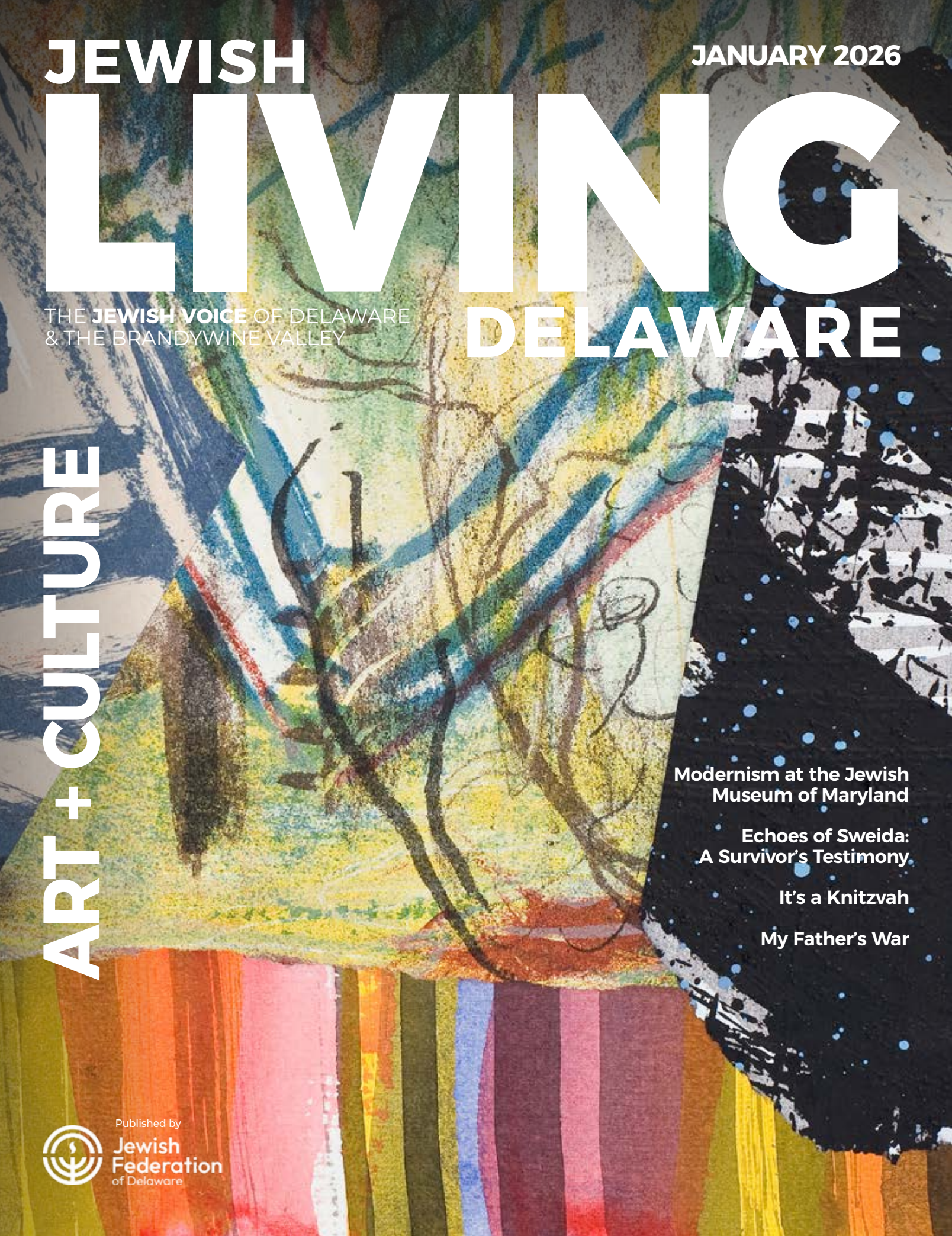

JEWISH LIVING DELAWARE

JANUARY 2026

THE **JEWISH VOICE** OF DELAWARE
& THE BRANDYWINE VALLEY

ART + CULTURE

Modernism at the Jewish Museum of Maryland

Echoes of Sweida: A Survivor's Testimony

It's a Knitzvah

My Father's War

Published by
Jewish Federation of Delaware

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- MARLA LEVY
Endowment Manager
Jewish Federation of Delaware

Jewish Federation of Delaware

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JEWISH LIVING DELAWARE

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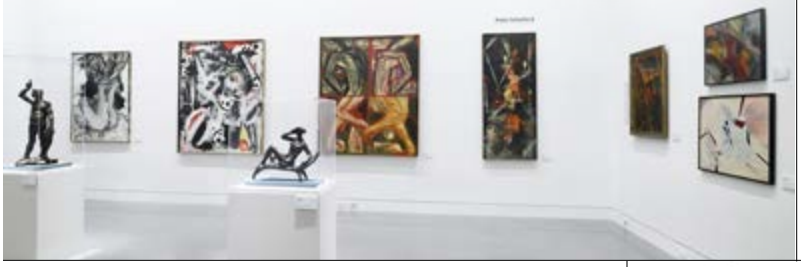
Modernism at the Jewish Museum of Maryland

Enjoy a snapshot of Jewish art from the Jewish Museum or Maryland. 14 artists, 77 objects, and plenty of history to go with it. Read on to learn about the artists and their place in Jewish history.



