

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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Six13 – Live In Concert!

Singing, friendship, and Jewish joy!



LENOX – On Sunday, August 16 at 7:30 p.m., Jewish Federation of the Berkshires invites the community to its annual summer concert, “Six13 LIVE – In Concert!,” for an exceptional evening of singing, friendship, and Jewish joy. This special event will take place at the Duffin Theater, located at Lenox High School (197 East Street in Lenox). Doors open at 7 p.m.

Six13 is a groundbreaking, New York City-based professional Jewish a cappella vocal band that brings an unprecedented style and energy to Jewish music using nothing but the power of the human voice. Juxtaposing the traditional with the contemporary, the group anchors its performance in a strong Jewish identity fueled by soulful harmonies, intricate arrangements, and a signature dynamic, full-band-like hip-hop sound. Driven by a mission to connect Jews around the

SIX13 CONCERT,
continued on page 7

“Truth to Power: Songpoets & Comedians for Social Change,” with Laura Wetzler



PITTSFIELD – On Thursday, August 6, at the special early start time of 10:30 a.m., Connecting With Community presents acclaimed singer, songwriter, guitarist, and lecturer Laura Wetzler, who will lead a dynamic multimedia presentation titled “Truth to Power: Songpoets & Comedians for Social Change.”

In this interactive workshop, Wetzler will celebrate the great songs and comedy that bravely confront the powers that be, demonstrating how art can serve

as a powerful force for resistance and hope in difficult times. Participants will enjoy a nostalgic sing-along featuring the music of icons like Bob Dylan, Phil Ochs, Paul Simon, Joan Baez, Odetta, Harry Belafonte, and Pete Seeger, while also exploring Jewish songs of protest in Yiddish and Ladino. The presentation will unearth the forgotten roots of Yiddish satire and spotlight the brilliant comic

minds of social commentators such as Lenny Bruce, George Carlin, Harry Shearer, Moms Mabley, Dick Gregory, Wanda Sykes, John Oliver, Jon Stewart, and Stephen Colbert.

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!

LAURA WETZLER,
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“Lo, a people that rises like a lioness, leaps up like a lion.”

Numbers 23:34



“Judah is a lion’s whelp...he crouches, lies down like a lion, like a lioness – who dare rouse him?” says our patriarch Jacob in blessing his formidable son in Genesis 49:9. From this image, however, it seems like intrepid Great Barrington photographer John Lipkowitz flirted with rousing A LOT of lions. His wildlife photography will be on view this August at 510 Warren Street Gallery in Hudson, NY – for more on John’s work, please see page 28.



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OP-ED

RABBI REFLECTION

Four Questions for the Season of *Heshbon HaNefesh*

By Rabbi Neal Borovitz / Berkshire Minyan



This issue of the Berkshire Jewish Voice is being published as we begin the countdown to Rosh Hashanah. On July 23rd, we communally commemorated Tisha B'Av, the date according to our tradition that marked the destruction of the First Temple (586 BCE) and the Second Temple (70 CE). Many other Jewish moments of devastation, such as the expulsion of the Jews from England (1290 CE), and the expulsion from Spain (1492 CE). In the 20th century, the outbreak of WWI (1914) and the deportation from the Warsaw Ghetto (1942) have been associated with this date. The Shabbat that follows Tisha B'Av is called *Shabbat Nachamu*, the Sabbath of Comfort.

The Rabbis, who after the exile that followed the destruction of the Second Temple established the cycle of Haftarah readings, chose selections from the Prophet Isaiah to be read on the seven Sabbaths between Tisha B'Av and Rosh Hashanah. These *Haftarot* of Consolation, unlike the majority of haftarah selections throughout the year, are not directly connected to the themes of the Torah portions they accompany. Rather, they are a vehicle for *t'shuvah* in its literal sense, a liturgical vehicle by which we can turn ourselves away from despair toward hope.

This year, in particular, I find this tradition especially salient. The nearly three years since October 7, 2023 have been a time of despair for Jews worldwide. The war, begun by Hamas on that day, has brought death, despair, and devastation to Israelis, Arabs, and Iranians. It has sparked a recurrence of the cancer of antisemitism worldwide, across America, and even here in the Berkshires. Similar to cancers that recur in the human body, the cancer of antisemitism has returned in a more virulent form than I have ever experienced in my 78 years of life.

Rosh Hashanah and Pesach are, for me, the two greatest moments of celebration and times for offering gratitude on the Jewish calendar. In that spirit, I want to pose four questions that each of us individually – and all of us as a community and a people – can ask ourselves over the next six weeks as we prepare ourselves for the awesome task that our rabbis called entitled “*Heshbon HaNefesh*” – an accounting of the soul.

The four questions I am asking myself this year were inspired by two thoughtful theater productions that I saw here in the Berkshires this summer.

My first three questions arose when I saw the troubling, but challenging play, *The Zionists*, that was produced by Barrington Stage Company earlier this summer. The playwright based his play upon the conflict playing out in his own family's divergent positions and opposing actions reflecting their opposing views on their relationships with Israel. As one who defines himself as a *Hovevi Tzion*, a lover of Zion, *The Zionists* bothered me deeply because it made me confront

the reality that individual Jewish families and The Family of People Israel, writ large, find ourselves, today, torn asunder by the events of these past three years and often incapable of finding a way to compassionately listen to what each other are saying and feeling about Israel.

Differences over Israel's actions and inactions are not new. The Zionist movement and the Israeli governments over the 78 years since the founding of the State have always reflected divergent views. What is new, and has been intensifying over the last decade in both Israeli society and within the American Jewish community, has been an inability to dialogue respectfully. Similar to the family portrayed on that stage, I believe that too many of us, too often, today allow our passionate opinions regarding Israel's actions and inactions to consume us, leaving no place or space for compassionate understanding of the voices of others. As the playwright makes us confront, those voices might belong to our mothers and our brothers, our fathers and sisters, and our children and grandchildren.

Question One – How can you and I find a way in the year ahead to engage in respectful dialogue with our fellow Jews who hold divergent views on both Israel's actions and upon our personal relationship with the Jewish state where half of World Jewry resides?

In Tractate Shavuot of the Talmud we are taught: *Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh B'zeh* – all Jews are responsible one for the other. Over the ages this teaching has been understood as a two-way street. Every Jew has the right to call upon both the community and individual fellow Jews for help. Conversely the community and each of us has a responsibility to respond to our fellow Jews with the Biblical response first spoken by Abraham, and later Moses, echoed by Jews ever since: *Hineni*, Here I am!

Question Two – As we prepare for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur this year, I ask you all to join me in taking time in these weeks between Tisha B'Av and Rosh Hashanah to take a personal inventory and ask: How well have we fulfilled our responsibility to give tzedakah, to perform acts of chesed, and work for the wellbeing of our fellow Jews, our fellow Americans, and all humankind?

To me, the greatest tragedy portrayed in *The Zionists* was the inability of the three siblings to hear the pain and the passion of their family members. While the content of this play focused upon the interrelationship and lack thereof between American Jews and Israel, what evolves throughout the play is the lack of a loving relationship between the siblings. The three grown children are connected to each other through their parents but have no true relationship with each other. They are all incapable of hearing each other's pain or passion, or of forgiving each other for past transgressions be they accidental or intentional.

The message of Yom Kippur is that before we can ask God for forgiveness and atonement, we must both ask forgiveness from those whom we have wronged or hurt and forgive to all who hurt us.

And so, Question Three – As we approach the Days of Awe, how can each of us and all of us take the Biblical imperative “sh'ma”! – listen – both literally, and more importantly seriously, by really listening to each other and hearing each other's opinions and pains?

Another Berkshire theater experience I had earlier this summer was attending Berkshire Theater Festival's production of a new play called *The American Five*, which is based upon the five people, Coretta Scott King, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, Bayard Rustin, Clarence Jones, and Stanley Levison – who, along with A. Philip Randolph (who is not portrayed in the play), were the main organizers of the 1963 March on Washington.

In the play, the four African Americans are portrayed as putting their personal lives on the line and thereby changing the course of 400 years of African American history. The one Jewish American character in the play, Stanley Levison, states directly a number of times that he is there to help out of his Jewish responsibility to *tikun olam*, repair of the world.

I walked out the play feeling that the moment in American history it portrays – and which I remember watching on television as a teenager as it unfolded – was truly a 20th century manifestation of the teaching of Hillel found in Pirke Avot 1:14

If I am not for myself who will be for me?
If I am only for myself What am I
If not now, when?

Question Four for myself and for each of you this year is: How can we as an American Jewish community in the year ahead, while we continue to stand up against antisemitism, also remain strong against the hate which has re-arisen against others here in America?

One final thought for the approaching New Year of 5787 is found in the teaching of Hillel: “That which is hateful to you do not do unto another! That is the essence of Torah! Now go and learn!” (Talmud: Shabbat 31A).

May each of us go forth in the year ahead and truly treat others with the respect and love we desire for ourselves. May we learn to listen to each other with compassion. May we all in the year ahead learn the significance of our communal name Israel, given to Jacob in Genesis 32 and whose etymology means “God Wrestler.” May we then learn from Jacob/Israel's encounter with his brother Esau how we can turn confrontation into reconciliation and wrestle together with the questions facing us individually and communally.

Rabbi Neal Borovitz has been an active member of The Berkshire Minyan in Great Barrington for 20 years. He is the Rabbi Emeritus of Kol Dorot, a Reform Jewish community in River Edge, NJ, where he served from 1988 to 2013.



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For calendar listings and events

OP-ED

EDITOR'S NOTE

Get Back to Where You Once Belonged

Return as Voluntary Subscribers

By Albert Stern / BJV Editor

Most of you reading this annual appeal for voluntary subscribers will be doing so in the late summer run-up to the High Holy Days, traditionally a time of reflection about our deeds over the past year and our aspirations for the next. In Hebrew, the process is called *teshuva*, which can mean repentance but that literally translates as “return” – a return, we hope, to paths of righteousness already familiar to us.

As I do each year, I look over the past year’s papers so I can remind readers and supporters of the Berkshire Jewish Voice of some the stories we hope you enjoyed. This year, I noticed that the idea of return cropped up over again in various ways, some of which will be apparent and some that are more specifically personal. But before I get there, let me return to some BJV boilerplate that we’ve used for years when asking you to support your local Jewish community newspaper with an additional gift to Federation.

This publication's revenues do not cover all its costs. Your financial help as voluntary subscribers is essential in our efforts to bring you meaningful, positive, and entertaining stories both by and about your neighbors, as well as about Jews around the world. Your generosity as voluntary subscribers last year was phenomenal, and your support remains vital to sustaining this publication. Please see the insert in this paper or look out for the email you'll soon receive from Federation for more on how you can support the Berkshire Jewish Voice.

For me, the most exciting return was my trip to Israel last February. In our April issue, I wrote about my visit to our **Afula-Gilboa Partnership2Gether region** perhaps too enthusiastically. About that article, no doubt many readers felt as Samuel Johnson did about Milton’s *Paradise Lost*: “None ever wished it longer than it is.” And what you read was only Part II – I haven’t even gotten to Part I yet. It had been 15 years since my last visit to Israel, where I spent a meaningful part of my childhood, including two years of conflict during the Yom Kippur War that started in 1973. Being there, even as war approached, and seeing what Israel has become – and witnessing firsthand the good work being done in Afula-Gilboa with funds from this Federation’s annual campaign – my excitement was off the charts.

I will publish a Part I to that story somewhere, eventually, but let me share now that on my visit to Jerusalem, I was brought back to a story I published in my second year as BJV editor back



in 2016 about the artist **Solomon Souza**. Back then, I discovered an online compilation of his graffiti-inspired art on the shutters that come down at night in the Machane Yehuda market. They mostly depict illustrious Jews of history, but some are of shopkeepers in the *shuk* – the one you see below is the one I wanted to visit most.

I was thrilled all the more a month or so later when **Howie Stier** posed in the same spot.

I was lucky – I got home before the war with Iran started, unlike Howie, who wrote a vivid Berkshire Jewish Voices essay on hunkering down in the neighborhood *miklat* (bomb shelter) with his fiancé Revital and neighbors in the Nachalot neighborhood as Iranian missiles rained down. We try to provide original writing that gives our Berkshire audience a better sense of life in Israel in these fraught times and how members of our community have engaged with the nation and its people. I was in awe of the harrowing stories told by **Ori Lazarovich**, a young Magen David Adom (MDA) paramedic who spent part of his childhood here in Lanesborough and who is now a first responder to crisis spots across Israel. Another column we published was **Dr. Gene Jura**’s account of his experience on a Sar-El mission with Jews and non-Jews from around the world that provided meals for nearly 24,000 IDF soldiers. Gene didn’t have a chance to take a picture with the mural of the guy with a hat at Mahane Yehuda, but we would have published it in the BJV if he had – and will if you take one when you visit Israel and send it in. It’s near the entrance of the *shuk* just off Jaffa Street.

I also returned to Jewish Federation’s **General Assembly** in Washington, DC, for the first time in ten years, a powerful immersion in how Jewish communal life, thinking, and priorities have changed in the wake of the October 7, 2023 attack and the global upsurge in antisemitism. I wanted to show that Jewish Federations are thinking clearly about the threats the community faces, physically in our communal spaces and houses of worship, as well as online, culturally, institutionally, and politically. I hope my reporting demonstrated that the system we are a part of is responding forcefully and intelligently to our challenges – Jewish Federations provide a unified countervailing force against the enemies of Jewish success, one that I am honored to work for and one that needs our support.

And I also had a chance to share how I was able to return home to places I’d never been before – houses built in Frederick, Maryland, and Essex County, Virginia, by two 6th great-grandfathers who were both Revolutionary War soldiers. On this 250th anniversary of the founding of our nation, I’m finding out more about my American roots and my adoptive family’s Eastern European story, and was helped along by two of the authors I interviewed this year – **Professor Michael Hoberman**, whose *Imagining Early American Jews* helped me sort out my impressions of my genealogical journeys, and **Jane Ziegelman**,



VOLUNTARY SUBSCRIBERS,
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Letters to the Editor

A Star Student is Deeply Grateful

Dear Jewish Federation of the Berkshires:

Thank you so much for awarding me the Henry Simkin and Frances Simkin Schiller and Dr. Stanley and Faye Simkin Scholarship. I am deeply grateful for all you have done and will continue to do for me, my family, and our entire Jewish Community.

Thank you again,
Jacob Klein
Pittsfield

[See the related story about our annual meeting on page 14.]

Berkshire

JEWISH VOICE

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

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- Dara Kaufman: Publisher and Managing Editor
- Albert Stern: Editor
- Jenny Greenfeld: Advertising Sales Representative and Copy Editor
- RB Design Co: Graphic Design and Layout

Editorial opinions expressed in the *Berkshire Jewish Voice* are those of the newspaper and not those of any individual. Signed editorials do not represent the view of the newspaper, but rather express the writer’s view.

The *Berkshire Jewish Voice* is under no obligation to accept any advertisement. It does not guarantee the kashrut of any merchandise or service advertised.

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

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Your Federation Presents

From Auschwitz to Activism: Creating Champions of Caring



Barbara Greenspan Shaiman is a noted educator, businesswoman, social entrepreneur, and the author of *Live Your Legacy Now: Ten Simple Steps to Find Your Passion and Change the World*. Her extensive recognition includes the Philadelphia Inquirer Citizen Hero award and induction into the Hunter College Hall of Fame.

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

PITTSFIELD – On Thursday, August 13, at 10:45 a.m., Connecting With Community presents social activist, author, and national speaker Barbara Greenspan Shaiman, who will lead an inspiring program titled “From Auschwitz to Activism: Creating Champions of Caring.”

