

Association of Jewish Libraries NEWSLETTER

February/March 2010

Volume XXIX, No. 3

AJL Heads to Seattle for the 2010 Convention

TOBY HARRIS AND RITA FRISCHER

Come to Seattle for salmon, sustainability, spectacular scenery and scintillating sessions. You'll love being in the beautiful Pacific Northwest this summer while you connect with colleagues at the 45th Annual AJL Convention! The salmon jumping, our famous gardens blooming, the snow-capped mountains calling ... all this and an exciting program, packed with new ideas, will be here waiting especially for you.

Presenters from Israel, Canada, Argentina, the West Coast, the East Coast, and in between will represent synagogues, day schools, and public libraries along with the most outstanding universities, seminaries, and archives. Be prepared for a little Yiddish, a little Ladino, a little "green," a lot of collaboration, and a hefty helping of technology.

You'll visit architect Rem Koolhaas's innovative downtown Seattle Central Library for a hands-on session and a tour. You'll meet fabulous authors, including this year's Sydney Taylor Book and Manuscript Award winners. You'll hear an inspiring keynote address. Whether you're a newcomer to Judaica librarianship, an educator eager to learn more about Jewish books, or a Hebrew cataloging expert, there will be sessions of interest and assistance to you.

Our base of operation is the elegant and historic Fairmount Olympic Hotel, located in the heart of downtown. From there,

you can easily visit Pike Place Market or the Elliot Bay waterfront, take a hike or a boat ride, or sample a greater variety of artisan roasted coffees than you can imagine. Love art? Enjoy public art as you walk to the Seattle Art Museum nearby. Or take a stroll in the outdoor Olympic Sculpture Garden to build up your appetite for the delicious kosher meals, prepared by Va'ad-approved Nosh Away Caterers, which will be served in the hotel's breathtaking Spanish Ballroom.

Exhibitors will be prominently placed in the Spanish Foyer just outside the ballroom with our featured local independent bookstore, Third Place Books, sharing the space along with other fine booksellers and publishers. On Sunday, July 4th, we'll be open to the public, showcasing our local arts and crafts community, both Judaic and secular in nature, and offering music, poetry, and storytelling for your enjoyment as well.

Optional tours on Wednesday, July 7th, will follow the annual division and general meetings. You will be able to choose a guided ride around town highlighting Jewish historical sites or a guided nature walk through forests and wetlands, learning to see native plants through Northwestern eyes and reinforcing our Jewish instinct to preserve our world.

"Speak to the earth and it will teach you." Come to Seattle this summer and let's all learn together.



Convention Subsidies are Available to AJL Members

PEGGY PEARLSTEIN AND RONDA ROSE

Long-standing members active in AJL, newer members who would like to participate more fully, and convention participants who are current paid-up members may apply for a convention subsidy. Full registration at the convention is required, and there is an expectation that recipients will attend the entire convention. Members in the local area are not eligible for travel expenses.

Volunteering at the convention is a must. You might also be asked to write an article describing your convention experience

for your local chapter or for the *AJL Newsletter* within one year of receiving the grant.

Members wishing to apply for this grant should complete the application form in this newsletter (or on the Web—a link to the form is at www.jewishlibraries.org/ajlweb/scholarships/conventionsubsidy.htm). Forward the form to Ronda Rose, Past President AJL, 11257 Dona Lisa Drive, Studio City, CA 91604, 323-654-3652 or send it by e-mail to rfrose@sbcglobal.net. You may submit any additional documentation via e-mail.

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President's Message

SUSAN DUBIN

We have just returned from our annual Midwinter Board and Council meetings in New York. The weather was cold but the days were beautiful and sunny. This year we met at the Affinia Hotel, right near Penn Station. Most of us from out of town found rooms in the hotel. This allowed for several after-hours meetings to work on convention planning. The Seattle convention, like all of our conferences, will be a not-to-be-missed event! National Convention team members worked with local convention co-chairs, Toby Harris and Janet Heineck, in hammering out an outstanding program with sessions of interest to everyone.

The preliminary program is in this issue of the newsletter as well as on the AJL Web site. At the council meeting we determined once again to support attendance with a subsidized registration fee and generous convention stipends for those needing assistance to attend. Although food prices and AV costs have risen astronomically, we set this year's early registration fee (before April 1) at \$460, registration from April 1 to June 1 at \$485, and late fees after June 1 at \$525. This may be the last year we can subsidize fees to keep them this low, so plan to attend now.

Our organization is continuing to reach out internationally. We have several members representing AJL on a panel presentation for the European Jewish Studies Conference. Rita Saccal, International Meetings co-chair, will be representing us at the Tel Dan conference in Israel. This fall, we had a very successful mini-conference in Israel, organized by Ya'akov Aaronson, and there is a promise of more to come. We also welcomed our first Italian council member when Nanette Hayon from the Fondazione Centro di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea in Milan, attended the meeting as International Meetings co-chair. Read the report she wrote about her library on page 44.

This is an election year for AJL. We will be voting electronically, so make sure your e-mail address is current in our database. Anyone who requests a paper ballot will receive one in the mail. The nominating committee, led by Laurel Wolfson, has recommended a slate of officers, which is listed on the next page. Others wishing to run for office may submit their names, as outlined in the AJL bylaws. Our organization is strong, and we have some strong leaders coming up. Working with the board and council these past two years has been a great pleasure for me. We have all worked hard to see our organization continue to grow and flourish.

As libraries continue to struggle financially, it becomes even more important to share experiences and help each other. Use our new wiki to share your questions and good ideas. A link to the wiki is on our Web site. If you are not sure about how to use a wiki, look for a webinar we will be offering later this year and/or attend a session on Library 2.0 (and beyond) tools at our upcoming convention. Check out the podcasts posted on the Web site of last year's convention programs and the mini-course produced by Heidi Estrin, which expanded on some of those sessions. Network with others in the field through our electronic discussion list, HaSafran, and take advantage of our mentor program. Above all, share your good news and triumphs with us.

Looking forward to seeing many of you in Seattle!

AJL Scholarship Fund

SARAH BARNARD

Most of you know that AJL awards two scholarships annually to deserving students attending schools of library and information science who hope to pursue careers in Judaica librarianship. What you may not know is that the amount of the scholarships has recently been increased to \$1000.

The challenge is to raise some to help support the scholarship. Just send a check made out to AJL Scholarship Fund to me, Sarah Barnard, Hebrew Union College Library, 3101 Clifton Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio 45220. Be sure to include the name and address of the person(s) to whom you want a card sent and your own name and e-mail or address if you want an acknowledgement. I will send the cards out promptly.

Please publicize the AJL scholarship to students who might be interested in applying. The application form and instructions are on the AJL Web site. Completed applications go to Shuli Berger, whose address is on the application. Our committee evaluates the applications and chooses the winners later in the spring.

We have had two recent donations to the Scholarship Fund:

- From Ellen Cole to Lee Wixman, in memory of his beloved daughter, Leanne Copes
- From Sarah Barnard to Libby White, with wishes for a refuah shelemah.

AJL Is Now an ALA Affiliate

At its midwinter meeting, the American Library Association (ALA) voted to grant affiliate status to AJL. Being an ALA affiliate will allow AJL to announce its awards on the ALA Web site. It will also give the association an opportunity to present its point of view on ALA policies and decisions. Listed below are more benefits of ALA affiliate status:

- 11 issues of the *American Libraries*, official magazine of the American Library Association.
- Inclusion in the electronic *ALA Handbook of Organization*.
- A listing of meetings and programs sponsored by AJL in the final program at the Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference, which is distributed to all attendees.
- The right to reserve meeting room space at the ALA Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference, at the prevailing ALA rate.
- Co-sponsorship privileges.
- The right for AJL members to reserve a sleeping room sub-block within the ALA Housing Block.
- Free ALA conference registration for official representative(s) of AJL.
- Affiliates meeting with the ALA executive director at every conference.
- Complimentary meeting room space for the board meeting(s) of affiliates who reserve a room block.
- Participation in the affiliates booth at the Annual Conference Exhibition.
- Subscription to the ALA affiliates list, which serves as a communication tool for all affiliates throughout the year.

AJL Electronic Election

JOY KINGSOLVER

AJL's biennial election will again be held by electronic ballot. This is a quick and easy way to vote, and it saves trees, too!

In order to participate, you need to be sure your dues are current—only paid-up members are eligible to vote—and make sure you've let us know your correct e-mail address. To check on the e-mail address in our records, go to the Web site at jewishlibraries.org and look up your name in the directory. Please make sure that the e-mail address listed there is the one you prefer to use for this election. E-mail addresses are never used for any purpose other than the election.

If your e-mail address has changed, please contact our vice-president for membership, Laurie Haas, to correct it. You can reach her at lhaas@torahacademy.org. If you need a paper ballot for this election, please call Joy Kingsolver at 630-988-4726. We'll make sure you're able to participate. If you have questions, contact Joy by phone, or e-mail jkingsolver@earthlink.net.

Slate of Officers

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AJL Online

To subscribe to Hasafran, AJL's electronic discussion list, send the message: "sub hasafran [your first and last name]" to: listproc@lists.acs.ohio-state.edu.

Visit the AJL Web site at www.jewishlibraries.org.

AJL is now on Facebook. Become a fan.

Chapter Chatter

TOBY ROSSNER

News from the Chapter Relations Team

Submitted by Irene Seff and Enid Sperber

Thank you to Enid Sperber, Amalia Warshenbrot, and Judith Greenblatt, who traveled to New York in January to represent AJL chapters at the mid-winter council meeting. In addition to offering advice and guidance to more than a dozen chapters, our committee is working to nurture the formation of new chapters. Librarians in New Mexico have met twice. There is interest in North Carolina (see Amalia's report below). Amalia said it best: "creating a chapter-network of libraries with similar needs can provide peer support, shared resources, and ideas. Not only can this save funds, but it can also help in the professional development of individuals who work in the library." Is it time to form a chapter in your area? Want lots of ideas, suggestions and support? Let us know how the Chapter Relations Committee (see e-mail addresses below) can support your efforts.

Editor's note: Amalia described the beginning of her quest to organize a new chapter in the Carolinas in the Nov/Dec issue of the *AJL Newsletter*. Her story continues:

After trying to reach synagogues in North and South Carolina, I decided to concentrate on Raleigh-Durham and Charleston. I will invite librarians and library volunteers from other areas to meetings in these two cities and I will try to use the Internet as a tool for communication. I am concentrating on these two cities because Jewish libraries in other areas are too far away from one another to create separate groups. There are day schools in Raleigh-Durham and Charleston as well as one or two librarians in academic institutions. In the future I hope to get in touch with archivists. The area has interesting Jewish history.

I happened to read an article in JTA about a new Jewish day school in Ashville, North Carolina, and contacted the school's director. It was perfect timing! This is their third year; they have 25 students from kindergarten to fifth grade. Recently they had their first fundraiser for their library. I was so happy to tell them that AJL is the best resource for them—from mentoring, to the Jewish Valuesfinder and other bibliographies, introducing the Weine cataloging system, and suggesting reasonable software. I am researching their area to help them with fundraising as well. This is exactly where the Chapters Committee can make a difference! AJL members like myself are eager to share their experience with Jewish libraries by creating an AJL chapter—a network of libraries with similar needs.

Editor's note: There are now chapters representatives throughout the country who can give your chapter help—perhaps even make a personal visit to your city. Our committee members are Irene Seff—Southwest (Irene@the.seffs.net), Enid Sperber—California (enidkentsperber@gmail.com), Sylvia Firschein—Florida (shfirsch@aol.com), Judy Greenblatt—New England (Judygreenb@aol.com), Amalia Warshenbrot—North & South Carolina (amaliaima@att.net), and Toby Rossner, Chapter Chatter editor (tobyross@cox.net).

Israel Chapter

Submitted by Yaacov Aronson

The Steering Committee of the rejuvenated Judaica Librarians' Group (aka Israel Chapter of AJL) met at the National Library of Israel (NLI) in Jerusalem at the end of January. On the agenda was a discussion of the group's aims and of the program for the next study day to be held in the spring. A number of librarians and professors have offered to make presentations and the committee evaluated the subjects and decided which to accept.

Members of the committee are Yoseph Leichter, NLI; Rosalind Duke, NLI (retired); Gita Hoffman, Bar Ilan University (retired); Arlene Keehn, Hebrew Union College; Yardena Levinberg, Haifa University; Aharon Bejell, Yeshivat Har Etzion.

Albuquerque, NM

The librarians in Albuquerque met for a second time on January 20. At the suggestion of Rabbi Chava Carp, Solomon Schechter Day School, a discussion was held on the possibility of incorporating the catalogs of all of the area's Judaica libraries into a union catalog. Chava was inspired to investigate this possibility by a workshop at the AJL Convention in Cleveland in 2008.

Editor's note: The Chapter Relations committee members are helping Chava with her research.

Florida West Coast Chapter

Submitted by Sylvia Firschein

We welcomed to our chapter members of Sun City Florida Synagogue, who are starting a library. They have no money for books at this time, so we are all giving them duplicates of significant books. We are having difficulty finding a weekday that is good for all of us for meetings, so we are changing the day of the week for each meeting. Does anyone out there have a better solution?

San Antonio Chapter

Submitted by Marlene Reynolds

Our chapter met on January 21 at the San Antonio Central Public Library. We learned about Jewish Texanna (people, places, or things in Texas).

Capital Area Chapter (AJL-CAC)

Submitted by Yelena Luckert

The Capital Area Chapter met on January 17 at the home of Mindy Hecker. A potluck lunch was followed by a talk by Naomi Morse, who spoke on the topic *Does this book look Jewish?: Adventures with Uri Shulevitz's How I Learned Geography*, a 2008 Caldecott Honor Book. Discussion on "what is a Jewish book?" followed.

Long Island Chapter (LI-AJL)

Submitted by Wendy A. Marx

The guest at the December meeting of the Long Island Chapter was local author William D. Kaufman, who regaled us with a story from his new book, *The Day My Mother Changed Her Name and Other Stories*, published by Syracuse University Press. Bill started his new career as an author at age 93.

Our chapter is looking forward to its annual public librarians meeting in April. In conjunction with the Nassau-Suffolk library

associations, we invite public librarians to browse and to hear our members' reviews of Jewish books that have universal appeal, such as books on tolerance, kindness, inclusiveness, and non-discrimination.

New York Metropolitan Area (AJL-NYMA)

Submitted by Rita Lifton

Workshop coordinators Ina Rubin Cohen and Rachail Kurtz hit another home run with their program for the 2010 NYMA Reference Workshop. This was attested to by an audience of more than 40 people who came together on January 5 at the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary. The program began with a presentation by Rabbi Nesanel Kasnett (senior editor of the Schottenstein Talmud, ArtScroll/Mesorah Publications) entitled *Opening the Gates of Scholarship: The Schottenstein Talmud Project*. Rabbi Kasnett described how, at the outset of the project to publish this English edition of the Babylonian Talmud, certain guidelines were laid down. The Schottenstein English edition was to be a "sophisticated elucidation of the plain meaning of the Gemara according to Rashi." Moreover, the editors were aware that their audience would have multiple levels of knowledge, ranging from beginners to scholars.

Rabbi Kasnett went on to describe the workflow. Each section of the Talmud was assigned to an author, an editor, and a reader. The author composed the first draft including a translation of the text and explanatory notes. This draft was reviewed by an editor who made corrections and generally polished the writing. The draft was then sent to a reader who had the final say as to the accuracy of the material. Rabbi Kasnett described numerous other steps in this process of "berur achar berur," or continual refinement. Writing and editing the 73-volume Schottenstein English edition of the Talmud took 15 years. Rabbi Kasnett's description offered a fascinating insight into the processes involved in creating such a monumental work as well as a reflection of the dedication of those involved in this scholarly endeavor. An audio recording of this presentation will be made available on NYMA's Web site, www.ajlnyma.org.

Switching gears, the second presentation offered a look at the cutting edge of reference work. Alexa Pearce (acting librarian for journalism, culture and communication, New York University Libraries) spoke about *Mobile Reference Services: The Next Step for Library Technology*. Ms. Pearce described how the New York University (NYU) libraries have, within the past two years, incorporated text messaging and instant messaging (IM) as part of their reference services. She pointed out that modes of communication are proliferating and libraries have to think about which to add to the services that they have traditionally offered. Ms. Pearce described the methods of receiving user inquiries via text messaging/IM—mobile phones or chat windows on a computer screen. She also discussed the pros and cons of using a vendor. NYU Libraries initially decided not to use the vendor option. They have now moved to "libraryh3lp," an integrated IM/web-chat help system designed specifically for libraries.

In order to publicize the availability of these new services, NYU Libraries advertised on their Web site. Training materials and documentation were put on the library's wiki. By collecting statistics and transcripts, the staff was able to monitor the use of these services and to figure out which factors resulted in satisfied

customers. The reference staff learned that continuity in message threads was an important element in quality of service. Ms. Pearce ended her presentation by sharing on screen a transcript of one of the reference interviews. This was a wonderful way to demonstrate all that she had described and the potential of text messaging and IM to enhance traditional reference services. An audio recording and Ms. Pearce's PowerPoint presentation will be available at www.ajlnyma.org.



Alexa Pearce, acting librarian for journalism, culture and communication at New York University Libraries, highlights new technology for public service.

The next event on NYMA's calendar is our 2010 day school/high school workshop, which will take place on March 10 at the Abraham Joshua Heschel High School in New York City.

Greater Cleveland Chapter

Submitted by Sean Martin

In honor of Jewish Book Month, the Cleveland chapter sponsored a reception with guest speaker Michael Bennett, editor and publisher of the *Cleveland Jewish News*. Bennett described the Cleveland Jewish Publication Company as the producer of a newspaper, a magazine ("jstyle"), custom publications, and a Web site (www.clevelandjewishnews.com). In his very interesting talk, Bennett described the challenges the *Cleveland Jewish News* faces during this period of rapid technological change. He encouraged us to think about how we use the newspaper and to use the newspaper in different ways (and, not least, to support the newspaper advertisers). Bennett also described the process of developing the online archive of the *Cleveland Jewish News*, to be completed within the year. This archive will allow readers to search all of the issues of the *Cleveland Jewish News* since it began publication in 1964, making research that is now quite cumbersome much simpler.

The chapter also completed and distributed the 2009 Judaica Booklists for both children and adults. The lists are available on the AJL Web site.

Montreal Chapter

Submitted by Janice Rosen

The program *Harvesting the Fruits of History: A User's Guide to Displaying, Digitizing, and Creating an Online Database for a Historical Collection* was held on November 20, in conjunction with the Health Sciences Library of the Jewish General Hospital of Montreal (JGH). Despite our members' trepidation at entering a hospital during the early days of the swine flu pandemic, the program was well attended, by the standards of our small chapter, and was extremely informative. The ten or so librarians and genealogists gathered around the Jewish General Hospital Library conference table hung on the three presenters' every word, as archivists Linda Lei and Shiri Alon spoke about the

digitization of the JGH historical archives and how this material is now being put on the Web. The program was introduced and hosted by library director Arlene Greenberg.

The meeting opened downstairs in the hospital lobby, where we had a final chance to see the traveling exhibit *The Jewish General Hospital at 75: A Retrospective*, which formed the basis for the digital material presented in the library session. Over the past year the JGH Library team has selected, scanned, and entered into an Inmagic database the most vital elements of the hospital's early historical records, including individual donor cards in the shape of bricks that helped to fund the initial construction in the Depression years of the early 1930s. We learned how the team had to modify its original exhibit texts to fit the requirements of a simple story line, and how the online database evolved and was modified to fit the needs of users and the distinct elements of the materials. Since some of us are beginning similar projects, we were most grateful to get this insider's perspective.

The meeting concluded with a promotion for the upcoming AJL 2011 conference in Montreal and a call for volunteers by chapter co-president Marsha Lustigman. Over kosher refreshments and lively conversation, we concluded the meeting with the sense of an important new bond having been forged between the JGH Library staff and the AJL-Montreal executive. Archivist Linda Lei wrote the following to Janice after the meeting:

"I hope you had a very good holiday and all the best wishes for 2010! Thank you so much for all the kind words. We also enjoyed the program a lot. And in the meantime we're keeping a keen eye on any digital initiatives in the archival field, especially the ones that are about Jewish General Hospital, as there might be a chance to cross-reference each other. Please keep us informed of any activities in the group.... It's always inspiring and refreshing to exchange ideas with and learn from other colleagues and experts."

Southern California Chapter (AJLSC)

From the AJLSC Web site, selected by Toby Rossner

Once again I urge you to visit the AJL Southern California Web site (www.AJLSC.org) for a vast array of information of value to all AJL members. Here is a sampling from my visit to the Web site on January 14.

- Save the date: Monday, February 22, 7:30 pm—our next AJLSC meeting with guest Maggie Anton, author of the *Rashi's Daughter's* series.
- New! Two brand new AJLSC brochures for Jewish Book Month 2009—compiled by Blumenthal Library Staff, Sinai Temple, and Ellen G. Cole, Levine Library, Temple Isaiah, Los Angeles—available to download and make copies:
- In Celebration of Jewish Book Month 2009
- A Selected List of Recent Books and DVDs For Adults
- A Selected List of Recent Books and DVDs For Children and Teens
- Free—*The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg*—an award-winning 35mm. print is available for free; only cost is shipping and handling, and public performance rights if fee charged. The Ciesla Foundation was the producer of the 2001 Peabody Award winning film, which includes archival footage and interviews with celebrities.
- Bibliography of Illustrated Books on the Holocaust pre-

pared by Lisa Silverman, library director, Sinai Temple Library

Northwest Chapter

Submitted by Toby Harris

Last fall, the Northwest Chapter was busy forging relationships and creating subcommittees for the 45th AJL conference, to be in Seattle this summer. The Jewish Community Center in Vancouver, British Columbia, held its 25th Annual Jewish Book Festival, officially titled the Cherie Smith Jewish Community Center of Greater Vancouver Jewish Book Festival. AJL Northwest became a sponsor and sent me, as its representative to spread the word about AJL, our chapter, and the conference.

AJL member Karen Corrin invited Judaic librarians and staff from the greater Vancouver area for a visit to meet and discuss future collaboration possibilities. Karen and I spoke highly of the resources available through AJL and what a great organization it continues to be for us. Karen showed us the unique and fabulous Isaac Waldman Public Library where she is the head librarian. In addition, a grand tour was led of the Jewish Museum and Archives of British Columbia. These are both located in the vibrant Jewish Community Center, where the Jewish Book Festival and many ongoing programs take place. I was also delighted to stop in at the King David High School library, courtesy of another AJL member, Lisa Stibravy. Vancouverites are excited about the conference and the new chapter and it was well worth the visit to



Author Rona Arato and Northwest Chapter president Toby Harris met at the Vancouver Book Festival.

meet our friends and colleagues on the other side of the border! Portland, Oregon will be next!