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Echoes of Sweida: A Survivor's Testimony

In March 2025, Syrian forces marched against their own citizen, targeting and murdering minorities, such as the Druze population, across the country. By the summer, the violence reached Sweida, where Bashar Albarouki, owner of Ali Baba restaurant in Newark, and his family were visiting family. Albarouki bravely shares his harrowing experience.

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For many of our community members, fiber arts have become a purpose for gathering. Whether knitting for a loved one, cross-stitching to preserve history, or crocheting for a good cause, these crafters find connection to their Jewish identities through their art.

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My Father's War

"I did not grow up Jewish. But, somehow, I grew up with a deep sense that the stories my parents brought home—stories of the people they felt morally bound to witness—were entrusted to me as well." Renna van Oot shares the impact World War II had on her parents, and on her in turn.

Columns

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Every day, Jewish Federation of Delaware funds and supports agencies and programs that feed, clothe, shelter, counsel, and rescue thousands of people here in Delaware and the Brandywine Valley, in Israel, and around the world. We provide opportunities that educate, inspire, and celebrate a vibrant Jewish life. It's our responsibility. It's our privilege. It's who we are.

Federation is about the commitment of an entire community to repair the world, care for the vulnerable, ensure a Jewish future, and enhance and strengthen Jewish life. It is about building a vital and vibrant community that inspires generations to come. Whether the task is educating our youth, reducing poverty and hunger, caring for the elderly, rescuing and resettling new immigrants, fighting antisemitism, spurring Jewish renaissance worldwide, or simply serving as the convener for community events and stewarding safe and secure facilities, the Federation is the one place that belongs to every Jew—the place where philanthropy, volunteerism, and a shared commitment come together to make a difference, every day.

Our community will come together for **Federation Shabbat** on Friday, January 30, 2026 at Congregation Beth Emeth. The celebration showcases the uniqueness of the Delaware Jewish community, as our seven state-wide synagogues come TOGETHER for an evening of song, prayer, celebration, and pride. It is an expression of unity as well as an expression of the power of collaboration.

Super Sunday will follow on Sunday, February 1, 2026, serving as our official kick-off to the **2026 Annual Campaign** (and our largest single day of fundraising of the year).

Federation counts on the generosity and increased support of our community members to sustain the life-saving work that we do. Please help us meet the needs of as many Jews as possible, throughout the region and across the globe, by making your 2026 Annual Campaign gift today.

The Annual Campaign is at the core of what we do, providing essential, unrestricted dollars for the organizations that provide amazing services to our community and to those in need around the world.

It is the Annual Campaign that addresses the most pressing needs and issues at a moment's notice.

It is the Annual Campaign that has been the glue that has held the Jewish community together for more than 90 years and will continue to do so.

While we look back at what we've accomplished, we must also look toward the future. We look ahead at the alarming challenges that lie in wait and the daunting obstacles we must overcome.

Please—on behalf of the thousands of men, women, and children who are in desperate need of a better life—commit to the Annual Campaign and become part of the solution. There is no better time to get involved because, through Federation, you can make a world of difference and deliver the gift of hope to those in need.

We are here for the Jewish People both locally and abroad, and we will never let them down.

Thank you for your continued support.

We Grow Stronger TOGETHER As One.

L'Shalom,,
Seth J. Katzen, President & Chief Executive Officer

Join us in Illuminating the Future

As you celebrate the Festival of Lights, honor the spirit of Hanukkah by making a legacy commitment and leave a lasting impact on generations to come.

Jewish Federation of Delaware

Life & Legacy
ASSURE JEWISH TOMORROWS

With a legacy gift, you ensure that the warmth of Hanukkah continues to spread its glow for future generations.

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It's not just charity, it's continuity. It's love made permanent.

Jewish Federation of Delaware's 90th Anniversary Celebration

The Jewish Federation of Delaware celebrated its 90th anniversary on November 13 at Harry's Savoy Grill. The special event honored past presidents and featured a fireside chat with Montana Tucker—multi-talented, award-winning actress, singer, dancer, and philanthropist with over 14 million followers on social media—moderated by Suzanne Grant. The evening was filled with inspiration and celebration.

Photo Credit: Bradford Glazier

A warm thank you to Montana Tucker and Suzanne Grant for a very special evening


TOGETHER As One
Jewish Federation of Delaware


TOGETHER As One


Jewish Federation of Delaware
Jewish Federation of Delaware

Late Fall at Temple Beth El

Photo Credit: Temple Beth El

TBE parents enjoy gaming while waiting for Religious School

The Sontowskis walk TBE's final Scott Mackler 5k for ALS after spearheading it for 25 years

TBE offered introductory mahjong lessons

Rabbi Beals leads the blessings before Men's Club Breakfast

TBE Mens Club Breakfast

Temple Beth El's Mensch Club on Tap

BY **RABBI MICHAEL BEALS**

The rise in intermarried couples can be viewed as a challenge or an opportunity for the Jewish continuity. At Newark's Temple Beth El, with a large percentage of intermarried couples, we look at it as an opportunity.

With that attitude in mind, Rabbi Michael Beals hosted his first Mensch Club on Tap for non-Jewish spouses of intermarried families on Monday night, November 25, at Newark's historic Deer Park Tavern. Pitchers of beer, nachos, grilled brussels sprouts, and soft pretzels were all sponsored by the Rabbi's CEPD Fund, and the conversation flowed.