In this workshop, Shaiman will share how her family’s profound Holocaust history inspired her to found Champions of Caring, a non-profit organization dedicated to creating social change and fostering understanding and peace in society. The daughter of Holocaust survivors, her mother was the sole survivor of a family of 65 at Auschwitz, and her father worked for Oskar Schindler. Shaiman, who walked through the gates of Auschwitz with her daughter and grandchildren for the second time in November 2025, uses her family’s legacy to empower others to become social activists and think about how they can be a mensch.

Participants will also learn about her organization’s three core elements: integrating community service models, teaching universal lessons from all forms of genocide, and fostering intergenerational collaboration. Shaiman will discuss her youth public service programs, which have engaged over 10,000 students across Greater Philadelphia and Cape Town, South Africa, as well as her new initiative, Dan’s Champions, which supports inner-city immigrant students. Additionally, she will showcase her documentary, *The Coral Ring Legacy*, co-created with Emmy Award-winning filmmaker Henry Nevison, which highlights how past program participants continue to live out the values of kindness and empathy decades later.

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. A suggested donation of \$3 is requested for adults over age 60, and \$7 for all others.

Rosh HaShanah: Apples, Milk, and Honey, the Blessing and the Curse

PITTSFIELD – On Thursday, August 27 at 10:45 a.m., Connecting With Community presents biblical ethnobotanist, author, and teacher Dr. Jon Greenberg, who will lead an intriguing presentation titled “Rosh HaShanah: Apples, Milk, and Honey, the Blessing and the Curse.”

In this session, Dr. Greenberg will explore why apples hold such deep significance in Jewish tradition, diving into the custom of enjoying apples and honey on Rosh HaShanah, as well as the plant’s broader meanings in *Shir HaShirim* (Song of Songs) and the *Midrashim* of the Exodus. He will also discuss the ancient uses of honey – including its role in mummification – and the complicated symbolism of milk. While the Torah celebrates a “land dripping with milk and honey” as an agricultural paradise, the prophet Isaiah uses the exact same phrase to represent ruin and the devastation of war. Dr. Greenberg will explain how this contradiction stems from Israelite society’s shift from nomadic, pastoral roots toward sedentary agricultural life, unpacking the moral and symbolic lessons this transition leaves for us today.

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. A suggested donation of \$3 is requested for adults over age 60, and \$7 for all others.

Dr. Jon Greenberg is the founder of Torah Flora, an educational organization dedicated to using biblical and Talmudic ethnobotany to better understand the Torah. He received his bachelor’s degree in biology from Brown University and his doctorate in agronomy from Cornell University. He has conducted extensive agricultural and scientific research with the US Department of Agriculture and the University of Pennsylvania’s Institute for Cancer Research, and studied at Israel’s Yeshivat Hamivtar. An experienced educator, textbook editor, and speaker, he is also the author of *Fruits of Freedom*, a *Passover Haggadah* written from the perspective of Jewish food history and agriculture.

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

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

VOLUNTARY SUBSCRIBERS, continued from page 3

whose remarkable meditation on yizkor books reconnected me with the memorial volume of the shtetl from which my maternal grandparents emigrated.

Connecting to that Eastern European story remains something of a challenge, as I expressed in one of the stories that included my visit to the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst. I had a chance to interview **Susan Bronson**, the new head of that vital repository of Jewish literature and culture, and share the story of how the YBC will be moving forward with “Yiddish: A Global Culture,” the permanent exhibition documenting the Ashkenazi world that flourished from the 1860s until the catastrophe of World War II. It’s a project that is as much forward looking as it is historical and will remain an essential resource in preserving a part of Jewish history that continues to shape contemporary Jewish life, self-image, and self-understanding. We are lucky to have it close by.

My interview with Susan was just one of the forward-looking stories we published. It was a pleasure to write about **Rabbi Mendel and Zivia Volovik of Chabad of Williamstown**, who are connecting with Williams College students and amplifying the opportunities for Jewish connection in the northern Berkshires. On the opposite side of Berkshire County, educator **Lindsey Brown** has partnered with Federation to expose the students at the Mount Everett school to anti-bias initiatives like Changemakers for Good and the MA Mobile Museum of Tolerance. Visiting the school for a performance of Shany Dagan’s Holocaust-themed *3RDGEN* dance (brought to the Berkshires by **Shery Londe**) and then some sessions with students in the MMOT brought home how Federation and our partners are reaching local youth with positive messages that are making a difference in their lives and our community.

Our Super Tzedakah Week chairs, **Molly and Chris Meador**, shared their story of how Federation has supported their family’s Jewish journey every step of the way, particularly with religious school and summer camp scholarships. Talking to them helped me, and I hope you, understand the challenges younger members of our community face in establishing and sustaining a career in the Berkshires and finding their Jewish peers, and how helpful Federation can be in outreach to connect folks who are working and raising families. Our **Berkshire Jewish Collective** is just one initiative to build and sustain a segment of our community that can often feel overlooked in a region that attracts more retirees than young adults. And it was also a pleasure to meet our future-focused Major Donors Celebration chairs **Ken and Mimi Heyman**, who explained the importance of legacy giving to ensure continuity in Jewish communities.

One of the upsides of living in a mature community is that our demographic still reads books. This year, I was fortunate for a second time to interview **Andrew Porwancher**, this time about Theodore Roosevelt’s relationship with the Jews of his era. **Dr. Steve Rubin**’s columns provide useful appraisals of books of interest – if Dr. Steve says a book is worth reading, it surely is. **Carol Goodman Kaufman** – an accomplished novelist in her own right – interspersed her regular food articles with interviews of literary heavy-hitters **Tova Mirvis** and **Marilyn Simon Rothstein**, as well as an amusing tale of a set of 18th century tefillin found in Pittsfield. Israeli chiropractologist **Yossi Yovel** was a pleasure to talk to – I think about what I learned from him and his delightful and surprising book, *The Genius Bat*, on these warm summer evenings when I watch Berkshire bats fluttering overhead. **David Kaufman** took us back in time describing his photographic project *The Posthumous Landscape: Remnants of Jewish Life in Eastern*

Europe. People sometimes tell me that they wish we had a podcast – this spring, we came close when my colleague **Rabbi Daveen Litwin** asked me to host an online program with critic **David Denby** about his book *Eminent Jews: Bernstein, Brooks, Friedan, Mailer*. It was well-attended and many folks shared that they would like more like that.

The fact that so many of you all appreciate good writing emboldened me to publish verse by some very accomplished Berkshire poets: **Richard Berlin**, **Rabbi Pamela Wax**, and, in this issue, **Adam Green**. Our **local rabbis** also come through each issue with meaningful and well-crafted Rabbi Reflection columns. And my favorite piece of original writing we published this year was **Alex Rosenblum**’s hilarious reminiscence “My Life as an American Soldier” – to paraphrase Winston Churchill, never was so much owed by so many to Alexander Ziskin ben Moshe Yidel. Thank you, my friend and fellow Chabadnik, for your service and for your writing.

Let me wrap up with some additional BJV boilerplate we’ve used successfully on past voluntary subscriber appeals:

Please see the insert in this newspaper for the different funding levels available. An honorary publisher gift of \$360 allows us to provide four pages of color. Due to popular demand, we are printing more copies of each issue and printing costs have escalated in recent years. Your support will allow us to reach more people wishing to connect with all our Jewish community offers to full-time residents, part-time residents, and the tens of thousands of Jewish vacationers who visit the Berkshires each year.

In these challenging times for the Jewish community, it’s always a relief to publish a positive story like **Ruth Kaplan**’s “My Divine Kiss by an Angel in the Berkshires.” While at Baker’s Golf Center playing mini-golf, a stranger named Angel spotted her necklace with a message of support for Gaza hostages in both Hebrew and English and expressed his affection and sympathy for the Jewish people. Over the last 12 months, all of us have read stories in which Jewish jewelry has elicited hateful responses, and Ruth’s story was reassuring in how it showed we are not as alone as we can sometimes feel. Kudos, as well, to Shakespeare & Company, whose artistic director **Allyn Burrows** shared the reasons that the group staged a Jewish plays festival last fall and will be doing so again in October. The arts world these days is often rife with cancellations of Jewish creators, and it was reassuring to hear from Allyn how our Berkshires arts institutions are refusing to accept that.

For the same reason, I have to thank our **advertisers** for their ongoing support of the Berkshire Jewish Voice. Yes, the paper offers much bang for their advertising buck, being read, valued, and delivered at the homes of an attractive upscale demographic in Berkshire County. Advertising in the BJV should be a no-brainer for anyone wishing to publicize their programming or services, but as we’ve seen in recent weeks, in some places, \$9 and being sitting US congressman cannot buy you a cup of coffee if you are Jewish. Please read the article on page 20 about Seed + Mill’s **Rachel Simons** to see how capriciously Jewish businesses, even those working cooperatively with Muslim Israeli Arabs, are being canceled.

In ordinary times, taking out an ad in a Jewish newspaper would not be construed as a big deal. These are not ordinary times, and it is a big deal. I am grateful to the wider Berkshire community for supporting this newspaper and the Federation that publishes it.

Your Federation Presents

Current Events Seminar, with Dr. Steven Rubin

PITTSFIELD – On Thursday, August 20 at 10:45 a.m., Federation presents the third 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.

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*.

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.

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

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



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Graphics provided by HGF’s Life & Legacy Program

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.

Seniors Acting Up – A Look at Life from a Different Perspective

PITTSFIELD – On Thursday, September 3 at 10:45 a.m., Connecting With Community presents the talented local amateur theater troupe “Seniors Acting Up,” who will deliver a lighthearted performance titled “Seniors Acting Up – A Look at Life from a Different Perspective.”

With so many challenges facing the world daily, a little laughter is always welcomed. This engaging session features a lineup of short, comedic staged readings designed to bring joy and a fresh perspective to everyday life. The local cast members share a deep, collective love for community theater, which shines through in their spirited and relatable portrayals.

The ensemble was originally founded as “Milton’s Gang” by the late Milton Lestz z”l, who passed away in January 2025. This year’s dedicated group of performers ranges in age from their sixties to eighties and includes Linda Cantoni, Tom and Laura Gardner, Peter McCallion, Peter Podol, Denise Roller, and Diane and Mike Farella. Now performing under the banner of “Seniors Acting Up,” the troupe lovingly dedicates all of their performances to Milton’s memory and continuing theatrical legacy.

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. A suggested donation of \$3 is requested for adults over age 60, and \$7 for all others.

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

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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

Antisemitism and Democracy with Amy Spitalnick



Amy Spitalnick

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.

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.

In the months following the October 7 attacks, the rise in antisemitism has prompted urgent questions about how best to ensure Jewish safety while

Jewish Federation Awards \$97,000 in Jewish Education Grants to Berkshire Congregational Schools

Jewish Federation of the Berkshires is proud to announce \$97,000 in Jewish education grants to support four local congregational religious schools serving children and families across the Berkshires in the 2026-2027 school year.

The grants were awarded to:

- Chabad of the Berkshires, Lenox
- Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, Great Barrington
- Congregation Beth Israel, North Adams
- The combined religious school of Knesset Israel and Temple Anshe Amunim, Pittsfield.

Together, these grants represent approximately 30 percent of the cost of educating Jewish youth in these programs and play a critical role in helping congregations provide meaningful, high-quality, and accessible Jewish education to local families.

“At a time when congregations are working hard to meet the evolving needs of children and families, these grants help ensure that every child has the opportunity to build a strong connection to Jewish life, learning, and community,” said Federation Allocation Committee Chair, Judy Usow, “Jewish education is one of the most important investments we can make in the future of our community.”

Federation’s support helps congregational schools support professional staffing and provide engaging curriculum, holiday celebrations, Hebrew learning, Jewish values and social justice education, family programming, and opportunities for students to develop a strong sense of Jewish identity.

For many families, these grants also help keep tuition affordable and accessible, ensuring that financial barriers do not prevent children from participating in Jewish learning and community life.

Leaders from the participating congregations emphasized that Federation support is essential to sustaining vibrant Jewish educational programming in the Berkshires.

“We could not run a school without Federation’s annual support,” said Congregation Beth Israel co-president Natalie Matus. “These funds do far more than support classrooms – they help create welcoming Jewish communities where children feel connected, families feel supported, and Jewish learning, traditions and values can be passed from one generation to the next.”

Jewish Federation of the Berkshires remains committed to strengthening Jewish life throughout the region by investing in education, community connection, and the next generation of Jewish leadership.

For more information about Jewish Federation of the Berkshires and its community impact, visit jewishberkshires.org. See page 22 for a special section on religious school offerings and family programs in the Berkshires.

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Gift Card Drive Raised Support for Local Community



Thanks to all who participated in Federation’s May gift card drive supporting immigrants and other marginalized communities with groceries, gas, and basic necessities. Federation’s Jenny Greenfeld (left) delivered cards to Volunteers in Medicine in Pittsfield, where they were gratefully accepted by ViM’s Executive Director Ilana Steinhauer and Berkshire Community College’s Director of Adult Learning Ana Suffish.

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Your Federation Presents

Talkback – *The Zionists*

On June 30, hundreds joined Federation and Barrington Stage Company to fill the Boyd-Quinson Theater in Pittsfield for a talkback about *The Zionists*. Focusing on the complex realities of family dynamics and divisions represented in the play and the world today, the panel discussion was a timely

and important gathering with many layers of learning rooted in the production, the speakers' perspectives, the emotions, and the moment. The engaged response of the participants was a palpable reflection of what it meant to share this substantive and meaningful conversation and be in community together.



Thank you, panelists S. Asher Gelman (playwright), Letty Cottin Pogrebin (novelist), Jeff Robbins (moderator), and Alan Paul (BSC's artistic director).



SIX13 CONCERT,

continued from page 1

world with their heritage through music, the band is uniquely composed of members from varied Jewish denominations and upbringings. This diversity creates an entertainment experience that has been universally acclaimed across the globe by individuals from equally varied backgrounds and generations.

The group has become an international phenomenon both online – where their high-energy music videos for Hanukkah and Passover have amassed over 20 million views – and through eight award-winning albums that have landed them among the top Jewish music artists on iTunes and Spotify.

General admission tickets are \$25, tickets for young adults under 30 are \$20, and children ages 13 and under are admitted free of charge. Advance ticket purchases are required as all tickets will be held at the door – purchase tickets at our calendar of events page at jewishberkshires.org. Proceeds from the concert will directly benefit Federation's ongoing efforts to confront antisemitism and secure our local community.

This program is funded in part by PJ Library, the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, and generous community underwriters.

LAURA WETZLER,

continued from page 1

Advance lunch reservations are required and can be made by calling (413) 442-2200 before 9 a.m. on the day BEFORE the program. A suggested donation of \$3 is requested for adults over age 60, and \$7 for all others.

Laura Wetzler brings decades of study and performance in multicultural world music, European art music, and the history of American popular entertainment. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Music Vocal Performance with honors from Hofstra University and has released six CDs, including *Kabbalah Music: Songs of the Jewish Mystics*, which was praised by *The New York Times*. An internationally touring artist who sings in seven languages, Wetzler is also the award-winning writer, director, and composer of the humanitarian film *What Happened at the Veterans Home?* When not on stage, she dedicates her time to extensive humanitarian volunteer work, including developing deaf education programs for the Jewish community in Uganda.

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

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One Story

Each year, a portion of Federation’s annual campaign dollars are donated to our overseas partners doing vital work in Israel and around the world. Here is one story about how an Israeli all-girl robotics team came to Massachusetts and took home a coveted prize.