In Seattle, the focus has been on gathering an incredible group of presenters and contributors for the annual conference and planning a valuable, meaningful and stimulating experience for you all! So don't miss it!

For developments and more details about the conference this summer, see the 8-page convention insert in this issue of the Newsletter.



Reviews of Titles for Children and Teens

EDITED BY LINDA R. SILVER

Appearing at the end of each publishing year and the beginning of the next, best book lists are a tradition in the children's book world, compiled by reviewing journals like Kirkus and organizations like ALSC (ALA's Association of Library Service to Children) among others. Relatively few books of Jewish content ever appear on these lists—they represent a very small part of children's book publishing, after all—but it is always interesting to compare those that are chosen for the honor of "best" by the secular media with the critical reception they get from Jewish reviewers. A prime example of a fundamental difference occurred in 2008, when *Kirkus* named *Unsettled* by Mark Aronson a "best book," while the AJL reviewer, an expert on books about Israel for youth, roundly (and justly) condemned it for its lack of accuracy and anti-Zionist distortions. Even now, a year later, it is hard to believe that such a flawed book would appear among the "best."

Kirkus Reviews, in its Nov. 15, 2009 issue, named the following books of Jewish content among the best of 2009:

The Doll House Downstairs by Yona Zeldis McDonough, illustrated by Heather Maione, published by Viking. Kirkus calls it a mix of "one part Rumer Godden's *The Story of Holly and Ivy* and many parts Sydney Taylor's *All-of-a-Kind Family*. The AJL Newsletter reviewer, writing in the Sept./Oct. 2009 issue, called the story "charming" and said of the illustrations that they capture the essence of the setting.

Anne Frank: Her Life in Words and Pictures by Menno Metselaar and Ruud van der Rol, published by Flashpoint/Roaring Brook.

A Family Secret by Eric Heuvel, published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux;

The Search by Eric Heuvel, Ruud van der Rol, and Lies Schippers, published by Farrar, and Giroux.

All three of these titles were highlighted in Kirkus's best books list because they were created under the auspices of Amsterdam's Anne Frank House.

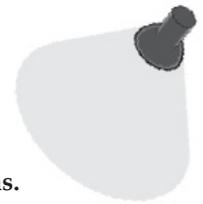
The book about Anne Frank was reviewed very positively in the Nov./Dec. 2009 issue of the AJL Newsletter, with the reviewer, an expert in Holocaust literature for young people, calling it "a handsome keepsake and history" with many outstanding features. *A Family Secret* and *The Search* are both graphic novels reviewed by an expert in the Jewish graphic novel in the Nov./Dec. 2009 issue of the Newsletter. (We are so fortunate to have experts among our reviewers!) AJL's reviewer was much less enthusiastic about them, describing them as absent of violence but also absent of much emotion and useful only as supplements to other more notable books about the Holocaust.

The last book of Jewish content to make the Kirkus list is *You Never Heard of Sandy Koufax?* by Jonah Winter, illustrated by Andre Carilho, published by Schwartz and Wade/Random. Jonah Winter is highlighted for both this book and another about Gertrude Stein, which the Newsletter editors chose not to review because it has no Jewish content. Each of Winter's

picture-biographies, Kirkus remarks, "takes on a voice unique to its subjects" and the AJL reviewer also points this out in an enthusiastic review of *You Never Heard of Sandy Koufax?* that was featured in the "In the Spotlight" section of reviews for children and teens published in the May/June 2009 issue.

Comparing AJL Newsletter reviews of 2009 books with the secular media's "best" choices, it's apparent that there is much room for debate about what exactly "best" means. When only books of Jewish content are being considered, the Sydney Taylor Book Award Committee has the final say, which is why each member's commitment to the committee's mission, depth of book knowledge, fact-checking abilities, and critical acumen are so important.

In The Spotlight



Adler, David and Michael Adler. *A Picture Book of Harry Houdini*. Illus. by Matt Collins. New York: Holiday House, 2009. 32pp. \$17.95. ISBN: 978-0-8234-2059-9. Gr. 1-3.

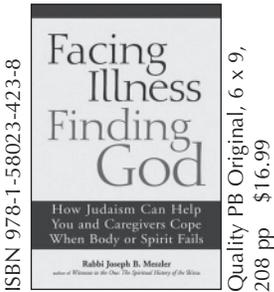
Strong art and straight forward text clearly introduce the magnetic magician/escape artist, Harry Houdini. The chronological explanation stays tightly focused on the major facts of Houdini's personality, career and reputation. Picture book readers gain a good idea of his life and life style from a spare biography that neither overwhelms them with everything Houdini did nor disappoints them by explaining how tricks were accomplished, as volumes for older readers do. The text counterpoints Houdini's relationships to his drive to be the world's greatest magician. His Jewish roots and family ties take the stage almost as often as his performances. His hard work perfecting his craft, his loyalty to his audiences are so impressive, the attack that causes his death shocks in word and picture. Sophisticated, mobile illustrations from strange or unusual points of view dynamically capture Houdini pushing the envelope to achieve the thrills in his act. Pictures jump the gutter; they rush into the reader's space, instilling tension and immediacy. The action is set in its historical time, over 80 years ago. The art presents the era's fashions, cars, buildings, and crowd emotions, while the text tracks a small-time magician developing into an international star through his talent, innovation, courage, persistence, and daring. It is no trick to love the famous Houdini; the trick is to deliver the man without losing the magic. The Adlers/Collins team admirably succeeds; their book is highly recommended.

Ellen G. Cole, Temple Isaiah, Los Angeles, CA

Caton, Tzipi. *Invisible Me*. New York: Targum Press, 2009. 271pp. \$22.99. ISBN: 978-1-56871-533-9. Gr. 7-12.

Dini Braverman has had a childhood trauma—the aftermath of witnessing a child drown at camp—and, unable to express her feelings about it, she withdraws into a psychiatric disorder known as "selective mutism": communicating only by writing

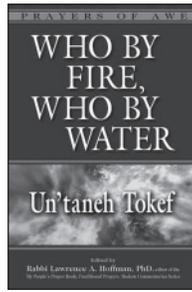
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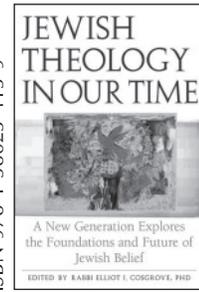
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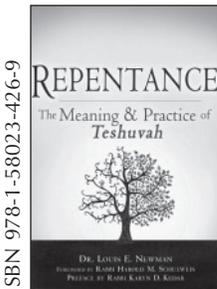
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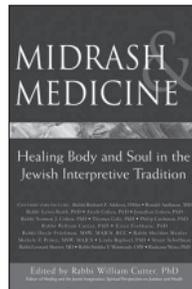
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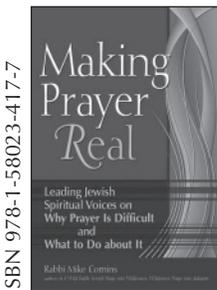
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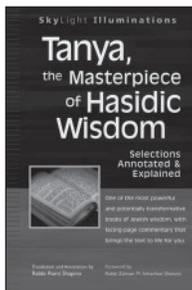
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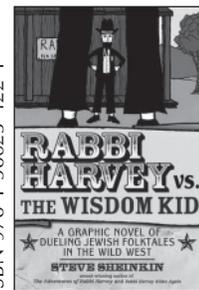
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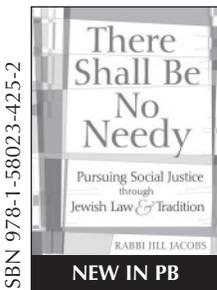
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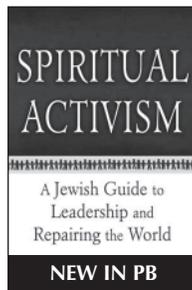
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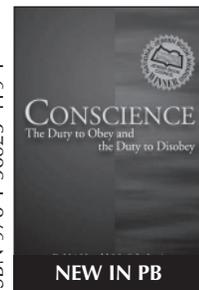
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notes. The issues this presents for Dini, her family and her friends, and the successful therapy she receives are the subjects of this book. Eventually, Dini learns to maintain a balance between thinking of herself and thinking of others. She begins to listen to what others feel and to express her own anger, hurts, and disappointments. She realizes that her parents love her and care about her. These lessons are, of course, valuable to any teenage reader. While the story is about Dini and her selective mutism, it takes place in the context of an Orthodox Jewish life. Dini attends Jewish day schools, her family is shomer shabbas, she talks to G-d, her sheitel-wearing mother is known for her chesed activities in the community, and her siblings (and Dini herself) may have difficulty finding a marriage partner because of Dini's affliction. Inside her head, Dini is an endearing, normal, chocolate-loving teenage girl, and her personality is well expressed in the novel. The printed format, effectively presented in various fonts, allows us to read Dini's notes, hear her thoughts, and follow the "conversations" she has with others, especially with her witty and insightful therapist. This is an unusual and very likeable book about teenage life and its many frustrations.

Susan Berson, Denver, CO

Editor's Note: *Understanding Buddy* by Marc Kornblatt and *Blood Secret* by Kathryn Lasky also deal with selective mutism.

Hyde, Heidi Smith. *Feivel's Flying Horses*. Illus. by Johanna van der Sterre. Minneapolis, MN: Kar-Ben/Lerner, 2010. 32pp. \$17.95. ISBN: 978-0-7613-3959-1. Reviewed from an unbound copy. Gr. 2-4.

One of the lesser-known stories of Jewish immigrants in America is that they were among the foremost carvers of wooden carousel horses. This picture book portrays in lively words and illustrations the story of one of them, a woodcarver named Feivel, who sadly leaves his wife and children behind in the old country while he makes the voyage to America in hopes of a better life for all of them. Working constantly to earn enough for his family's passage, Feivel is treated by his cousin to a trip to Coney Island, where his amazement is reflected by page after page of fluid, dramatic scenes of Coney Island's many wonders. The wooden carousel horses resonate the most with Feivel and when he sees a sign advertising for an experienced wood carver, he applies and gets the job. Each of the magnificent horses Feivel creates is fashioned with his family in mind so that a horse with a "long, golden mane as bright as sunshine" is named Goldie for his wife while another whose "speed and power made him stand out" is painted a "regal blue" in honor of Feivel's proud oldest son, Avram. It takes three years for the carousel to be completed and through all of that time, Feivel yearns for his family, which he knows is changing and growing up without him. And despite his pride in the beauty of the carousel, it isn't until his family is able to join him in America that he rides the carousel whose circle is now complete. A historical note explains how Jewish woodcarvers, whose skills had been developed in Europe making synagogue decorations, migrated to America at the same time that the carousel industry was flourishing. Hyde's writing is a smooth blend of the historical and the fictional, written with much visual detail and a sense of pathos for the separation of immigrant families. Keeping it all upbeat and not too sentimental

are van der Sterre's paintings, done in a muted palette that conveys action, setting, and theme very attractively. *The Rose Horse* by Deborah Lee Rose (Harcourt Brace, 1996) tells a similar story. Hyde and van der Sterre also collaborated on *Mendel's Accordion* (Kar-Ben/Lerner, 2007). Recommended with enthusiasm.

Linda R. Silver, Cleveland, OH

Karsh, Efraim. *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: The 1948 War*. Essential Histories: War and Conflict in Modern Times Series. New York: Rosen, 2009. 96pp. \$31.95. ISBN: 978-1-4042-1842-0. Gr. 10-adult.

This is a rare "series book" about the Middle East in that it is written by an authority on the subject (the author is professor of Middle East studies at Kings' College, University of London), isn't "dumbed down" in terms of language, vocabulary, or sentence structure, and doesn't distract with useless but colorful graphs, insets, and sidebars. What is *does* supply are relevant facts, analysis, and context about its subject—the war between the Arabs and the Jews of Western Palestine in 1948, culminating in the armistice agreements of 1949 between the new state of Israel and its neighbors. Karsh calls this "the Palestine War" of 1948, and his book will be a valuable resource for high school and college students wanting to understand the tumultuous events of that year and their effects on the subsequent history of the region. Nearly half is a military history, detailing the strategies, advantages and disadvantages of each side, and then relating the battlefield course of the war. These middle chapters will be mined by those with a particular interest in military history. Any student doing research on the battles and progress of the 1948 war will want to consult the middle fifty pages of Karsh's work.

Of more general interest are the first and last chapters, titled respectively "Background to War: the Burden of History," and "Conclusion and Consequences: Perpetuating the Arab-Israeli Conflict." In these fifteen pages or so, a reader will learn facts that are rarely encountered in similar works: the Jewish return to Zion did not begin with the 20th century; Arabs of the period between the two world wars never saw Palestine as a separate entity unto itself, but as a part of "Greater Syria;" Arab violence against Jews in Palestine was not a result of the creation of Israel, but occurred in a steady stream at least as far back as 1920. The concluding chapter quotes reports and contemporaneous records to illuminate the sources of the Palestinian refugee situation: besides the trauma of war itself were the suspicions, rivalries, and animosities among various Arab leaders, clans, and nations, and the flight of the Arab leaders themselves, abandoning their people to a collapsing morale. It emerges that the Arab refugees of the time saw themselves as victims of their own leaders more than of Israeli aggression, and had these leaders been victorious, they made it clear they would not create a new Palestinian Arab state, but divvy up Palestine among Egypt, Syria, and Transjordan.

Karsh's book is clearly based on historical research and direct quotations from primary sources buttress his assertions. The omission of footnotes to document those quotes, plus the sometimes inferior quality of the black-and-white photographs are the only drawbacks to an excellent narrative, suitable for serious readers—grades 10 to adult. Includes index, glossary, timeline, bibliography.

Andrea Rapp, Wise Temple, Cincinnati, OH

Editor's Note: Amazon lists a 2008 copyright for Karsh's book. A paperback edition was published originally in England by Osprey in 2002.

BIBLE

Greengard, Alison. *The Brave Women Who Saved Moses*. Illus. by Carol Racklin-Siegel. Oakland, California: EKS, 2009. 28pp. \$10.95. ISBN 978-0-939144-62-4 Pbk. Grades 1-3.

The Brave Women Who Saved Moses is the latest collaborative effort by Greengard and Racklin-Siegel to adapt a well-known Bible story for young readers learning Hebrew. Their new book recounts the story of Moses's origins as told in Exodus 1-2. The female-centered story of self-sacrifice and courage focuses on the women who protected Moses and guaranteed his survival from the Pharaoh's decree to kill every newborn Jewish boy. The book follows the same word-for-word translation format of their previous books in the series, giving one paragraph per page of the story in both Hebrew and English. Bright and colorful reproductions of silk paintings highlight each passage and bring the text to life. A literal translation and an extensive glossary of Hebrew words aid young people in expanding and reinforcing their Hebrew vocabulary. Recommended.

Allison Marks, Temple Israel Library, Akron, OH

Taylor, Ross. *David. Money at its Best*. Philadelphia: Mason Crest Publishers. 2009. 119pp. \$14.95. ISBN: 978-1-4222-0468-9.

David, the 12th book in the *Money at its Best* series, is inappropriate for Jewish libraries because it has a Christian point of view. The first illustration, from an illuminated manuscript, shows King David with a halo above his head. The premise of the series is that Jesus, when he says that wealth is evil, means that it is okay to be wealthy if you use your wealth to help people. The introduction discusses Jesus's teachings on wealth. Taylor writes that King David was very wealthy and came from a wealthy family. A photograph of a pot of gold is pictured on the first page of each chapter. Taylor tells the story of King David by quoting and paraphrasing from the book of Samuel. Each episode in King David's life is followed by the author's opinion that what is written in the book of Samuel is improbable. Taylor's information on Middle East geography is also inaccurate: he refers to Gaza and the West Bank of Israel as Palestinian territories.

Ilka Gordon, Siegal College of Judaic Studies, Cleveland, OH

FICTION

Malley, Gemma. *The Returners*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2010. 229pp. \$16.99. ISBN 978-1-59990-443-6. Reviewed from an ARC. Gr. 5-8.

The Returners is a quasi-political fantasy narrated in the first person by a high school student called Will. Will does not know why he is so unhappy, why he has horrifying nightmares, why certain people seem to approach him and stare at him, why his

mother killed herself, and why he has such an abusive father. In circuitous and confusing narration, Will comes to the horrifying discovery that he is a Returner, one of a group who are not normal humans, but symbols. They live successive lives, maintaining and propagating evil because they are preordained to do so. The novel is set in a future Britain, where endemic political correctness infects the story with predictable dogma. It is obvious who the good guys and bad guys are, and they are represented as caricatures.

Will's anxious thoughts eventually devolve into a recapitulation of horrific past events: the transport of African slaves on ships to the Americas, the decimation of a Native American settlement, the Holocaust, and the killing in Rwanda. It appears, unconvincingly, that Will was a prime evildoer in all of these. Those events are The inclusion of the Holocaust in this litany occurs without any historical background or differentiation from the other historic evils. There are no Jewish characters in this story, nor is there any information about Jews, Jewish history, European history, or any other history. The book plays fast and loose with the Holocaust and dishonors it with a lack of factual and emotional truth. Not recommended.

Naomi Sussman Morse, Silver Spring, MD

Palmer, Robin. *Little Miss Red*. New York: Speak, 2010. 254pp. \$7.99. ISBN: 978-0-14-241123-0 Pbk. Reviewed from an ARC. Gr. 8-10.

Poor sixteen-year-old Sophie Greene. She longs for the passionate, adventurous life that her romance novel heroine, Devon Deveraux, leads in book after book. Instead, Sophie has a safe and stable life in a comfortable Los Angeles suburb. To add to her frustration, her boyfriend, Michael Rosenberg, is sensible, predictable and completely unromantic. Sophie is dismayed because she has to visit her kvetchy and stingy cliché of a Jewish grandmother in Florida over spring vacation along with Michael, who will visit his own grandmother. Is that not what all Jewish kids do over spring break? One day, while at the mall, Sophie purchases large sunglasses and an oversized red hat against the advice of Michael and her friends, and from these flashy accoutrements her adventures begin.

All of a sudden, Michael comes down with the chicken pox and is unable to go to Florida with her. Michael's seat on the airplane is taken by a handsome and mysterious rocker who calls her "Red," because of her hat. The rather conventional Sophie is swept away by this seemingly rebellious young man. For some unexplained reason her grandmother also takes a shine to him and invites him to stay with her, plying him with lox and brisket. At first, Sophie feels like Devon Deveraux on one of her escapades. However, as the week progresses, Sophie realizes that this guy is a self-absorbed leech. She also learns that there is no perfect guy and that sometimes stability is all right. This humorous but shallow story does not convey any values beyond those of consumerism and materialism. The characters are clichés of middle-class Jewish teenagers, parents, and grandparents. The author tries too hard to be hip and tuned in to teenage pop culture. Teens will not connect with Sophie's reading of trashy romance novels in this age of the *Gossip Girl* and *Twilight* series. The story is not recommended for Jewish libraries.

Heather Lenson, Jewish Education Center, Cleveland, OH

Rosen, Devorah. *Mystery in Spain*. New York: Feldheim, 2009. 250pp. \$19.99. ISBN: 978-1-59826-327-5. Gr. 5-9.

This time travel story puts Motti, a teenager from Haifa, into the lives of annusim (hidden Jews) in 15th-century Spain. Somehow, Motti appears in the bedroom of young Roberto de Enrica, and, together with Roberto's brother Juan, plus a large cast of other characters, he outwits the Inquisitor and saves captured Jews from Cordoba. Several narratives are intertwined: Roberto is being followed, his family is under suspicion of being Jewish, Roberto saves the life of a Muslim child just as his family is being taken away by the Inquisition (and the boy turns out to be Jewish after all!), the de Carlos family is imprisoned, there is a large mysterious house across the road from the de Enrica home, a friend of the family named Alejandro may or may not be a friend of the Jews, a Jewish informer repents and returns to help his people, etc. Motti's appearance causes only a tiny ripple, with Roberto and his family only mildly curious about who he is and where he came from. The exposition is unnatural, and a wordy, long-winded writing style slows down the pace. The boys take far-fetched risks, but they believe they are protected by Hashem. Hebrew terms are italicized but not translated. The audience for this book will be a traditional one.

Susan Berson, Denver, CO

Walfish, Miriam. *Penina's Doll Factory*. Illus. by Jessica Magnus. Jewish Girls Around the World Series. New York: Judaica Press, 2009. 160pp. \$16.95. ISBN: 978-1-60763-015-9. Gr. 3-5.

Penina Mendes first appeared in *Penina's Plan* and we'll meet her again soon in *Penina's Adventure at Sea*. This book is a sequel to the earlier one, briefly reprising the first story, but it can stand on its own. Penina is a 10-year-old Sephardic girl in mid-19th-century London, a member of a wealthy family with a strong tradition of tzedakah, especially for the newly-arrived poor Eastern European Jewish immigrant community. Penina learns and shares the valuable message from Pirkei Avot, "No one person can do everything, but we always have to try." In the rather slow-moving story, Penina and her sister Shoshanna, 12, hatch a plan to sell dolls made by the mother of her immigrant friend and other women like her who cannot keep jobs because they don't work on Shabbat. Of course, despite setbacks, the plan succeeds brilliantly. *Penina's Doll House* is a period piece from an era of calling cards, carriages, hand-made clothes, private tutors, and fine London stores. However, like the book's static illustrations, Penina and Shoshanna are cardboard characters, proper young ladies who never fight, always ask permission, and display impeccable manners. The book has two small editing errors. On page 51, "blind man's buff" should be "blind man's bluff" and Chipping Camden, the site of textile mills, is placed south of London, whereas it is actually northwest of London.

Susan Berson, Denver, CO

Another View

The Sydney Taylor Book Award winner for older readers, *The Importance of Wings* by Robin Friedman, received an unenthusiastic review in a previous issue of the *AJL Newsletter*. Here is an alternative and more positive review.

Friedman, Robin. *The Importance of Wings*. Watertown, Massachusetts: Charlesbridge, 2009. 170pp. \$15.95. ISBN: 978-1-58089-330-5.

Roxanne and Gayle live on Staten Island. Their father drives a taxi, and their mother is in Israel, taking care of their sick aunt. It is the 1980s, and Roxanne worries about many things: being a nerd, getting dressed in gym class, and not being able to get her hair into the popular style—with wings. She and her sister miss their mother and their father is either working or not very talkative. They spend a lot of time watching television, often scheduling their day around their favorite shows. When an Israeli girl and her father move into the "cursed house" next door, Roxanne's new friend helps her to see life differently. Liat's mother was killed in a terrorist attack, so Liat is not scared or saddened by the trivial things that challenge Roxanne. Roxanne sees through Liat and her father that her Israeli heritage is something of which to be proud. One night, a fire burns Liat's house down to the ground. Shortly afterward, her father decides they should return to Israel. Although Roxanne is sad to lose her friend, she has new found confidence and decides it's okay to be "Ravit," her Hebrew name.