Questions for Rabbi Beals included "Where in Delaware can I and my Jewish wife be buried side-by-side?" and "Is it disingenuous of me to wear a *kippa in shul* if I'm not Jewish?" Plus, "How do I navigate my Jewish in-laws when they say hateful things about Palestinians as a part of their overall support for the State of Israel?" Aside from the questions, conversation covered every subject imaginable, from Jewish views of the afterlife to the latest movies to JK Rowling's hateful stance on trans people vs. Judaism's biblically-based concern for the marginalized in society.

The next two Mensch Club on Tap meet-ups are scheduled for Monday, January 26 and Monday, February 23, 8:30 PM, at the quiet-room-on-the-right in the Deer Park Tavern, 108 W. Main Street, just to the right of the UD Trabant Student Center Parking Lot. The meeting is open to all non-Jewish spouses looking to bond with Rabbi Beals and with one another.

Photo caption: Left to right: Michael Herring, Ben Toole, Joe Butcher, Nick Harris, Rabbi Michael Beals, Corey Backus
Photo Credit: Sophia at Deer Park Tavern

Arts Education
at Albert Einstein Academy

BY **RACHEL BLUMENFELD,**
Head of School

At Albert Einstein Academy, we know that art class is not just a chance for students to take a break from reading and math. Art is a pivotal component of elementary education, giving children a chance to explore, create, and express themselves in more depth than they are able to with words. At the same time, they are learning to examine the world more closely, create abstract representations, and synthesize ideas in new ways. Additionally, the skills taught in art class help students refine their fine motor skills and strengthen their executive functions, such as organizing, decision-making, self-monitoring, and problem solving. In a world where we want children to grow into thoughtful, imaginative, and resilient adults, art education isn't just "extra"—it is essential.

Please enjoy this artwork from some of the students at Albert Einstein Academy. These students used different techniques to create works that represent peace, love, and what brings them joy.

Photos provided by Rachel Blumenfeld

Einstein Academy is a Beneficiary Agency of Jewish Federation of Delaware.

Ava Kopin, fifth grade

Scarlett Kraft, kindergarten

Joseph Messick, third grade

Danielle Wasserman, third grade

MY FATHER'S SHOP

Photo Credit: wikimediacommons

BY **LARRY KOCH,** EDD

My relatives on my father's side worked in the garment industry. Most were members of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU), and that was a focal point of our lives. On vacation we went to union summer retreats, rather than the expensive "Borscht Belt" hotels, and we voted for the Liberal Party, which the ILGWU's leader David Dubinsky controlled.

My earliest memory was when I was four, visiting my father at work. That was 1950—75 years ago!

I remember I wore short pants and short sleeves on that hot day, and that the windows were open. An old fan on a table worked tirelessly to cool the small room.

My father announced to the room full of workers sitting in front of sewing machines that "I was no longer a '*little pisher*' and it was time to put me to work," and then he explained my job for the day, which was to help the working ladies by using a giant magnet to pick up pins on the floor.

My father was in the fur business, and while the six or seven middle aged ladies in the shop were experienced at their jobs, they didn't have the time or flexibility—or eyesight—of a young boy to retrieve needed pins.

So, crawling crab-like—on my bottom, this way and that with my heavy magnet—I would circulate, collecting pins and putting them in an old coffee can. While I passed, the ladies would tousle my hair and share Yiddish endearments. I pretended not to notice but I loved the attention.

My father stopped in the shop occasionally from his adjacent office, and all of the ladies told him what a good worker I was. I enjoyed my day, the ladies were to me like a room full of bubbies, and after that I accompanied my father to the shop whenever possible, until he became ill and could no longer continue his business (but that is another story!).

My father immigrated from the town of Komarno, which was an important garment center in pre-war Poland. He hired ladies who had old country experience in the clothing business. While most of the time he was dealing with sales and bookkeeping and similar office tasks, he took his turn at the sewing machines, especially when there were deadlines that had to be met.

Besides the rattle of sewing machines, the shop was never silent. Often the women talked while they worked about the old country, about coming to America and of course neighborhood gossip. "They went to Gluckstern's for their anniversary" or "At his *aufruf* my nephew looked like he was going to jail, not getting married." Often a tale would hit home, and the office would erupt in laughter or tears—or both—and similar experiences would be shared.

Sometimes they would even sing—"Raisins and Almonds" (*Rozhinkes mit Mandlen*) was a favorite—and they would all join in. It seems incredible, but while they talked or kvetched or sang, these skilled women continued to work nonstop, and they never "missed a stitch" (pun intended)!

In school I would later hear nothing good about sweatshops. Yes, the work was hard and the hours long, but the women seemed to enjoy their jobs and the community with which they worked.

Besides, let's be honest—where else could such immigrants find work? They all spoke Yiddish and, if they spoke English at all, it was with a heavy accent. The women also needed to leave work early on Friday and take off for Jewish Holidays—accommodations that were rare at other places of employment. Admittedly not all Jewish employers were so lenient, but my father was.

From their meager salaries, families survived, and I am sure many of their children and grandchildren now in businesses and the professions are descendants of "sweatshop" labor.