World ORT All-Girl Robotics Team Claims Top Innovation Prize at International Competition in Massachusetts

WORCESTER – There are thousands of miles between the communities of the Pioneer Valley and the Berkshires and the award-winning World ORT students visiting them from southern Israel, but the kinship between them is a strong and historic one.

The visiting Israeli students are an all-girl robotics team from Dimona, a traditionally overlooked city in Israel. But PowerPuff Team #900, students from the YOUNiversity Center in Dimona, an extracurricular STEM enrichment program run by World ORT Kadima Mada, World ORT’s operating arm in Israel, showed the world what expert training can do.

The 9th-graders took part in the prestigious international FIRST LEGO League at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, in Worcester from June 12 to 14. The girls, who won the national finals in Israel, competed against more than 100 teams from all over the world and took first place in the Innovation award.

Participating and winning at such a high level is a huge achievement. Dimona is a small desert city of roughly 35,000 residents in Israel’s Negev region that has traditionally been underserved educationally and socioeconomically. Thanks to a partnership between World ORT Kadima Mada and the Municipality of Dimona, roughly one in four children in Dimona now participate in robotics groups that run from kindergarten through high school.

But equally important as winning an international accolade is being held in a collective embrace by the Jewish community abroad. Ahead of the competition, supporters from Springfield Jewish Community Centre (JCC) and the Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts welcomed the girls and enjoyed a meal together, followed by a Q&A session. The Pioneer Valley and the Berkshires have a long history and involvement with ORT. The region’s Women’s American ORT chapter was a vibrant one for many decades and the Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts and Jewish Federation of the Berkshires has consistently been great supporters of ORT.

And in 2014, Heritage Academy Day School in Longmeadow, which placed a strong emphasis on technology, partnered with World ORT to become the



first pilot school in the United States to implement its outstanding technological program. World ORT Kadima Mada provided cutting-edge technological tools and pedagogical training to enrich the teaching and learning environment within the classroom.

Otis and Longmeadow resident Suze Goldman, World ORT Board Member and former president of the Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts and former Executive Board Member of the Springfield JCC, said: “As members of the Jewish community, we have a connection to our Jewish families around the world. Our history instructs us that community is powerful and significant and necessary. When people were in need in Europe after the war, the Jewish community was there to help them. Whether we live in Vilnius, in Israel, or in Mexico City, we are extended family.”

There are other connections too. The Federation’s Anna P. Housen Fund for Israel, Fred & Ruth Weiss Fund for Israel, and the Sylvia Zucker Children’s Fund has made a joint gift of \$10,000 to support World ORT Kadima Mada’s YOUNiversity in Dimona for the upcoming school year, ensuring students such as the PowerPuff team can have similar experiences.

Springfield and the Pioneer Valley has a community of Holocaust survivors; ORT played a significant role in educating survivors and refugees in the Displaced Persons’ (DP) Camps in Europe after the Second World War. A number of the children born and educated by ORT in the DP camps live in Pioneer Valley.

“When there is distress to Jews locally and around the world, our community is there. People are suffering now, and World ORT is helping them, for example in Ukraine and in Israel,” explains Goldman. She is also an Executive Board Member of Jewish Family Service, which serves Jewish community members in need in the Berkshires and the Pioneer Valley.

In Israel, World ORT aims to reduce socioeconomic gaps in underserved

ONE STORY,
continued on page 9

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Your Federation Presents

ONE STORY, *continued from page 8*

communities through STEM education, leadership, and innovation. Dimona is now a nationally recognized robotics hub, and investment in education in this region is helping to improve the opportunities for its students.

Adi Cohen, the YOUNiversity Center of Excellence Manager for the Dimona and Be'ersheva regions, said: "This team has proven, once again, that girls can lead, create, innovate, and succeed at the highest levels in science and technology. Their hard work, dedication, curiosity, and determination paid off.

"These young girls are champions, and they are a powerful example for other students, especially young girls, who dream of taking part in the world of robotics, engineering, and innovation. I am extremely proud of them, of their journey, and of everything they represent."

The girls told the Springfield audience: "Robotics for all of us is much more than just a team. It's like a family. We learn, grow, argue but, most importantly, we love unconditionally. Everyone of us brings a different colour, a different strength, a different story and together we became something powerful."

ORT works to impart Jewish values such as *tikkun olam* to all students, and the PowerPuff Team #900 were mentored by RoboActive #2096, the team that won a special award at the First International Robotics Championship in Houston, Texas, last month.

Moshe Leiba, World ORT Kadima Mada's Deputy Directory General and Chief Pedagogy and R&D Officer, said: "These remarkable young women are proof that talent is universal, even when opportunities are not. Through dedication, expert mentoring, and access to high-quality STEM education, they transformed curiosity into innovation and brought pride to their community, to Israel, and to the entire ORT network."

The PowerPuff Team #900 visit was generously supported by the Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts and the Springfield Jewish Community Centre.

To learn more about supporting transformational educational opportunities like this one, please contact Chief Development Officer Allison Baumwald at Allison.Baumwald@ort.org.

Jewish Women's Foundation Celebrates 17 Years of Funding Berkshire Non-Profits

On June 25, the Jewish Women's Foundation of Berkshire County gathered at Pittsfield Country Club for its annual meeting at which they celebrated their 17th year of community outreach and looked ahead to their 18th year of funding grants to local non-profits that increase access to food, housing and other essentials; promote self-sufficiency; and empower youth and young adults in the wider Berkshire community.

The group also supports Jewish Federation of the Berkshires' efforts to combat antisemitism, including grants to regional universities and public schools. Additionally, the JWF last year funded Project Hope, which brought young Israelis from hostage families to Camp Kimama Half Moon in Monterey for some time away from the stresses they were experiencing.

In 2025-26, the JWF awarded 28 grants totaling \$138,500, as well as providing emergency funding when unexpected needs arose, as happened during the government shutdown last year slowed the distribution of benefits. This year, that total will be \$150,000. But in addition to these grants, JWF builds relationships by pairing liaisons with their 28 grantee organizations in order to develop personal connections within the community.

Co-president Carol Striker expressed sentiments echoed by many of the more than 200 JWF members: "The Jewish Women's Foundation has been a gift to me – I get more than I give out. Amid the scenery and culture that we all enjoy, surrounding us is a community in need – the second poorest county in Massachusetts." Co-president Geri Liemer stressed how the more than 200 members of JWF are "not content to live in a bubble. When we see local people struggle, we want to engage with those people."

Grantees at the meeting shared how the depth of JWF's personal engagement is unusual. "Their liaisons become friends and participate in the work of our organization," says People's Pantry board president Laura Gratz. This year, the pantry has used JWF funds to purchase chicken and beef from local suppliers, which also benefits the local farm economy. Mo Guthrie shares that the Guthrie Center uses JWF funding to provide music classes and to help defray the rising costs of it Wednesday program that provides meals to 80 persons each week.

For more information on how to get involved with JWF, visit jewishberkshires.org/jewish-womens-foundation or email JWFberkshires@gmail.com. There are many different ways to get involved that will suit your interests and expertise.



JWF co-presidents
Carol Striker and Geri Liemer



PHOTOS BY CAROL SMOKLER

Summer Shabbat Retreat: Berkshire Jewish Collective 20's, 30's, 40's



The Berkshire Jewish Collective at Tanglewood
in July

SANDISFIELD – Remember the feeling of summer camp? Long afternoons by the lake. New friendships that formed in a single day. Time to unplug, laugh, move your body, and simply enjoy being together.

On Saturday, August 22, join the Berkshire Jewish Collective at Camp Kimama Halfmoon for a one-of-a-kind Jewish Summer Camp Day-Long Retreat designed for adults in their 20s-40s, couples, singles, and families looking to build meaningful Jewish community in the Berkshires. Starting at 10 a.m. and continuing through 4 p.m., gather for lakeside yoga inspired by Jewish wisdom, delicious meals, swimming, camp activities, meaningful conversations, music, Jewish rituals, and plenty of free time to simply connect.

Whether you're new to the Berkshires or have lived here for years, this retreat is about experiencing Jewish community in a way that feels welcoming, joyful, authentic, and deeply human. Come reconnect with yourself, with others, and with the simple magic of summer.

Leave with new friendships, lasting memories, and a stronger sense of belonging. FREE attendance but REGISTRATION REQUIRED by August 5. Registration includes breakfast, lunch and all activities.

For more information on the Berkshire Jewish Collective: Jewish 20's, 30's and 40's, join the WhatsApp group or reach out to Sarah at bjc@jewishberkshires.org.

An initiative of Jewish Federation of the Berkshires with support from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.

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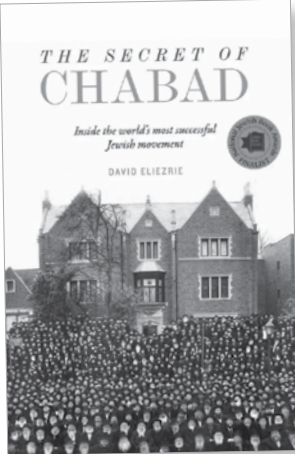
LOCAL NEWS

A Busy High Summer Weekend at Chabad

Shabbat with Chabad historian and chamber music on Sunday

LENOX – Chabad of the Berkshire invites the community to learn more about the Chabad movement and enjoy world class chamber music on the weekend beginning Friday, July 31.

Shabbat with Rabbi David Eliezrie



On Friday, July 31, bestselling author Rabbi David Eliezrie (*The Secret of Chabad: Behind the World's Most Far-Reaching Jewish Movement*) begins his visit to Chabad with a talk about the Lubavitcher Rebbe's relationships with Israeli leaders Ariel Sharon, Yitzchak Rabin, and Benjamin Netanyahu. He'll share stories from those encounters and detail the unique guidance the Rebbe offered,

along with the lessons they hold for leadership and Jewish life today.

The evening begins with Kabbalat Shabbat at 6:45 p.m., followed by Shabbat dinner at 7:15 p.m. The evening will include Shabbat songs, a shared meal, and an opportunity to spend a meaningful Shabbat together. Suggested donation is \$50 per person.

On Saturday, August 1 at approximately noon after Shabbat services, join Rabbi Eliezrie for a talk exploring how Chabad grew from a small group in Brooklyn into one of the most far-reaching Jewish movements in the world.

From Alaska to Florida, from California to small towns across America, and from India to South America, Chabad is present in places few would have imagined Jewish life could thrive. How did this remarkable global network come to be – and how did it transform modern Jewish life so profoundly?

Based on his book *The Secret of Chabad*, Rabbi

Eliezrie will trace the vision of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson, and the bold idea that every Jew, no matter where they are in the world, is connected and reachable. He will explore how that vision turned into a worldwide network of emissaries and centers that continue to shape Jewish life today. The talk will also explore how the Rebbe's message can shape and change the way we think about our own lives.

Following the program, guests are invited to enjoy a delicious Kiddush luncheon.

Rabbi David Eliezrie is president of the Rabbinical Council of Orange County and Long Beach and serves on the boards of the Jewish Federation & Family Service of Orange County and the Jewish Agency. He is also Chabad's National Liaison to Jewish Federations of North America. His writing has appeared in the *Jerusalem Post*, the *LA Times*, and the *Times of Israel*.

Israeli Chamber Project Brings Evening of World-Class Chamber Music to the Berkshires



The Israeli Chamber Project, an internationally acclaimed ensemble of leading soloists based in Israel and New York, will present an evening of exceptional chamber music on Sunday, August 2. The evening will begin with a dinner at 5 p.m., followed by a concert at 6 p.m. featuring a beautifully curated program of classical chamber works performed at the highest level.

Known for performances at major venues including Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, and Wigmore Hall, the ensemble is recognized for its artistry, precision, and collaborative spirit. This is an opportunity to experience world-class musicianship in an intimate setting. Cost is \$60 for dinner and concert.

These programs will take place at Chabad of the Berkshires, 17 West Street, Lenox. More information is available at JewishBerkshires.com.

The Synoptic Gospels Through the Eyes of a Jew

PITTSFIELD – On the Wednesdays of July 29 and August 5 from noon to 1:30 p.m., Rabbi Peter Levy visits Temple Anshe Amunim for a look at “The Synoptic Gospels Through the Eyes of a Jew.”

Two thousand years ago Jews faced tumultuous times. A new paradigm of Judaism, along with Christianity, were responses to that chaos. Different people told different versions of similar stories to find the courage and strength to navigate those difficult days.

Rabbi Levy will lead participants on a journey through the New Testament gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke – discover relevant and common paths through our own challenging times as we seek oneness with God.

Please feel free to bring lunch. No cost but please register in advance at ansheamunim.org/event/rabbi-levy.

Stories and Poems – 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 – leads two ongoing 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. The next session is Monday, August 10 from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. To RSVP or for more information, contact Rabbi Pam Wax, rabbipwax@knessetisrael.org.

SHIR HADASH,
continued on page 12

Wherever Life Leads

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Maybe You're a
Reconstructionist...
and Don't Know It
Come find out this
High Holy Day Season!



Congregation Ahavath Sholom is opening its doors for free
High Holy Day services. Experience it for yourself.

What if Judaism could be deeply rooted in tradition and speak to your life today?
At Congregation Ahavath Sholom, a Reconstructionist community, we embrace Jewish tradition as a living, evolving source of meaning. Through prayer, music, learning, reflection, poetry, and community, we create High Holy Day experiences that are spiritually rich, intellectually engaging, and warmly welcoming.

**Join us for a full High Holiday experience led by
Rabbi Jennifer Rudin and Rabbi Jeffrey Eisenstat**

Fri. Sept. 11, Erev Rosh HaShanah 7:00 PM	Sat. Sept. 12 Rosh HaShanah 10:00 AM
Family Service Sun., Sept. 13 Rosh HaShanah 2:30 PM	
Sun. Sept. 20 Kol Nidre 7:00 PM.	Mon. Sept. 21 Yom Kippur 10:00 AM
Mon. Sept. 21 Neilah 5:00 PM followed by a Pot Luck Break-Fast	

Whoever you are. Wherever you're coming from. You're at home at CAS.
No membership required. All are welcome. Donations appreciated.

Pre-registration required, casoffice15@gmail.com. For more information call Rabbi Rudin, 508-333-1991. Congregation Ahavath Sholom, The Creative Spirit Dwells Here



Visit our website to learn more.



LOCAL NEWS

SHIR HADASH,
continued from page 10

Aggadah: Stories for Their Time and Ours
Join Rabbi Wax on Tuesdays from 10:30 a.m. until noon through August 18 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 Saturday, 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.

Congregation Ahavath Sholom Prepares You for the High Holidays
HOUSATONIC – Although Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are more than a month away, Congregation Ahavath Sholom is getting ready! The Reconstructionist congregation is pleased to announce two programs that will prepare the community to take an active role in High Holiday services.
Learn to Read Torah: Four-Part Summer Intensive
For adults who have wanted to learn the art of Torah chanting, CAS is offering a four-part “Learn to Read Torah” series led by Rabbi Jennifer Rudin. The course will meet on the Thursdays of July 23,

August 6, August 20, and August 27 from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. Classes are in person, with recordings available for those who miss a session.
Participants will receive High Holiday Torah readings, text and audio recordings, and individualized support from Rabbi Rudin. The series is designed to help learners gain the skills and confidence needed to participate in Torah reading during Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippur, and throughout the year.
For more information or to register, contact Rabbi Jennifer Rudin at rabbirudinahavathsholom@gmail.com.

