took on in my youth was to connect me to the Jewish stories in order to make me a proper Chaim Yankel – but that never quite happened. Leviticus 19:34 holds that "the stranger who dwells with you shall be to you as one born among you; and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your



From Virginia's Land Office Military Certificates collection, this documents the second step of a three-step process for Revolutionary War veterans to obtain bounty land in return for their service. This, from 1834 - 50 years after the war - is Sgt. Carter Croxton's application, with his signature.

God." I was always too roiled by mysteries and secrets to trust the love, and maybe Hashem, as well. On my 50th birthday, as I floated in my swimming pool spun around by the wind, weightless and watching clouds drifting through the blue sky above me, I felt rootless and desolate.

I only started to let things go after I found my biological parents five years later. Doing so allowed me to accept my Jewish identity as a *ger* (stranger) and not only accept the Jewish love, but to want to create more of it for others. I know more about my history than I ever imagined. That knowledge not only brings me back to places like Valley Forge and Yorktown, but also to Mount Sinai. Knowing what I am freed me from worrying about what I am not, enabling me to finally enjoy the Jewish soul that is an inextricable part of me.

I have to say, though, that I believe I feel this country a little differently than most of my fellow Americans – like my host William Andrews at Cherry Hill, who says *he* has been in Virginia since the 1600s, I have been in these American places for a long time. As has my son, an American who carries within him not only the Native American, Californio Mexican, British Isles, and German stories, but the Jewish immigrant story, as well. He is 'biologically' Jewish through his mother, and may never feel the tensions and contradictions I experience. He is an Ashkenazi Jew connected to Europe who is also connected to his father's American story, and we'll see what he does with it. He is nineteen now and not particularly interested.

There will be mysteries that I cannot untangle for him, but I resolved not to keep secrets. But that does not mean there won't be some surprises. Life, after all, is ever full of surprises.

**Epilogue: March 2026**

ME: Hello, Eliot – do you have a second to talk? I seem to have found out something interesting about my grandmother and, I guess, you and me.

Yes, Margaret Frances [redacted] (1914–2002) is a direct descendant of multiple **Mayflower passengers** through her maternal Lanning and Gillett lines. [MayflowerHistory.com](#) +2

Her most significant connections come through the families that founded **Windsor, Connecticut**, where early **Mayflower** descendants intermarried with the pioneers of the **Massachusetts Bay Colony**.

**Confirmed Mayflower Ancestors**

**John Howland & Elizabeth Tilley:**

- This is the most direct and common connection for families in the **Gillett and Lanning** branches.

TO BE CONTINUED

## CULTURE &amp; ARTS

## Labors of Love: The Life and Legacy of Henrietta Szold

### Award-winning filmmaker Abby Ginzberg brings her documentary on Hadassah's founder to the BJFF

By Carol Goodman Kaufman / Special to the BJV



Abby Ginzberg

Abby Ginzberg is an American independent documentary film director and producer and founder of Ginzberg Productions. She will be in the Berkshires on Monday, July 20, when her latest film, *Labors of Love: The Life and Legacy of Henrietta Szold*, is featured at the Berkshire Jewish Film Festival.

In 1912, Szold founded Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, in New York City. In 1933, she immigrated to Eretz Israel and helped run Youth Aliyah, an organization that rescued 30,000 Jewish children from Nazi Europe. In October 1934, Szold laid the cornerstone of the new Rothschild-Hadassah-University Hospital on Mount Scopus. She died in 1945 at the age of 84.

Since starting to make films in 1983,

Abby Ginzberg has made many films about discrimination and the legal profession. Ginzberg has won many awards for her work, among them the NAACP Image Award for Best Documentary for *Barbara Lee: Speaking Truth to Power*; the Peabody Award, for *Soft Vengeance: Albie Sachs and the New South Africa*; and has twice won the American Bar Association's Silver Gavel Award, for *Soul of Justice: Thelton*, and for *Doing Justice: The Life and Trials of Arthur Kinoy*.

**Hadassah Berkshire Hills** will host a desert reception before the film in honor of Director Abby Ginzberg at 2:30 p.m. for ticket holders. Email [BerkshireHadassah@gmail.com](mailto:BerkshireHadassah@gmail.com) for more information.

Ahead of her appearance, the Berkshire Jewish Voice had the opportunity to talk with her.

### The BJV Interview: Abby Ginzberg

**I understand that you went to law school. How did you come to film production from the law? And did your background in the law influence the films you've chosen to make?**

I was working at the time for the state of California doing enforcement. They were about to kill OSHA [Occupational Safety and Health Administration]. I felt like I'm going to keep doing the same cases over and over. This is not for me. I've got to figure out another way to engage with the public. I felt like the stories were important, but I was talking to a judge or a jury at the time.