In that era, it was assumed that most of us, when we grew up, would work in the clothing industry, and the most popular shop class in junior high school was sewing. Who, then, expected that the industry would move south in search of cheaper labor, and then out of the country altogether?

I remember joining my father once at his early breakfast. Afterwards, he kissed me goodbye and headed out to work in the "city." Even though we lived in Brooklyn, to us, Manhattan was the "city."

The sun had not come up yet, and the weather was terrible. I was a young boy, and though I strained to see my dad, the rain came down in buckets and the wind was horrendous, and I soon lost him in the pitch darkness of morning. A few steps from the apartment door and it was like the earth had swallowed him up.

Suddenly, lightning lit up the sky, and for a quick second I could see not only my father, who turned and waved to me, but dozens of bundled ghost-like men and women, all determinedly marching forward, all bent against the driving rain. They came from across the street and up the block, and all moved toward the subway entrance. I know not all of them worked in sweatshops, but many of them did. In a flash, the lightning lit up the sky, and then it was gone and the darkness returned.

Nevertheless, the quick sight of that moment, seeing dozens of people braving horrible weather was incredible to me at the time, but in retrospect it was even more profound. I was seeing, in effect, a photograph of early morning Brooklyn working class people—and from that neighborhood, Jewish people—leaving their tenements to go to back breaking work—a sight that future generations would probably never see—in a world that I know has since disappeared.

About The Author:
DR. LARRY KOCH, formerly from Maine, is an educator with interests in storytelling, entertainment, writing and history—especially Lincoln and the Civil War. Larry was instrumental in founding UD's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, taking the lead in forming OLLI Dover's founding committee of UD staff, potential members and community leaders. In retirement he enjoys sharing these interests with audiences of all ages, libraries, and Jewish institutions! He can be reached at larrykoch@gmail.com.

Hesed in the Midst of Hardship

BY **RABBI ELLEN AND STEVE BERNHARDT**

After our terrible car accident, we were shaken to the core — physically, emotionally, and spiritually. In the days that followed—while we tried to process the shock and navigate the endless appointments, phone calls, and pain—something extraordinary began to unfold around us. It came not in grand gestures, but in small, steady waves of compassion: meals dropped off at our door, offers to drive, messages of concern, prayers whispered on our behalf. Each act carried with it something deeper than kindness alone. It was *hesed*.

In Hebrew, *hesed* is often translated as "lovingkindness," but that word barely captures its depth. *Hesed* is steadfast love—the kind of compassion that shows up, stays, and sustains. It is the heartbeat of community, the glue that binds people together when life feels like it's unraveling.

We saw *hesed* in every casserole left on our porch, in every text that simply said, "Thinking of you," in the people who quietly took care of things with which we didn't even know we needed help. It wasn't about obligation or sympathy; it was love in motion—a reflection of divine care made tangible through human hands.

Our accident was a moment of devastation, but what followed was a revelation. When everything seemed broken, we discovered that we were held—not just by seatbelts and airbags, but by a web of compassion so strong and tender it took our breath away.

This experience reminded us that *hesed* isn't a one-time act. It's a way of being. It's the meal you make when someone's world falls apart, the call you place weeks later to ask, "How are you really doing?" It's the decision to show up even when it's uncomfortable, inconvenient, or unseen.

We are profoundly grateful—for our healing, for our safety, and most of all, for the community that surrounded us with *hesed*. In a world that can feel hurried and harsh, your lovingkindness has been a sacred mirror, reflecting the best of what it means to be human.

May we never take this for granted. And may we, in time, pass this *hesed* forward—to others who will need to be reminded, as we were, that love is stronger than any accident, and community is the vessel that carries us through.