Sound the Shofar – Tekiah Gedolah!
 Historically, the sound of Tekiah Gedolah is both earthly and Divine. It emanates from an animal horn and makes the same noise heard at the top of Mount Sinai when God addressed the people.
Do you have a desire to learn how to blow the Shofar? Do you wish you could make a mighty blast at High Holiday services? Bring your Shofar, or borrow one, to Congregation Ahavath Sholom at 1089 Main Street in Housatonic on August 8 at noon.
Learn how to make the ram’s horn cry out. Make a mighty sound!
Please RSVP to casoffice15@gmail.com

Congregation Beth Israel Summertime Shabbats
NORTH ADAMS – Congregation Beth Israel of the Berkshires (CBI) continues its rich schedule of Shabbat worship, learning, and community programs through the end of summer, with offerings both in person and on Zoom.
Shabbat Services
Regular Shabbat Morning Services will be held on the Saturdays of August 8 and 22 at 9:30 a.m. at CBI. Hear some words of Torah (and some words about Torah) as we bask in Shabbat’s sweetness. These services, led by Rabbi Jarah Greenfield, will include traditional liturgy, contemporary poetry, chant, Torah study, and song as well as spectacular

views from the sanctuary, which connect with the natural world and with our Source. Onsite and online; Zoom participants will need their own copy of *Mishkan T’filah*, available as an e-book.
Kabbalat Shabbat Services take place on the Fridays of August 14 and 28 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. Onsite and online; digital liturgy will be shown via slide-share, no siddur required for Zoom participants
RSVPs for all services are requested at cbiberkshires.com/calendar-of-events. Some dates may be subject to change; congregants are encouraged to check the calendar for updates.

Programming for Women at Chabad
Torah class, Mah Jong, and crafting Judaica
LENOX – This summer, Chabad of the Berkshires offers women opportunities to play, learn, and create at its Jewish center in downtown Lenox.

Torah & Tea Luncheons
Women are invited to join Torah & Tea, Chabad of the Berkshires’ weekly luncheon and Torah discussion, continuing every Monday throughout the summer.
Led by Sara Volovik, each gathering begins with a delicious lunch in a warm and welcoming setting, followed by an engaging exploration of the weekly Torah portion. Drawing on classical commentary and Chassidic and Kabbalistic insights, the discussions bring Jewish wisdom to life in a way that is meaningful and relevant.
Torah & Tea meets every Monday at noon at Chabad of the Berkshires, 17 West Street, Lenox. There is no charge to attend, although reservations are appreciated.
For more information or to RSVP, visit JewishBerkshires.com or call (413) 499-9899.

CHABAD WOMEN,
continued on page 16



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IS CLOSER THAN YOU THINK.

At Wingate Living, our world-class residences are built to elevate everyday life and make you feel right at home – without any of the stress of maintaining a home. And if your needs change, we’re here for you every step of the way. See what the good life looks like. Schedule a visit and you’ll discover all we have to offer.

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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

Federation's 86th Annual Meeting: A Year of Growth, Resilience, and Investment in the Future

Plus building community partnerships across Berkshire County



Federation President
Arlene Schiff



Bill Ballen and Phil Fogelman



Lindsey Brown and Dara Kaufman

Thank you so much to the more than 100 community members who attended Federation's 86th annual meeting on June 22 to celebrate a year of growth, resilience, and impact while looking ahead to the opportunities and challenges facing Berkshire Jewish life. We also thank our hosts at Shakespeare & Company.

Federation President Arlene Schiff opened the evening by reflecting on the vital role Federation plays in sustaining and strengthening Jewish life across the region. "When we gather as a community, we're reminded that Jewish life isn't something we inherit. It is something we actively build together," Schiff said. "It's shaped by shared responsibility, care for one another, and a commitment to ensuring that Jewish life in the Berkshires remains strong, welcoming, and meaningful for every generation."

Schiff noted that Federation's work continues to evolve in response to changing community needs and highlighted three areas that have become increasingly important over the past year: building a safer Jewish community, combating antisemitism, and supporting Israeli society.

Through the Jewish Berkshires LiveSecure Initiative, Federation expanded security training and preparedness efforts across local Jewish institutions. More than 675 community members, including clergy, educators, camp staff, and lay leaders, participated in security trainings designed to enhance emergency preparedness and strengthen coordination with local law enforcement.

Federation's security efforts have also extended beyond the Jewish community. Following violence at a Catholic school in Minnesota, Federation shared its expertise with local Catholic institutions, providing security assessments and training for clergy, teachers, and staff throughout Berkshire County.

Addressing the rise of antisemitism, Schiff highlighted Federation's advocacy efforts at both the local and state levels, including work to advance recommendations from the Massachusetts Special Commission on Combating Antisemitism. Through partnerships with elected officials, educators, law enforcement, and civic leaders, Federation has helped ensure that Jewish concerns are understood and addressed throughout the region.

Schiff also discussed Federation's continued support for Israel, including a strategic shift in allocations to deepen partnerships in the Afula-Gilboa region. During the past year, Federation distributed \$74,000 in grants to nine organizations supporting vulnerable populations, including at-risk youth, Ethiopian immigrants, Russian-speaking women, and survivors of sexual violence.

Executive Director Dara Kaufman then presented Federation's broader community impact, emphasizing that Federation's mission extends beyond responding to crises.

"Our work is about building a Jewish community where people feel connected, cared for, proud, and inspired to be part of something larger than themselves," Kaufman said.

Over the past year, thousands of community members participated in more than 125 Federation programs and events. Federation also provided more than 3,300 kosher meals and a wide range of social services, educational programs, food assistance, and holiday care packages that supported hundreds of older adults and vulnerable community members.

Kaufman highlighted Federation's efforts to foster thoughtful dialogue during a period of increasing polarization. Programs such as Speaking Across Conflict, presented in partnership with Resetting the Table, helped community members develop skills for engaging across disagreement with empathy and respect.

The Federation's investment in Jewish youth and identity-building was another major focus of the evening. During the past year, Federation awarded more than \$82,000 in camp scholarships, enabling 43 local children to attend Jewish overnight camps. Federation also provided funding to support Israeli teens attending URJ Eisner Camp and Camp Kimama Halfmoon this summer.

"Jewish camp remains one of the most effective ways to build Jewish identity, belonging, leadership, and pride," Kaufman said.

Kaufman also celebrated the continued growth of the Berkshire Jewish Collective, Federation's initiative for Jewish adults in their 20s, 30s, and 40s. Membership in the Collective's WhatsApp network grew by more than 150 percent over the past year, reaching 128 members, with many participants forming meaningful friendships and connections beyond organized programs.

The evening included the election of Federation's 2026-2027 Board of Directors. The Federation also recognized outgoing board members Rebecca Cook Dubin, Rabbi Jodie Gordon, Gail Orenstein, Jen Sacon, and Tom Sawyer for their years of dedicated service.

Federation also recognized the 118 members of the organization's Legacy Circle, whose planned gifts and endowment commitments help ensure the long-term vitality of Jewish life in the Berkshires.

The program concluded with a community conversation focused on combating antisemitism, promoting Holocaust education, and strengthening partnerships with local schools. Featured speakers included longtime educator Bill Ballen, education consultant Phil Fogelman, and Mount Everett Regional School teacher Lindsey Berkowitz Brown. Together, they explored the importance of collaboration among schools, families, and community organizations in creating safe and inclusive learning environments for all students.

Looking ahead, Kaufman reported that Federation's 2026 Annual Campaign has already raised more than \$835,000 toward its \$1.6 million goal.

"What gives me the greatest hope is not any single program or initiative," Kaufman told attendees. "It is the people in this room and throughout our community who continue to show up for one another, invest in our future, and affirm that Jewish life matters."

The evening concluded with a reminder that Federation's strength comes from its unique role as the organization that brings the Berkshire Jewish community together to respond to emerging needs, support those who are vulnerable, and ensure a vibrant Jewish future for generations to come.

Star Students

Judith Cook introduced the recipients of the **Henry Simkin and Frances Simkin Schiller and Dr. Stanley and Faye Simkin Scholarship**, given to Jewish high school seniors who have demonstrated high academic achievement and leadership in the Jewish and broader communities. This year's recipients are:

Your Federation Presents

Jacob Klein



“You don’t need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows,” Bob Dylan asserted, but self-proclaimed “weather warlock” Jacob Klein of Pittsfield would likely beg to differ. The Pittsfield High School grad for several years put out his daily Berkshire Weather newsletter and delivered forecasts on radio station WTBR. He writes that not only is he a proud Jew raised in the Conservative movement at Knesset Israel, as an avid genealogist he

found out he is a Jew with some *yichus* – “I have discovered that some of my ancestors came from the famous shtetl Valozhyn. Others were early Zionists who moved to the Holy Land during the First Aliyah, and supposedly I am even descended from the Maharam of Rothenburg.” Jacob is also overcoming a serious physical challenge, having suffered a brain injury that impacts his life. “It took many months for me to regain my ability to walk and speak without much impairment,” he shares. “I found G-d when I was suffering and I have been with Him ever since. I want to become a rabbi and even a *posek* [Jewish legal scholar].” Part of his journey led him to become more traditionally observant. “I am G-d’s creation, and I want to devote my life, however long it is, to serving the Creator and Master of the Universe, as well as the Jewish people.”

He describes his efforts to ensure that when PHS formed its Model United Nations, Israel not be excluded as some in the student leadership insisted. “It is sad to hear certain things at school, not built by intentional hate, but by an ignorance that perpetuates antisemitism and anti-Zionism,” he writes about his efforts to voice a pro-Israel and pro-Jewish message. “I do my best, and try to inspire by building understanding through dialogue. I thank Hashem for my existence and for all the miracles of the world.”

A National Honors Society member at PHS, Jacob will attend Yeshiva University in the fall and will enroll in the Jewish Studies program on a rabbinic studies track.

Ava Mozian



“In kindergarten, one of my classmates asked me why Santa didn’t come to my house as he did for all ‘the normal kids,’” writes Ava Mozian of Lenox. “Although I tried to argue that Hanukkah was basically eight straight days of Christmas, my big takeaway from that conversation was the feeling that I wasn’t actually ‘normal.’” She adds that at first she reacted badly to her religious school classes at

Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, which only emphasized the sense of difference she felt about her identity. Even Jewish summer camp – so often a touchstone

in a young person’s Jewish journey – left her feeling left out, as her perception of its “tri-state subculture felt like yet another world where I – a Western Massachusetts kid – just didn’t fit in.”

So, after her bat mitzvah, Ava took a step back from Jewish practice, but she was later persuaded by her father to try her hand at mentoring the younger students at Hevreh’s religious school. She remembers: “As I taught kids the Alef-Bet and the foundations of prayers that they would recite during their bar and bat mitzvahs, I was humbled to realize I was one link in a chain of cultural transmission that spanned millennia. In this role, I also took on a leadership position, guiding younger students through their early Jewish education and helping create a supportive and engaging classroom environment. Newly motivated, I began to attend a confirmation class at my synagogue where I could lend my voice to larger discussions about world events and Jewish traditions. The more I listened, the more I understood that everyone’s relationship with Judaism with heritage, faith, and culture was complicated in some way. Ironically, my time spent feeling like an outsider helped me appreciate my place inside the Jewish community.”

At Lenox Memorial High School, Ava took many AP courses and was captain of the varsity track and cross-country teams. In the fall, she will attend Emory University, where she expects to study Law and Political Science.

Judith Cook also introduced the first recipient of the **Sandra Kronick Smith College Scholarship**, which supports a graduating female student attending college or vocational/technical school who demonstrates good character, is hard-working, and possesses a strong work ethic.

Sadie Honig-Briggs



“There’s no part of my life that I can tell you about without also telling you about being Jewish,” asserts Sadie Honig-Briggs of Tyringham. There are “obvious things” she points to – working as a *madricha* at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire’s religious school, working in Hevreh’s office and playing violin at services, and giving a speech for Federation about her first visit to Israel.

“But then,” she adds, “there are the things that you wouldn’t look at and say ‘that’s her

Judaism.’ Volunteering at Volunteers in Medicine Berkshires, taking vitals and making calls in Spanish. Teaching a recent immigrant how to read in English, how to order food at restaurants, how to get a library card. Working as a Restorative Justice facilitator at school, helping peers to see eye to eye. Helping a four-year-old violin student learn the notes to ‘Twinkle Twinkle.’ Studying chemistry until one in the morning. Writing and re-writing and editing essays, poems, applications for schools. Painting murals in the Dominican Republic. Acting in the school play. Reading the news. Holding the door for somebody. Joining hands at a barn dance. Telling someone they look beautiful. Planting flowers. Making food. Singing. Laughing. Reading. Protesting. Learning.”

86TH ANNUAL MEETING,
continued on page 25



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

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



LOCAL NEWS

CHABAD WOMEN,
continued from page 12

Mah Jong Mondays Continue Through the Summer
There's still plenty of time to join the fun! Mah Jong Mondays continue every Monday at 1:30 p.m. through the end of August, welcoming both returning players and newcomers.

Whether you've been playing for years or have always wanted to learn, you'll find a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. Experienced players are happy to teach beginners, making it easy for anyone to join in and enjoy the game. More than just a game, Mah Jong Mondays have become a place where friendships grow, laughter is shared, and people enjoy spending time together each week. There is no charge to participate.

A Creative Afternoon with Lasting Meaning
A beautiful piece of Judaica. An afternoon with friends. A deeper appreciation for a mitzvah that has welcomed Jewish families home for generations.

On Wednesday, August 5 at 4 p.m., Chabad will host "Resin and Rose," a special event for women that blends creativity with Jewish learning in a relaxed and elegant setting. Participants will craft their own resin mezuzah case while discovering the significance of the mezuzah and the powerful message it brings to every Jewish home. More than a decorative item, the mezuzah is a symbol of faith, protection, and Jewish identity, transforming an ordinary doorway into an entrance filled with purpose and blessing.

The afternoon is designed to be both inspiring and enjoyable. Guests will work while enjoying wine, delicious refreshments, and the opportunity to connect with other women in the community. The cost is \$36 per person. Advance registration is encouraged.

Chabad of the Berkshires is at 17 West Street in Lenox. For more information and to RSVP for events, please call (413) 499-9899 or visit JewishBerkshires.com.

Create a Jewish Legacy Campaign

Please remember the Jewish Community in your will.

Hello, Neighbor – Get to Know Adamah Farm This Summer



Pizza will be served on the patio overlooking Lake Miriam

FALLS RIVER, CT – The folks at Adamah Farm want to meet their neighbors in the Berkshires and environs! The Jewish educational farm is housed on the 400-acre Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center campus, just 30 minutes south of Great Barrington and 15 minutes east of Millerton, NY. Adamah works nationally to cultivate vibrant Jewish life in connection to the Earth.

On Sunday, August 30 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., enjoy the abundance of late summer at a Farm-to-Pizza event. Spend the day by the lake and on the farm, enjoying fresh, wood-fired pies made with ingredients you can harvest yourself-sun-ripened tomatoes, fresh basil, straight from the field. Drift between the farm and the water: visit the goats, kayak on our lake, or simply settle in and enjoy. Live music from the Jamie Saft Trio will carry through the afternoon.

All ages and backgrounds are always welcome. To RSVP, please email Adam Sher at adam.sher@adamah.org

This event is co-sponsored by Federation and PJ Library.

Other events include:

- Thursday, August 13 @ 7:30 p.m. – Farm and orchard walk.

- Friday, August 28 @ 7 p.m. – Welcome Shabbat with a song circle lakeside.
 - Thursday, September 3 @ 7:30 p.m. – Farm and orchard walk.
- Adamah is at the Isabella Freedman Retreat Center, 116 Johnson Road in Falls River, CT. For more on Adamah, visit adamah.org.