Ah, the drama of being in eighth grade! There's the boy you have a crush on who likes someone else. There's getting picked last for teams in gym class. There are your parents, who are so unlike Mike and Carol Brady and not even like Ma and Pa Ingalls. There are bullies, but there are also friends, your favorite shows, and going to the mall. All the aspects of teenage angst are presented poignantly. The twist of an Israeli trying to be an American is an original and refreshing variation on the coming-of-age and feeling awkward story. While not particularly Jewish, the Israeli characters are authentic. The main characters, Roxanne and Liat, are developed well, and their family and friends interact in realistic ways. This book is recommended for public libraries, and most synagogue and community center libraries. It would also make an excellent book club pick for girls ages nine through twelve, encouraging discussion about fitting in and being yourself.

Kathe Pinchuck, Congregation Beth Sholom, Teaneck, NJ

FOLKLORE AND LEGENDS

Sigal, Goldie. *Stingy Buzi and King Solomon*. Montreal: Lomir Hofn Press, 2009. 80pp. \$18.00. ISBN: 978-0-9811085-0-6 Pbk. Gr. 2-5.

Based on a 1972 Yiddish book, which, in turn, was based on legends and folktales about King Solomon, this comic book (not a graphic novel) is a cartoon story with Hebrew-lettered Yiddish in the bubbles, and the same text below in both English and transliterated Yiddish. Buzi is a mean, greedy guy who abuses his servants. King Solomon invites him to the palace. Tempting him with food but not letting him eat, King Solomon teaches Buzi "how it feels to be hungry" and Buzi realizes that his "whole life has been lived in error." The Yiddish alphabet, a literal translation, and the story in Yiddish without illustrations are also included. Although the story line is thin, the translated text is lively, and the old-fashioned color illustrations are adequate.

Powerfully told in a unique voice, *In a Pale Blue Light* conveys an authentic and rarely achieved insight into Jewish life in South Africa during the tumultuous times around World War II.

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In a Pale Blue Light
a novel by Lily Poritz Miller



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- Canadian Jewish News

"A beautiful and deeply touching work of fiction that is bound to have a profound impact on the reader."

- The Jewish Tribune

Most Jewish children are not learning Yiddish these days, but a school or synagogue could well use this book as the basis for a charming children's play in English.

Susan Berson, Denver, CO

HOLIDAYS

Abramson, Susan. *Rabbi Rocketpower and the Half-Baked Matzah Mystery: A Particularly Peculiar Passover*. Illus. by Ariel Diorio. Bedford, MA: Oak Leaf Systems, 2009. 96pp. \$11.95. ISBN 978-0-9659546-2 Pbk. Kdg.-Gr. 3.

In the exceedingly strange and goofy world of Rabbi Rocketpower, something as benign as matzah can turn sinister and take the shape of a mouse, a race car and even a flying pyramid. But that's only the tip of the afikoman in Rabbi Susan Abramson's *Rabbi Rocketpower and the Half-Baked Matzah Mystery*, her third in a series of early-reader books about the off-the-wall adventures of the Mensch family. The Mensch's Passover celebration is imperiled when a misguided matzah, cursed by an ancient pharaoh, runs amok. Along the way, readers are treated to the relentless malapropisms of Purr, the family cat; a seder-plateful of gentle, cornball humor; and, as usual, Rabbi Rocketpower (the family matriarch and airborne superhero) saving the day. Wrapped in this silly package are the story of Passover, explanations of the holiday's symbols, and a message about the tenuous nature of

freedom. The book is illustrated with simple line drawings and features two comic-strip-style passages which further explain the bizarre plot. For librarians wishing to add a dash of craziness to their more conventional collection of Passover fare for children, this may fit the bill. Certainly, children weaned on the antics of Spongebob and Captain Underpants (an obvious influence on the book's appearance, tone and alliterative title) will appreciate your choice. The book includes recipes and a glossary of Passover terms.

Allison Marks, Temple Israel Library, Akron, OH

Goetz, Bracha. *What Do You See on Shabbos? What Do You See? Series*. New York: Judaica Press, 2009. 16pp. \$8.95. ISBN: 978-1-60763-005-0 Board Book. Ages 1-3.

How do young children know it is Shabbos? By using their senses to see, smell, taste, touch, and hear things around them. This delightful board book starts with preparing special foods for Shabbos, welcoming guests (a Shabbos tradition), lighting the candles, putting on special clothes, placing special items on the Shabbos table, and making time for families to play together. It ends with *Havdalah*. Continuing a great series for preschoolers, the things that are seen are all labeled and easy to identify. The labels are in English, so the book is appropriate for Jews of any denomination. Adorable children grace the pages, drawing pre-readers to the book. This book can be the starting point for many class discussions: the special foods each child eats on Shabbos, the color shirt each child wears, the special things they do, etc.

The book is most suitable for babies and toddlers, and is highly recommended for libraries that serve them.

Kathe Pinchuck, Congregation Beth Sholom, Teaneck, NJ

Light the Menorah. Illus. by Jannie Ho. 12pp. \$6.99. New York: Price Stern Sloan, 2009. 978-0-8431-8954-4 Board Book. Preschool-Kdg.

The focus here is on the miracle of the oil. On each of the pages of this book, corresponding to the nights of Hanukkah, there is an opportunity to pull a flap, lighting the menorah with the appropriate number of candles. In addition to lighting the menorah, the stiffly-illustrated family makes latkes and jelly doughnuts, gets presents, sings songs, plays dreidel. A nice touch not often found in books like these is the idea that “on the sixth day, I get to *give* presents. We buy lots of little toys and bring them to boys and girls in our neighborhood.” The interactivity (pulling the tab) will undoubtedly be popular with children.

Susan Berson, Denver, CO

Martin, David. *Hanukkah Lights.* Illus. by Melissa Sweet. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 2009. 26pp. \$5.99. ISBN: 978-0-7636-3029-4 Board Book. Ages 1-3.

In sparkling watercolor and collage illustrations, a diverse rainbow of children joyously celebrate Hanukkah. The rhyming text is perfectly complemented by the appealing illustrations, while the board book format and small size are just right for very young toddlers. Full-color illustrations on one side of each double-page spread portray the holiday progressing as the children eat latkes, spin a dreidel, give and receive presents, and enjoy a treat of Hanukkah gelt. On the opposite side of each page, one more candle in the colorful menorah is lit for each of the eight nights, until at the end they have all been lit. After the children play with shadows on the wall and enjoy dancing and singing, they are shown a healthy feast of fruits and vegetables, perfect for our health-conscious times. There are no adults in the story, so readers see the story from a child’s perspective. It is also noteworthy that an older sibling is shown reading to a younger one, which will encourage other children to do so. Highly recommended for toddlers ages 1-3 as an entertaining and very age-appropriate way to learn about Hanukkah traditions.

Andrea Davidson, The Temple-Tifereth Israel, Beachwood, OH

Weber, Doba Rivka. *Dear Tree: A Tu B’Shvat Wish.* Illus. by Phyllis Saroff. New York: Hachai, 2010. 30pp. \$10.95. ISBN: 978-1-929628-48-3. Preschool-Kdg.

A little boy sits outside on the synagogue steps in winter, thinking about the tree that grows nearby. He wishes it many good things: a year filled with sunlight, beautiful blossoms, and strength to stand for many years to come. Thanking Hashem for the gift of this tree and all the others in the world, he promises to care for it and guard it and ends by wishing the tree “Happy New Year.” Attractive color illustrations complement the story by showing the tree close up through all seasons of the year. In some of the pictures birds build nests in it, in others the boy swings from it, and in others it is decorated first with pink blossoms and then with small red fruit. A note in the front of the book explains that the tree depicted is a variety of crab apple tree. A longer note following the story gracefully explains the holiday of Tu B’Shevat

and how it can inspire us to remain strong in our Jewish faith and in doing good deeds. Simple and sincere, the story gives readers an excellent introduction to Tu B’Shevat. Recommended for all Jewish libraries serving young children.

Linda R. Silver, Cleveland, OH

HOLOCAUST AND WORLD WAR II

De Groot, Jan. *A Boy in War.* Winlaw, B.C.: Sononis Press, 2008. (Distributed in the U.S. by Orca Book Publishers.) 191pp. \$13.95. ISBN: 978-1-55039-167-1 Pbk. Gr. 8-12.

The Nazi invasion of Holland, a country with a history of friendship with Germany, shocked everyone as the occupation persisted and grew harsher. Many of the Dutch came close to starvation during that time and many did starve as a result of the Germans’ sending all their products to Germany, and confiscating precious farmland for airstrips, etc. The narrator of this true story is a charming Dutch boy with two close friends, an older brother, and a mother and father, all of whom he enjoys and loves. Although the family is not Jewish, they are engaged full-time in rescuing Jews and downed Allied airmen. In one of the Jewish families, whom the de Groot family harbored for a whole year, a neurotic, perhaps even psychotic person gets the de Groot family in trouble and is ultimately responsible for Jan’s father’s imprisonment and death. The de Groots are innovative, independent thinkers, and they are action-oriented. They are the kind of people the reader would enjoy knowing. This exciting and touching memoir of Righteous Gentiles belongs in the Jewish library.

Marcia W. Posner, Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center, Nassau County, NY

Gross, Elly Berkovits. *Elly: My True Story of the Holocaust.* New York: Scholastic Press, 2009. \$14.99. 128pp. ISBN: 978-0-545-07494-0. Gr. 6-12.

In short, powerful chapters, Elly traces her life from her childhood in a happy family in Romania through her brutal Holocaust experiences at Auschwitz/Birkenau—beginning at age 15—forced factory work, and eventual liberation and emigration to America with her husband and two children, emphasizing all the points at which she miraculously escaped death. There is quite a bit of repetition; one assumes that this was the way the story was presented to Elly’s daughters, who have added a foreword and afterword. Elly’s poetry is also included. It is similar in style to the book’s economical narrative and also reflects her experiences, including an especially moving poem entitled, “Please Come, Mommy. I Miss you,” and an allegory entitled, “New Birds Fly Again.” Direct, clear, and powerful in its details, it is a good complement to the Anne Frank diary or other Holocaust personal memoirs. The strength of the book lies in its evocation of Elly’s loneliness and the persistent sense, even into old age, of her lost childhood and lost loved ones.

Susan Berson, Denver, CO



Kacer, Kathy and Sharon McKay. *Whispers from the Camps*. Toronto: Puffin Canada, 2009. 151pp. \$13.99. ISBN: 978-0-14-331252-9 Pbk. Gr. 6-12.

As in *Whispers from the Ghettos*, Kacer and McKay have documented individual true stories from the lives of teenage survivors of the Holocaust, including the father of co-author Kathy Kacer (author of *Hiding Edith*, 2006). In some cases, the lives of the teens are saved because of their special skills, e.g., knowledge of the German language or the ability to read aircraft blueprints. Many of the stories deal with the arrival at Auschwitz—selection, stripping, hair shearing, cold showers, thin clothing, repeated lineups for counting, etc.—but each is remarkable for being so personal and detailed. A reading of several of these stories about life in the concentration camps reveals a pattern of compelling, literary writing. Also included is a 5-minute play, “The Liberation of Dachau” and a glossary.

Susan Berson, Denver, CO

Lasky, Kathryn. *Ashes*. New York: Viking, 2010. 192pp. \$16.99. ISBN: 978-0-670-01157-5. Reviewed from an ARC. Gr. 7-12.

Gabby Schramm is a thirteen-year-old girl who lives in 1930s Berlin during a turbulent political time. As the Weimar Republic crumbles and “the Old Gentleman,” President von Hindenburg, loses control of the government, Hitler and the Nazis climb to power. Gabby is brought up in a culturally enlightened family that is strongly opposed to Hitler. Her father is an astronomy professor and a colleague of Albert Einstein. Although the Schramms are not Jewish, Professor Schramm is accused of adhering to “Jewish physics,” a term coined by anti-Semitic scientists who reject Einstein’s theory of relativity. Gabby’s mother’s best friend, Baba, is Jewish and a gossip columnist for a Berlin newspaper. Through Baba’s vantage point, the family is cued into the happenings within the inner circles of government and politics. These factors, along with Gabby’s precocity, make her unusually perceptive, for an adolescent girl, about the politics swirling around her. Ulla, Gabby’s older sister is an accomplished musician but her focus has changed from music to her new boyfriend Karl. Gabby at first finds Ulla’s relationship with Karl fascinating, but soon begins to suspect that Karl is a Nazi.

The author’s foreword provides an abbreviated history of the numerous changes in Germany following the First World War, as well the targeting of Jewish scientists and intellectuals by Nazis and their sympathizers. Still, readers will follow the story more easily if they have knowledge of German political history after World War I. Each chapter of the book begins with a passage from a classic novel, such as *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* or *All Quiet on the Western Front*, a device that encapsulates both moral issues and the “pack” mentality of the German people under Nazi rule. Unfortunately, Lasky brings too many topics into the novel including a subversive Berlin cabaret, a Nazi book burning, etc. These briefly-described events distract from the main plot. The story is recommended, however, because it examines, through vividly real characters, two topics about the era rarely explored in books for young people, namely, social turmoil during the Weimar Republic and the Nazi campaign against Jewish scientists.

Heather Lenson, Jewish Education Center, Cleveland, OH

Walfish, Miriam. *The Stars Will Guide You*. New York: Judaica Press, 2009. 320pp. \$20.66. ISBN: 978-1-60763-016-6. Gr. 9-12.

In 1943 Rica Levi, 15, and her brother Lelio, 8, are instructed by their widowed father to flee their home in the Rome ghetto. The book describes the children’s hiding by Catholics in Narola, Italy; the liberation of Rome by the Allies and their return to find their ransacked and defaced apartment; the search for family after the war; and, finally, being reunited with their father. Along the way, Rica and Lelio interact with a large cast of characters—other children in hiding; caring Italians who help them (in a “conspiracy of goodness”); lighthearted, kindly Jewish-American soldiers; an Israeli member of the Jewish Brigade; Red Cross workers; a long-lost uncle in Brazil, etc. Despite the terrible psychological toll that hiding and separation from parents takes on the children, Rica and Lelio remember their father’s words: Like the stars, the Jewish people are “untouchable, immeasurable, and will continue forever.” Rica continues to feel her father’s presence and guidance, especially when she looks at the stars. Another theme is the modest way in which people helped the children, all of them saying they just wanted to do the right thing.

There are many coincidences, and the book could have used a good editor to trim its wordiness. The author has written a good story that focuses on a lesser-known part of the wartime Jewish experience (in Italy and Hungary), but it appears that she did extensive research and then felt compelled to stuff as much of it as possible into her book.

Susan Berson, Denver, CO

Waxman, Laura Hamilton. *Anne Frank. History Maker Biographies Series*. Minneapolis: Lerner, 2009. 48pp. \$27.93. ISBN 978-0-7613-4221-2. Gr. 3-4.

Laura Waxman’s *Anne Frank* is a successful retelling of the story of this well-known Jewish victim of the Holocaust, in a version for readers as young as third grade. Elementary and junior high students read Anne Frank’s diary and her name is well known to younger children, but until now, her story has not been available to students in lower grades.

The author introduces the reader to the history of Germany from World War I through World War II. The story of Anne’s family and their migration from Germany to the Netherlands is well told. As important, the story of Hitler and the rise of Nazism are explained well. The horrific events experienced by the Frank family and others are recounted in a fashion that is not too frightening for younger readers.

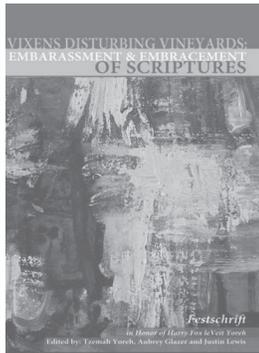
Many of the illustrations are historic photographs. Colored boxes highlight historic events. A timeline, two bibliographies, and a list of select Web sites add to the history of the Shoah and the story of Anne Frank’s family. I usually disapprove of third grade students’ reading about Anne Frank, but the author’s style makes the story accessible to 8-10-year-olds. This book is extremely useful for curricular biography reports. The author has written several other volumes in this series. Recommended for readers in third and fourth grade.

Shelly Feit, Moriah School Library, Englewood NJ



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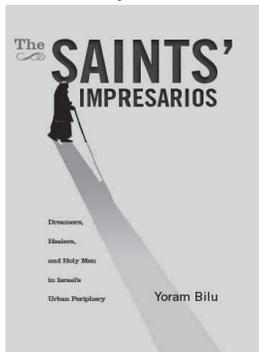
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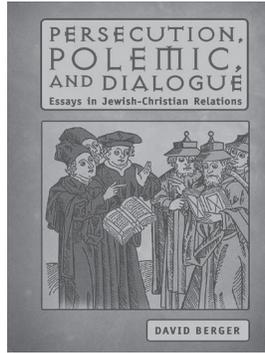
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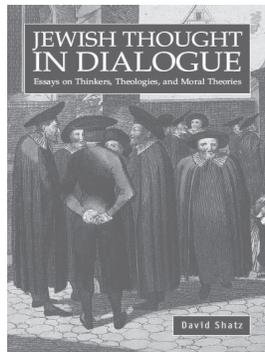
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Weintrob, Kitty. *I'm Not Going Back: Wartime Memoir of a Child Evacuee*. Toronto: Now and Then Books, 2009. 176pp. \$20.00. ISBN: 978-0-9784435-1-1. Gr. 3-6.

This forthright memoir, developed in a writing class over a period of years, is based on the author's experiences as a child evacuee from the East End of London. Her home is shabby and her Dad is away with the army in a civilian capacity, but between her mother and her uncle Yudi, plus her friends, she is not bothered at all by the imminent threat of Nazi bombs. When she is compelled to evacuate with the rest of London's children, she is not a happy camper. All she wants is to stay with her mom.

A shrewish woman and her darling, albeit henpecked, husband play host to her and her friend. When their maid quits, the wife enlists the children in "char" duties and she is a harsh and duplicitous taskmaster. While the friend stays, the author runs home several times, and is ultimately placed with another family—wealthy, long on money and servants, but short on good manners and kindness towards her. She is relegated to the servants' quarters and finally runs home for good—raids and all. What is unusual about this chatty book (it's like a friend telling you about her experiences over coffee) is that Kitty, the central character, is not a child from the Kindertransport, but a Jewish Londoner. As autobiographical fiction for girls from 8-12, it is quite satisfying, and I, having reached adulthood many times over, enjoyed it as well.

Marcia Weiss Posner, Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center,
Nassau County, NY

ISRAEL

Elkeles, Simone. *How to Ruin Your Boyfriend's Reputation*. Woodbury, MN: Flux, 2009. 257pp. \$9.95. ISBN: 978-0-7387-1879-8. Gr. 9-11.

Several of Amy Nelson-Barak's friends from Chicago decide to spend part of their summer vacation in an Israeli army boot camp program for teens. Amy knows that her boyfriend, Avi, is stationed at the same base so she signs up, too, in a misguided attempt to have time with him. She makes trouble for him, selfishly assuming that ordinary military rules don't apply to her.

Elkeles portrays a teenager going through a difficult time, learning to have confidence in herself, dealing with feelings of jealousy, and gradually grasping the idea that some rules simply must be obeyed. Through most of the novel, Amy's character is so spoiled, clueless, and manipulative that readers may wonder why they should care about her. By novel's end, however, she redeems herself, proving that she is actually a decent human being.

How to Ruin Your Boyfriend's Reputation is geared to teens, though some adults may have reservations about sharing it with younger teens. Amy and Avi spend the night in a hotel room, and though they come close, they decide not to have sex. Other teenage characters' sex lives are discussed fairly frankly. This entry in the *How to Ruin...* series is not as strong as the earlier two volumes but it is likely to appeal to readers who have enjoyed the previous books about Amy.

Recommended for high schoolers.

Marci Lavine Bloch, Silver Spring, MD

Herman, Charlotte. *First Rain*. Illus. by Kathryn Mitter. Chicago: Albert Whitman, 2010. 32pp. \$16.99. ISBN: 978-0-8075-2453-4. Reviewed from a galley. Kdg.-Gr. 2.

Abby and her parents move to Israel, leaving a tearful Grandma behind. Through letters and e-mail, they keep in touch, with Abby telling Grandma about her wonderful new life, the sights she's seen, and the new Hebrew words that she's learned. She even sends Grandma a jar of Dead Sea mud and in return, Grandma sends her some colorful fall leaves. Their loving relationship is at the heart of this story, which also projects a very positive picture of normal Israeli life. Because it's dry in Israel until the fall, Abby misses her walks with Grandma in the rain back home but when the rain does begin, who should appear at Abby's door but Grandma, wearing her yellow slicker? After some tears of joy, the "two yellow ducks" go for a walk in the Israeli rain.

The illustrations for this warm, cheerful story convey its mood and provide concrete details, such as the diverse group of children in Abby's classroom. Some information about Israel is woven into the story, augmented by realistic pictures of a shuk, the Western Wall, the Dead Sea, etc. Written by the versatile author of *What Happened to Heather Hopkowitz?* and *How Yussel Caught the Gefilte Fish* among others, *First Rain's* plot and illustrations, deftly combining the familiar and the new, will strike a chord with young readers.

Linda R. Silver, Cleveland, OH

Hodge, Susie. *Israel. Changing World Series*. London: Arcturus, 2008. (Distributed by Black Rabbit Books of Mankato, MN.) 46pp. \$20.81. ISBN: 978-1-84837-009-8. Gr. 5-8.

Like other series books on Israel, this volume's chapters cover Israel's history, politics, social and cultural life, foreign relations, and technology, and are replete with large, colorful photographs, text boxes, maps, and charts. The book recognizes what many other such volumes do not: that all Israeli citizens—Arabs and Jews—have equal rights, that environmentalism is a major movement in Israel, that Israel shares with developing countries the knowledge and technology that have fueled its own rapid development, and that Hamas is an Islamist terrorist group dedicated to Israel's destruction. This is all to the good.

On the other hand, the book has several shortcomings, including misleading comparisons of Israeli "unitary," centrally-powered government with America's federalism (it might be worth noting that the size of Israel vs. the United States precludes its division into dozens of states or provinces!), its wildly off-base claim that Israel receives 33% of America's foreign aid budget, and its side-stepping the point that the main impediment to Arab-Israeli peace is the refusal of most Arab states to grant Israel's right to exist. Statements such as: "People living in PA-controlled areas can no longer vote in Israeli elections" leave one shaking one's head wondering about the author's understanding of the situation. Although hundreds of millions of migrating birds traverse Israel each year, the photo about bird migration shows some storks killed by contaminated waste in a Negev pool—an odd choice of photo to document this spectacular feature of Israeli fauna.

This book on Israel is a better effort than many, but still falls short. Use instead titles like Marcia S. Gresko's *Israel*, Jennifer

Rozines Roy's *Israel*, Jill DuBois and Mair Rosh's *Israel*, and/or Louise Shipley Slavicek's *Israel*.