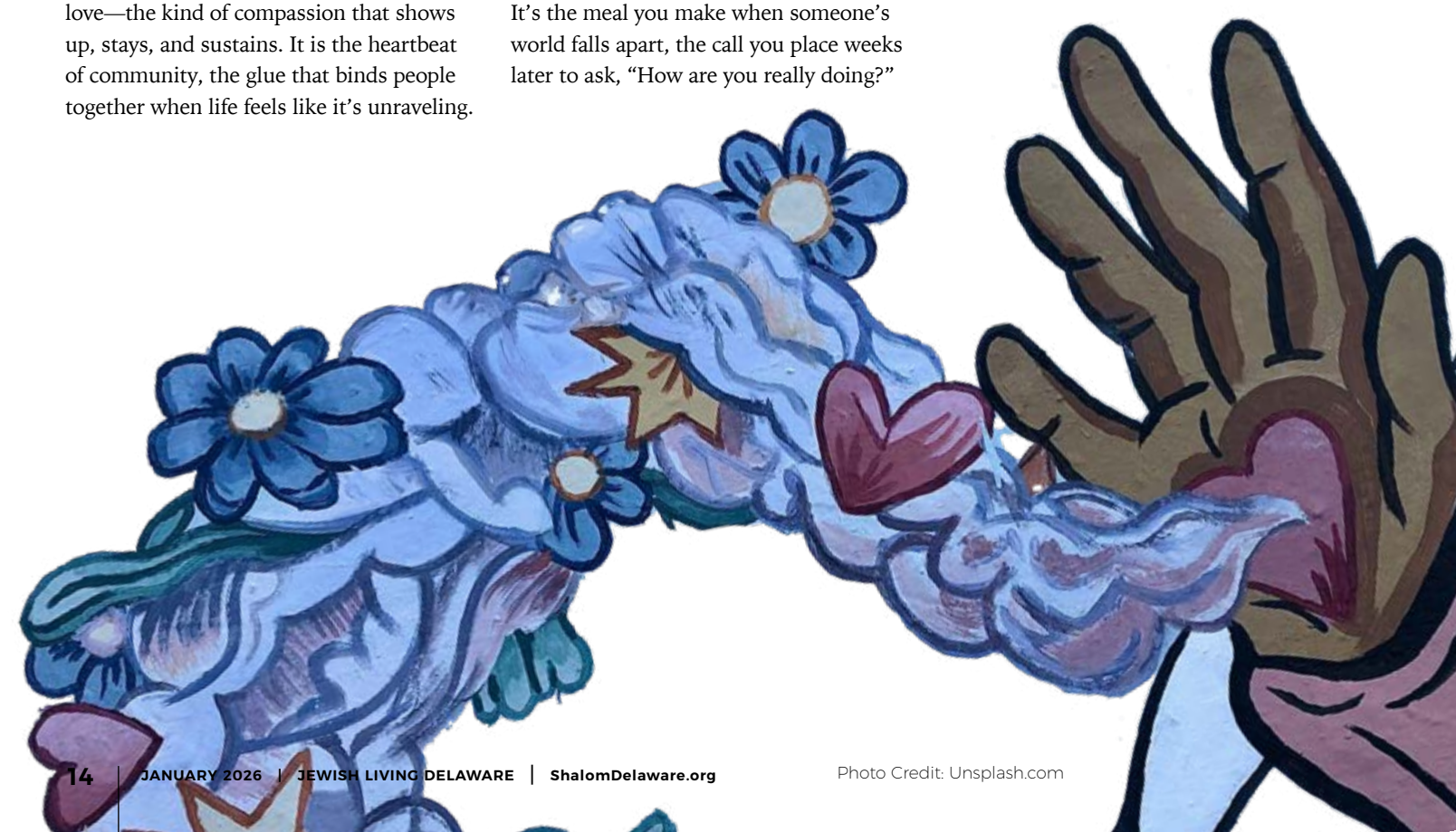


Photo Credit: Unsplash.com

Zuzima:

A Home for Contemporary Movement in the Israeli Desert

BY **JEWISH LIVING DELAWARE STAFF,**
WITH INFORMATION FROM YEDIDYA YOSSEF,
ASSISTANT HEAD OF THE COUNCIL OF MITZPE RAMON

In the expansive stillness of the Negev, Zuzima has emerged as a dynamic center of creativity, movement, and cultural growth. Based in Mitzpe Ramon, Delaware's sister city in Israel. The organization is the only contemporary dance center of its kind in southern Israel, and in 2024 it was officially recognized by the Ministry of Culture as a National Dance Center. This designation affirms what dancers, audiences, and locals already know: Zuzima is shaping the cultural future of the region through rigorous artistic training, innovative programming, and deep community partnership.

Zuzima's artistic and educational reach is remarkable for a town with a population of approximately 6,000 residents. The school operates three annual training programs in dance, movement, and performance, attracting 53 core students (ages 18 to 30)—including dancers from Germany, Portugal, New Zealand, and beyond. Its curriculum, approved by Israel's Ministry of Education, is active in 21 schools throughout the Negev and offers full scholarships to students who participate in community-focused service. This dual commitment to excellence and accessibility ensures that professional-level dance education remains rooted in the local landscape.

Performance is central to Zuzima's identity. More than 40 performances are staged annually by choreographers from across Israel, and the center produces two annual festivals—Winter and Summer—which showcase established artists, emerging creators, and stand out student works. Open workshops, artist talks, and community events invite the public into the creative process, and all are offered free of charge. International collaboration further enriches Zuzima's programming; its partnership with France's Centre Chorégraphique de Montpellier supports artist residencies, co-productions, and an exchange between cultural communities.

Perhaps most impressive is Zuzima's integration into everyday life in Mitzpe Ramon. Residents join weekly movement sessions that foster wellness and connection. Local artists use the studios at no cost, while community members participate in co-created performances which take place public spaces. Outreach extends into schools, senior centers, and informal gathering spots, reaching more than 1,000 residents each year.

These efforts are having a lasting impact. Among graduates, 57% continue working in the dance field as creators, performers, and educators; and an extraordinary 15–20% choose to remain in Mitzpe Ramon—strengthening the town's creative fabric. With over 50 public events each year and a growing network of teachers, staff, and alumni, Zuzima is helping transform Mitzpe Ramon into a hub for culture, education, and tourism.

Q: A:

"Has the idea of brit lost its meaning?"

Each month, Rabbi Peter H. Grumbacher, along with rabbis from around the state, answer your questions about Judaism.