JTS in the Berkshires Tackles the Subject of AI



Dr. Shira Billet

LENOX – The second JTS in the Berkshires lecture this summer will be presented by Dr. Shira Billet, Assistant Professor of Jewish Thought and Ethics at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, on the topic of "A Jewish Ethics of Creativity for a Technological Age."

This presentation will take place on Friday, August 7 from 10:30 a.m. to noon at the Elayne P. Bernstein Theatre at Shakespeare & Company, 70 Kemble Street, Lenox. It is highly recommended purchasing your ticket online ahead of time at: tinyurl.com/JTSBerkshires2026

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. Shira 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.

The JTS in the Berkshires program, in partnership with Knesset Israel, is generously co-sponsored by Jewish Federation of the Berkshires with additional funding from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.

Please contact Tani Schwartz-Herman at JTS with questions, tanischwartz@jtsa.edu, (212) 678-8996.

FRANKIE AND JOHNNY IN THE CLAIR DE LUNE

by Terrence McNally

Directed by Nicole Ricciardi

JULY 30–AUGUST 23

Elayne P. Bernstein Theatre

SHAKE IT UP THE REMIX

Created by Allyn Burrows & Jacob Ming-Trent

Directed by Allyn Burrows

JULY 31–AUGUST 3

Tina Packer Playhouse

HAMLET

by William Shakespeare

Directed by Ariel Bock

AUGUST 13–30

Tina Packer Playhouse

MIDSUMMER DREAMERS

Created & Performed by Nick Nudler & Kirsten Peacock

Directed by Maura Hanlon

SEPTEMBER 1–3

Tina Packer Playhouse

THE NORWEGIANS

by C. Denby Swanson

Directed by James Warwick

SEPTEMBER 4–OCTOBER 4

Elayne P. Bernstein Theatre

CELEBRATING JEWISH PLAYS

A WEEKEND OF READINGS, POETRY, AND MUSIC

OCTOBER 9–11

Tina Packer Playhouse & Elayne P. Bernstein Theatre

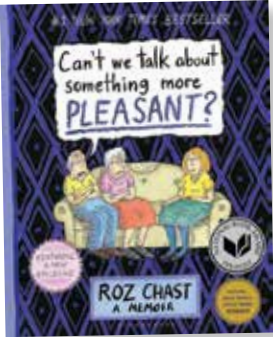
LOCAL NEWS

Shabbat Outdoors with TAA

PITTSFIELD – This summer, enjoy Saturdays in the beautiful Berkshires with Temple Anshe Amunim. Hikes will include the Old Mill Trail in Hinsdale on August 1, Pleasant Valley Audubon Sanctuary in Lenox on August 15, and Kennedy Park in Lenox on August 29. 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.

CBI Book Club to Discuss Roz Chast’s *Can’t We Talk About Something More Pleasant?*

WILLIAMSTOWN – On Monday, August 10 at 11 a.m., the CBI Book Club will meet in-person at the home of a Williamstown member, to discuss *Can’t We Talk About Something More Pleasant?* by Roz Chast. In her multi-award-winning first memoir, Chast – a New Yorker cartoonist – brings her signature wit to the universal topic of aging parents while shining a light on one family’s endearing peculiarities. Spanning the last several years of their lives and told through four-color cartoons, family photos, documents, and a narrative as rife with laughs as it is with tears, Chast’s memoir is both heart-wrenching and hilarious. RSVP to receive the address. Those who plan on joining should RSVP at cbiberkshires.com/series/book-club.



Mikvah Now Open in Lenox

On July 5, Chabad of the Berkshires opened the doors to Mikvah Rose at its Jewish Center in downtown Lenox. Hundreds attended the grand opening of the mikvah, which was funded by generous community members and with help from Mikvah USA. Women interested in mikvah should contact Chabad of the Berkshires’ co-director Sara Volovik at (413) 770-1310.



Elul Study: Unpacking the *Unatane Tokef*

On three Tuesday evenings, Rabbi Pamela Wax of Knesset Israel will take a deep dive into the *Unatane Tokef* prayer. What does this prayer mean theologically, and what does it mean to us personally? How might we reimagine *tefilah*/prayer, *tzedakah*/righteousness, and *teshuvah*/repentance? What about that enigmatic “severe decree”? Compare this prayer to some of the deathbed tales of the Rabbis and of the Hasidim, in search of a wisdom about life and death that can inform High Holy Day observance – and the rest of our lives. On Zoom only the Tuesdays, August 25, September 1 and September 8, from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Register for the Zoom link at knessetisrael.org/rsvp. Free for members of KI and TAA / \$36 for non-members.

Compelling Shabbat Speakers at Chabad

LENOX – Chabad of the Berkshires invites the community to learn more about some of the decisive issues facing Jewish communities and institutions worldwide from a lineup of distinguished authors and thinkers. All talks take place Saturdays at approximately noon, following Shabbat services. A kiddush lunch will be served after. “How Israel Lost the Media War Since October 8, 2023,” with Gary Rosenblatt How did Israel go from being the victim of the deadliest attack in its history to facing growing criticism around the world? Why did the narrative shift so quickly, and what role did the media play in shaping public opinion? These questions are at the heart of a timely presentation on August 8 by Gary Rosenblatt, one of the most respected voices in Jewish journalism. Rosenblatt will examine how mainstream media coverage, social media, and Israel’s own public diplomacy have influenced global perceptions in the aftermath of October 7. Drawing on decades of experience reporting on Israel, politics, and the American Jewish community, he will offer insight into one of the most consequential issues facing Israel and world Jewry today. Rosenblatt is the former editor and publisher of The Jewish Week of New York and a Pulitzer Prize finalist.

From *Mini Skirt to Hijab*: Jacqueline Saper on Life During Iran’s Islamic Revolution



Jacqueline Saper

What happens when a country changes overnight – and the life you knew disappears with it? On August 15, Jacqueline Saper, author of *From Mini Skirt to Hijab*, shares a powerful and deeply personal presentation on life during Iran’s Islamic Revolution. Saper will share her firsthand account of growing up in Iran during a time of dramatic political and cultural upheaval. As a young Jewish woman, she experienced the revolution not as history from a distance, but as a lived reality marked by fear, uncertainty, and rapid change.

Amid renewed global attention on Iran, Saper’s story offers a personal perspective on a period that reshaped millions of lives. In her talk, she reflects on what it meant to navigate daily life as everything familiar shifted – schools, society, personal freedom, and identity – and how she ultimately rebuilt her life after leaving Iran. Saper was featured in the Berkshire Jewish Voice in February 2023.

The Iran Escalation: What Were the Key Players Expecting?

As tensions involving Iran continue to influence global security, energy markets, and international diplomacy, an important question emerges: how were governments and strategic actors preparing for escalation, and how did those expectations compare with what has actually unfolded? On August 22, Dr. Efraim Chalamish, an international economic law expert, NYU professor, and advisor specializing in global finance, national security, and cross-border policy, will explore that question and much more about the current conflict. Dr. Chalamish will offer an inside look at how

SHABBAT SPEAKERS, continued on page 18

MAZEL TOV!

- Emma Lezberg** who, having completed her third year as a PhD student at Harvard University School of Education, focusing on immigration, has been accepted to their law school. She will pursue a dual PhD/JD program. Proud family are twin brother, **Jacob**, parents **Jenny Greenfeld and Bob Lezberg**, and kvelling grandma, **Barbara Greenfeld**.
- Longtime Berkshire Eagle sports columnist **Howard Herman** on his induction to the Western Massachusetts Baseball Hall of Fame.
- Nancy Reiner and Ilan Dahan** on the birth of two grandchildren. Daughter **Danielle Dahan** and husband, **Joe**, welcomed **Caleb Julian Sposato** on May 1. He joined big sister **Aviva**. Daughter **Jessica Dahan** and husband **Ben** welcomed **Colette Anita Dahan Mickle** on June 7. She will join siblings **Miles** and **Lola**.
- Henry Amos Herzberg**, a rising 8th grader at BART Charter School, on his upcoming bar mitzvah on August 29 at Knesset Israel. Henry is the son of **Lesley and Matthew Herzberg**, brother of **Jacob**, and grandson of **Gay and Mark Herzberg** and **Deborah and Paul Keiner**. His Tikkun Olam project is preparing and delivering meals to members of the Jewish community in need.
- Rob Bildner** on the exhibit of his photographs on view at the Stockbridge Library through the end of July.
- Jane Rosen** on her milestone birthday.
- Cindy and Ed Helitzer** as recipients of the Knesset Israel Award of Merit.
- Jeff Cook** on his special birthday.
- Ari Drayman**, son of **Eric and Cherie Drayman**, receiving his J.D. from University of New Hampshire Law School.
- Alex Henner**, son of **Dr. David and Nadine Henner**, receiving his bachelor’s degree from the University of Massachusetts.
- Gabe Rich**, son of **Tom and Pam Rich**, receiving his bachelor’s degree from Babson College.



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LOCAL NEWS

SHABBAT SPEAKERS,

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governments and policy institutions were preparing for potential escalation in the region – what scenarios were being modeled, what contingencies were considered most likely, and how decision-makers assessed risk in real time. The discussion will also explore how economic pressures, diplomatic calculations, and security concerns intersect in shaping policy responses, and where real-world developments have diverged from those expectations.

These programs will take place at Chabad of the Berkshires, 17 West Street, Lenox. All are warmly invited to attend. For more information, visit JewishBerkshires.com.

Maggie Haberman to Speak at 59th Annual Feigenbaum Lecture at Temple Anshe Amunim



Maggie Haberman

PITTSFIELD – The 59th Annual Hilda Vallin Feigenbaum Memorial Foundation Lecture will be held on Sunday, August 23 at 7:30 p.m. at Temple Anshe Amunim, 26 Broad Street. This year's speaker is Maggie Haberman, White House Correspondent for The New York Times, who will be speaking on "The Current Political Landscape."

Due to extremely high demand, registration for in-person attendance has been closed. Details to register to stream the lecture live are now available on the Temple website at ansheamunim.org.

A Pulitzer Prize winning reporter, Haberman has worked for The New York Times since 2015 and previously reported for Politico, The New York Post, and The New York Daily News. Her first book “Confidence Man: The Making of Donald Trump and the Breaking of America”, was an instant #1 New York Times best-seller. Haberman continues

to report extensively on the Trump presidency and Washington politics for both print media and television. Haberman's most recent book, *Regime Change: Inside the Imperial Presidency of Donald Trump*, co-authored with Jonathan Swan, was released in June 2026.

"We are delighted to welcome Maggie Haberman as this year's speaker," said Josh Cutler, Chair of the Feigenbaum Lecture Series. "Ms. Haberman is one of the nation's leading authorities on politics and has reported on the most influential moments in our nation's recent history. Her visit to our Temple is most timely considering the upcoming midterm elections which will help shape the domestic and foreign policy development over the next two years."

"Ms. Haberman's visit also allows us to celebrate the civic and spiritual legacy of Hilda Vallin Feigenbaum, and honor the love and dedication of her sons, Dr. Armand Feigenbaum and Dr. Donald Feigenbaum (both of blessed memory), who established this lecture series in perpetuity as a living tribute to their mother's spirit," Cutler said.

About the Hilda Vallin Feigenbaum Lecture Series

The Hilda Vallin Feigenbaum Memorial Foundation continues to enhance the spiritual and intellectual life of Temple Anshe Amunim and the larger community. The Foundation has sponsored lectures by leaders in American government, literature, theology, and journalism including such personalities as Julian Bond, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Bernard Kalb, Ambassadors Daniel Kurtzer and Martin Indyk, Steven Emerson, Katty Kay, Howard Dean, Bret Stephens, and Admiral James Stavridis.

For more information, please call the Temple office at: (413) 442-5910 or visit the Temple's website at ansheamunim.org. Temple Anshe Amunim is an accessible building.

A New Torah in Town: A Celebration of Jewish Unity

LENOX – “The dedication of a new Torah scroll is more than a sacred object,” says Chabad of the Berkshires’ co-director Rabbi Levi Volovik. “It is

a moment of unity,
continuity, and joy
for the Jewish people,
connecting generations
through the timeless
words of Torah."

On Sunday, August 16, at 10:30 a.m., Chabad invites all to celebrate the dedication of a new Torah scroll, marking the completion and welcoming of a new *Sefer Torah* into Jewish life in the Berkshires.

The Torah is being dedicated by Rabbi Levi and Sara Volovik in loving memory of Rabbi Levi's father, Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Volovik, and by community members Steven Zucker and Sonia Becker in loving memory of their parents. Their generosity ensures that the memory of loved ones is honored in a way that continues to inspire Jewish life, learning, and unity for years to come.

“In Jewish tradition, every Jew is compared to a letter in the Torah,” says Rabbi Volovik. “Just as a Torah scroll is only complete when every letter is present, the Jewish people are strongest when every individual is included. When a new Torah is written and welcomed, it is not only a celebration of a sacred text – it is a celebration of the people who come together to write the next chapter of Jewish life.”

The event will include the final letters being

completed, followed by music, dancing, and a festive community brunch as the Torah is joyfully carried into its new home. "There is a special energy in witnessing a Torah enter a community for the first time, as it becomes part of daily prayer, celebration, and Jewish continuity," adds Rabbi Volovik

The program will take place at Chabad of the Berkshires, 17 West Street, Lenox. All are warmly invited to attend. For more information, visit JewishBerkshires.com.

Runway to the Days of Awe 5787

On Tuesdays from 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 or email the CBI office for more information at office@cbiberkshires.com.

Deepen Your Shabbat: *'Acharei Kiddush'* Continues at Knesset Israel this Summer

PITTSFIELD – Knesset Israel is inviting the community to nourish both body and mind this summer with “*Acharei Kiddush*” (After Kiddush).

On the Saturday mornings through August 22, 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 after.

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.

The series continues on August 1, with **Frederic Rutberg** talking about “Local Journalism in 2026 and Beyond.” What are the challenges that face the newspaper industry, and what is the future landscape for local journalism? An expert in the field will share his wisdom about the world of journalism and publishing today. KI member Fred Rutberg served as staff attorney for the New York City Commission on Human Rights and then at Manhattan Legal Services in Spanish Harlem in the early 1970s before moving to Berkshire County. He practiced law and served in several capacities as a jurist, and was a vice president of the Massachusetts Judges’ Conference. He retired from the bench in 2015, and in 2016 purchased New England Newspapers, Inc. (publisher of the Berkshire Eagle) with three other investors. He retired as publisher in 2025, but continues to serve as president of New England Newspapers, Inc.

On August 8, “Unpacking Second Isaiah” will be led by **Rabbi David Weiner**, the spiritual leader of Kneset Israel since 2009. Isaiah chapters 40-56, the source for most of the *haftarot* read during the season leading up to the High Holy Days, is an exceptionally rich part of the Tanakh. Explore some of the prophet’s core arguments and themes, which continue to shape Judaism to this day. Why are these passages so upbeat and comforting? What new ideas about God, covenant, and Israel do they seek to teach? Why do we call their author ‘second Isaiah’, and how might his writing inspire us in uncertain times?

On August 15, **Rabbi Val Lieber** of Temple Anshe Amunim delves into “Einstein’s God: Science, the Universe, and Holiness.” Examine letters, articles, and interviews featuring Albert Einstein’s opinions about the universe, Judaism, and a Creator, along with several passages from the Zohar and other Jewish mystical sources to discover how they dovetail with the modern physics of Einstein and later quantum physicists. No background in physics or Jewish mysticism required to enjoy this session.

LOCAL NEWS

RAMBLIN' RAV,

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Wednesday Morning, August 12
Old Mill Trail, Hinsdale
Very Easy, 3 miles, 180', 1.5 hours
Just because the walk is easy doesn't mean the scenery isn't beautiful! This short trail through fragrant hemlock forest along the East Branch of the Housatonic River is a smooth, basically flat delight, and the first half of the trail meets Forest Service Trail Accessibility standards. Excellent walk for people of all ages. Leashed dogs are welcome.