Andrea Rapp, Wise Temple, Cincinnati, OH

JUDAISM

Benefeld, Rikki. *Let's Go to the Farm.* New York: Hachai, 2010. 32pp. \$10.95. ISBN: 978-1-929628-40-7. Ages 2-4.

A visit to a farm, as enjoyed by a brother and sister and seen through an Orthodox lens, is the subject of this newest book in the Toddler Experience Series. The cheerful, round-faced preschoolers who have captivated readers in the past with accounts of their first wedding, their trip to the doctor, visiting friends, a shopping excursion, their first day at school, and going to shul have a very full day at the farm. They notice the animals large and small that Hashem has made, get a milking lesson, gather eggs, observe how animals take care of their young, wash their hands and say a brocha before a picnic lunch, and end their stay by picking vegetables and thanking the farmer for inviting them. Written in short rhyming sentences, it artfully combines the exuberance of two very well-behaved little children with their reverence toward God and God's gifts. Benefeld's illustrations are as simple and unpretentious as her writing and their page placement, with ample white space and spare lines of text, makes for both informative and comfortable reading. Recommended for Jewish early childhood collections.

Linda R. Silver, Cleveland, OH

Blitz, Shmuel and Miriam Zakon. *The Search for the Stones.* Illus. by Mark Lumer. New York: Shaar Press/Artscroll, 2009. 96pp. \$17.99. ISBN: 978-1-4226-0934-7. Gr. 3-6

The goal of this non-fiction story is "to teach us, through the wonders of imagination, how to act properly." It starts out in Israel and is clearly directed to frum children. Ari and his sister Ilana discover a key-shaped stone that "will unlock the secrets of time and space." They must use the keystone to travel back in time and find four stolen stones, avoiding evil and danger with their pure hearts. Each of four chapters has a separate quest, in various places and time periods, involving the Beit Hamikdash, the Spanish Inquisition, tzedakah, and Nazi Germany. Like many books of this type, the story is rather didactic, and the illustrations, while colorful and dramatic, are not up to contemporary standards.

Susan Berson, Denver, CO

Darvick, Debra B. *I Love Jewish Faces.* New York: URJ Press, 2009. 30pp. \$8.95. ISBN: 978-0-8074-1108-7 Pbk. Preschool-Gr. 2.

When is a book not a book? This comes close to answering that question. It is a compilation of 30 color photographs of people who are Jewish, according to the author-photographer. Some are performing a ritual, like a Black family blessing the Sabbath candles or a boy and a man reading from the Torah. One shows a woman in an exotic costume, another an exuberant bride. Some are of babies, some of older people. A boy swings a bat, a girl plays soccer. Short rhyming lines of text identify "just-brissed faces"

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and "just-kissed faces"... "blissed and prissed and much-missed faces." Its chief value is in showing how the Yiddishe punim reflects Jewish diversity and this is the use it will probably have in preschools and primary classrooms.

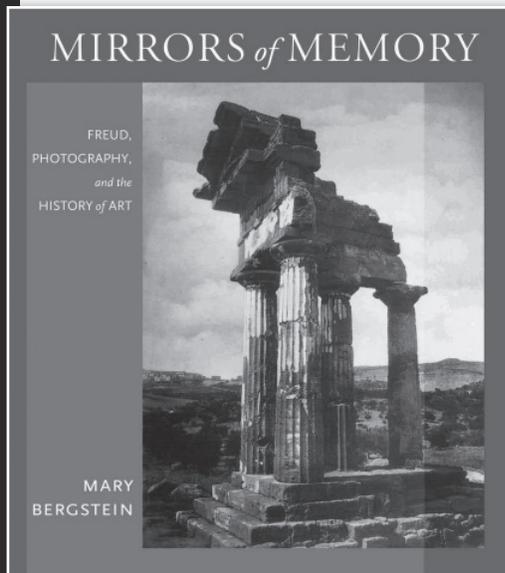
Linda R. Silver, Cleveland, OH

Jules, Jacqueline. *Before We Eat: A Thank You Prayer.* Illus. by Melissa Iwai. Minneapolis, MN: Kar-Ben/Lerner, 2010. 6pp. \$5.95. ISBN: 978-0-7613-3954-0 Board Book. Preschool-Kdg.

Jacqueline Jules has a keen ability to ground her books in the imaginations and voices of young children. In only a few rhyming lines, she introduces young children to Hamotzi, one of the blessings said before eating, and reveals through the characters' comments just what they have to be thankful for. Acknowledging that it's hard for little ones to stop to pray before eating, the extremely simple story portrays a brother and sister pausing to "say some words that feel just right" because they thank God for "good food, a home, a family, and gifts that God has given me." The words of the prayer are given in transliteration and English opposite a cheerful illustration of the little boy ready to take his first bite of bread. Part of the publisher's Very First Board Book series, this should be considered for every Jewish early childhood collection.

Linda R. Silver, Cleveland, OH





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Krohn, Genendel. *When We Left Yerushalayim: Stories of the Churban Beis HaMikdash.* Illus. by Tova Katz. New York: Feldheim, 2009. 48pp. \$14.99. ISBN 978-1-59826-393-0. Gr. 3-5.

Feldheim’s picture books retell important stories from Torah, Talmud and other sources, using vivid illustrations to dramatize them. This volume follows that pattern. It is divided into two sections; the first deals with the destruction of the First Temple by the Babylonians in 586 BCE. It includes the legend of Zedekiah and the deer and the tale of Gedaliah. The second part recounts the Roman invasion in 70 CE. It contains the story of Kamtza and Bar Kamtza, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai’s escape from the city, and the miracle of the Western Wall. Each piece gives sources, primarily from Talmud and Midrash.

Every page-spread also contains a vividly-colored illustration. Most of them are historically accurate: Nebuchadnezzar is a stylized Babylonian king, shooting an arrow into the clouds, while three pots labeled “Jerusalem,” “Alexandria” and “Rome” sit at his feet; Gedaliah and his family are shown evacuating their home after the destruction of the city; Rabbi Yochanan is shown before the square-jawed general, pleading for Yavneh as a messenger arrives from Rome. In the image of the burning of the Temple Mount, however, the Wall is shown with men in modern Hasidic clothing.

The table of contents identifies the memorable dates associated with the events (Tisha b’Av, etc.), and there is a useful glossary of Hebrew words and phrases. The story of the two destructions is true to the sources. But in the end, the book feels old-fashioned. Its target audience is 3rd to 5th grade students in the observant community. Krohn is also the author of *Who is the Builder?* and *The Very Best Gift*.

Fred Isaac, Temple Sinai, Oakland, CA

Rosenberg, Tziporah. *Round and Round The Jewish Year: Elul-Tishrei.* Illus. by Ruth Beifus. New York: Feldheim, 2009. 67pp. \$19.99. ISBN: 978-1-59826-376-3. Kdg.-Gr. 3.

Elul-Tishrei is the first volume in a four-volume series entitled *Round and Round the Jewish Year*. It combines stories, poetry, and information to describe to young readers what happens at each point in the year. The mix of different types of writing makes for interesting reading. The text includes a lot of detail but it can be easily understood, although it may need to be read to younger children rather than read by them. The language in the book will be most familiar to Orthodox families but a glossary in the back might help others. The illustrations have bold, saturated colors that are enticing to children. The images evoke emotions appropriate for the text and add to readers’ understanding. Recommended for its thorough treatment of the material and its wonderful illustrations.

Debbie Feder, Ida Crown Jewish Academy, Chicago, IL

Stein, Michal, and Devorah Kroizer. *Birkas Hachaim, The Wonders of Our Body.* New York: Feldheim, 2009. 64pp. \$19.99. ISBN: 978-1-59826-366-4. Gr. 4-8.

There’s an interesting concept here but the presentation is rather confusing and odd. Readers will learn about the heart, lungs, muscles, brain, bones, cells, senses, nutrition, digestion, etc.—all within the context of spiritual health and gratitude to

Hashem for the proper functioning of their bodies. At the core is the Birkas Asher Yatzar, the prayer to prevent illness. There is a brief story about a boy named Shuki with diabetes and a broken leg, who is healed by medicine and prayer. Surrounding the story are rather unattractive illustrations and physiological explanations of human biology featuring dwarfs, giants, intestine cells, the special luz bone (which is said to be nourished only by the melaveh malkah meal), a thigh bone supporting a car, the numerical equivalent of yad (hand) and ayin (eye), an experiment demonstrating the lubrication of joints, clown faces, an explanation for hiccups, using muscles to perform mitzvot, Holocaust stories, rebbe stories, and much, much more. It's quite a mishmash. The intended audience is observant children.

Susan Berson, Denver, CO

Zoldan, Yael. *We Can Do Mitzvos from Aleph to Tav*. Illus. by Shira Allen. New York: Feldheim, 2009. 46pp. \$12.00. ISBN 978-1-59826-395-4. Preschool-Gr. 2.

Here is a very simple aleph bet book that connects the Hebrew alphabet with certain mitzvot (good deeds). It is written from the Orthodox perspective and is very gender specific. The illustrations are simple colored pencil sketches that are pleasing to a young child's eye. The short story is written in rhyme that connects each letter with a phrase. For example, "Kaf's for keeping Kosher, The only food we eat. Lamed-Limud Torah, learning Torah is so sweet." The Hebrew letters are transliterated on one side of the page, while the mitzvah terms on the other side of the page include vowels, which is important for the early Hebrew learner. The author uses a theme for each Hebrew letter, which makes it pleasant reading for a parent and child together. The mitzvot include visiting the sick, being kind and good, reading Torah, helping the poor, giving tzedakah and keeping kosher. There is some inclusion of holidays like Shabbat, Sukkot, Pesach and Hanukkah. This book is mainly recommended for Orthodox classrooms and libraries for children ages 4-7.

Lisa Katz, Greenbrae, CA

MUSIC

Figiel, Caroline. *The Miracles of Chanukah*. Contact information: Caroline and Danny, P.O. Box 29 Grayson, GA 30017, 770-751-9969. Preschool-Gr. 3. Audio CD.

The first half of *The Miracles of Chanukah* tells the story of Hanukkah through narrative and original songs. The second half of the CD repeats the songs without narrative. The original songs ("Be Like Me," "Pull Out Your Dreidels," "I Want Latkes") are catchy and fun to hear. The vocalist has an enchanting clear voice and sings the songs beautifully, but the songs contain some inaccuracies, mispronunciations and poor grammar. According to the CD, the miracle of Hanukkah is that the Jews found enough oil to light the *ner tamid* in the synagogue. There is no mention of a Temple or menorah. The vocalist does not pronounce the guttural H, which makes the song "Chanukah Ha Ha" sound silly. The word *shamash* is pronounced with the accent on the wrong syllable. The refrain "strong like a hammer" which is repeated many times in the song of the same name, is poor English usage.

Although it is a joy to hear, *The Miracles of Chanukah* is marred by its errors.

Ilka Gordon, Siegal College of Judaic Studies, Cleveland, OH

***Songs from the Garden of Eden, Jewish Lullabies and Nursery Rhymes*. Coll. by Nathalie Soussanna, musical arrangements by Paul Mindy and Jean-Christophe Hoarau, illus. by Beatrice Alemagna, Montreal: Folle Avoine Productions, 2009. 68pp. \$16.95 ISBN: 978-2-923163-46-8. Audio CD included. For all ages.**

Here are refreshing sounds for children, their parents and teachers: a musical collection of traditional Judeo-Spanish lullabies and rhymes, along with Yiddish and Hebrew, and Arabic lullabies and songs, played and sung in a key and rhythm that will sound exotic to many ears. The book provides music, words, translation into English, and information about each selection. Brief histories of Judeo-Spanish, Hebrew, Arabic and Yiddish are thoughtfully included. The whole is attractively designed and illustrated with stylized folkloric figures and designs.

Judeo-Spanish language and musical traditions are found in communities around the world, including Brussels, Paris, Los Angeles, New York City, Izmir, Istanbul and Tel Aviv. One of the songs, a Judeo-Spanish lullaby called "Durme, durme" is particularly compelling in the unadorned purity of its *a capella* voice, which ends in the quietest whispered note possible. The lullabies in Yiddish are invitingly warm and enfolding, and a lovely "Erev Shel Shoshanim" features the sweet voice of a child singing the Hebrew song. Interested listeners can hear many of the 28 songs on this CD on the Internet. The music is available for download from several sites including: iTunes, Napster, Puretracks, Virgin Mega, and Amazon, and will be available next year on the publisher's own Web site at www.thesecondmountain.com.

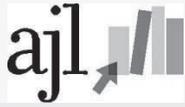
The creators of this book/CD have cast a wide net, and the songs should attract speakers/singers of the several languages, young and old, and expose many to songs and sounds that may be new to them. Highly recommended for music collections in Jewish and secular schools and libraries, nursery schools, kindergartens, and especially for use in the home. This would make an unusual gift for a new baby or for a child's birthday.

Naomi Morse, Silver Spring, MD

Sam Moshinsky's *Goodbye Shanghai: A Memoir*, reviewed in the Adult Readers section on p. 29, may also be of interest to teenagers:

Publishing News

The January 1, 2010 issue of the venerable *Kirkus Reviews* was its last. In his parting message to readers, the editor, Eric Liebetrau, made this observation, which is worth all reviewers' attention: "Sugarcoating reviews or providing reliably positive reviews—often when the material is, quite frankly, mediocre—serves nobody well..." It's a sentiment that the editors of this review section endorse and that *Kirkus*, in its heyday, exemplified.



Association of Jewish Libraries, Inc.

Leadership for Jewish Literacy, Libraries and Librarians

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January 21, 2010

Dear Director,

We are delighted to inform you that your librarian has been invited to attend the annual convention of the Association of Jewish Libraries, Inc. (AJL). As you know, the AJL is an international organization with over 1,000 members devoted to the educational, informational and networking needs of those responsible for collections of Judaica. The annual Convention, the venue for much of this networking and information exchange, is its premiere event, the first in the Pacific Northwest.

The 45th annual convention of the Association of Jewish Libraries will take place at the Seattle Fairmont Hotel, Seattle, Washington, from Sunday, July 4 through Wednesday, July 7, 2010. Through its annual conventions, AJL offers a variety of professionally prepared and presented programs on a wide range of subjects relevant for all types of Judaic librarians. Once again, AJL has created a set of sessions to meet the specific needs of librarians and volunteers, both professionally trained and untrained. This exceptional opportunity will enable your librarian to enhance the value of your library by sharing all the new information gained by participating in this event.

If your librarian is not a member of AJL, we recommend that s/he join via the application form found on the AJL website at www.jewishlibraries.org. If your librarian chooses not to join AJL, s/he may still attend the conference, but must pay the higher, non-member rate.

Please support your librarian's attendance at this most important event. The library is a key center of learning in your institution, and your librarian's participation in conferences such as this ensures that your institution will continue to receive the highest value from your librarian's increased knowledge.

You will find a registration form, information about travel and food, as well as a full Convention program on the AJL website at www.jewishlibraries.org. I am happy to answer any additional questions regarding participation in this year's Convention. You can email me at president@jewishlibraries.org or reach me by phone at 818-606-0793.

We hope your institution will take advantage of this opportunity, and we look forward to seeing your librarian at the Convention.

Sincerely yours,

Susan Dubin

Susan Dubin, President
Association of Jewish Libraries

Preliminary AJL 2010 schedule (subject to change) (updated 2/10/10)
Sunday

Time				
9:00 am-12:00	Board mtg & breakfast			
10:00-12:00	Exhibit set-up			
10:00 am – 5:00 pm	Registration			
12:00 – 3:00	Council mtg & lunch			
12:00-6:00	Exhibits & cultural activities			
1:30-3:30	<i>SSC Board mtg.</i>			
3:30-4:30		Newcomers	RAS Cataloging	
4:30-5:30		Mentor mingle	RAS Digitizing	
6-7:30 pm	Keynote speaker & dinner			
8:00	Optional Fireworks tour -			

Wednesday

Time				
6:00 am	Morning walk			
6:30 am-7:15	Minyan	Minyan		
7:00-8:30	Breakfast			
9:00 am – 10:00	RAS meeting		SSC meeting	
10:15 – 12:00	General membership meeting & Installation			
12-1:00	Box lunch pickup			
12-1:00	Council meeting			
1:00 – 2:30	Convention wrap-up meeting			
2:00 -	<i>Tours: Jewish History Tour or Nature Tour</i>			

Monday

Time					
6:00 am	Morning walk				
6:30 am-7:15	Minyan	Minyan			
7:00-8:30	Breakfast				
8:00 am-5	Registration				
9:00 am- 6:00 pm	Exhibits				
	A	B	C	D	E - CEU
Session 1 8:30 – 10:00	<i>Researching Sephardi Jews</i> Amalia Levi Shuli Berger	<i>Cataloging in Israel</i> Elhanan Adler	<i>Sustainability</i> Barak Gale SPL librarian?	<i>AJL & Social Web</i> Heidi Estrin & Diane Romm	<i>Disaster Preparedness (pt1)</i> Gary Menges
10 – 10:30	Coffee Break	Coffee Break	Coffee Break	Coffee Break	Coffee Break
Session 2 10:30-12:00	<i>Bibliophilic Treasures</i> Eric Chaim Kline Henry Hollander	<i>Yad Vashem</i> Zvi Berhardt	<i>Freshman Seminar?</i>	<i>What's Hot in Israeli Literature</i> Pnina Moed Kass	<i>Disaster Preparedness (pt.2)</i> Gary Menges
12:00- 1:30	Awards lunch	Awards lunch	Awards lunch	Awards lunch	Awards lunch
Session 3 1:45 - 3:15	<i>Manuscripts & Archives</i> Yoram Bitton Rachel Misrati	<i>Judaica Reference Services</i> Sonia Smith David Levy	<i>Management Issues</i> Kathy Bloomfield	<i>Hands on Social Web</i> Sheryl Stahl @Seattle Public Lib	<i>Disaster Preparedness (pt.3)</i> Gary Menges
3:15 – 3:45	Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break	Tour of Seattle Public Library	Coffee break
Session 4 3:45-5:15	<i>Jewish Social History</i> Heidi Lerner Zachary Baker	<i>US Holocaust Memorial Museum</i> Henry Mayer Michlean Amir	<i>Seattle Jewish History</i> Isaac Azose Eulenburg	<i>Readers Advisory</i> David Wright @Seattle Public Lib	<i>Fictional Jews at the End of Time</i> Mark Stover
5:30-6:30	Feinstein lecture				
8:00 pm	Committee meetings -	Accreditation	STB award committee		
9:00 pm	Movie: <i>Jews & the Pike Place Market??</i>				

Tuesday

Time					
6:00 am	Morning walk				
6:30 am-7:15	Minyan	Minyan			
7:00-8:30	Breakfast		Scholarship comm. meeting	RAS ref. & bib. Award mtg.	
8:00 am-5	Registration				
9:00 am-6:00 pm	Exhibits				
	A	B	C	D	
Session 5 8:30 – 10:00	<i>Jewish History</i> Marlene Schiffman Libby White	<i>Libraries & New Technologies</i> Tina Weiss Joe Janes	<i>Daily Life of the Israelites</i> Gloria London	<i>Sydney Taylor Winners</i> Panel discussion	
10 – 10:30	Coffee Break	Coffee Break	Coffee Break	Coffee Break	
Session 6 10:30-12:00	<i>Higher Education for Judaic Librarians</i> Haim Gottschalk Nancy Poole	<i>RDA</i> Adam Schiff w/ Joan Biella & Heidi Lerner	<i>Building Community</i> Wendy Marcus	<i>Sydney Taylor: What's Hot - What's Not</i> Panel discussion	
12:00- 1:30	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	
Session 7 1:45 – 3:15	<i>Jewish Archives Collaboration</i> Nicolette Bromberg	<i>LC Hebraica Cataloging</i>	<i>How to be a Book Critic</i> Heidi Estrin & Panel	<i>Biographies & Personal Memoirs</i> Malka Drucker Roz Reisner	
3:15 – 3:45	Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break	Coffee break	
Session 8 3:45 - 5:15	<i>Yiddish Culture</i> Faith Jones Rita Saccal	<i>OCLC Update</i> David Whitehair	<i>Historical Fiction</i> Maggie Anton Jacqueline Dembar Greene	<i>YA fiction</i> Rachel Kamin, Jenine Lillian, et al	
5:15 - 6:15	<i>User group meetings?</i>				
6:00 - 7:00	Reception				
7:00 – 10:00	Award Banquet				
10:00 pm	<i>Meetings if needed</i>				

45th ANNUAL ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH LIBRARIES CONVENTION



Fairmont Olympic Hotel
Seattle, Washington
July 4 – 7 2010
REGISTRATION FORM

Please print:

Name _____ Date _____
Home Address: (Street, City, St. Zip code) _____

Home e-mail _____ Home phone _____

Work Address: Institution _____
(Street, City, St. Zip) _____

Work e-mail _____ Work phone _____

Before the convention contact me at _____ Home _____ Work _____

For the attendees directory check which address to use: _____ Home _____ Work _____

May we include the above information on the secure, members-only portion of the website? _____

Badge information: *Please print clearly exactly what you want on your badge*

Name _____

Institution _____

City _____ State/Province/Country _____

AJL Position _____ Chapter _____

Are you an AJL Member? __Yes__ No Is this your first AJL Convention? __Yes__ No

Division: __RAS (Research, Archives & Special) __SSC (Synagogue, School & Center)

Do you need Shabbat home hospitality? _____ Yes _____ No

Are you a registered student in a School of Library/Information Science? __Yes__ No

Are you a presenter? __Yes__ No

Please fill out the following sections that apply:

I. Full Registration

Fees include all sessions and glatt kosher meals from Sunday dinner through Wednesday breakfast with the exception of Monday night dinner. A kosher box lunch may be purchased for Wednesday lunch.

Forms postmarked: **before April 1** **after May 1** **after June 10** **Amount Due**

AJL Member/Spouse/Partner	\$460.00	\$485.00	\$ 525	\$
AJL Nonmember	\$510.00	\$550.00	\$ 560	\$

Do you require vegetarian meals? _____ Yes _____ No

Please note that we will be serving fish.

Please inform us of any **serious** dietary restrictions. or allergies _____

The Association of Jewish Libraries promotes Jewish literacy through enhancement of libraries and library resources and through leadership for the profession and practitioners of Judaica librarianship. The Association fosters access to information, learning, teaching and research relating to Jews, Judaism, the Jewish experience and Israel.

II. Per Diem Registration

Fees include sessions, breakfast and lunch on the day for which you are registered.
Circle: Monday or Tuesday @ \$175.00 each day. Tuesday, July 6 will feature sessions of special interest to educators. Local Teacher rate @\$125.00 Per Diem Total \$ _____

III. Meals Only: For those who are not Full Registrants or per Diem registrants but wish to join us for certain meals. Please indicate the meals you will be attending.