Have a question?
ASK THE RABBI!
Send your questions to:
AskTheRabbi@ShalomDel.org

RABBI JEREMY WEISBLATT
Campus Director at University of Delaware Hillel

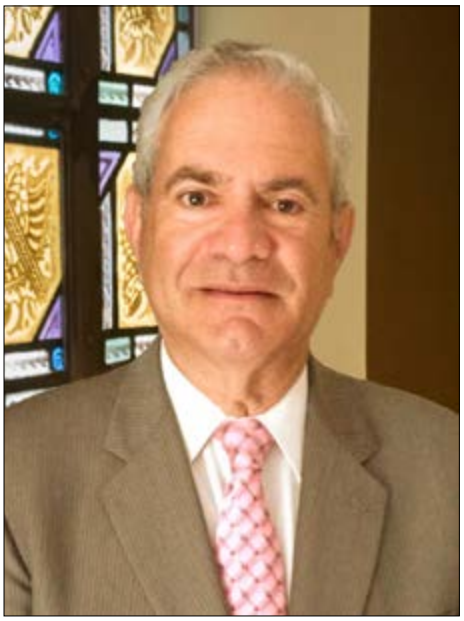
The student stepped off the bus, and, proceeding cautiously on the rain-soaked Jerusalem stone sidewalk, towards the overlook. It was late morning in January and—even with the rain, the clouds, and the soaked-through shoes—looking out at the Jerusalem hills, she turned to me and said, "Rabbi, so this is what it means to feel a part of the Jewish people." This was the student's first time in Israel and before this trip, the term "Jewish People" meant nothing to her. But now, in this moment of meaning, the term came alive before her eyes.

Rabbi Grumbacher asks a timely and essential question in asking about the relevance of the concept of *brit* today. The story I shared suggests that I support the notion that this is not an outmoded concept; however, I believe that there is no simple answer. Instead, I think that the millennial-old notion of *B'nei Yisrael* is not lost or irrelevant. Rather, I've come to see that the idea of belonging—of a purpose that transcends

generations and binds us to the past, present, and future—can be powerful and inspiring if we reframe it for the reality of 2025.

Today, communal connections are weaker than ever. More to the point, the view that all Jews are connected to something larger has dimmed greatly since October 7. But it is at precisely this moment that we need to double down on finding paths to bind us to one another once more. Time after time, the students who walk through the doors of Hillel say they are looking for something, but they're not exactly sure what. If I were to start with talking with them about Israel, or covenant, or something grand, their eyes would gloss over, and—more than likely—I would never see them again. Instead, I focus on them, on learning who they are, and connecting them with other students. So no, this is not *brit*, but a re-framing of what *brit* can look like in a world in which the majority of Jews do not subscribe to the *halachic* (legal) framework that undergirds so much of Jewish life (even if one doesn't recognize its fingerprints). What this is then is the reframing of *brit*, so that it lives on even if it looks like a shadow of what another generation might call *brit*.

Let us strive, then, to be like Moses, who sat in the back of Rabbi Akiva's study hall. We may not understand how the next generation uses tradition, but so long as they continue to turn to it, we can be assured that there will be another generation taking Torah, and making it their own.



RABBI PETER H. GRUMBACHER
Rabbi Emeritus,
Congregation Beth Emeth

For some, even the initial sign of the covenant, the *Brit Milah*, the covenant of circumcision, has lost its meaning. In days gone by, welcoming a baby boy into the covenant of Abraham was one of the most joyous occasions for a family, and surely some might say the most significant in our tradition. But like so many other Jewish traditions among some of our sisters and brothers, it has gone the way of the dodo bird.

Circumcision itself is one thing, but that only takes care of the word *milah*. It is the idea that by going through the ritual and not merely having a physician perform the physical act in a hospital on any convenient day—not necessarily the required eighth day—one links one generation to the next . . . the chain of tradition continues, the *brit*/ covenant is reaffirmed.

There is more than the *milah* that defines our covenant, our *brit*. God made a covenant with Noah, sealed with the rainbow as a sign, that no longer will the there be a Divine interference in the continuity of life on earth. That is to say, if we want to blow ourselves up, that's our business but God won't do it. But shouldn't we have to establish our own *brit* with humanity not to turn ploughshares into swords, pruning hooks into spears, and the earth into an environmental lethal injection?

Of course, there is the covenant at Sinai, when we proclaimed *na'aseh v'nishmah*, "We shall do and we shall hear." God said, "I shall be your God and you shall be My People." A partnership, a covenant, a *brit*. Whatever your understanding of God, even with all the questions, even doubts, you might have about God's existence, you cannot dismiss the role our ancestors saw God playing in our history. Indeed, we had—and sadly have—some very tragic events, but we are still here to talk about them.

The concept of covenant is one of the most compelling in our tradition. The fact of covenant is one of the strongest signs of hope we have. We Jews, especially our kids and theirs—are too quick to scoff pillars of our faith. What can we do to strengthen the idea of *brit*? You ask me questions . . . my turn to ask you.

MODERNISM

AT THE JEWISH MUSEUM OF MARYLAND

BY **SUSAN ISAACS,** PhD, MFA

In January 2025, I was contacted by Director Sol Davis and Exhibits Manager Katie Andril of the Jewish Museum of Maryland (JMM) in Baltimore to create an exhibition in some way inspired by or connected to a 1998 essay that Baltimore artist Jacob Glushakow (1914–2000) wrote for the Jewish Museum's institutional publication, *Generations,* titled "Brief Burst of Glory: The founding and flourishing of the first and last school of Jewish artists in Baltimore."

Gushakow claimed, that for a period, Baltimore nurtured a core group of Jewish artists who mostly knew each other and often showed together. Many of them later taught at area institutions such as the Maryland Institute College of Art, the Jewish Community Center, and various colleges and universities, influencing the next generations of Baltimore artists and art lovers.