Rain date – Thursday, August 13
Register for meeting place (carpool or trailhead) and time



Keystone Arch Bridges, engineered by James MacNeill Whistler's father

Wednesday Morning, August 26
Keystone Arch Bridges, Chester
Easy, 3+ miles, <300', 1.5 hours plus time for wading & Torah study
Come on your own or bring sure-footed children and grandchildren for an easy hike along a scenic section of the Westfield River that is crossed by several early 20th century keystone arch bridges. At the midpoint of the hike, pause for a rest (fearlessly) on a 'very narrow bridge,' or, if conditions permit, scramble down the side to a swimming hole under the bridge. Excellent hike for kids. Leashed dogs are welcome

Rain Date – Thursday, August 27
Register for meeting place (carpool or trailhead) and time.

JDC in the Berkshires will feature Ariel Zwang, JDC Global CEO



Ariel Zwang

of North America and Jewish Federation of the Berkshires. This Federation supports JDC with funds from our annual campaign, this year contributing \$90,000.

This event is free, but RSVP is required at tinyurl.com/JDCBerks26. Event location in Lenox will be provided after RSVP.

For over 110 years, JDC has put the timeless Jewish value of mutual responsibility into action. Today, JDC is supporting vulnerable Jewish communities in Ukraine and around the world, leading recovery and rebuilding efforts in Israel, and strengthening Jewish life amid rising antisemitism globally.

Ariel Zwang will offer insights on the current state of the Jewish world and how JDC is making a difference where it matters most.

A light Kosher dinner will be served. For more information, please reach out to Elisheva Massel, elishevama@jdc.org

This event is hosted by Amy Dean & Alan Kluger and Cheryl Fishbein & Phil Schatten.

Ariel Zwang took the helm of JDC in January 2021 and has since led JDC's hundreds of professionals, operating in 70 countries worldwide. During this time, they have responded to multiple crises – the war in Israel and rise of antisemitism impacting global Jewish communities, the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, and historic disasters in Morocco and Turkey – all while bolstering global Jewish life and leaders.

Cancel Culture: Seed + Mill Co-Founder on Combatting BDS

Among the more insidious positions held by the anti-Israel Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS) movement is its opposition to what it terms “normalization.” As defined on the BDS website,

Normalization is the participation in any project, initiative or activity, local or international, that brings together (on the same “platform”) Palestinians (and/or Arabs) and Israelis (individuals or institutions) and does not meet the following two conditions:

1. The Israeli side publicly recognizes the UN-affirmed inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, which are set out in the 2005 BDS Call, and
2. the joint activity constitutes a form of co-resistance against the Israeli regime of occupation, settler-colonialism and apartheid.

As Arno Rosenfeld wrote in an article on the subject published by The Forward in June, “Organizers of the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement, which seeks to isolate Israel, have focused on organizations and companies that they contend support the Israeli state, whether or not they are located in Israel, while cautioning that ‘it does not call for or condone boycotts of individuals because of their Israeli or Jewish origin.’ But that doesn't stop it from happening.” One high-profile example that occurred in June was the attempt by anti-Israel voices to cancel actress Gwyneth Paltrow (whose father was Jewish) for filming an advertisement for a luxury property in Herzliya, Israel – an act they labeled “Gwynocide.”



Rachel Simons

The boycott of Israeli products by Brooklyn's Park Slope Food Coop is merely the most publicized action of its type, Simons asserts. Many retailers and consumers in the US and overseas – and some in the Berkshires and Hudson Valley – have stopped purchasing Israeli products and ingredients even if they are made (as her company's offerings are) collaboratively by Jews and Israeli Arabs.

Simons – who presented a program for Federation last February about her cookbook *Sesame: Global Recipes & Stories of an Ancient Seed* – spoke to the BJV about how these organized and personal boycotts have affected her craft tahini and halava business. Our conversation was edited for length and clarity.

The BJV Interview: Rachel Simons of Seed + Mill

BDS is affecting business people like yourself who are trying to work cross-culturally. How have you been affected?

Our business is 10 years old, started in New York City in Chelsea Market. Our values as a business have always been inclusivity, using food as a vehicle to connect people of all different faiths and cultures. Those are my business values and my personal values. We've sourced our tahini, which is our core product, from Israel since we started. The production and the industry over there are really vibrant and strong. They make excellent products, and we wanted a premium ingredient.

I could have sourced my tahini here in the US, but I wanted the best of the best. There was no ideological reason per se for me to have sourced my ingredients and products there. We are a brand that outsources our production, which means we co-pack our products. We've worked with the same co-packer for many, many years, and have a fantastic relationship with them. They happen to be Muslim Israeli Arabs. Their factory is very multicultural. They employ people of all faiths and colors, and it's a big factory that exports all around the world. They and Seed + Mill are being punished by a campaign that purports to want to provide liberation and freedom and dignity for people in Israel. My personal view is that this campaign is not doing anything of the sort, and it's punishing the people that they purport to want to help.

I don't think it would be morally fair or appropriate to boycott Jews or Arab Israelis. So whilst they happen to be punishing Arab Israelis in this case, I don't think BDS is a morally appropriate campaign regardless of the target.

The Park Slope Food Coop got a lot of press because of where it's located and the type of people who shop there. How did their boycott specifically affect you?

The Coop voted to take our products out of the store, so we will lose that revenue. It obviously also impacts team morale. But it's not the first time that our business has been boycotted. We've had other buyers at specialty stores tell us that they will no longer carry our products because they're manufactured in Israel. We also have consumers who used to purchase from us who reach out and tell us, “Oh, I bought your product from your store or on your website, and now I see on the label ‘produced in Israel’ and I want a refund.” Some want to share their views on how they feel about where we manufacture. There have been multiple ways we have received opinions and negativity or boycotting of our products in the last four years.

Do you feel like it's a grassroots kind of thing where people are responding to their own political views, or do you feel that it's more organized? For example, will a buyer get a list of companies like yours that uses manufacturers in Israel?

I think it's both. I think there's been a lot of individuals who are not part of an organized network who have a view and they are reaching out independently and individually. And then I think there is obviously a very organized campaign that is trying to make this have a wider impact. So, it's coming to us both ways.

You say that when people reach out to you, they use it as an opportunity to express their political views. Do you feel harangued if they tell you to stop working in Israel? What do they want from you?

I'm glad you asked that question because actually I don't feel harangued. If anything, when somebody reaches out to tell me about their purchasing decisions, at the very least it gives me a moment to engage with them and to humanize my business and to humanize the people who are making our products over in Israel. I'm at least grateful when somebody will tell me what they're doing and why, because that is the first step in a dialogue. I engage with every single person, and I try to explain to them why I don't think their actions are productive or moral.

I'm not an activist [but] I have an opinion. I want stability and peace and dignity for people in Israel of all religions. I'm not an extremist. I'm a human, and I try to just explain why this BDS campaign is just not going to help. If you genuinely believe that both Jews and Palestinians deserve to live safely and

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OBITUARIES

Elaine Phyllis Shindler, 97, volunteer, supporter of Jewish community, role model

PITTSFIELD - Elaine Shindler, 97, passed away on Wednesday, June 10, at Berkshire Medical Center. Most recently, she was a resident of Wingate Residences at Melbourne Place.

Daughter of the late Max and Sarah Skoletsky, Elaine was a life-long resident of Pittsfield, graduating from Pittsfield High. She was a life-time member of Congregation Kneset Israel.

She and her late husband, Robert, are known for the many causes for which they regularly volunteered in the community, for events at the synagogue, distributing flowers on Christmas day at local hospitals, and for the numerous veteran organizations including the Jewish War Veterans and the American Legion.

Bob and Elaine used to love square dancing and arranged frequent trips to Foxwoods Casino as a part of the group's fundraising efforts.

For years, they dedicated themselves to the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires' kosher lunch program at Kneset Israel, bringing nourishment, comfort, and companionship to seniors, among their many other contributions to the Berkshire Jewish community. They were tremendous role models.

Elaine leaves a son, Marty (Roberta) of Mesa, AZ and their children Michael and Perri; daughter, Lori Fish (Bruce) and their children Larry and Alexander.

Funeral Services were held on Thursday, June 11, at Kneset Israel Cemetery, Pittsfield.

Contributions would be appreciated to The Bob and Elaine Shindler, KIZayde and KIBubbe Endowment Fund at Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road, Pittsfield, MA 01201.

Allan Lipton, MD, 87, respected physician, active in many Jewish communities

PORTLAND, OR – Allan Lipton, MD, 87, passed away peacefully surrounded by family on Monday, June 1.

Born December 29, 1938 in Brooklyn, NY to Ruth (Goldberg) and Murray Lipton, Allan was a star athlete on Samuel J. Tilden High School's basketball team that won the 1955 NYC Public Schools Athletic League Division II Championship and competed for the City crown at Madison Square Garden.

Allan graduated from Amherst College, a school he deeply loved and appreciated. He particularly treasured his

liberal arts education and Amherst's acceptance of Black and Jewish students, which was uncommon in that era. His love for Amherst was so strong and persuasive that he convinced his nephew, two of his three children and grandnephew to follow in his footsteps there. He majored in Biology, a subject in which he excelled and would define his future as a physician and scientist. Allan and Nan have since established the Lipton 1959 Fund for Faculty Research at Amherst.

Allan earned his MD degree from NYU in 1963, completing internship and residency in the Cornell Medical Division at Bellevue Hospital. There he met a nursing student who became his loving wife of 61 years, Nancy "Nan" Whitcomb Lipton. They were married at the Gideon Putnam Hotel in Saratoga Springs, NY on May 8, 1965.

Allan served in the public health service as a research associate at the National Institutes of Health (Bethesda, MD). He returned to NY for a fellowship in Hematology and Oncology at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. From 1969-1971 he continued his research as an American Cancer Society Dernham Fellow at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies (La Jolla, CA). Allan's mentor there, biochemist Robert W. Holley PhD, shared the 1968 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.

In 1971 Allan and Nan moved to Hershey, PA where Allan founded the Division of Oncology at the Milton S. Hershey Medical Center of Penn State University. He became Professor of Medicine and worked there for a half-century. He cared for cancer patients in outpatient and inpatient settings, led a thriving research laboratory, and mentored generations of physicians and scientists. He was instrumental in the development of aromatase inhibitors to treat breast cancer and later became an international leader in the treatment of bone metastases. He was the first in this country to treat patients with bone metastases with pamidronate and first in the world to treat patients with bone metastases with denosumab. His later work focused on the use of biomarkers to predict response to therapy and clinical outcomes. During his career he authored 376 peer reviewed papers, touched countless lives, and cherished his colleagues around the world.

While his children were young, he spent one month each summer as the camp doctor at Camp Greylock in Becket. He loved camp and later retired to Becket, where they dubbed their home

Camp Lipton. Allan loved the musical and other cultural offerings of the Berkshires, the region's nature, and gathering there with friends, neighbors, and family. He enjoyed playing tennis and golf and most of all swimming in Yokum Pond. Allan and Nan later divided their time between Becket and Portland to be near grandchildren.

Allan participated avidly in numerous Jewish communities including Beth El Temple in Harrisburg, PA, The Maimonides Society of the Jewish Federation of Harrisburg, Kneset Israel in Pittsfield, Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, Chabad of The Berkshires, Congregation Neveh Shalom, and Congregation Shir Tikvah in Portland. He and Nan volunteered for Hadassah and traveled to Israel on multiple Hadassah missions. The Nan and Allan Lipton Endowment Fund supports a scientist or a nurse to obtain the knowledge or skills to improve patient care, research, or education at Hadassah Medical Center (Jerusalem).

Allan is survived by his wife Nan; sister Serena; son Samuel, daughter-in-law Ann, grandchildren Saul and Simone; daughter Sarah, son-in-law Devan, grandchildren Shoshana and Rafael.

A funeral was held on Wednesday, June 3 at Ahavai Shalom Cemetery of Congregation Neveh Shalom, Portland. Donations may be made to Berkshire Hills Hadassah, Kneset Israel, or MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger.

Dr. Jack Budnick, 89, long-time volunteer, successful pediatric dentist, great humor

LEE – Dr. Jack Budnick, 89, beloved husband, father, and grandfather, passed away on Friday afternoon, June 12.

Born October 26, 1936 in Pleasantville, NJ, to Ida and Meyer Budnick, he had two siblings, Sylvia and Irwin (all preceded in death.) After graduating from Pleasantville High School, he attended Temple University, proudly served in the Air Force, and completed his pediatric dentistry residency at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. He had a long and successful career as a pediatric dentist in Nutley, NJ.

In 1967, Jack married Esther (nee. Bunks) and together they built a life filled with love and family. They later relocated to the Berkshires where he was a long-time volunteer for Volunteers in Medicine and at the Tanglewood Music Center.

Jack was devoted to his wife and children, and was a kind and caring father and

grandfather. He enjoyed traveling, tennis, theater, music, was a diehard NY Giants fan, and loved White House sub sandwiches. He will be remembered for his great humor and being a frequent punster. Jack's legacy will live on through his family.

He is survived by his wife Esther; children Michael (Alison Kinsey), Mimi (DL Helfer,) and Becka McDougall (James). His daughter Sydna preceded him in death. He also leaves his son-in-law Howie Bond (Hermine Levey); grandchildren Mina and Isaac Bond, Eve and Owen McDougall; Sydna's step-children Jessi (Guy Constantine) and Noah Bond (Molly Carlisle); Michael's stepchildren Leanne Schulz, Joni and Shannon Hobbs; and numerous cousins, nieces, and nephews.

A graveside funeral was held on Monday, June 15 at Ahavath Shalom Cemetery, Great Barrington.

Donations in Jack's name may be made to Volunteers in Medicine, Berkshires at vimberkshires.org and St. Jude's Children's Hospital at stjude.org.

Gene Shalit, 100, longtime Stockbridge resident, reviewer, and film critic

STOCKBRIDGE – Gene Shalit, 100, the longtime film critic for NBC's TODAY show, whose walrus mustache and exuberant wordplay made him one of television's most recognizable reviewers, died Friday, June 12. Shalit "passed away peacefully today after 100 years of an amazing life," his family told NBC News in a statement.

Born March 25, 1926, in New York, he was raised in Newark and Morristown, NJ, where his father purchased a drug store. In high school, he created the first school paper, The Spotlight. He graduated in 1949 from the University of Illinois, at Urbana-Champaign, where he proved his journalistic bona fides as a sports editor, columnist, and humor writer for The Daily Illini. He later became a reporter and writer for the Twin Cities' daily newspaper and filed dispatches on Big Ten sporting events as a freelancer for The Associated Press in Chicago.

Shalit started his career as a print journalist as the senior film critic for Look Magazine and wrote the "What's Happening?" page for Ladies Home Journal for a dozen years. He published articles in The New York Times, Cosmopolitan, TV Guide, Seventeen, Glamour and McCall's.

Shalit started as a part-time TODAY show contributor in 1970 before moving to a full-time role three years later. He earned national fame as the program's go-to movie analyst, offering his take on summer blockbusters, awards contenders, and other big-screen projects until his retirement on November 11, 2010. He stood out from the broadcast television crowd with his colorful bowties and puffy hair. He often studded his reviews in the "Critics Corner" with puns and other cheeky turns of phrase, endearing him to millions of viewers.

Shalit was married to Nancy Lewis for 28 years, from 1950 until her death in 1978. Shalit and Lewis had six children.

Services were private per the family's request.