I got my start as a producer for worker training films, so by the time I decided to start doing my documentaries, I had enough of a reputation as somebody who knew what she was doing. I could raise money, because that was always the key. My very first film was civil rights lawyer Arthur Kanoy. My next film was about a federal judge Nick Felton Henderson, and my third was about the first Latino appointed to the California Supreme Court. What is the through-line for all the films that I've done? They are about people who are not well known. They may have lived through times that were well known and worked with people like Martin Luther King and Caesar Chavez, but you've never heard their names. As a result of that, I feel like I've introduced them to people who will be inspired by them. Their profiles are elevated as result of having a documentary made about them.

**There's also a social justice theme going on, both in those films and with Labors of Love.**

Yes, I was trying to connect the earlier films with Henrietta. She was all about justice. I mean, she was brought up to think that she would be helping some scholar translate his work, which is what she did in the early half of her life. But she was capable of doing so much more.

In my films there's always a moment in the person's history that stands out. Everybody has a defining moment where their lives could've ended, or could've tanked, or something terrible could've happened. And it did for Henrietta. It was not a guarantee that she was going to be able to overcome her depression, her misery, when she was rejected. The fact is that she gets out from under it with that trip to Palestine with her mother.

**Why are you doing Henrietta Szold's story now?**

I wasn't sure what Henrietta was like. Twenty years ago, this story was just not talking to me. Then I turned 70 and suddenly I identified with her as an older woman still active, still caring about the world, and still trying to figure out how to make the world a better place.

But it required me getting up to my shoulders in her until I knew that I had a story. But things didn't just fall into place. Some of it didn't work. We had to go back to the drawing board. We spent the time and took the care. We did try to get the story right. For example, I wanted to give the (Youth Aliyah survivors) a chance to tell me their story, as long as it connected in one way or another to Henrietta.

**You have a personal relationship with the story of Henrietta Szold, don't you? Your grandfather on one side was Louis Ginzberg, the very man who broke Henrietta's heart. And your grandmother on the other side was Zip Szold, Henrietta's sister.**

I am sure that there was some discussion about a Ginzberg finally marrying a Szold among the people who knew the story, but it wasn't widely known until much later when my father wrote about it and Baila Round Shargel published her diaries. It became kind of a big scandal.

**Where did you do your research?**

The Center for Jewish history in the AHS American Jewish Historical Society and the Schlesinger Library at Harvard were two of the main ones. The

Central Zionist Archive in Jerusalem has all of her stuff from Palestine. Normally I hire people, but this time I just knew I had to see for myself, so I did my own archival research.

I spent two very long days at Meir Shfeyah (youth village). We got a lot of very good stuff. But my lack of Hebrew was actually an obstacle. I do not speak a word, so the interviews that I conducted in Hebrew were problematic in terms of being able to really be sure what the people were saying.

(Every Youth Aliyah group) that came over made a scrapbook for her of their time on kibbutz or in the villages. They were beautiful and handwritten, all thanking her for bringing them here for giving them a new life. It's just pages and pages of gratitude. There are 20 boxes so that was a huge archive as well. Most

of the movie footage came through the Spielberg Archive in Israel and the Jerusalem Cinematheque. They have footage of early day pre-state Palestine.

The good news is that because various books have been written and had relied heavily on the written archives, if I was looking for something specific, I had an idea of where to look for it. The archives were very helpful because they put you back in that period of time so you get to sort what was the correspondence like, who was she writing to and who was writing to her? You can't get that from book.

The archivists were very helpful. There's footage of Henrietta at the boat, welcoming the kids to Palestine. All that stuff is invaluable. There's a lot of paperwork that was in these archives that I didn't rely on because it was really more appropriate for a book than for a movie.

The New York Times covered her in a way that they never would today. It's interesting that she was a character for them. I mean it's not a mistake that they gave her a full obituary because they had been following her as an American in Palestine. It wasn't on the front page, but every time anything happened it was somewhere.

**Did you leave out anything?**

There are some things that I could've talked about a little bit more, such as the numbers of kids that she was hoping to be able to bring to Palestine from places like Belgium and France and Poland, but that would've been a little mini story.

**Probably 30 years ago I asked a woman to join Hadassah. She sniffed at me and said, "I don't join women's organizations." Do you think maybe the 2022 Supreme Court Dobbs decision might inspire women to get more involved with women's organizations and issues?**

We thought we took care of everything. The victories were permanent for all of us and we didn't have to worry about it. Everybody seems so complacent now. I just feel like we're in a moment of a wake-up call. We are going to have to fight again.

**I understand you have a personal connection to the Berkshires.**

Yes, this is a bit of a homecoming in terms of bringing this film to the Berkshires. I have a lot of cousins here. I felt the same way bringing it to New York and Baltimore, to places where either Henrietta or I have strong connections. I'm hoping people will come out and learn about Henrietta.

**I've seen the film already and I plan to see it again. It is absolutely wonderful, so I hope you get a huge audience.**

Novelist, children's book author, and BJV food columnist **Carol Goodman Kaufman** has also served as as the Hadassah National Co-Chair of Youth Aliyah.



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