He included himself and 10 more artists as representative of this era, which spanned the Great Depression of the 1930s through the Civil Rights decade of the 1960s. Readers may have heard of some of these artists. You might even own a work by one or more of them: Florence Austrian, Mervin Jules, Reuben Kramer, Herman Maril, Karl Metzler, Selma Oppenheimer, Helen Ries, Edward Rosenfeld, Amalie Rothschild, and Aaron Sopher. As the project evolved, we added four contemporaneous artists not discussed in Glushakow's article: Gladys Goldstein, Perna Krick, Bennard Perlman, and Peter Scholleck. Most these artists have work in the JMM collection, which is not specifically an art museum but, instead, an institution that seeks to illuminate Jewish history and culture.

Several of this final group of 15 artists are known beyond Baltimore and quite a few are included in museum collections across the United States. In fact, I had already worked on a very large project for one of them, Amalie Rothschild, which included a retrospective at Towson University and a companion in-depth book. (www.goyacontemporary.com/publications/amalie-rothschild#tab:slideshow) Sadly, we could not track down a Helen Ries painting until after the exhibition opened. It became clear over the expanse of the project that the preservation of an artist's career following their death often depends upon family members championing and preserving their loved ones' works and reputations. We collaborated with five different artists' family members and several collectors, as well as another Maryland institution, the Maryland Center for History and Culture. (https://www.mdhistory.org/)

In the end, we created an installation of 77 objects (paintings, prints, drawings, and sculpture) by 14 artists. Of these, 45 are owned by the JMM and 32 are borrowed from private and public collections. In addition to designing an exhibition to show off these works, the museum also needed to frame over 30 of them and build sculpture stands and Plexi© cases for eight and a light box for yet another. As is typical of large exhibitions, some works required conservation treatment. We also wrote and published an illustrated catalog of 60 pages, now included in the collection of the Library of Congress and available for purchase from the Jewish Museum of Maryland. In general, such a project would normally take place over a several-year period. With the outstanding staff of the JMM and the amazing specialists engaged by the museum, we accomplished this in a bit over six months.

What specifically did we learn about these artists? We discovered that they were individual practitioners who responded to modernist ideas with a broad range of methods, materials, and styles. Their views were largely shaped by prevailing theories that emerged from Europe: Post Impressionism, Fauvism, German Expressionism, Cubism, Art Deco, Surrealism, and Bauhaus. Some of them were also influenced by a 20th century American approach to Realism and others to the Abstract Expressionism that emerged in the U.S. after the Second World War. Of the final 14 artists in the show, 12 of them studied at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA)—some for a brief period and others graduating with honors. Quite a few studied in or travelled to New York City and to Europe and beyond; others stayed closer to home, with each finding a unique voice that expressed a contemporary vision.

Photo Credit: Will Kirk

Glushakow, himself, arrived as an infant in Baltimore having been born at sea while his parents were emigrating from Ukraine to the United States. He not only studied at MICA, but also at the Art Students League in New York City (1933–36). He, like many of the artists in Modernisms, worked for the WPA (Works Profess Administration) during the Depression and served in the Armed Forces in WWII. He was an excellent draftsman who focused on modern life, especially depicting the people and streets of Jewish Baltimore. Two works by Glushakow included in the exhibition are exquisite drawings of the historic synagogues (Lloyd Street and B'nai Israel) that today flank the central structure of the JMM.

Many of the artists were close friends, among them Herman Maril (1908–1986), Reuben Kramer (1909–1999), and Amalie Rothschild (1916–2001).

Maril was a Baltimore native who graduated from the Maryland Institute College of Art, participated in the WPA, and served in the military during WWII. He developed a modernist painting style that employed flat planes of color. Believing in creating an overall harmony where all the forms "locked" together, Maril produced images where no elements could be taken away or added without disturbing his elegant, reductive compositions. He is represented in the Modernisms exhibition by seven works that span a period of close to 40 years, from circa 1941–1980. Five of them are owned by the JMM and demonstrate the development of his style from an American type of bold figuration to a stylized abstraction of landscape and interiors. Maril's work is in museum collections across the United States.