Phyllis Elaine Greenberg, 82, lifelong learner, cultivated close, meaningful friendships

PITTSFIELD - Phyllis Elaine Greenberg (nee Kaplan), 82, died on Monday, July 13.

A former social worker, she was a lifelong learner deeply committed to personal growth and helping others. Passionate about poetry, music, and dance, she spent time writing poems and stories, appreciating the outdoors, and finding joy in the simple things.

A native New Yorker, Phyllis later retired with her husband, Eric, with whom she shared time between their two most treasured places - The Berkshires and Sarasota, FL.

She cultivated close, meaningful friendships throughout her life. Her sensitive soul, warm heart, and sweet laughter will be missed by everyone who knew and loved her.

Phyllis was the devoted wife and life partner to Eric; loving mother to Amy Mayes; cherished mother-in-law to Josh Mayes; beloved sister to Paul Kaplan and Ken Kaplan; and dear sister-in-law to Ellen Leiserson. Phyllis treasured her immediate and extended family and found great joy in the love, laughter, and connections they shared.

Funeral services were held Sunday, July 19, at Flynn & Dagnoli-Bencivenga Funeral Home, Pittsfield. Burial followed in Pittsfield Cemetery. Donations can be made to Recovery International, a non-profit dear to her heart.



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Jewish Education in the Berkshires – 2026/2027

Jewish Federation of the Berkshires has a strong commitment to Jewish youth, helping to provide a high-quality Jewish education for 134 children and young adults through \$97,000 in grants to congregational religious schools across the Berkshires, a meaningful investment in a Jewish future.

Berkshire County is fortunate to have a diverse Jewish community that offers educational opportunities encompassing a wide range of approaches and family preferences. This section offers an overview of local Jewish schools.

Please note that owing to the BJV’s publishing schedule, some key dates and events for local religious schools may not have been finalized at press time. *Please contact the congregations for complete details.*

Kneset Israel & Temple Anshe Amunim – Pittsfield

Kneset Israel, a Conservative congregation, and Temple Anshe Amunim, a Reform congregation, have a **combined Hebrew School program that for the 2026-2027 school year, will take place at Temple Anshe Amunim while Kneset Israel undertakes a renovation project.** Both Rabbi David Weiner (KI) and Rabbi Valerie Lieber (TAA) teach during the weekday sessions.

The Kneset Israel and Temple Anshe Amunim Hebrew School welcomes students from preschool through twelfth grade to dynamic classes where they learn Hebrew, Torah, Jewish studies, history, and culture. The school prides itself on its intimate classes and extraordinary faculty. In addition to teaching skills for meaningful Jewish living, the school also incorporates a ‘hidden curriculum’ helping students learn to value and prioritize their own involvement in Jewish community life. Kneset Israel and Temple Anshe Amunim are committed to ensuring the accessibility of its programming to families of diverse backgrounds seeking Jewish



education – including single parent and blended families, LGBTQ parents and students, people with special needs, Jews of Color, and interfaith families. Because the synagogues are passionately egalitarian and committed to the future of the Jewish people, no student or family is ever turned away for financial reasons. For both congregations, Hebrew School is a

benefit of membership, and there are no school fees. The Hebrew School is supported by the Berkshire Jewish Film Festival, Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, and contributions by both congregations and their members.

Family Programming

In addition to the Hebrew School program, KI receives a generous grant from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation to fund its Families Together programming for families of both congregations. These exciting programs for the whole family linking themes of the Jewish holidays and year with contemporary social issues take place on select Sundays and Wednesday afternoons throughout the year. Open to non-members as well as members, these programs are a great way for families to experience community, Jewish education, and connection. Many sessions incorporate activities for everyone together; others separate the groups by age to enable targeted classes for adults and children. A back-to-school barbecue takes place on Labor Day weekend, this year on September 7 – you may register at knesetisrael.org/rsvp.

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Jewish Education in the Berkshires – 2026/2027

Primary School

Children age 5 and below are invited to attend the Tot Shabbat program, offered monthly. This exciting opportunity will incorporate music, games, stories, and an introduction to the Jewish worship experience. Preschool and kindergarten students enjoy programming on Shabbat mornings. Highly qualified teachers facilitate classes that feature song, movement, and Shabbat-friendly crafts. Students in first and second grade also meet on Shabbat mornings to begin their studies of Hebrew, prayer, mitzvot and Jewish holidays. Purposeful Play gives the youngest pupils a chance to learn creatively and experientially. A team of experienced primary school educators infuses this program with joy.

Elementary School

Grades 3 through 6 meet twice a week, on Shabbat mornings and on Wednesday afternoons. Over the course of their elementary school years, students study stories from the Torah, lifecycle, holidays and Jewish values. Grades 6 and 7 explore facets of ancient and modern Jewish history. All students at this age level also participate in Junior Congregation on a weekly basis. Wednesday afternoon classes use formal and informal techniques to help students learn to read Hebrew fluently and accurately; by the end of 5th grade students are chanting from the Torah scroll.

NEW in 2026-2027, the youngest students in K through 2nd grade will be invited to attend the first hour on Wednesdays for an hour of project-based learning, including arts and crafts and activities that we are unable to do on Shabbat.

B'nai Mitzvah

The two congregations prepare students separately for B'nai Mitzvah. Students from Temple Anshe Amunim study with the congregation's rabbi to prepare to lead the service and teach Torah to the community at their bar and bat mitzvah. They participate in services throughout the year.

The crown jewel of KI's education programs, the congregation's intensive b'nai mitzvah program engages students deeply in developing the skills and enthusiasm they will need for lifelong leadership of Jewish religious life. Instruction includes chanting Torah and Haftarah and leading all Shabbat services. Students also complete a mitzvah project and prepare a short sermon for the morning of the celebration. Graduates of this program report feeling comfortable in all sorts of synagogue services. Many have emerged as leaders in their campus communities and in congregations across the globe.

High School

Students convene weekly to study with expert educators. High school students also have the opportunity to serve as teaching assistants in the Hebrew School, especially in Junior Congregation, the bar/bat mitzvah program, and Purposeful Play programs.

Registration for the Hebrew School takes place during the summer months. Hebrew School education is a benefit of membership at Knesset Israel, and new members are always welcome. Non-members are also welcome to enroll their children in exchange for a tuition payment. Either way, Hebrew School can be an excellent gateway to becoming more involved in the community. Interested families are invited to contact Rabbi David Weiner at (413) 445-4872 or rabbidweiner@outlook.com and Rabbi Valerie Lieber at (413) 442-5910 or rabbiv@ansheamunim.org.

Congregation Beth Israel of the Berkshires – North Adams

Congregation Beth Israel of the Berkshires is a welcoming, inclusive, and innovative congregation with a long history and deep roots, now a part of the Reform movement.

Discover the Jewish Journeys After-School Program

Jewish Journeys is an after-school educational program for ages 4-13 in which children explore Jewish culture, religion, and identity through exuberant, creative learning. The goal is to inspire joy in being Jewish so that children experience Jewish life, learning and community as vibrant and meaningful parts of who they are. Classes take place at CBI on Monday afternoons, 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Students learn about Jewish culture, holidays, rituals, values, prayers, texts and Hebrew language in a fun and inclusive environment through art, drama, music, cooking and other hands-on activities. CBI offers two semesters (September-December and January-May). Students may enroll for one or both semesters.

Program Highlights:

- Afternoons begin with free time and snacks, allowing children to decompress from the school day and gear up for learning.
 - Younger children (grades pre-K-2) explore Judaism through acting out stories, making art projects, creative movement and games to gain familiarity with Hebrew letters, vowels, words as well as Jewish holidays and values. Class time ends at 5:15 p.m. for grades K-2.
 - Older students (grades 3-7) choose from Hebrew classes suited to their level as well as Jewish Studies elective classes geared to their interests. Previous elective offerings have included Cooking Jewish Cultures, Jewish Ceramic Art, Living Jewish Civilizations and a *Tikkun Olam* Workshop.
 - Between classes, students gather for Tefilah Time, during which all ages enjoy spirited singing and prayer, building a strong sense of community.
 - Each semester culminates in a special Shabbat service during which students lead prayers and proudly share their projects with family, friends and community.
 - Jewish Journeys families gather on holidays and Shabbat in various locations throughout the region, in private homes and community venues, for activities such as a Shabbat by a lake, a backyard music jam, a Hanukkah bonfire, or cooking a meal for the hungry in a community kitchen.
- Jewish Journeys is a partnership between Congregation Beth Israel of the Berkshires, a welcoming and inclusive congregation affiliated with the Reform movement, and Nefesh, a family-centered Jewish community that celebrates culture, traditions, and values together. The Jewish

Journeys program is funded in part by Jewish Federation of the Berkshires and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.

This program warmly welcomes children and families of all backgrounds – Jewish, interfaith, secular, or simply curious. Everyone is invited to join CBI's growing, supportive community.

Enroll now to give your child a joyful journey into Jewish life, learning, and belonging!

For more information and to register, visit cbiberkshires.com/education or contact Rabbi Jarah Greenfield at learning@cbiberkshires.com. Registration is open through August 20th.

Hevreh of Southern Berkshire – Great Barrington

Religious School at Hevreh

This year, Hevreh's Religious School welcomes Cantor Sarina Elenbogen-Siegel as its new Religious School Director.

Hevreh's vibrant and growing school, serving more than 75 students from Pre-K through Grade 12, will be enriched by Cantor Elenbogen-Siegel's leadership, creativity, and passion for Jewish music and learning. Along with a deep love of music that will help foster an even greater sense of Jewish joy throughout the Religious School community, her enthusiasm for hiking and connecting with nature will also inspire new opportunities for experiential learning.

"I strive to lead with vision and collaboration, getting to know each student's strengths and passions in order to cultivate community and help make our world a better place," says Cantor Elenbogen-Siegel. "I look forward to partnering with our faculty to create meaningful ways to integrate nature and the outdoors into our educational experience."

Hevreh's Religious School and Hebrew Skills programs are designed to:

- Create a learning community where all students, faculty, staff, and families feel a strong sense of belonging.
- Ignite joy in living on Jewish time through meaningful educational, social, and spiritual experiences.

JEWISH EDUCATION,
continued on page 25

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

CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

Friday, July 31	7:56 p.m.
Friday, August 7	7:47 p.m.
Friday, August 14	7:39 p.m.
Friday, August 21	7:27 p.m.
Friday, August 28	7:16 p.m.



Jewish Federation OF THE BERKSHIRES

Let's do Lunch!

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 Kneset 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

JULY

MONDAY, JULY 27

Noon, Lunch...Quinoa veggie burger (GF)(DF), coleslaw, three bean salad, potato wedges, burger bun, and sweet surprise (baker's selection).

THURSDAY, JULY 30

10:45 a.m. program: Judaism and Tai Chi: Finding Balance in an Unbalanced World with Joel Friedman.

Noon, Lunch...Vegetarian southwest stuffed peppers (GF), chopped salad, rice, roasted sweet potato, corn bread, and Pina Colada fluff.

AUGUST

MONDAY, AUGUST 3

Noon, Lunch...Meat loaf (GF)(DF), salad, potato pancake, four blend mixed vegetables, whole wheat bread, and applesauce.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 6

10:30 a.m. program: Truth to Power: Songpoets & Comedians for Social Change, with Laura Wetzler.

Noon, Lunch...Chicken Waldorf salad over mixed greens (GF)(DF), vegetable soup, cucumber and tomato, dinner roll, and peach halves with berry sauce.

MONDAY, AUGUST 10

Noon, Lunch...Turkey croquette (GF)(DF), carrot salad, quinoa, zucchini, multi-grain bread, and apricots.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 13

10:45 a.m. program: From Auschwitz to Activism: Creating Champions of Care with Barbara Shaiman.

Noon, Lunch...Persian chicken (GF)(DF), Israeli salad, couscous, roasted cauliflower, challah, and fresh melon.

MONDAY, AUGUST 17

Noon, Lunch...Baked ziti, minestrone soup, carrots, Italian green beans, garlic bread, and sugar cookie.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 20

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

Noon, Lunch...Lentil, sweet potato, and chickpea stew (GF)(DF), celery and apple salad, quinoa, zucchini in dill sauce, hearty white bread, and brownie.

MONDAY, AUGUST 24

Noon, Lunch...Tuna fish cake (GF)(DF), cream of mushroom soup, rice, peas and carrots, rye bread, and lemon bar.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 27

10:45 a.m. program: Rosh HaShanah: Apples, Milk, and Honey, the Blessing and the Curse with Jon Greenberg.

Noon, Lunch...Spinach pie, Greek salad, baked artichoke hearts, lemon potatoes, pita bread, and rice pudding.

MONDAY, AUGUST 31

Noon, Lunch...Vegetable frittata (GF), salad, hash brown potatoes, stewed tomatoes, croissant, and butterscotch Bundt cake.

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.

Jewish Education in the Berkshires – 2026/2027

JEWISH EDUCATION, *continued from page 23*



Hevreh kids

- Foster shared values and a common language through music, Hebrew, and *T'filah* during “*Boker Tov, Hevreh!*” community gatherings, Yachad programming, and Community Shabbats.

Teens are at the heart of Hevreh’s program, with special learning and travel opportunities designed just for them, as well as the leadership *Madrikhim* program, which invites teens to work in classrooms, providing young role models for students, and crucial assistance to the faculty.

Hevreh invites families to learn more about Religious School, Hebrew Skills, Early Childhood Center, B’nai Mitzvah, and Confirmation programs by contacting Cantor Elenbogen-Siegel at selenbogensiegel@hevreh.org.

Shabbat Sh’Bubble

On Saturday, August 15 at 9 a.m., the Hevreh patio is the place to be for a special summertime outdoor Tot Shabbat at Hevreh with a chance to meet Cantor Elenbogel-Siegel! She will help all sing and dance into Shabbat together with a snack and bubble party on the Hevreh patio! This event is open to everyone and is most appropriate for children ages 0-5 and their grownups.

Registration requested. For more information visit hevreh.org or call the office at (413) 528-6378.

Congregation Ahavath Sholom – Great Barrington



CAS introduces a new education program

Congregation Ahavath Sholom, in conjunction with Simcha-Services, invites families to discover “a different kind of Jewish education” with a program designed to meet the realities of modern family life while providing meaningful Jewish learning, Hebrew education, and community connection.

Led by Rabbi Jennifer Rudin, this program offers a flexible alternative to traditional synagogue religious schools. CAS built this program around the belief that Jewish education should be welcoming, engaging, and adaptable to each family’s needs.

“Families today are juggling busy schedules and multiple commitments,” says Rabbi Rudin. “Jewish education should support families, not add stress to their lives. Our goal is to create learning experiences that are meaningful, accessible, and joyful.”

The 2026-2027 program combines small-group learning, personalized Hebrew instruction, and opportunities for families to build Jewish community in ways that fit their schedules.

Key features include:

HyFlex Learning – Students may attend classes either in person or via Zoom, choosing the format that works best for them each session.

Flexible Scheduling – Rather than assigning students to a single weekly class, group learning sessions are offered multiple times each month, allowing families to select the day and time that best fits their schedule.

Personalized Hebrew Tutoring – Students receive short, weekly one-on-one Hebrew tutoring sessions designed to build confidence, strengthen skills, and prepare for meaningful participation in Jewish life and B’nai Mitzvah celebrations.

Community Connection – Throughout the year, families are invited to participate in holiday celebrations, Shabbat experiences, social gatherings, service projects, and community events.

The curriculum focuses on helping students build Jewish literacy, explore Jewish values, engage with Jewish texts and traditions, and develop a personal connection to Jewish life. Learning is designed to be interactive, relevant, and responsive to the interests of students and families.