- Sunday Dinner.....meal(s) @ \$105 _____
 - Monday Breakfast.....meal(s) @ \$55 _____
 - Monday Lunch.....meal(s) @ \$80 _____
 - Tuesday Breakfast.....meal(s) @ \$55 _____
 - Tuesday Lunch.....meal(s) @ \$70 _____
 - Tuesday Banquet.....meal(s) @ \$120 _____
 - Wednesday Breakfast.....meal(s) @ \$55 _____
 - ** Wednesday's Kosher Box Lunch must be ordered by June 28.....meal(s) @ \$35 _____
 - ** Monday Night's Kosher Box Dinner for must be ordered by June 28.....meal(s) @ \$40 _____
- Total for ala carte meals** \$ _____

Do you require vegetarian meals? _____ Yes _____ No.
Please inform us of any **serious** dietary restrictions. _____

IV. Optional Tours

Wednesday, July 7, Tours Depart at 2:00 sharp; will return about 5:30 PM.
Option A: Local Jewish History. Learn the history of the pioneering Seattle Jewish community in a guided driving tour of significant Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jewish sites. Sponsored by the Washington State Jewish Historical Society. \$40

Option B: Native Northwest Plants. Join a local native plant specialist on a walking tour of the renowned Washington Park Arboretum. Explore a restored wetland and visit native plant gardens. Conclude your tour at the University of Washington Botanical Gardens' Elisabeth Miller Library, offering a premiere horticulture collection. \$40

Optional Tour A or B (circle one) Total \$ _____

Watch for late breaking news about Sunday, July 4th happenings!

V. CEU Course. Disaster Preparedness, Response & Recovery

The course will be taught by Gary Menges, Preservation Administrator, University of Washington Libraries and is worth .5 credits \$45.00 _____

VI. REGISTRATION SUMMARY

Please summarize and total your convention choices from sections I through V.)

- I. Full Convention Registration \$ _____
 - II. Per Diem Registration \$ _____
 - III. Meals Only \$ _____
 - IV. Optional Tours \$ _____
 - V. CEU course—(disaster Preparedness) \$ _____
- TOTAL DUE \$ _____**

Make all checks payable to **Association of Jewish Libraries Convention 2010** and mail with your completed registration form to: AJL Convention 2010 Registration, Ronda Rose 11257 Dona Lisa Drive Studio City, CA 91604. **Keep a copy of this registration for your records.** Your cancelled check will be your receipt.

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Refund requests must be submitted in a signed letter prior to June 18, 2010, and are subject to a \$100 cancellation fee. Refunds will be processed and mailed after July 15, 2010. Please send refund requests to Ronda Rose at the above address.

Liability Release for All Related Events and Excursions – Must be Completed

I, on behalf of myself, my heirs, next of kin, personal representatives, and assigns, do hereby release and discharge the Association of Jewish Libraries (AJL), 2010 Convention Committee, the officers of AJL, and AJL volunteers for any and all liability claims of damages, actions and cases of actions whatsoever, in any manner arising out of or relative to any loss, damage, or injury that may be sustained by the undersigned or any property of the undersigned while participating in the event. I hereby represent that I will observe all applicable rules and generally conduct myself in a safe and prudent manner.

I hereby consent to and permit emergency treatment in the event of injury or illness while participating in this event. I certify that I have read this waiver and release and understand its significance.

Signature (Release form 061001) _____ **Date** _____

To become a member of the Association of Jewish Libraries, please send \$50 (US) membership dues (\$30 for retirees and students, \$15 additional for overseas members) payable to AJL to Laurie Haas, VP for Membership, P.O. Box 3816, Columbus, OH 43210-0816.

Do not send membership dues with this registration.

For registration information contact: Ronda Rose: rfrose@sbcglobal.net

For conference information contact: Toby Harris: ajlnw@earthlink.net

HOTEL REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Hotel reservations are not part of this registration form.

Please make your own reservations by calling the toll-free number below.

Fairmont Olympic Hotel

411 University Street

Seattle, Washington

Telephone: 1 (888) 363 5022

FAX (206) 682 9633

E-MAIL: olympic@fairmont.com

Reservations must be received by the Fairmont before June 2, 2010 Convention rates are:

Single or double occupancy \$199.00 + tax

Triple occupancy \$229.00 + tax

Reservations must be accompanied by a first night room deposit or guaranteed with a major credit card.

GETTING TO CONVENTION

Updated Travel and Tour information will be posted on the AJL website and/or the convention blog in the spring.

CATERING

All cooked and served food at the convention and at the Monday night optional tour will be catered Kosher by Nosh Away. Special dietary needs must be requested on your registration form as we will not be able to make changes or substitutions at the convention.

The Association of Jewish Libraries promotes Jewish literacy through enhancement of libraries and library resources and through leadership for the profession and practitioners of Judaica librarianship. The Association fosters access to information, learning, teaching and research relating to Jews, Judaism, the Jewish experience and Israel.

The AJL Institute for Judaica Librarianship is offering ...

A 4.5-hour CEU course at the 2010 AJL convention in Seattle
Co-sponsored by the AJL Professional Development and Continuing Education
Committee and the University of Wisconsin-Madison/Extension

Preparing for the Inevitable: Disaster Planning and Response

Instructor: Gary L. Menges, preservation administrator, University of Washington Libraries,
Seattle, Washington

Gary teaches "Preservation and Conservation of Library Materials" in the UW Information
School and has presented workshops for WESTPAS and other libraries on the West Coast.

The course will cover prevention, risk assessment, preparation (including developing a
template for a plan), response, assessment of damage, recovery and working with
emergency recovery services, salvage techniques, and insurance.

A Pocket Response Plan for Collections (PReP Plan) will be sent to registrants upon
registration. They will be asked to identify institutional and utility contacts, a disaster team,
first responders, and emergency services for their institution. A cover memo will
accompany the PReP plan. It is not expected that participants will have completed the
plan, but this assignment will provide the framework for discussion.

The course will be given in 3 sessions on Monday, July 5, 2010
8:30- 10:00 AM, 10:30 -12:00 noon, and 1:45 - 3:15 PM
Tuition is \$45.00

AJL and the University of Wisconsin-Madison/Extension will award a 0.5 CEU certificate to
each participant who is a current paid up AJL member and is present for the entire 4.5
hours of instruction.

For more information, please contact Leslie Monchar at: lmonchar2@yahoo.com

Registration Form — CEU course 2010

Please enroll me in Preparing for the inevitable: Disaster Planning and Response

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Affiliation: _____

Mail this form together with your \$45.00 check payable to AJL to:
Leslie Monchar, 2 White Meadow Rd., Rockaway, NJ 07866 by June 7, 2010

Do NOT mail CEU registration form with convention registration

REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO ATTEND ANNUAL AJL CONVENTION

All applications must be received by email by the deadline of **March 25, 2010**
You must be a current member of AJL at the time of application and the convention.
Full registration at the convention is required to be eligible for any support.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

INSTITUTION: _____

POSITION: _____ YRS HELD: _____

IF APPLYING FOR SPECIFIC SUPPORT:

_____ LITTAUER _____ TRAVEL

AJL MEMBERSHIP: current: _____ # of years: _____

AJL ACTIVITIES: _____

CONVENTION PARTICIPATION (attendance, presentation, local committee):

CURRENT: _____ PAST: _____

IS THIS YOUR FIRST AJL CONVENTION? _____

ANTICIPATED CONVENTION EXPENSES (attach another sheet if needed)

REGISTRATION _____ HOTEL _____ TRAVEL _____

OTHER EXPENSES (please specify) _____ TOTAL _____

*** Please note that room reimbursement is based on 2 or more members per room.**

*** You will need to bring proof of your travel costs for reimbursement. .**

OTHER FUNDING SOURCES, CONFIRMED [OR ANTICIPATED]

INSTITUTION _____

LOCAL SUPPORT _____

NAT'L OR INTERNAT'L ORGS _____

PERSONAL FUNDS (How Much Are You Able To Handle) _____

This application will be used to determine eligibility for general support grants as well as those with specific eligibility requirements.

All applications will be acknowledged by email.

Please feel free to include any additional information on a separate sheet.

Reviews of Titles for Adults

EDITED BY MERRILY F. HART AND DANIEL SCHEIDE

FICTION, DRAMA & MEMOIR

Cooper, Cynthia L. *Silence Not: A Love Story*. East Stroudsburg, PA: Gihon Press, 2009. 128 p. \$17.95 (ISBN 978-0-98199-060-6).

This play, based on Gisa Peiper's life between 1932 and 1938, is a tribute to an impressive personality. Gisa is involved in the Labor movement, anti-Nazi activities, and a love affair with Paul Konopka. Disguised as Adriana, she waits at the Munich train station to escape to Paris. As she waits, a series of flashbacks occurs, and Adriana enters into a dialog with her alter-ego Gisa. Although the reader knows the date of each sequence, a spectator might be baffled by the non-chronological episodes. The confusion seems to be intentional and in performance may perhaps create a sort of "stream-of-consciousness" effect. The heroine's fear and her courage are conveyed strongly. The prison scene is especially effective, together with the surprise ending. A biographical appendix mentions that the heroine emigrated to the U.S. and had a distinguished career in social work.

Chaim Seymour, Bar-Ilan University, Israel

Gottlieb, Fred. *My Childhood in Siegburg: 1929-1938*. Jerusalem: Mazo Publishers, 2008. 93 p. \$20. (ISBN 978-9-65734-454-5).

This well-written, focused, concise account of the author's early life in Siegburg, Germany, documents how conditions changed once the Nazi regime took hold of that region. Gottlieb relates his own memories and those of former neighbors, many now living in Israel or the United States. As the Nazi party gained power, the local market was renamed Adolf Hitler Platz and his family's home became the headquarters for the NSDAP. Gottlieb's parents were both physicians (and practicing Orthodox Jews) who were highly respected throughout the village. His mother wrote in her diary in 1933: "We have come on evil times. Hitler has come to power. We Jews are suffering very much. Daddy lost all his patient accounts. We hope this will be reversed. The children are not aware of these events, and we are, thank G-d, happy." His father was still hopeful that things would get better until in 1938, an edict prohibited Jewish doctors treating non-Jews. A local priest whispered to his father, "A night of anticipation is imminent" and the doctor left for Cuba two weeks before Kristallnacht. The rest of his family remained in Germany to sell the house, and the children were placed on the Kindertransport to England. Once his father gained admission to the United States in 1940, the family was reunited. The author now lives in Israel. This heartwarming memoir is recommended for academic libraries and large Holocaust collections.

Martin Goldberg, Penn State University, Monaca, PA

Liebman, Shana, editor. *Sex, Drugs & Gefilte Fish: The Heeb Storytelling Collection*. New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2009. 266 p. \$13.99 (ISBN 978-0-44650-462-1).

Heeb Magazine was founded in 2000 as a vehicle to reach the Jewish progressive market in the United States. It became known

for its satiric and sardonic approach, and for its live storytelling events. This volume contains 48 of the stories. As the editor asserts in her preface to the book: "the capacity for self-deprecation, extreme guilt, analysis, comedy as coping, therapy-induced self-awareness and obsessive record-keeping are, for better or worse, typically thought of as Jewish qualities, so it wasn't hard to find Jews who could tell a good story." Some of the stories are confessions, like Abby Sher's "Poop Sandwich," in which she tells about making a sandwich of dog poop and presenting it to her rabbi as chopped liver (she later apologized to him); Noah Tarnow's adventures transporting a cat across the country ("Out of the Bag"), and Simon Rich's narrative about how his brother convinced Simon that he (Nathaniel) was God ("Baruch Atah Nathaniel"). The most relevant (and Jewish) stories appear in the "Family" section with a mother who calls her son frequently, a daughter who realizes she is a lot like her father when it comes to synagogue experience, and an uncle concerned that his nephew is not circumcised. While this book is probably inappropriate for many Jewish libraries, those that subscribe to Heeb or whose patrons enjoy authors like Shalom Auslander, Elissa Albert or Rachel Shukert will want this in their collection.

Kathe Pinchuck, Congregation Beth Sholom, Teaneck, NJ

Moshinsky, Sam. *Goodbye Shanghai: A Memoir*. Armadale, Australia: Mind Film and Publishing, 2009. 219 p. \$39.95 (ISBN 978-0-64651-028-6).

Sam Moshinsky opens his memoir with a letter to his grandchildren, who motivated him to record his unique and interesting childhood. His grandparents and father moved to Shanghai from Vladivostok, Russia, in 1930. Sam was born in Shanghai in 1934 and lived there until he immigrated to Melbourne, Australia, in 1951.

Moshinsky is a warm story-teller. With numerous photos and personal anecdotes he transmits an enchanting view of his early life against the backdrop of events in the early 20th century. The book includes twenty titled chapters, photo key and street names, endnotes, resources (including Web sites), and two maps on the end papers: Shanghai 1940 and China 1937.

This book is not only about a Jew who had to change his country of residence and is challenged by the need to adapt and adjust. It is a book that encourages the reader to be hopeful and confident in the future even if it involves living and traveling in strange and uncertain times and conditions. *Goodbye Shanghai* would be an excellent addition to Jewish middle and high school libraries and to synagogue and public libraries.

Nira Glily Wolfe, Highland Park, IL

New, Elisa. *Jacob's Cane: A Jewish Family's Journey from the Four Lands of Lithuania to the Ports of London and Baltimore*. New York: Basic Books, 2009. 328 p. \$27.95 (ISBN 978-0-46501-525-2).

Elisa New finds drama in the split in her family between two continents and two 19th-century industries—cigarette production and textile treatment. The family story reads like a soap

opera, but the history of Jewish involvement in these industries is absorbing. The author traces the Jewish development of trade and commerce in the free cities of the Hanseatic League. Intrinsic to the story is the movement of the Haskalah from Germany to the Baltic States and the growth of German-speaking Jewish communities there. *Jacob's Cane* is well written, especially when describing the geography and history of northern Europe, but it is poorly edited. Discussing the use of a London cigarette factory as a bomb shelter, the author writes: "Parents of the young persons working there were happy to send their children to work ... for where else ... was there so much safety?" Two pages later she writes: "What parents concerned for the safety of their children would not send them to work ..." The author works with a Lithuanian archivist named Vilius who, for several paragraphs, becomes Vilnius. An excellent bibliography lists academic and popular works about Jewish participation in German culture and economics. *Jacob's Cane* is a good introduction to the topic. It is receiving good reviews and will probably be requested in synagogue libraries.

Beth Dwoskin, *Proquest, Ann Arbor, MI*

Piatka, Naava. *No Goodbyes: A Father-Daughter Memoir of Love, War and Resurrection*. St. Augustine, FL: Global Authors Publishers, 2009. 332 p. \$32.95; \$22.95 pbk. (ISBN 978-0-59549-603-7; 978-0-59549-815-4 pbk.).

Writing the history of one's family has become an international pastime. However few memoirs are as turbulent and engaging, with such a colorful cast of characters, as that of Holocaust survivor Xavier Piatka, related by his beloved daughter, Naava. The circumstances of the book's publication, completed while Naava was in the last stages of terminal cancer, are sufficiently poignant to make the book compelling reading. Multi-talented Naava, artist, actress, and playwright, has written a moving and masterful memoir. Her facility with language punctuated by her mother's Yiddish witticisms, her narrative ability, and her insights into human relationships are impressive.

Xavier Piatka was born into an educated and sophisticated family in Vilna in 1919. During the Nazi occupation he was associated with the Judenrat of the Vilna Ghetto, while his future wife, Yiddish actress and singer Chayela Rosenthal, made a name for herself on the ghetto stage. Meeting after the liberation, the couple settled in Cape Town, South Africa, where Naava was born. She moved to Boston after her marriage. This book, her way of making her peace with her authoritarian father, complements her earlier tribute to her late mother, Chayela Rosenthal (and the uncle she never knew, the Yiddish songwriter, Leib Rosenthal), the one-woman show *Better Don't Talk*, which she performed in the United States, Canada, London, Europe, South Africa, Australia, and in Vilna. Highly recommended for synagogue, academic and research libraries.

Veronica Belling, *University of Cape Town, South Africa*

Rupin, Rafael. *The Jericho Scrolls: A Historical Novel*. Jerusalem: Mazo Publishers, 2009. 790 p. \$27.95 (ISBN 978-9-65734-456-9).

This work of fiction, described as the diary of a Jewish leader of the first century CE, belongs to the genre "alternative history." The hero conquers Cyprus and then wages war on the Romans,

forcing them into a peace treaty, which includes the establishment of an independent Jewish state in Eretz Israel. The state does not survive due to the inability of Jews to subdue their differences and work together.

I was impressed by the author's ability to portray first-century life, but was left with the feeling that a book of half the size would have been more successful. It is impossible to maintain a level of tension and interest for 800 pages. The first person narration restricts the author's options. The narrator is too perfect and too moral. The last paragraph of the book makes it quite clear why Mr. Rupin felt the need to write this book: "From the diaries of Guria there emerges a surprising similarity between the events that occurred 19 centuries ago ... and the event occurring in the present day State of Israel. The deterioration of the Jewish state, that Guria established, and its loss ... should be an alarm signal ..." My reactions are mixed and I am not convinced that the novel is a success.

Chaim Seymour, *Bar-Ilan University, Israel*

Spark, Debra. *Good for the Jews*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2009. 284 p. \$24.00 (ISBN 978-0-472-11711-6).

Award-winning novelist Debra Spark's *Good for the Jews* centers around Ellen Hirschorn, a young Jewish woman living in Madison, Wisconsin. The book has everything needed in a good novel: mystery, suspense, romance, politics, and humor, all based on the story of the Book of Esther. Ellen (Esther) is an orphan who lives with Mose (Mordechai), her much older cousin and guardian. Their lives get tangled up in anti-Semitism when Mose, an unconventional high school teacher, gets into a confrontation with the new principal, Hyman (Haman), which is further complicated by Ellen's relationship with Alex (Achashverosh), the superintendent of schools, who also happens to be her boss Valerie's (Vashti) ex-husband. Although many creative liberties were taken as far as staying true to the "original," Spark's update is well written and demonstrates that the familiar story of good vs. evil is still relevant today. Recommended for libraries with Jewish fiction collections.

Shoshana Hurwitz, *Hurwitz Indexing, Ma'ale Adumim, Israel*

NONFICTION

Bedzow, Ira. *Halakhic Man, Authentic Jew: Modern Expressions of Orthodox Jewish Thought from Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik and Rabbi Eliezer Berkovits*. Jerusalem; NY: Urim Publications, 2009. 191 p. \$19.95 (ISBN 978-9-65524-029-0).

Rabbi Bedzow's analysis of these two 20th-century modern Orthodox Jewish thinkers is penetrating and interesting, but it left me with a feeling of uneasiness. I know that my thinking and my approach to life have been profoundly influenced by the Rav (Rabbi Soloveitchik), but at the same time I am also aware that his philosophic apparatus is different from mine. Rabbi Soloveitchik studied in a German university in the first half of the twentieth century and was influenced by philosophers such as Kant, whereas today, Kant's place is in a course on the history of philosophy.

The two thinkers feel the need to systematize Jewish religious ethics in relation to secular ethics and to prove the superiority of the former. The Rav's son-in-law, Rabbi Lichtenstein, writing as a contemporary, feels quite comfortable with two parallel concepts and accepts that somebody can be "religious and good" (see his *We Will Walk by His Light*). His colleague, Rabbi Amital even sees a place for natural morality together with halakhah (see his *And He Gave the Land to Man*).

Rabbi Bedzow is aware that interpretation of Torah has to change in order for it to be comprehensible to different generations living in different environments, but he emphasizes the need for caution in translating concepts into modern terms. The book's philosophical approach ignores Rabbi Soloveitchik's lyrical side, which is full of feeling. The lyrical passages often convey his message far more effectively than philosophical discussions. All in all, a good, well-written book but limited in scope.

Chaim Seymour, Bar-Ilan University, Israel

Benner, Hannelore. *The Girls of Room 28: Friendship, Hope and Survival in Theresienstadt.* New York, NY: Schocken Books, 2009. 318 p. \$26.00 (ISBN 978-0-80524-244-7).

This innocent-sounding title is one of the best Holocaust books published recently. Through the memories and diaries of the girls from Room 28 in Theresienstadt, who survived the war and whose friendships have lasted for a very long time, the reader gets a picture of what life was like for these victims of Nazism before their deportation to Theresienstadt, and during their incarceration there.

Diary entries of one of the girls describe the condition of her little cousin who was a year old when she was taken from home, and struggled with life-threatening illnesses. Those responsible for the children's groups were able to garner the strength necessary to teach the girls and provide leadership that might help them to survive the horrible day-to-day conditions. The girls were challenged intellectually and physically, and they participated in musical and theatrical performances that entertained the general population of Theresienstadt. *The Girls of Room 28* is an excellent historical document, rich in primary source material, and is accessible to readers with little background knowledge. The book belongs in every Judaica library—academic, synagogue and school.

Michlean Amir, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC

Berlin, Naftali Tzvi Yehuda. *The Path of Torah.* Translated and annotated by Elchanan Greenman. Jerusalem; New York: Urim Publications, 2009. 393 p. \$34.95 (ISBN 978-9-65524-030-6).

This bilingual edition of the Netziv's *Darkah shel Torah* was originally published as an introduction to the work Ha'amek Shealah of Achai Gaon. It conveys the poetry of the Netziv's language and departs from a literal translation, navigating the Scylla and Charybdis of Tosephta Megillah 3:21: "He who translates a biblical verse literally is a liar, but he who elaborates on it is a blasphemer."

Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin (the Netziv) and Rav Joseph Ber were the joint rashe yeshivah of Volozhin, a yeshivah founded by Rav Hayyim Volozhiner, who was a student of the Vilna Gaon. While Rav J.B. Soloveitchik stressed a "witty" pilpul method

that sharpens logic, the Netziv favored the method of the Vilna Gaon. The two modes of learning created a schism. This edition, although it lacks an index and bibliography, is recommended for all Jewish libraries.

Dr. David B. Levy, Touro College

Biemann, Asher D. *Inventing New Beginnings: On the Idea of Renaissance in Modern Judaism.* Stanford: Stanford University Press (Stanford Studies in Jewish History and Culture), 2009. 428 p. \$60.00 (ISBN 978-0-80476-041-6).

This book deals with an intellectual movement among German Jews between 1890 and 1938, described as a Jewish Renaissance. The idea of a renaissance is central to the discussion: "... we have made an effort to build this book on concepts and ideas rather than on the thinkers thinking them."

The book is divided into two parts. The first half sets out a general philosophy of history; the second half is concerned with the application of the ideas in a Jewish setting. In this post-modern approach, the author supplies a structure to specific historical events through a new beginning, which is applied in a Jewish setting through atonement and/or teshuva (repentance). The idea of the "golden age," where the aim is progress toward a utopian future based on an idealized past (what Professor Fisch describes as "a remembered future") is one example of such a structure. The book is most certainly not easy reading, but the author does make an interesting contribution to a modern philosophy of history.