Unlike many traditional programs, participation does not require synagogue membership.

“Our message is simple,” Rabbi Rudin said. “Your Judaism, your way. We want families to know there is a place for them, whether they are deeply involved in Jewish life or just beginning to explore what Judaism means to them.”

Registration is now open for the 2026-2027 school year. Families interested in learning more are encouraged to contact Rabbi Jennifer Rudin at rabbirudin@simcha-services.com.

Chabad of the Berkshires – Lenox



Chabad kids

Walk through the doors of Hebrew School at Chabad of the Berkshires on a Sunday morning and you’ll hear Jewish music, see children laughing with friends, and feel an energy that is warm, joyful, and real. It’s a place where children feel at home while discovering what it means to be Jewish.

Chabad of the Berkshires’ Hebrew School, led by Sara Volovik, is built on a simple belief: when children love being Jewish, everything else follows. They become excited to learn, eager to ask questions, and proud to embrace their Jewish identity.

The Hebrew School welcomes Jewish children ages 5–12 from all backgrounds into a warm and engaging environment that nurtures a love for Torah, mitzvot, Hashem, the Jewish people, and our heritage.

The Sunday program runs from 10:00 a.m. to noon and brings Judaism to life in a way children can truly connect to. Children learn to read Hebrew step by step, explore the weekly Torah portion and its relevance to their daily lives, and become familiar with the prayers and blessings that are part of Jewish tradition. They also gain a meaningful understanding of the Jewish holidays, their traditions, and the values they teach.

But Hebrew School is about far more than what happens at a desk. Children bake challah for Shabbat, create holiday projects, sing Jewish songs, play games, and experience Judaism through hands-on activities that make learning memorable and fun.

Prayer (*tefillah*) is also part of the experience, helping children feel comfortable in a synagogue setting and develop a personal connection to Jewish prayer in a way that feels natural and meaningful.

With small groups and individual attention, every child is encouraged, supported, and guided at their own pace. The goal is not simply to teach information, but to help each child develop a genuine connection to Judaism and a sense of pride in who they are.

When children leave Hebrew School, they don’t just know more about Judaism – they love being Jewish even more than when they arrived.

Chabad warmly welcomes every child from every Jewish family. No membership is required, and no child is ever turned away due to financial circumstances.

“Our mission goes beyond Hebrew reading or bar and bat mitzvah preparation,” says Sara Volovik. “We strive to help children build a lifelong connection to their Jewish identity, values, and community, giving them the confidence to live proudly as Jews wherever life takes them.”

To learn more or register, visit jewishberkshires.com/hebrewschool or contact Sara Volovik at jewishberkshires@gmail.com.

SESAME, *continued from page 19*

peacefully, then I try to explain that this isn’t the way to get there. All I ask is that we actually have a genuine conversation. I don’t like to be screamed at with slogans, and I do get...I get a lot of slogans, people who just yell at me and say, ‘You’re complicit in genocide.’ That’s not productive

I’m probably most upset with what happened at the Park Slope Coop because I’ve been supplying products to them for 7 years. [Seed + Mill] is a New York business. I live in New York. My team members work in New York and, in fact, some are members of the Coop. I would have been a Coop member had I lived nearby, because I like co-ops. I’m sort of one of them – I appreciate the model that they’re building. Had someone at the Coop said, “Hey, would you like to come and talk to us about this issue,” I would have liked the opportunity to do so. It’s this way that I feel like the BDS campaign, from my experience directly, doesn’t seem to be a genuine effort at peacebuilding. Because if it was a genuine effort at peacebuilding, they would have at the very least said, “Would you like to come and talk to us?”

How have your Israeli Arab suppliers and partners responded when you explain what’s been going on in the United States?

They’re devastated because ultimately this is going to deprive them of a job and an income. And the trajectory and the history of the BDS has been to take jobs away from ordinary Palestinians. The other irony is that, you know, these are food producers. We’re not talking about people in tech or banking and finance. BDS somehow always seems to want to target the people making tahini, of all things. So [my Israeli Arab partners are] confused. They feel unseen. They feel that they’re the collateral damage in a much bigger conflict.

You know, you’ve probably heard the expression that in academia, the battles are so vicious because the stakes are so small. It’s kind of the same thing here. Maybe people can’t relate to banking or finance or arms manufacturing, but they can relate to a can of tahini and allow that to become the vehicle for their disdain and their anger.

We’re a teeny tiny tahini company. Really – *that’s* the target of your anger? You’re contacting me from a part of the country where we’ve actually had a lot of hate. Some of our stores are in the Hudson Valley/Berkshires area, with the sort of small specialty stores where we have had quite a lot of loss of relationships and loss of accounts. The Hudson Valley has, more so, been a pretty difficult place. I live nearby, and my team is also connected to this region. Half of my team in New York, by the way, fast on Ramadan because they’re Muslim New Yorkers. These are all people who deserve to live and have jobs and talk to each other with some common sense and some pragmatism. BDS just feels like a campaign of pure racism with zero pragmatism or genuinely-held authentic desire for peace.

Seed + Mill products are available at seedandmill.com.

ANNUAL MEETING, *continued from page 15*

Sadie’s busy schedule is guided by her belief in “*tikkun olam* – I believe that it is my duty to repair the world. I live Jewishly every single day. I am Jewish in everything I do because I never forget the value that my religion, my community, my culture has instilled in me.”

The Monument Mountain Regional High School grad will attend Bowdoin College next fall. She expects to study Music and Chemistry, in hopes of living a “life that is focused, whether it be through science, art, or simple human connection, to stitching everything that is broken around me into something beautiful and whole.”

CULTURE & ARTS

Book Excerpt:
The Fireflies, by Richard Reiss

Local author Richard Reiss has published his first novel, *The Fireflies*, which Pulitzer Prize winner David L. Marcus praises as a “haunting exploration of love, guilt, and redemption. Through two brothers, *The Fireflies* traces the hidden cost of family secrets.” In this excerpt, “the central character and narrator shares a story about a woman he met when he was much younger,” writes Reiss. “It’s a story he has never forgotten.”



She was twenty-three and so was I. She was still a student, and I was a young man with a job having no idea of where I might be going. She told me stories, and this was my favorite. She said she liked to brush her hair at night. She said that sometimes she would do it in the dark to watch the sparks from the static electricity. She said it reminded her of fireflies. She liked fireflies. She said they were magical. She told me that when she was a little girl, her parents took her

on a camping trip. It was nighttime and she wandered off into a field not far from where they had set up their tents. She said it was July and it was very hot, even at night. At first, she saw a few, then a few dozen, then a few hundred, and then it looked as though “the entire field had been overcome by shooting stars.” So, she ran through the field trying to catch one in her hand. When at last she did, she stared at the little bug, its narrow black body glowing each time it flickered its wings. She said, “All I could do was smile, and then it flew away. Gone forever.”

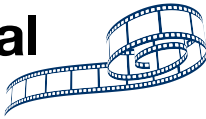
“Do you know,” she told me with her hand in mine, “that fireflies only live for three weeks. What if we only lived for three weeks? What would we do with our lives?”

I didn’t have a good answer. I just listened.

She said, “If I only had three weeks to live, I would glow like a firefly. How else would I be seen? Who would know me? Who would care? But if I glowed, even if only for three weeks, then someone would see me. Someone would know I was alive, blazing a three-week trail across the skies. And she closed her eyes, and the corners of her mouth rose imperceptibly, but enough for me to realize that she was watching herself glide effortlessly across the horizon. And that’s when I moved my lips one inch closer to hers. And that’s when I raised my hand to her cheek. And that’s when I leaned in as if there was a lasso around us, slowly, gently, pulling us together, no faster than the speed of a shrinking sponge as its water disappears into heaven. And that’s when I learned what I should have known, what should have been apparent to me long before sparks made her hair shimmer: a perfect moment is so rare, so beautiful, so fleeting, that to let one slip away is indistinguishable from killing the light of a firefly. I am many things in this world, but I won’t kill the light. I’ll live for the perfect moment and the perfect memory that my epiphany will one day deliver.

The Fireflies (Serving House Books) is available on Amazon and richardreiss.com.

Berkshire Jewish Film Festival
Concludes Its 40th Season



LENOX – The Berkshire Jewish Film Festival (BJFF) will continue in 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. through 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.

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 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.

August 3



3:30 p.m. – *The Stamp Thief*

When a former Seinfeld writer uncovers a decades-old secret, that a rogue Nazi officer stole priceless stamp collections from Holocaust victims and buried them in a Polish basement, he launches a daring mission to recover them. Armed with nothing but a fake movie shoot as cover, Gary

Gilbert seeks to uncover the truth and return the stamps to their rightful heirs. This movie is part detective thriller, part heist film, and entirely true.

7:30 p.m. – *Frontier*

Set against the rugged peaks of the Spanish Pyrenees in 1943, *Frontier* is a gripping WWII drama based on true events, that follows Manel Grau, a principled Spanish customs officer who faces a life-altering choice when Franco’s regime seals the border to Jews fleeing Nazi-occupied France. Defying orders and risking everything, Grau embarks on a perilous mission that threatens not only his own life but also the safety of his family and their community. This film is a moving reminder that, in history’s darkest moments, it is often ordinary people who choose courage over silence.

August 10

3:30 p.m. – *Sapiro V. Ford: The Jew Who Sued Henry Ford*



In 1927, Aaron Sapiro, a Jewish orphan who rose to become one of America’s most celebrated lawyers, walked into a Detroit courtroom and had the audacity to sue Henry Ford, the wealthiest and most powerful antisemite in America, for libel. The trial, which some consider

America’s first modern hate speech case, involved mysterious car accidents, bribery accusations, and a nation riveted by the spectacle of one Jewish man forcing a titan of industry to account for his hatred.

7:30 p.m. – *The Ring*



Arnon Noble is a religious man with a strong bond to his mother, a Holocaust survivor. He often drives her to school lectures where she tells the students how she saved the lives of her baby boy and herself with the help of a thin gold ring. When the mother’s health deteriorates, Arnon sets off from Israel to Budapest to find that legendary ring and, in a last-ditch

attempt at reconciliation, invites his estranged daughter to join him on the search. Will the search for the ring be successful? Will the ring save the mother’s life again and also succeed in saving Arnon’s relationship with his daughter?



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CULTURE & ARTS

A Teshuvah Journey

Adam Green’s new collection of poems explores recovery through a Jewish lens



Adam Green, musical director of Congregation Beth Israel of the Berkshires and resident of North Adams, has just released *Recover: A Teshuvah Journey Through Eating Disorder Treatment*, a searing sequence of poems that chronicles his treatments, relapses, and ongoing recovery from atypical [non-underweight] anorexia nervosa. Per the Cleveland Clinic website: “Atypical anorexia is an eating disorder that’s like anorexia nervosa. It’s often missed because people with atypical anorexia have a weight that’s average or above for their height, not under.” As Green writes in his introduction, “‘atypical’ anorexia is actually many times more common than ‘typical’ anorexia.”

On Tisha b’Av 5783, a bed opened for Green at an in-person treatment facility. While he did not want to be separated from his work during the Jewish

calendar’s time of reflection and return, he writes that “I was not capable of pulling myself out of the state I was in on my own, so I agreed to go.” The poems of *Recover* “chronicle what happened after, following the progression of the Jewish calendar through the yearly season of repentance, from Tisha b’Av through the Seven Weeks of Consolation to the High Holy Days.”

The impact of *Recover* derives from Green’s unflinching observation of the recovery process – its stretches of monotony and frequent banality punctuated by flashes of terror and dread, self-doubt and self-loathing. Though his condition is unusual and specific, he universalizes his experiences (for Jews, anyway) by tying it to the annual *teshuva* process in which we are now in the midst of as the Days of Awe approach. Moreover, anyone who has faced a difficult diagnosis and prolonged hospitalization and has been brought through with faith will connect with Green’s flashes of insight and keen characterizations of a penitent patient’s struggle toward wellness.

The BJV is pleased to share three of Adam Green’s poems from *Recover*, available for \$15 from Bayit Publishing (yourbayit.org).



Why

You ask
why I won’t eat.
You’re not the first to ask
and you won’t be the last. I can’t
tell you.



Modeh Ani in the ED Treatment Facility

I find that I am here, awake, alive –
am I really that shape I see reflected,
grateful and terrified in equal measure?
Before I get in line to start the day
you roll over the blood pressure machine –
living souls reduced to vital signs
and constant checks to prove that we still breathe.
Enduring is the way that one survives this.
God won’t show up to break me out of here.
You tell me that my heartbeat’s out of range –
“**Have** one of the nurses check that one more time.”
Restored to wakefulness, I make the trek,
my feet in sandals from the dollar store,
soul and body supposedly reunited,
to have them check the numbers yet again.
Me, I think that healing, when it comes,
great or small, comes from a place that
is connected to life, to nature, and the world.
Your sticky note with numbers in my hand,
faith in my heart, I give the nurse my wrist.



Tightrope

Eat a “challenge snack”
(one serving of ice cream,
exactly).

Panic and run laps
around the parking lot
while waiting for a ride to shul.

Recover
but not too much.



FOOD AND DRINK IN THE BERKSHIRES



Isabella Freedman
Jewish Retreat Center
AN ADAMAH CAMPUS

Farm-to-Pizza @ Adamah

Sunday, August 30
11am–4pm

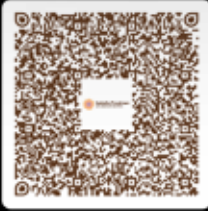
Adamah is the Berkshires' Jewish educational farm, and works nationally to cultivate vibrant Jewish life in deep connection with the Earth.

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- **Taste:** Pick tomatoes for wood-fired pizza
- **Listen:** Live music with *Jamie Saft Trio*
- **Touch:** Hand-make your own mozzarella
- **See:** Our lake, trails, boats, and goats



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CULTURE & ARTS

Take a Walk on the Wild Side

John Lipkowitz’s wildlife photography on view this summer in Hudson, NY

The BJV caught up with John Lipkowitz at home in Great Barrington as he was on the verge of leaving on his ninth trip to photograph African wildlife in June, this time revisiting Botswana. A retired attorney, John has traveled the world (usually with his wife, talented visual artist Nina) pursuing his passion for capturing animals in their natural habitats. Their walls are lined with Nina’s paintings and John’s menagerie of images from such far-flung places as Japan, India, Antarctica, East Africa (the savannahs of Tanzania and Kenya), and the Arctic regions he says he loves the most, such as the North Pole and the remote Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard, which he has visited seven times.

Precocious in his interest in both animals and photography, the Brooklyn native started using his first “serious camera” when he was thirteen, documenting visits to zoos and the Mystic Aquarium in Connecticut. A self-proclaimed “hoarder” of photo equipment, John’s home studio has all the technology necessary to work with, and then print, the images he captures.

Starting in 2003, he started using digital cameras, which allows him to take a vast number of photographs while he’s out in the wild. He says that he’s taken as many as 33,000 snaps on a 20-day trip, of which perhaps “200 are on a five-star level. The editing process is lengthy, but by now I know right away from a thumbnail image what I want to look at again.”

Starting in August and through September, you can see an exhibit of John’s five-star work on view at the 510 Warren Street Gallery in Hudson, NY on Saturdays and Sundays. John has shared a small sampling with the BJV of what you can expect.

High Holy Day planning tip: “In the case where one established a wall with a tied elephant, everyone agrees that the sukka is fit, as even if it dies and falls, its carcass still has a height of ten handbreadths and is fit for the wall of a sukka. Where they disagree is in the case of an elephant that is not tied.”
Talmud, Tractate Sukkah 23a:8/