Chaim Seymour, Bar-Ilan University, Israel

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Blau, Yitzchak. *Fresh Fruit & Vintage Wine: The Ethics and Wisdom of the Aggada.* Jersey City, NJ: Ktav, 2009. 270 p. \$24.95 (ISBN 978-1-60280-008-3).

Aggada—the genre of stories or homilies found throughout the Talmud and in collections of midrash—is not usually accorded much respect in the traditional yeshivah environment. Legal discussions are seen as the essence of Torah, and aggada is for fun. In his new book Rabbi Yitzchak Blau aims to break the dichotomy. He arranges passages of aggada by subject, treating such topics as the dynamics and ethics of learning and Jewish ideas about leadership. All the passages are drawn from the Talmud, underscoring his point that they should be an integral part of regular yeshivah learning. In each chapter, Blau presents a short passage of aggada and two or three pages of discussion. Many of the passages are very well known, but Blau manages to throw new light on them. Blau uses the commentaries of the Maharal of Prague, Rav Kook, Rabbi Isaac Hutner and others, but also a wide variety of modern writers, from Kierkegaard to Charles Taylor. One only wishes that each idea was given more space, because the book offers a compelling approach to the depths of traditional Judaism.

Pinchas Roth, Hebrew University, Jerusalem

Brown, Erica, and Misha Galperin. *The Case for Jewish Peoplehood: Can We Be One?* Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2009. 189 p. \$21.99 (ISBN 978-1-58023-401-6).

In this thought-provoking book, authors Erica Brown (director of adult education at the Partnership for Jewish Life and Learning, and scholar-in-residence at the Jewish Federation of

Greater Washington) and Dr. Misha Galperin (CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington) explore a wide range of issues related to Jewish identity and the concept of peoplehood. The authors examine the implications of peoplehood in relation to changing Jewish demographics, ideas, and values. They also explore aspects of Jewish personal and community identity. At the end of each chapter are “questions for conversation” which are appropriate for individual reflection, group discussion, and community development or leadership exercises. Recommended for community, synagogue, and academic libraries.

Ilya Silbar Margoshes, University of Regina, Regina, SK Canada

Cassuto, U. *From Adam to Noah: A Commentary on the Book of Genesis. Part One.* Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2009. 323 p. \$47.50 (ISBN 978-9-65223-480-3).

This 20th-century classic is back in print after many years. A long time ago, this reviewer attended a Modern Orthodox high school, where students were encouraged to use Cassuto’s commentary, but not to tell too many people about it. Umberto (Moshe David) Cassuto was an Italian-Israeli professor and rabbi, and one of the past century’s most prominent biblical scholars. Today, his work is out of vogue in the academy, but it has become quite popular in the modern Orthodox world, where his polemic against the Documentary Hypothesis is received warmly. Cassuto had planned an in-depth commentary to the book of Genesis, but was only able to finish up to chapter XI before his death in 1951. *From Adam to Noah* is the first of the two volumes in English translation. Essential for any Jewish library.

Daniel Scheide, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, FL



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Cohen, J. Simcha. *Shabbat the Right Way.* Jerusalem and NY: Urim Publications, 2009. 203 p. \$18.00 (ISBN 978-9-65524-021-4).

In his new book, Rabbi Cohen, a congregational rabbi who has authored six previous works on halacha and the "Halachic Questions" column for *The Jewish Press*, analyzes Jewish practice on the Sabbath. In Part I he discusses such details as whether or not a guest may make Kiddush, in which hand a left-handed person holds the Kiddush cup, and whether grape juice is permissible for Kiddush. Rabbi Cohen quotes from many sources to explain how his conclusions are reached. In Part II, his attention is turned to Leil Shabbat (Friday evening). Part III addresses contemporary social halachic issues: using the services of a gentile on Shabbat, playing ball on Shabbat and on Yom Tov, using a dishwasher with a timer on Shabbat, etc. Part IV, "General Shabbat Concerns," deals with topics such as taking pills on Shabbat, wearing a wristwatch on Shabbat, riding a tricycle on Shabbat, and issues related to making Havdalah. The final section is a lengthy discussion on the seemingly radical halachic innovation of a "Shabbat bus." Rabbi Cohen seems (with certain limitations) to allow for its use, however he mentions the serious concerns of other halachic authorities. This book belongs in high school and synagogue libraries' halacha collections.

Beverly Geller, The Frisch School, Paramus, NJ

Cook, Lisa Fineberg. *Japan Took the J.A.P. Out of Me.* New York: Downtown Press, 2009. 288 p. \$15.00 (ISBN 978-1-43911-003-4).

When her brand-new husband takes self-described Jewish American princess Lisa Fineberg Cook from the comforts of posh Los Angeles to live in Nagoya, Japan, the dream of an exotic adventure quickly changes to frustration as she deals with missing her old life and friends, feeling different in a foreign culture, and adjusting to marriage itself. Slowly, though, Lisa learns to become the wife she hoped she could be while finally fitting into this new world and making it feel like home.

Readers of this book will either love it or hate it: this is chick-lit at its finest. However those who wish to learn more about Japan's culture and language, or anything related to Judaism for that matter, will not find much here—and most of the few references to either are not even explained. Although the book's title is clever, it is a whinefest from beginning to end filled with clichés about L.A. princesses.

Cook does become somewhat domesticated during the year and touches on a few real issues like the treatment of women in Japanese culture, but the end didn't find her much closer to being "de-J.A.P.-ed" than the beginning. A cute memoir, but not necessary for Jewish collections.

Shoshana Hurwitz, Hurwitz Indexing, Ma'ale Adumim, Israel

De Lange, Nicholas, Julia G. Krivoruchko, and Cameron Boyd-Taylor, editors. *Jewish Reception of Greek Bible Versions.* Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck (Text & Studies in Medieval & Early Modern Judaism). 2009. 338 p. \$195.00 (ISBN 978-3-16149-779-7).

Hebrew and Greek, symbolizing Judaism and Hellenism, are often posited (especially on Hannukah) as diametrically opposed. As the finds of the Cairo Genizah have made clear, however, Jewish communities in the Byzantine Empire spoke

in Greek, wrote in Greek and even studied Torah in Greek well into the Middle Ages. *Jewish Reception* is the first publication of the Greek Bible in Byzantine Judaism Project, a research group based at Cambridge University that is dedicated to studying this phenomenon. Most of the articles provide background on the study of the Greek Bible at Cambridge, on the history of the Greek Bible and its intersections with Jewish sources, and on the Jewish communities of Byzantium. Five articles study Jewish usage of the Bible in Greek. The volume covers a wide variety of topics, of interest and importance to more readers than is apparent from the title.

Pinchas Roth, Hebrew University, Jerusalem

Deutsch, Jonathan, and Rachel D. Saks. *Jewish American Food Culture.* Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2009. 141 p. \$17.95 (ISBN 978-0-80322-675-3).

Jewish American Food Culture offers a handy guide to selecting, preparing, and understanding Jewish American cuisine. Acknowledging that "there is no single way American Jews eat," the authors celebrate the richly diverse origins and rituals of Jewish eating. The guide begins with a chronology of significant events in Jewish history and food culture, and continues with a historical overview of Jewish people throughout the world and a brief history of Jewish immigration to the United States. Succeeding chapters examine foods and ingredients, cooking practices, typical meals in the American Jewish diet, and the pleasures and challenges of dining out. The final chapters offer discussions of holiday celebrations, health and diet, and kashrut.

Both festive and everyday recipes appear throughout the book and there is a selected bibliography and index. Deutsch is assistant professor and director of the Culinary Management Center at Kingsborough Community College in New York City and Saks is a nutritionist, chef, cooking teacher, and graduate student at New York University. *Jewish American Food Culture* is one in a series on Food Cultures in America and is an excellent reference source for all types of libraries.

Sheila L. Darrow, Central State University, Wilberforce, OH

Finkelstein, Baruch and Michal. *Delivery From Darkness.* New York: Feldheim, 2009. 210 p. \$19.99 (ISBN 978-1-59826-258-2).

The Finkelsteins' *Delivery From Darkness* may be the first book of its kind about postpartum depression (PPD), a disease that is little-known in general and even less talked about within the context of Judaism. It includes personal anecdotes from couples afflicted with PPD ranging from mild to psychotic, explanations of symptoms and causes, and prevention and treatment options. There is a chapter detailing how birth control is used halachically in situations of PPD and a chapter on PPD from the husband's perspective. Another section discusses dealing with PPD and depression/mental health in general within Jewish law and in the Jewish community.

It's interesting to note that the chesed that is common in Jewish circles after a member has a baby, such as cooking meals and offering to help out with the other children, is something that is recommended in general as an effective treatment to reduce or eliminate milder cases of PPD. Highly recommended for all types of Jewish libraries.

Shoshana Hurwitz, Hurwitz Indexing, Ma'ale Adumim, Israel

Fishbane, Eitan P. *As Light Before Dawn: The Inner World of a Medieval Kabbalist.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press (Stanford Studies in Jewish History and Culture), 2009. 322 p. \$45.00. (ISBN 978-0-80475-913-7).

Fishbane, assistant professor of Jewish thought at JTS, presents the first major study of Rabbi Isaac of Akko, an important turn-of-the-fourteenth-century kabbalist. Born in Israel, Isaac wandered throughout the Jewish world, influenced by Sufi mysticism, medieval philosophy, and Spanish kabbalah. A major theme of Fishbane's sophisticated presentation is Isaac's concern with the lines of authority in transmitting his received (kabbalah) esoteric wisdom, contrasted with his innovative presentations of his own eclectic interpretations of the kabbalah. The other focus of the book is a remarkable study of Isaac's spiritual life through a close reading of autobiographical and exegetical passages of two of his works: *Me'irat 'Einayim*, a kabbalistic commentary on Nahmanides' commentary to the Pentateuch; and *'Ozar Hayyim*, a mystical diary of visions and revelations. Fishbane explores Isaac's use of textual exegesis, breath and visual exercises, dream interpretation, semi-conscious waking states, and kavvanot to contemplate the divine and achieve kabbalistic unity with the ten sefirot.

This work is an important contribution to the study of medieval Jewish mysticism. Fishbane's writing is erudite, his methodology sophisticated, his analysis rich. The book offers insights for specialists in the field but is also accessible for the layperson interested in comparative religion and medieval mysticism. Highly recommended for academic libraries.

Harvey Sukenic, Hebrew College Library, Newton Centre, MA

Flusser, David. *Judaism of the Second Temple Period, Volume 2: The Jewish Sages and Their Literature.* Translated by Azzan Yadin. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2009. 380 p. \$42.00 (ISBN 978-0-8028-2458-5).

David Flusser, a Jewish scholar who taught at Hebrew University in Jerusalem for many years, died in 2000. Much of his scholarship focused on the Jewish origins of Christianity, and during his long career he attracted many students, Jewish and Christian alike. Along with several highly influential books (including a volume titled *Jesus* that has been translated into virtually every European language), he published dozens of articles. In 2002, his Hebrew articles were collected in two volumes, and the present book is a translation of the second volume. The articles in this volume cover a wide range of topics, from the Book of Daniel to medieval Jewish stories. Flusser interweaves texts from the New Testament, ancient Greece and Rome, and the gamut of Jewish sources, interpreting each in light of the others. The result is an eloquent testimony to the breadth of his knowledge and the vitality of his methodology. It would have been helpful to include a note detailing where and when each article was originally published. Sub-dividing the articles into thematic sections would also have been helpful for the reader. A very important collection of studies on early Judaism and Christianity.

Pinchas Roth, Hebrew University, Jerusalem

Goldstein, Niles Elliot. *The Challenge of the Soul: A Guide for the Spiritual Warrior.* Boston: Trumpeter, 2009. 180 p. \$16.95 (ISBN 978-1-59030-660-4).

Goldstein, "a rabbi and a martial artist for the past fifteen years," writes that "whatever teachings, principles, or techniques [he] learned that advance and expand [his] skills in one area are inevitably mirrored by advances and growth in the other." In other words, fighting taught him how to teach. His book "offers a path toward self-empowerment and ... self-transcendence, a guide toward the inner redemption that so many of us in this disturbing time so desperately crave." Goldstein writes easily—he has previously published eight books—and blends harmoniously teachings from the Hebrew Bible, Hasidism, secular contemporary thinkers (Karl Jung especially), and from his own training in the martial arts and his experience as a rabbi. Highly recommended to Jewish practitioners of the martial arts.

Roger S. Kohn, Silver Spring, MD

Goldwater, Raymond. *Pioneers of Religious Zionism: Rabbis Alkalai, Kalischer, Mohliver, Reines, Kook & Maimon.* Jerusalem; New York: Urim, 2009. \$19.95. (ISBN 978-9-65524-023-8).

This book, by a well-known British Jew, presents a century of rabbinical leadership in the observant community. Raymond Goldwater discusses the lives, writing, and impact of several important rabbis from the middle of the 19th century through the formation of Israel, many of whom are little known outside their own communities. Some were partners with Herzl, Weizmann, and Ben-Gurion, while others were more closely connected to the Mizrahi stream of Zionism. All of them were critical in forming the religious ideas that drew thousands of immigrants to Palestine, and that remain part of the State's frame of reference to this day.

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Pioneers of Religious Zionism brings out an important aspect of the movement over the past century and a half. The writing is clear and straightforward. The rabbis' contributions are treated chronologically, making it easy to see their impact over the generations, but the profiles are not interwoven; each chapter is essentially independent. The volume lacks a bibliography and an index. It will be most useful in academic institutions, though it can be a worthwhile purchase for synagogue and high school libraries.

Fred Isaac, Temple Sinai, Oakland, CA

Hakak, Lev. *The Emergence of Modern Hebrew Creativity in Babylon, 1735-1950*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2009. 258 p. \$39.95 (ISBN 978-1-57753-514-6).

This study examines secular Hebrew literature written in Iraq (mainly in Baghdad) from 1735 until 1950, when the Jewish mass emigration took place. Following an introduction on the history of the Jews in Iraq, Jewish education, and Hebrew creativity there, the book is divided into three parts. The first part focuses on Hebrew poetry, examining chronologically poets and their major poems, often citing poems in Hebrew followed by English translation. The second part is on folktales, reportage, epistles, research of literature and a story, major scholars and several works. The last part deals with Hebrew periodicals, examining their characteristics and their publishers, and describing the issues of four periodicals that are quite rare. The book ends with an epilogue, questions (apparently for self-examination or classroom use), index of authors (including those cited in the bibliography) and a bibliography and images of books, periodicals, and persons. The main contribution of the book is the great amount of data it provides, some of which is hard to find elsewhere, though the book is somewhat repetitive. It is recommended for collections of Hebrew literature and Middle Eastern Jewish history.

Rachel Simon, Princeton University Library, Princeton, NJ

HaLevi, Yehudah. *The Kuzari: In Defense of the Despised Faith*. Translated and annotated by N. Daniel Korobkin. New York: Feldheim Publishers, 2009. 724 p. \$39.99 (ISBN 978-1-58330-842-4).

Korobkin's edition of Rabbi Yehudah HaLevi's *The Kuzari* is based on the Hebrew translation by ibn Tibbon. Korobkin's translation is clear, concise, accurate, and elegant, and this edition, which includes two classic rabbinic commentaries to illuminate the text, is the best one for an English speaking audience. The new Feldheim publication is updated from the out-of-print 1998 text with corrections, notes, introduction, and appendices. It features English text with facing vocalized Hebrew translation in a beautiful layout.

Dr. David B. Levy, Touro College

Hoffman, Warren. *The Passing Game: Queering Jewish American Culture*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2009. 206 p. \$24.95 (ISBN 978-0-81563-202-3).

This study is surprisingly cheerful in both its attitude and its effect. Looking at a variety of early-20th-century American literature and performance, Hoffman finds numerous texts willing to engage with sexual difference in various guises. Purposely avoiding looking at recent "gay works" (that is, by authors who

are openly gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered creating art to speak to that experience), he widens the lens of queerness. Jewish artists appear to have understood sexual diversity as part of a complex of issues that pose questions about American-ness. In looking at Abraham Cahan's *The Rise of David Levinsky*, Hoffman's analysis is bracing and fresh. He writes that Levinsky's failures as a sexual being (he is seriously attracted to men, but continues to attempt love affairs with women, which end in disaster) are part and parcel of his determination to become American. Hoffman concludes: "... David's inability to negotiate his homoerotic feelings for other men is incompatible with the larger project of U.S. assimilation in which the text is invested ... In the world of the assimilating Jewish American immigrant, one cannot be queer and American at the same time."

Hoffman infuses some new ideas into well-worn discussions, for example in looking at Sholem Asch's "Got fun Nekome" (God of Vengeance). Also discussed are actor Molly Picon's cross-dressing roles, some interesting late stories of Isaac Bashevis Singer, and *Portnoy's Complaint*. As this list indicates, Hoffman is strong on Yiddish works (as well as those written in English but emerging from a Yiddish milieu, such as *Levinsky*), but strays into more mainstream, English-language works to find related issues.

This book is highly recommended for scholarly collections, and will also find an audience in public, community, and synagogue libraries serving GLBT patrons.

Faith Jones, New Westminster Public Library

Horowitz, Brian. *Jewish Philanthropy and Enlightenment in Late-Tsarist Russia*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009. 342 p. \$35.00 (ISBN 978-0-29598-898-6).

The author, Sizeler Family Chair of Jewish Studies at Tulane University, examines the role and background of the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment among the Jews of Russia (OPE). The OPE, a philanthropic organization, was set up by westernized Jews of Saint Petersburg to further educational and vocational opportunities for their brethren by establishing a network of schools and agencies.

The subject matter is thoroughly researched, with abundant archival material. Turbulent eras in both Russian and Jewish history converge during this span of approximately 50 years, from the period of the liberal policies of Tsar Alexander II to the 1917 revolution. The goals of the OPE reflected assimilated members' attempts to combine modern and Jewish thought. Their confusion and a certain naiveté were manifest in both the curricula and pedagogy, where faculty debated over religious versus secular, and even language of instruction (Russian, Hebrew, or Yiddish). In addition to the ideological and bureaucratic bickering, vicious anti-Semitism limited the success of the organization, which was finally disbanded under the Soviet regime. The author maintains that the OPE, in spite of its shortcomings, helped to shape "a type of Jewish modernity, in which the struggle for national rights was combined with a strong view of Jewish identity."

Appendices contain a sample of syllabi and the statistics of student attendance and attrition. This book belongs in libraries with Jewish studies collections.

Hallie Cantor, Yeshiva University, NY

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Isaacs, Ron. *Have a Good Laugh: Jokes for the Jewish Soul.* Illustrated by Franklin Feldman. Jersey City, NJ: Ktav, 2009. 185 p. (ISBN-978-1-60280-130-1).

In seven chapters the author groups jokes by subject: Israel, Theology and God, Family, Bible, Rabbis, Humor from Chelm, and last but not longest, Potpourri of Jewish humor. Though many of the jokes are well-worn and familiar to older readers, there is always a new generation to entertain and surprise. When you sit in your armchair all by yourself and read these humorous stories, they may not seem so funny, but if you are a good storyteller, you may add some of these to your repertoire and use them at an appropriate moment in a social setting or to enliven an otherwise serious speech. Illustrations are few but inject sparkle into the volume. Recommended for collections in need of more anthologies of jokes.

Susanne M. Batzdorff, Congregation Beth Ami, Santa Rosa, CA

Kaplan-Mayer, Gabrielle. *The Creative Jewish Wedding Book: A Hands-on Guide to New and Old Traditions, Ceremonies & Celebrations.* 2nd ed. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2009. 261 p. \$19.99 (ISBN 978-1-58023-398-9).

This is a complete overview of the many varieties of Jewish weddings, from Orthodox to barely religious, from traditional ceremonies to inter-faith marriages, and it does not shy away from marriage between two persons of the same sex. Traditions and customs are explained; writing personal texts for wedding rituals is encouraged. The author empowers marrying couples to decide the style of wedding best for them and their families. A step-by-step plan facilitates what could be a daunting process. Choice of foods, music, huppah, and decorations is discussed in detail, with many suggestions included. Besides the general index, the book includes a 14-page list of Web sites and (how old-fashioned!) a four-page bibliography for further study. This title should be a welcome addition to your collection as a practical and up-to-date guide to this important life-cycle event. The second edition is expanded and updated.

Susanne M. Batzdorff, Congregation Beth Ami, Santa Rosa, CA

Magavern, Sam. *Primo Levi's Universe: A Writer's Journey.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. 240 p. \$24.95 (ISBN 978-0-23060-647-0).

It is a testament to Primo Levi's versatility that within twenty years of his death, four in-depth biographies were written, each exploring his life from a different angle. Primo Levi's twenty published works include memoir, fiction, poetry, essays, articles and much more. He was a scientist and an artist, and he was deeply dedicated to both disciplines. The months he spent in Auschwitz clearly defined him—those months he stated were “in Technicolor,” while the remainder of his life was “in black and white.” He felt compelled to write, to be a witness to the inhuman in humanity, and to draw conclusions about life in general based on his unthinkable experience.

Magavern's book is different from the other biographies in that he presents Levi through his works, and he includes numerous quotes to illustrate points in Levi's life and character. The works are complex and philosophically challenging, so the task at hand was not a simple one, but the result is a most elegant, interesting, and sensitive analysis of Primo Levi, the man and the writer. This

excellent book is recommended for all academic libraries and for synagogue libraries with significant Holocaust collections.

Michlean Amir, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC

O'Donnell, Patrick K. *They Dared Return: The Untold Story of Jewish Spies Behind the Lines in Nazi Germany.* Cambridge, MA: DaCapo Press, 2009. 239 p. \$26. (ISBN-978-0-30681-800-4).

I couldn't wait to read chapter after chapter of this well-written, fast-paced account of an unbelievable story, which would make for a fantastic movie. The primary focus is on Fred Mayer, who was born in Germany and immigrated to the U.S. in the late 1930s. Now 89, he still leads an active life including chopping wood every day and delivering food to the housebound. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, Mayer enlisted in the American Army. Initially, he was rejected as an “enemy alien” but several weeks later he offered to take his brother's place in the draft so his brother could finish college. The draft board, seeing Mayer's fierce determination, approved. Eventually, Mayer and several other Jews (mostly European born) joined the OSS's spy agency work—they shared a common bond of hatred for the Nazis as well as a love for America. As part of the OSS's “Greenup Mission” this small group of men was able to provide the allies with the exact location of Hitler's bunker in Berlin, railroad shipments, and other information of major importance to the war effort. Despite the possibility of being identified as spies, they persevered under harsh, brutal conditions. Some were captured but did not divulge any useful information. This excellent resource is highly recommended for high school, public, and academic library collections.

Martin Goldberg, Penn State University, Monaca, PA

Oisteanu, Andrei. *Inventing the Jew: Antisemitic Stereotypes in Romanian and Other Central-East European Cultures.* Translated by Mirela Adascalitei. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press (Studies in Antisemitism), 2009. 468 p. \$60.00 (ISBN 978-0-80322-098-0).

Andrei Oisteanu, a researcher at the Institute for the History of Religions in Bucharest, and associate professor at the Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Bucharest, presents a fascinating study that aims to establish the origins, evolution, and geographical dissemination of stereotypes about Jews. His focus is from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, and is limited to Romania, and Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe. The anthropological study consists in reassembling the profile of the “imaginary Jew” and comparing it with the profile of the “real Jew,” analyzing the breach between these two profiles. Oisteanu uses folkloric, ethnological, and pictorial materials to examine how a certain idea evolved over time, how a stereotype is reflected in the different regions or countries, how it evolved from folklore to intellectual ideas, and how these stereotypes compare with those of other ethnic groups. The anti-Semitic stereotypes vary: from the physical appearance of Jews—the big hooked nose, protruding lips, sidelocks, freckles, filth and characteristic garb—to their occupations, such as tradesmen, moneylenders, tavern-keepers, wagon-drivers and speculators, to their moral and intellectual characteristics. The final chapter,

"The Religious Portrait," looks particularly at myths of deicide, infanticide, and other imaginary crimes imputed to Jews in Romanian sources. Extensive notes accompany each chapter, and an index of names is provided at the end. Recommended for all academic libraries or extensive Jewish collections.

Sonia Silva Smith, McGill University, Montreal, Canada

Pedahzur, Ami. *The Israeli Secret Services & the Struggle against Terrorism*. New York: Columbia University Press (Columbia Studies in Terrorism and Irregular Warfare), 2009. 215 p. \$22.00 (ISBN 978-0-23114-042-3).

The author analyzes the effectiveness of different models used by Israel in the struggle against terrorism, along with the story of Israel's counterterrorism endeavor. As Pedahzur notes, this book does not deal with the roots of the Arab-Israeli conflict, but it aims to assess the conceptual issues of counterterrorism. Starting with the beginning of the 20th century and the struggle for the establishment of a Jewish homeland, the author describes the formation of the Israeli intelligence organizations, and later on, the first counterterrorism unit. In chronological order, he discusses the many terrorist attacks on Israel or Israeli citizens or interests by diverse terrorist groups, and the reaction and retaliation to these acts. Pedahzur argues that Israel should adopt a defensive model to fight against terrorists, instead of the war model used more extensively today. Although defensive actions are less glamorous than pin-pointed killing of terrorist leaders, the author maintains that defensive measures probably save hundreds of lives.

This is important and up-to-date book for anyone interested in world terrorism. Recommended for all academic libraries and for extensive Jewish collections.

Sonia Silva Smith, McGill University, Montreal, Canada

Porat, Dina. *The Fall of a Sparrow: The Life and Times of Abba Kovner*. Translated by Elizabeth Yuval. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press (Stanford Studies in Jewish History and Culture), 2009. 411 p. \$65. (ISBN 978-0-80476-248-9).

Abba Kovner was a gifted poet, a fierce polemicist, a committed partisan, and a passionate Zionist. This biography covers his extraordinary life with admiration and a critical eye. The book identifies four distinct chapters in Kovner's life. Part 1 covers his early years and sketches Jewish life in Vilna before the Nazi invasion in June 1941. Part 2 explores his time as a leader of the Vilna Ghetto and includes his famous 1942 Manifesto. Part 3 describes the exodus that followed the defeat of the Nazis in Russia, and Kovner's role in getting the surviving Jews out of Europe and into Palestine. A chapter is devoted to his attempt at "nakam," revenge against the Nazis in the aftermath of the war. The section concludes with Kovner's role in the Givati Brigade during the War for Independence, including his famous Battle Pages to the troops. Part 4 follows his later years in Israel, when he documented the Shoah in poetry and explored the meaning of his life and times.

This is the first full-length biography of Kovner in English. Despite its academic rigor, it is easy to read and frequently exciting. It belongs in all major academic Judaica libraries. Large synagogues should also consider it.

Fred Isaac, Temple Sinai, Oakland, CA

Sacks, Jonathan. *Covenant & Conversation: A Weekly Reading of the Jewish Bible: Genesis, The Book of Beginnings*. Jerusalem: Israel Maggid Books, 2009. 356 p. \$24.95. (ISBN 978-1-59264-020-1).

Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks is chief rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth, and translator and commentator of the new Orthodox siddur, *The Koren Sacks Siddur*. In *Covenant & Conversation* Rabbi Sacks discusses the weekly portions in the book of Genesis. Each short article, approximately three to five pages long, expounds on an important aspect in the parasha (portion) or comments on a specific pasuk (verse). The vignettes are well written and easy to understand. Rabbi Sacks's book is highly recommended for academic and synagogue libraries. The book would be especially useful to lay congregants who are asked to give a short sermon about the weekly portion.

Ilka Gordon, Siegal College of Judaic Studies, Cleveland, OH

Sattler, Stefen. *Torah and Color: Color as Your Key to the Parsha*. Jerusalem: Mazo Publishers, 2009. 197 p. \$17.95 (ISBN-978-965-7344-49-1).

"I have not really attempted to create a flow of ideas from one chapter to another." With this line from the introduction, Dr. Sattler summarizes the feel of his work on Torah: disjointed. The book begins to lose steam right from the start, with the Torah Color Scale. Using numbers from 000 (three zeroes meaning God, infinity minus, and 18) through 18 (meaning God, infinity plus, ORR, perfect, and the infinite space between 17 and

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17.9999), Dr. Sattler links the electromagnetic spectrum with a Torah spectrum. According to Dr. Sattler, this spectrum cannot be understood except in a very superficial form (as seen in his work). He states that much of this spectrum “is beyond human comprehension.” (N.B. I am neither a scientist nor a mathematician but I would also question how the number 18 can represent the space between 17 and 17.999.) There is no discussion as to how numbers are assigned to colors other than that the numbers 1-10 are for colors visible to the human eye.

In the following chapters each *parasha* is summarized. The colors of objects mentioned within the *parasha* are presented and the numbers associated with these colors are discussed. Some *parashot* have personal notes attached, others have one or more “PSs” in which Dr. Sattler further discusses his ideas. Overall, not recommended for any synagogue or public library.

Rachel M. Minkin, *Lansing Community College, Kehillat Israel Congregation, Lansing, MI*

Schwartz, Seth. *Were the Jews a Mediterranean Society?: Reciprocity and Solidarity in Ancient Judaism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010. 224 p. \$29.95 (ISBN 978-0-69114-056-4).

This highly technical and sophisticated work, combining cultural history and social anthropology with a close reading of texts, addresses the extent of the integration of the Jews in the Mediterranean society of ancient Rome. Schwartz focuses on the conflict between Jewish social relations based on biblical piety and religious solidarity, and Roman patronage and institutionalized reciprocity, the predominant Hellenistic cultural practice of benefaction, memorialization and honor termed “*euergetism*.” The first two chapters rigorously set up the model while the following chapters show how Roman ideas were adapted in the writings of Ben Sira and Josephus, and in the Jerusalem Talmud.

The author portrays Ben Sira as arguing that Torah-based norms of wisdom, fear of God, and observance of the law should be a fundamental part of reciprocity-based relationships. Schwartz interprets Josephus as claiming that true beneficiaries are not those who build buildings or provide public entertainments, but those who perform *mitzvot* and were memorialized in scripture. Selections of the Jerusalem Talmud portray the Jews as deeply immersed in Roman and Mediterranean bonds of reciprocity and honor. The rabbis themselves, while opposed to those norms, also adapted them. Honor was important between teacher and student, with the true honor awarded to those who performed *mitzvot* and charity. To greatly simplify his case, Schwartz argues for integration and adaptation with opposition.

For academic libraries with graduate programs in Second Temple and Talmudic Judaism.

Harvey Sukenic, *Hebrew College Library, Newton Centre, MA*

Shandler, Jeffrey. *Jews, God, and Videotape: Religion and Media in America*. New York: New York University Press, 2009. 341 p. \$23.00 (ISBN 978-0-81474-067-5).

“What has media done to us and how have we used media in Jewish life? How is it changing us?” These questions are at the core of this book. *Jews, God and Videotape* discusses the impact of

media—from early cantorial recordings, to movies, to radio and TV, and to the latest Internet videos—on the lives of American Jews. The author contends that changes in social and religious Jewish life seem attributable at least in part—or even in large part—to the influence of media. This is not just about how, as Jews, we’ve reacted to technologies, but how, as Jews, we shape and use media that ultimately comes back to shape us and our religious practices.

The book begins with the recordings of cantors from the “Golden Age” and ends with questions about Judaism in Second Life, a virtual online world. Chapter topics include the place of media in memorials and the role and effect of media in Jewish family rituals, such as the filming of weddings and bar mitzvah events. Shandler’s investigations at some of the fringes and complex tension points of modern (and even Orthodox) Jewish life really reveal more about Jewish social phenomenon within American culture than about the various technologies that serve as the catalyst. Recommended for book clubs and discussion groups, synagogue and academic libraries.

Judith Pinnolis, *Brandeis University, Waltham, MA*

Spero, Shubert. *Aspects of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchick’s Philosophy of Judaism: An Analytic Approach*. Jersey City, NJ: Ktav, 2009. 223 p. \$ 29.50 (ISBN 978-1-60280-125-7).

Aspects of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchick’s Philosophy of Judaism contains nine chapters, an introduction, an extensive glossary, an index, and a list of Rabbi Soloveitchick’s works cited in the book. Many of the chapters are revised articles that were previously published in scholarly journals such as *Tradition*, *Modern Judaism*, and *BDD: Journal of Torah and Scholarship*. Rabbi Spero, a prominent Orthodox rabbi and a literary scholar, with a Ph.D. in philosophy from Western Reserve University, is highly qualified to analyze Rabbi Soloveitchick’s philosophy. As Rabbi Spero states in the introduction, his approach is objective, since he never studied with Rabbi Soloveitchick. Rabbi Spero’s comprehensive glossary is a mini-course in the prominent secular and Jewish philosophers and important philosophical terms. This title is recommended for academic libraries and the philosophy collection of synagogue libraries.

Ilka Gordon, *Siegel College of Judaic Studies, Cleveland, OH*

Stroumsa, Sarah. *Maimonides in His World: Portrait of a Mediterranean Thinker*. Princeton: Princeton University Press (Jews, Christians and Muslims from the Ancient to the Modern World), 2009. 222 p. \$39.50 (ISBN 978-0-69113-763-6).

It seems that the true identity of Maimonides is in the eyes of the beholder. As an important historian of medieval Islamic thought, Stroumsa sees Maimonides in the context of the Muslim philosophers and scientists whose books he read, or may possibly have read. By placing him in this context, Stroumsa is able to uncover new and surprising angles in Maimonides’ thought. For example, she demonstrates that his description of Jewish heretics, such as the famous Elisha ben Avuyah, is based on descriptions of famous Muslim heretics. She makes the case that in his magisterial legal code, *Mishneh Torah*, Maimonides was following the legal philosophy of the Almohades—the same North African sect that drove him and his family from their home in Muslim Spain along with thousands of other Jews. These individual ex-

amples, which might seem counter-intuitive, serve Stroumsa's methodological goal of demonstrating that Maimonides must be read in his Muslim context.

The book is well written, presenting its dense material in an accessible way. Though there are many quotations in Arabic, nothing essential is left untranslated or unexplained. Stroumsa makes her points forcefully and persuasively, positioning Maimonides as a thinker of great importance to Muslims as well as to Jews.

Pinchas Roth, Hebrew University, Jerusalem

Twersky, Abraham J. *A Formula for Proper Living: Practical Lessons from Life and Torah.* Woodstock, Vermont: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2009. 126 p. \$19.99 (ISBN 978-1-58023-402-3).

Dr. Abraham Twersky, a renowned psychiatrist, rabbi, and prolific author, has written *A Formula for Proper Living* for people of all faiths and backgrounds. From Judaism and from the Torah Twersky draws practical wisdom that will assist and guide the reader in search of a more meaningful life. The book contains a detailed introduction that orients the reader to the book's six chapters: What drives us? Identity and Self-Esteem; Loving Others; Defending Against Our Defenses; Adapting to Adversity; and Perfecting the World, Perfecting Ourselves. At the end of the book is a list of carefully chosen "Suggestions for Further Reading." Each topic is anchored by a Jewish insight that leads towards spiritual understanding. Discussing unconscious motivation, Twersky quotes from Bachya ibn Pakuda's Duties of the Heart, explains the term "Freudian slip," and shows how the Torah holds a person responsible for behavior that was motivated unconsciously. Ezekiel and the Torah practice of *teshuvah* (repentance) are behind the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, which can guide all in perfecting themselves. Convincingly, Twersky refers to his personal experiences and to his other writings. Readers in synagogue, public, and Jewish high school libraries will enjoy and benefit from *A Formula for Proper Living*.

Nira Gily Wolfe, Highland Park, IL

Waxman, Chaim I., editor. *Religious Zionism Post Disengagement: Future Directions.* New York: The Michael Scharf Publication Trust of the Yeshiva University Press (Orthodox Forum), 2008. 445 p. \$30 (ISBN 978-1-60280-022-9).

This is an impressive book of essays that are based on the proceedings of a conference, held under the auspices of Yeshiva University, and represent the thinking of major American and Israeli specialists. The book is divided into seven sections, commencing with the life of a religious Zionist in the diaspora and concluding with Israel's impact on American Orthodoxy.

The book starts pessimistically with the claim that modern Orthodoxy is unattractive and is losing ground to the ultra-Orthodox. The second essay is even entitled, "Decline and Fall." However, from section five dealing with *aliya*, the book becomes far more optimistic. There is general agreement that opposing *aliya* will not save American Jewry and that, if indeed there is a problem with religious leadership, the lay leadership has stepped into the breach.

The longest contribution is that of Aviad Hacoen on the phenomenon of a specific religious Zionist *halakhah*. He draws

our attention to differences in form and content from those of classical halakhic works. In his conclusion, he claims that it would be hard to predict future events because of "the great dynamism which characterizes religious Zionism in its various forms." Adam Ferziger's treatment of the religious Zionist kollels in the United States follows this same more optimistic approach. All in all, this book makes for fascinating reading for students of contemporary Jewish life.

Chaim Seymour, Bar-Ilan University, Israel

Wimpfheimer, Barry S., editor. *Wisdom of Bat Sheva: The Dr. Beth Samuels Memorial Volume.* Jersey City, NJ: Ktav, 2009. 274, 60 p. \$435.00 (ISBN 978-1-60280-127-1).

This collection of studies is a tribute to the memory of Beth Samuels, who died prematurely in 2007, at the age of 32. A professor of mathematics, she was also a passionately committed Orthodox Jew who was very active in community life and particularly in women's Torah learning. This volume reflects the impact she made on her friends and colleagues. It includes an article by Dr. Samuels herself, on numbers in the Bible, and a study by her husband on quantum physics and Jewish prayer. The remaining 11 articles in the book deal with Bible, Talmud, prayer, and gender in Judaism. Most of the writers were Samuels's contemporaries, and their young voices provide the reader with a glimpse of the creativity in Jewish scholarship that is flourishing today in the liberal observant community of New York. The studies in Talmud in particular showcase the research of scholars—including the editor of the volume, as well as two of the Hebrew authors, Ethan Tucker and Jonathan Milgram—who have not yet published major works, but who clearly have a great deal to contribute to new thinking in their field.

Pinchas Roth, Hebrew University, Jerusalem

Wright, Jill Gold. *Creating America on Stage: How Jewish Composers and Lyricists Pioneered American Musical Theater.* Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2009. 135 p. \$83.00 (ISBN 978-3-63917-142-6).

American musicals are original, ground-breaking and... Jewish. The emphasis here is on the word "American" as it was delivered on the boards by marginalized Jews. America, warts and all, came to life through the eyes and talent of Jewish immigrant or first-generation composers and lyricists who created honest, passionate pictures of the land they adored despite open prejudice. Jill Wright carefully defines "Jewish" in this context as she parses 20th-century lyrics, music, and librettos to reveal how Berlin, the Gershwins, Hammerstein, Hart, Kern, and Rodgers brought forth a new art form for Americans. They deservedly became the household names we still revere.

Jewish writers and composers reinvented vaudeville/review fluff into the sophisticated amalgam we know as musical theater with serious, sensitive, even provocative themes delivered through rapturous songs and thoughtful or hilarious words. Their songs propelled plots through dramatic truth and character insight. Jews developed the question song from more than their Talmudic or Yiddish music roots; they found it safer for the disdained to question than declare. The Jewish sound in their music came from the blue note which rose from Eastern European synagogue's minor melodies, jazz, and folk songs.

Soaring stage scenes reflected their appreciation that a Jewish immigrant could take risk, could succeed in America. Their work communicated because it was based on their experiences; their reactions resonated. These composers and lyricists presented the human condition in American terms.

I recommend Wright's well-written book, although price is a problem, especially for a paperback. This topic is also covered (slightly differently, not as well) at a third the cost in other recent hardbacks. Wright does an outstanding job of proving—to quote Spamalot—You Won't Succeed On Broadway If You Don't Have Any Jews!

Ellen G. Cole, Temple Isaiah, Los Angeles, CA

SOUND RECORDINGS

Neusner, Jacob, editor. *The Jerusalem Talmud: A Translation and Commentary.* Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009. CD-ROM. \$179.95 (ISBN 978-1-59856-030-5).

The translation enterprise directed by Professor Jacob Neusner has by now covered all the classic rabbinic texts. The translations have been instrumental in opening the literature of the sages to a wide audience of students and scholars unversed in traditional Jewish learning. Among scholars familiar with both traditional and modern critical methods, however, Neusner's translations are notorious for their inaccuracies. The Jerusalem Talmud (or Yerushalmi) is a particularly dense text, and both the benefits and the flaws of the Neusner translation are prominent in this corpus.

The translation of the entire Jerusalem Talmud (15 volumes in all) is presented here in an interactive PDF. The text is copied directly from the print edition of the translation. It reproduces even the gross errors that aroused the ire of reviewers when it was first published in the early 1980s. Despite the title, this CD does not seem to include any commentary. The interface is quite basic, but not entirely user-friendly. Cutting and pasting from the CD into a Word document is possible, but the result is scruffy.

Having a complete translation of the Jerusalem Talmud in a compact format is of enormous value to a library, especially to an academic library with a small Judaica section. For such a library, that advantage probably outweighs the shortcomings of the edition.

Pinchas Roth, Hebrew University, Jerusalem

The Polina Shepherd Vocal Experience featuring The Quartet Ashkenazim. *Baym Taykh: New Yiddish Song.* Germany: Oriente Express, 2007. 1 compact disc. (45:27) \$18.99. RIEN CD64.

Blending Yiddish song with contemporary jazz and klezmer rifts and occasionally *a capella* harmonies, *Baym Taykh* is a set of brand new Yiddish songs that take the listener in a direction that is pleasant, charming, and yet deeply moving. The first instrumental piece is followed by eleven settings of lyrical texts by Yiddish poets and two from general Yiddish folklore. Each piece is set to music by Polina Shepherd, who is the composer of all the music on this album of highly original and highly accessible songs. Settings range from solos to various arrangements with

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the Vocal Quartet Ashkenazim. Word painting abounds, whether with vocal acrobatics or irony conveying the meaning of the text, such as in "Der Heyliker Balshemtov" (The Holy Balshemtov) by Zisha Landau. Some songs are rather enigmatic such as "Tsey" (Two) by Moyshe Kulbak. Others are simple and charming as is "Lernendik geyen" (As Learning Goes) by Y.L. Peretz, or address the eternal conundrums of 'boy meets girl' as in "Oy, a Shuster Darf Ikh Nisht" (Oh, I Shouldn't Have a Shoemaker). There's plenty of Yiddish-style tra-la-la in "A Nigndl" (A Tune) by Shike Driz and the traditional question-and-answer song such as "Vos Vilstu" (What do you Want?). The booklet contains transliterations of the Yiddish texts, along with English and German translations. Members of the Vocal Quartet Ashkenazim are Polina Shepherd, Yana Ovrutskaya, Evgenya Slavina and Merlin Shepherd. Highly recommended.

Judith Pinnolis, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA

Seroussi, Edwin, ed. *An Early Twentieth-Century Sephardi Troubadour: The Historical Recordings of Haim Effendi of Turkey.* Jerusalem: Jewish Music Research Centre, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2008. (Anthology of Music Traditions in Israel, no. 21). 4 compact discs. Booklet 46 p. \$40.00 AMTI 0801.

An astounding feat of salvage, preservation and research of over a period of twenty years went into this new 4-CD collection from the Jewish Music Research Centre at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The collection is part of a new brand of research,

which considers the impact of commercial recordings on Jewish culture in traditional Jewish populations in the first half of the twentieth century. In this case, the object is a figure of renown within the Sephardi world, Haim Effendi, a recording artist born in Turkey in 1853, whose recorded commercial works in this collection date back to 1907. Effendi's repertoire included both popular Ladino music and liturgical songs. Thus this music provides a window into Sephardic music popular back to the nineteenth century before musicians began learning their repertoire from these and other commercial recordings.

Over 80 of Haim's secular songs, ranging from Ladino, Turkish, Arabic, to modern Hebrew, were recorded by 1913, and he was still recording until he was nearly seventy years old. Listeners will need to be aware that while the songs have been made as clear as possible, they are still marked by the scratchy sounds of old recordings. Despite this, an absolutely amazing voice comes to us through the ages—a privilege to be able to hear. Recommended to lovers of Ladino and Sephardic music, and for academic libraries.

Judith Pinnolis, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA

Books Received

These titles will not be reviewed in the AJL Newsletter for reasons of space, scope, or date of publication. They are listed here as a courtesy to the publishers and a service to AJL readers. The materials themselves are donated to libraries.

- Ascher, Carol. *Afterimages: A Family Memoir*. Teaneck, N.J.: Holmes & Meier, 2008.
- Bloxham, Donald. *Genocide, the World Wars and the Unweaving of Europe*. London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2008.
- Cammy, Justin, et al., ed. *Arguing the Modern Jewish Canon: Essays on Literature and Culture in Honor of Ruth R. Wisse*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008.
- Craig, Jonathan. *You are the Reason: A Survivor's Guide to Ultimate Strength*. J. Craig, 2009.
- Eilati, Shalom. *Crossing the River*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008.
- Feldman, Jackie. *Above the Death Pits, Beneath the Flag: Youth Voyages to Poland and the Performance of Israeli National Identity*. New York: Berghan Books, 2008.
- Fox, Perla. *Let Me Count the Ways: Letters of Friendship, Love and Deception*. New York: Devorah, 2008.

- Friedman, Dayle A. *Jewish Visions for Aging: A Professional Guide for Fostering Wholeness*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights, 2008.
- Harris, David A. *In the Trenches: Selected Speeches and Writings of an American Jewish Activist. Vol. 5, 2006-2007*. Jersey City: Ktav, 2008.
- Heberer, Patricia, and Jürgen Matthaus, eds. *Atrocities on Trial: Historical Perspectives on the Politics of Prosecuting War Crimes*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008.
- A Joyful Harvest: Celebrating the Jewish Contribution to Southern Alberta Life, 1889-2005*. Alberta: Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta, 2007.
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- Leviant, Curt. *A Novel of Klass*. Livingston, Ala.: Livingston Press, 2008.
- Lustbader, Eric Van. *Robert Ludlum's The Bourne Deception*. New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2009.
- Mamet, David. *The Wicked Son: Anti-Semitism, Self-Hatred, and the Jews*. New York: Schocken Books, 2006.
- Morgan, Michael L. & Benjamin Pollock, eds. *The Philosopher as Witness: Fackenheim and Responses to the Holocaust*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008.
- Morrow, Jonathan. *Welcome to College: A Christ Follower's Guide for the Journey*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2008.
- Question Market. Vol. 1*. Jerusalem: Jewish Learning Library, 2008.
- Ross, Rita B. *Running From Home: A Memoir*. Lanham, Md.: Hamilton Books, 2008.
- Sofer, Rochel. *We Need to Talk: What Happens When Looking Thin Becomes an Obsession*. New York: Devorah, 2008.
- Spiegel, Philip. *Triumph Over Tyranny: The Heroic Campaign that Saved 2,000,000 Soviet Jews*. New York: Devorah, 2008.
- Stern Cohen, Hilda. *Words that Burn Within Me: Faith, Values, Survival*. Washington, D.C.: Dryad Press, 2008.
- Tabback, Thomas N. *Things Forgotten*. Austin: Pearlgate, 2008.
- Vapnyar, Laura. *Broccoli and Other Tales of Food and Love*. New York: Pantheon, 2008.
- Wander, Fred. *The Seventh Well*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2008.
- Westerink, Herman. *A Dark Trace: Sigmund Freud on the Sense of Guilt*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2009.

Keeping Current

The International Conference on Children's Literature

LISA SILVERMAN

The International Research Society on Children's Literature meets biennially to promote research on literature for children and youth. The conference is attended by some 500 professors, Ph.D. candidates, and others doing research in the growing field of children's literature. In early August, 2009, I traveled to



View of the campus of Goethe University

Frankfurt, Germany, to attend the conference and to present my bibliography of illustrated books on the Holocaust.

During the three-day conference, papers are presented every 30 minutes, within two-hour time blocks. This kind of children's lit is serious stuff, with plenary speakers either appearing on video or in person, along with simultaneous German translation. The keynote address was called "In the Backyard or the Foreground?: Transfer Processes and the Creation of Child Culture" and it was delivered by Dr. Zohar Shavit, who was well known to the audience, especially the Germans. At Tel Aviv University, Professor Shavit founded the academic study of children's culture and the study of texts written for Jewish children in the German-speaking world. She has authored pioneering studies on the establishment of institutions of Hebrew culture and Hebrew literature in Europe and Israel. Over the past 15 years, Professor Shavit has conducted research projects in collaboration with scholars from Israel, Germany and France, and this was her topic, as she spoke by video feed from her Tel Aviv office.

The venue for the conference was the lovely West End campus of Goethe University, in the exact buildings occupied by the I.G. Farben chemical company, notorious for developing the Zyklon B gas used in the extermination camps. The incongruity was noted in the welcome address by the German organizers, and they encouraged attendees to go out to the front of the building to view the large granite plaque there and the modern sculpture next to it. The plaque was engraved in German; the translation is: This building was designed by the architect Hans Poelzig

and erected between 1928 and 1931 as the headquarters of IG Farben Industries.

Between 1933 and 1945, as one of the largest chemical concerns in the world, the company increasingly put its scientific knowledge and production technologies into the service of war preparations and the National Socialist regime of terror. From 1942 to 1945, I.G. Farben, together with the SS, maintained the concentration camp at Buna-Monowitz, adjacent to the I.G. Farben factory at Auschwitz. Of the ten thousand prisoners made to work for the company there, most were murdered. In the Nazi extermination camps many hundreds of thousands of people, mostly Jews, were killed by Zyklon B gas, which was sold by an I.G. Farben company. From 1945 the building was the seat of the American military government and the High Commissioner for Germany. On 19 September 1945 the State of Hesse was proclaimed there. From 1952 to 1995 the building was the headquarters of the 5th Corps of the U.S. Army.

Aware of the history of the building, the State of Hesse acquired it in 1996 for the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University. An unusual sculpture series by Guy Ferrer adorns the lawn area in front of the building. The sculpture group consists of nine individual letters that form the word "tolerance." Part of the explanatory plaque states: "The work gives a message of tolerance and hope. Each letter in its figurative composition symbolizes a different culture or a form of spirituality. Being unified on one stage, thus scientists, scholars, priests, wise men, and pilgrims

entire a dialogue and challenge people of all nationalities to meet and to communicate and to pursue the symbolic conversation on this place."

My session proved to be of interest and I was approached by librarians from Brazil, Spain, Australia, and Germany, who told me that they wished more picture books on the Holocaust were available in their countries. Carola Pohlmann, director of children's services at the Berlin State Library, invited me to visit her library and view the 19 titles in its Holocaust picture book collection. She gave me a private, behind-the-scenes tour of the children's collection and rare book room in the library, a grand, marble edifice next to Humboldt University, the largest university in Berlin. The library is still undergoing massive reconstruction, but Carola led me through the labyrinthine corridors, showed off her most fascinating collection of Jewish and German children's literature, and told me that one day she would love to share images of the library's collection with our association.



The letter A in the sculpture Tolerance

Have You Heard?

LIBBY K. WHITE



Libby White, *AJL Newsletter* editor, suffered a small stroke at the end of December. She is recovering and working on her dissertation and the newsletter issue with help from dedicated staff. For inquiries on her condition, send a message to l1bbylib@aol.com. Libby wishes you a happy and *healthy* 2010.

David Levine, illustrator and artist, died in New York on December 29. He was 83. His work appeared in the *New Yorker*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and the *New York Review of Books*. Levine often caricatured celebrities and political figures. He considered himself a cultural Jew and many of his subjects contained Jewish themes.

Historian Yosef Yerushalmi, an expert on Sephardic Converso culture who also wrote on Freud and Judaism, also died in December. He was appointed Salo Baron Professor of Jewish History at Columbia University in 1980.

Abraham Sutzkever, noted Yiddish poet, died at age 96 in Tel Aviv on January 20. He became well known while living in Vilna. During the Nazi occupation he smuggled arms into the ghetto and hid rare Jewish books and works of art from the invaders. Later in Israel, he sought to keep Yiddish culture alive and edited a prominent Yiddish journal. Sutzkever was often mentioned as a candidate for the Nobel Prize in Literature.

New York's Jewish Museum will present an exhibit entitled "Curious George Saves the Day—The Art of Margret and H.A. Rey," from March 14 to August 1.

The Fondazione Centro di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea (CDEC), in Milan, Italy

NANETTE R. HAYON

As the new international liaison for AJL I had the pleasure to describe the activities of my institute at the midwinter council meeting. The CDEC was established in 1955 by Roberto Bassi, secretary of the Italian Jewish Youth Federation. Initially the center was headquartered in Venice but in 1958 it moved to Milan, to a historical building that had been a Jewish school since 1930.

In the beginning, the CDEC was devoted exclusively to historical research, in particular the deportation and Jewish participation in the resistance. In an effort to restore dignity to the victims, Liliana Picciotto was charged in 1979 with the task of preparing a memorial book that would record the name and fate of all the Italian Jews who had been deported. In 1991 Mursia of Milan published the result of her research: *The Book of Memory*. Our work in this area continues today: we are systematically updating all our records. In 1994, thanks to funding from the prime minister's office, we launched a new project to videorecord interviews with Italian survivors of the Holocaust. The result of this project was the 1997 film *Memory*, which won an award at the 1999 Nuremberg Film Festival.

Our institution is considered the primary resource for the study of Jews in contemporary Italy. We have two principal objectives. The first is systematically collecting and organizing material on the Jewish minority in Italy and in the world. Our second objective is to promote research on Jews of modern Italy; to organize cultural events, including exhibitions, debates, talks in schools, video presentations, and concerts; and to set up the Italian Judaism and Holocaust National Museum in Ferrara, the Holocaust Memorial in Milan, and of the Holocaust Museum in Rome. We are also committed to opposing all forms of racism and anti-Semitism and promoting the protection of civil rights in this area.

The variety and abundance of our material makes the CDEC a service agency that plays many roles, but never loses sight of its primary function as an historical institution and a place of

Jewish culture. The archives contains 180 linear meters of documents, including 6,400 videorecordings and more than 18,000 photographs.

The library contains nearly 24,000 volumes, all of which are cataloged online in the National Library System. It holds 2200 Jewish and non-Jewish periodicals in various languages, published since 1850. Of these, 150 are current. The collection includes nearly 600 doctoral dissertations that have, to a large extent, used material from our institute, and more than 700 posters, advertising the activities of Jewish institutions in Italy. The bulk of our collection dates from 1920 and includes material in Italian, French, English, Hebrew, Yiddish, and other languages. We acquire some 1000 volumes each year. Thanks to the generous contributions of libraries and the careful selection of books to purchase, the library has become a rich source of excellent material.

I want to mention just one of our many projects that may be of special interest in the United States. This is an exhibition in English that was held in 2009 at Syracuse University, entitled: "1938-1945: The Persecution of the Jews of Italy," consisting of 38 panels of images and documentation on the Italian Holocaust experience. Information about this and other CDEC projects is available on our Web site (www.cdec.it).

In 2010 the CDEC will publish the first issue of a new semestral study journal devoted to the history and historiography of Jews in the contemporary age, entitled: *Quest: Issues in Contemporary Jewish History. Journal of Foundation CDEC* (www.quest-cdecjournal.it). This English-language electronic journal will be free of charge.

The CDEC is a completely independent institute, which needs to reinvent itself daily to create cultural projects that respond to the needs of Italian society, and to find the financial resources to develop these projects. In Italy we must fight every attempt to allow cultural institutions to disappear for lack of government funding.



Western Regional Conference: Jewish Literature for Children

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM - Sunday, April 18, 2010

Monsters and Miracles: A Journey Through Jewish Picture Books AT THE SKIRBALL CULTURAL CENTER!

Celebrating the historical and cultural roots of the Jewish picture book with more than 100 original illustrations and texts from picture book classics and popular favorites. Featured authors and artists include Arnold Lobel, Daniel Pinkwater, Francine Prose, Maurice Sendak, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Lemony Snicket, Art Spiegelman, William Steig, Marc Chagall, and Ze'ev Raban.

Conference Schedule:

- 9 AM Registration, Continental Breakfast and introduction to the exhibit by curator Tal Gozani
- 10 AM Visit to Skirball exhibit, "Monsters and Miracles"
- 12 PM Lunch and panel discussion at American Jewish University, 15600 Mulholland Dr. (across the freeway from the Skirball)
- 2:30 PM Silent auction, Book sale and autographing by local authors

Featured speakers: **Joni Sussman** (publisher, KarBen Books), **Richard Michelson**, (Sydney Taylor Award Winner for *As Good As Anybody*) and others
 ☞ Manuscript consultations with Joni Sussman from KarBen Books available ☞

Sponsored by Sinai Temple Blumenthal Library, Association of Jewish Libraries, AJLSC, and the Ostrow Community Library at the American Jewish University

Conference will be held in Los Angeles, at Skirball Cultural Center (2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd.) and American Jewish University, (15600 Mulholland Dr.)

For reservations and information call Susan Dubin at (818) 886-6415, send email to Lisa Silverman at lsilverman@sinaitemple.org or return this to the address below:

Name _____ Address _____ City/State/Zip _____
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_____ \$55 (includes lunch) _____ AJL member \$45 (includes lunch) _____ \$45 Manuscript consult

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STEPHANIE (SARA LEAH) GROSS

When AJL president Suzi Dubin asked me to write a short article on social media, I smiled to myself as I pondered the often negative reactions to the obsession with seeing oneself on the Web. I have encountered techies who proselytize the need to adopt a public profile: “You’re not saved unless you tweet on Twitter, friend on Facebook, or post your resume on LinkedIn.” I believe that taking a measured approach to social media is the best practice.

I was never big on herd mentality, although there is much to be said for the wisdom of crowds. (The custom of labeling blog entries with tags is one example of how folksonomies can be used to categorize content.) Today, we are still very much in a beta stage, with few formal guidelines for incorporating social media into library services, even from our professional associations. We are struggling to come to terms with the metamorphosis of library use, information gathering and disseminating, even employment.

A librarian’s knowledge of what makes a good Web site is becoming a vital skill in the profession. No longer is knowledge of computer code needed to create a synagogue’s home page, embed applications such as a slideshow, install an online catalog widget, or link to Facebook. Many librarians who are communication-savvy find that they can post rudimentary blogs that are aesthetic, meaningful and productive.

AJL president Suzi Dubin has created a blog called People of the Books and Heidi Estrin continues to inform and entertain us with her Book of Life podcasts. I began NY Librarians Meetup on Blogger about nine months ago. Since then, I’ve begun following other bloggers and some have followed us. The purpose of our blog is to provide visibility to our members while covering a wide array of issues germane to new librarians and library students. Topics have included library tours, conferences and workshops, internships, library trends, and technology. My hope is to encourage and promote the use of social media.

Popular Social Networking Sites

LibraryThing: Social cataloging web application for storing and sharing personal library catalogs and book lists.

Facebook: Social utility that connects people with friends and others who work, study, and live around them. Applications such as weRead and GoodReads are quite conducive to sharing resources and opinions among discussion books members. Privacy settings are flexible and lists may be devised to organize usernames (“friends” in FB) into various categories, e.g. patrons, staff, clergy. Where mobile reference is available, IM (instant messaging) widgets such as Meebo may be installed.

Twitter: Microblog. Short headlines, such as upcoming library events, may be posted to the Internet as “tweets.” These tweets may have a hyperlink to further information, often a library home page. URL shorteners such as tinyurl.com and bit.ly may be used to decrease the number of characters in the Twitter string (140 total). Bit.ly allows for tracking, a handy mechanism to support patron usage. News headlines are often “pushed” to the “net” via tweets or even re-tweeted. Twitter now has a list

feature by which these postings may be indexed and searched. Hashtags (#) before a label may designate a particular event. Twitter aficionados also enjoy using TweetGrid for Twitter parties and Twitter Conference.

Friendfeed: Venue for posting web gleanings. It’s much like Facebook, but to my mind, far tamer.

Delicious: Social bookmarking site. Rather than simply save the link to your “favorites,” why not share it with colleagues? There is an option to keep posts private. The use of tags and bundles facilitates a rudimentary organization of saved material. On most sites, it is possible to form or join a group.

Establishing a social media presence on the Web

If your institution has a social media policy, follow it. Be familiar with the Title 17 Copyright Act, intellectual property rights issues, and the right to privacy. Many people do not wish their names published, photos posted, and so forth.

Have some goals in mind. Study the sites you wish to use, just as you would a database. Know how they work, what the terms of service are, what your liabilities are, and what the value of such online venues might be.

Bring out your most prized pieces of PR, e.g., flyers, library guides, newsletters, even vertical file ephemera. Consider how making this material available on the Web could enhance your visibility to your clientele. Then review the social media mentioned above and the resources below. Your decision will be far easier when you know what you want to accomplish. If you have friends and contacts on Facebook, etc. tap them for opinions and recommendations. Look at the Web sites of similar institutions and evaluate how the applications they use can support your own institution’s goals.

Remember to share your insights with your fellow members on Hasafran, user groups, AJL blog, and regional Web sites, e.g. AJL-NYMA.

Other Social Media Sites of Interest

Association of Jewish Libraries Wiki created by Diane Romm and Joyce Levine of the AJL Technology Committee. The wiki, supported by PBWorks, is a collaborative Web site for librarians and support staff with links to relevant online resources.

Connect.ala.org, Official ALA forum for a wide variety of topics. AJL is now an affiliate. Use this space to connect with other information professionals.

Digsby: Widget for aggregating e-mail, social media, and IM (instant messaging). Useful for mobile reference.

Facebook: See Jennifer Freer—Reference Librarian for exemplary use as professional page.

See AJL on Facebook for use in outreach, publicizing events, sharing resources.

Flickr: Photosharing site. See AJL Group.

LinkedIn: Professional network service.

See Association of Jewish Libraries Group.

Posterous: Microblog, primarily for mobile computing.

See the AJL Convention 2009 blog.

Mashable: Blog specializing in social media & IT.

Retaggr: Digital social media card.

See Stephanie’s card.

Slideshare.net: PowerPoint, slidecasts, and PDF portfolios.

See presentation by Stephanie (Sara Leah) Gross on social networking for librarians.

Vimeo: Provides tools for uploading and sharing videos.

Additional Resources

Farkas, Meredith G. *Social Software in Libraries: Building Collaboration, Communication, and Community Online*. Medford, NJ: Information Today, 2007.

Jacob Richman's Training Seminars—Social Media

Jacob Richman's Hot Sites—Social Media Articles and Videos

Kroski, Ellyssa, ed. *The Tech Set*. Neal-Schuman, 2010. Request exam copy.

Kroski, Ellyssa, ed. *Web 2.0 for Librarians and Information Professionals*. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2008.

Shea, Virginia. *Netiquette*. San Raphael, Calif.: Albion, 1994.

See also The Core Rules of Netiquette on the Web, excerpted from the book Click on each rule for elaboration.



An Israeli Author Speaks

ANNA LEVINE

Interview with Eve Tal

Anna: Mazal tov on the publication of your second novel, *Cursing Columbus*, with Cinco Puntos Press! Can you tell us a bit about it?

Eve: Gladly. *Cursing Columbus* is the sequel to my first YA novel, *Double Crossing*, which was selected as a notable children's book by the AJL in 2006 and a finalist for the 2005 National Jewish Book Awards in Children's Literature. It follows the story of Raizel and her family on the Lower East Side after the family is reunited in 1908. Actually, *Cursing Columbus* weaves together two stories. In the first, Raizel struggles to continue her education and overcome her shyness with the boy she loves. In the parallel story, her dyslexic brother Lemmel faces the challenges of a new school, preparing for his bar mitzvah, and, eventually, surviving on the crime-ridden streets of New York.

Anna: I love the intriguing titles. Why did you choose them?

Eve: Both books attempt to pierce the nostalgic myths that have grown up about Jewish American immigration. The title *Double Crossing* reflects the family's rejection at Ellis Island and the sacrifices that immigrants must make to gain acceptance into America. *Cursing Columbus* is a play on the immigrant's half-humorous curse, 'a klug tzu Columbus', blaming Columbus for the hardships of immigrant life.

Anna: You've lived on an Israeli kibbutz for many years, yet both of your books are set in America. Why is that?

Eve: Basically because two previous novels I wrote set in contemporary Israel failed to sell. And because I felt that the story of *Double Crossing*, which is based on my grandfather's immigration experience, was just too good a story not to tell. But I've published several picture books in Hebrew, and one of them, *A New Boy*, was published in the U.S. in a dual language edition by Milk and Honey Press.

Note: *Cursing Columbus* was named a 2010 Sydney Taylor Notable Book for Teens. For more information about Eve and her books, visit www.evetal.com.

The 2010 Sydney Taylor Book Award Winners

AJL is pleased to announce the winners of the 2010 Sydney Taylor Book awards. For younger readers, the award goes to *New Year at the Pier: A Rosh Hashanah Story* by April Halprin Wayland, with illustrations by Stephane Jorish. In the older readers category, the winner is *The Importance of Wings* by Robin Friedman. *Tropical Secrets: Holocaust Refugees in Cuba*, by Margarita Engle, is the winner in the teen readers category.



This year's honor books for younger readers are *Nachshon, Who Was Afraid to Swim: A Passover Story* by Deborah Bodin Cohen, with illustrations by Jago; *Benjamin and the Silver Goblet* by Jacqueline Jules, with illustrations by Natascia Ugliano; *Yankee at the Seder* by Elka Weber, with illustrations by Adam Gustavson; and *You Never Heard of Sandy Koufax?* by Jonah Winter, with illustrations by Andre Carrilho.

The 2010 honor books for older readers are: *Anne Frank: Her Life in Words and Pictures from the Archives of the Anne Frank House* by Menno Metselaar and Ruud van der Rol, translated by Arnold J. Pomerans; and *A Faraway Island* by Annika Thor, translated by Linda Schenck.

The Sydney Taylor honor books for teen readers are: *Lost* by Jacqueline Davies and *Naomi's Song* by Selma Kritzer Silverberg.

Congratulations to all the winners!

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Childhood Book is Returned to Holocaust Survivor

TOBY ROSSNER

This article was originally published in the Eastside Marketplace Almanack, Providence, Rhode Island, December 3, 2009.

“Art might be priceless, but librarians know how important books are.”

—Deborah Valdez, daughter of Walter Lachman

We are all familiar with the recent efforts to return the fine art looted by the Nazis to its original owners. But a similar effort to return the stolen books has only recently come to light. A report in *Spiegel Online International* revealed that upward of 40,000 (perhaps as many as 150,000) volumes in the collection of Berlin’s Central and Regional Library Headquarters are from the private libraries of deported Jews. These volumes were initially stored at the City Pawn Office in Berlin in the spring of 1943. Each book was assigned an accession number, beginning with “J.” The Berlin Library has initiated a research project with the aim of identifying those volumes that can be restored to the original owners or their heirs.

Due to the miracle of electronic communications, one of the librarian members of the Association of Jewish Libraries read the

Spiegel article and posted a link on the association’s electronic list. A member of the association’s Convention Planning Committee read the post and contacted Barbara Schneider-Kempf, director general of the Berlin State Library, who agreed to come to the AJL Chicago Convention as a plenary speaker.

Two weeks later, a feature story in the July 22 *Malibu Times* (“A Holocaust Survivor’s Childhood Book Comes Home” by Melonie Magruder) told of the return to Walter Lachman of a childhood book sixty-seven years after he and his grandmother were deported to Bergen-Belsen. Lachman’s book, *For Our Youth: A Book of Entertainment for Israelite Boys and Girls*, was a gift from his Hebrew schoolteacher, who inscribed it: “For my dear Wolfgang Lachmann, in friendship, Chanuka 5698, December 1937”. The match between book and owner came about when Lachman’s friend, Rabbi Larry Seidman of Newport Beach, read about this inscription in the *Spiegel* story and called his friend. An astounded Lachman answered, “That’s my book!” Lachman’s daughter, Deborah Valdez, traveled to Berlin to receive the book at a Berlin Library ceremony arranged to celebrate the book’s return to her father. When asked what he will do with this precious gift, Lachman replied, “Maybe I’ll read it again.”