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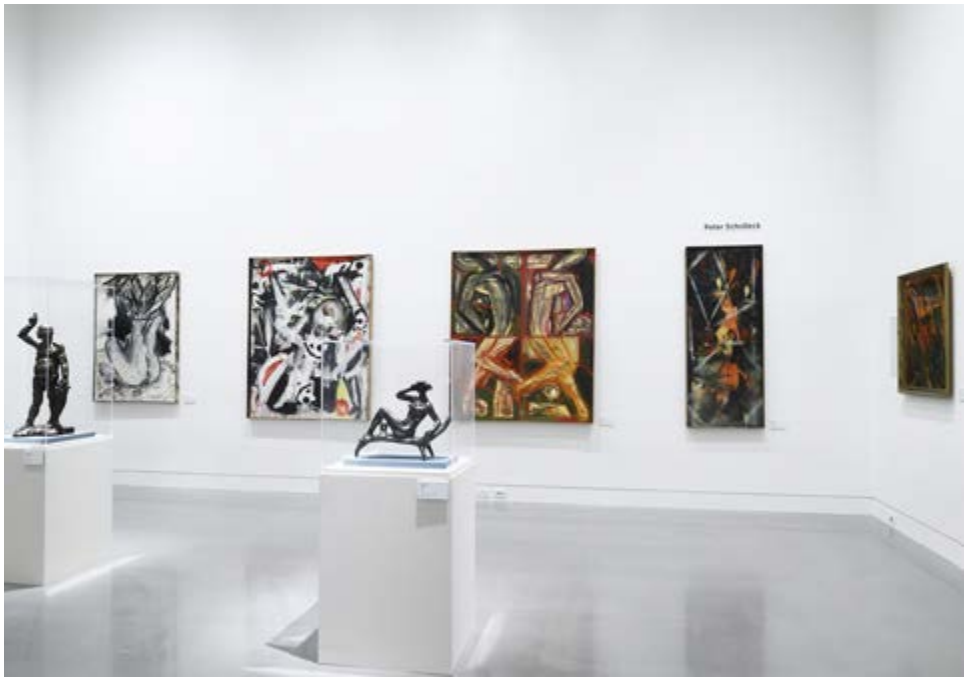
Kramer, the son of Russian immigrants, was born and raised in East Baltimore. He too attended MICA, graduating from its Rinehart School of Sculpture in 1934. Through two travel scholarships, he went to Europe to study sculpture, first at the Académie de la Grande-Chaumière in Paris and then to The American Academy in Rome in 1936. Following this, he went to London for another year to continue his sculpture studies with a Jewish expatriate sculptor, Jacob Epstein. Kramer, too, served in the military during the Second World War. Over his long career, he created an enormous body of work which includes both cast bronze sculptures and contour line drawings. Six of his table-top bronzes and eight of his drawings, all from the JMM collection, are on view in the exhibition. He was influenced by both the expressionism of Epstein and the modernism of Matisse.

Amalie (Getta Rosenfeld) Rothschild was born in Baltimore. At the age of 18, she earned a diploma in fashion illustration from MICA. For five months, she also attended what is now the Parson School of Design in New York City. Rothschild later undertook painting lessons with Richard Dicus, Herman Meril, and Max Schallinger. After a successful career as a painter, she turned her attention to sculpture, studying with Frieda Sohn. Rothschild was a prolific and highly respected artist who created a body of 1400 completed works in many different media, with approximately 380 of them now in private and public collections. In addition to creating paintings, sculptures, prints, and drawings, she also designed sets and costumes and undertook important commissions such as the Ark curtain for Baltimore Hebrew Congregation. Of the 10 works by her in the exhibition, spanning 1948–1982, five belong to the Jewish Museum of Maryland. They represent her various periods from Cubism to Constructivism and include both painting and sculpture.

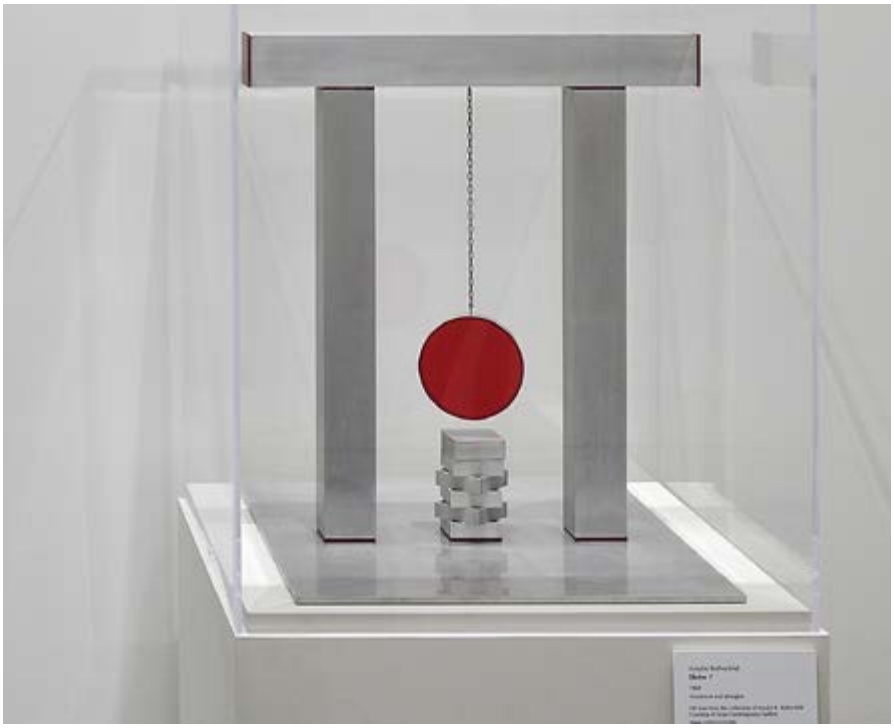
Two quite different artists, each known for their abstract works are Gladys Goldstein (1917–2010) and Peter Scholleck (1923–1969).

While Goldstein was born in Ohio, her parents were native Baltimoreans who moved the family back to the city when the artist was just three years old. Goldstein began studying art as a child in a special program for gifted students at the Maryland Institute, and when she graduated high school, she enrolled at the Maryland Institute College of Art, but left because she felt it was too conservative. She later took classes at Johns Hopkins and Columbia universities, the Art Students League of New York, and the Pennsylvania State University, studying with Hobson Pittman, who encouraged her to pursue a career as a fine artist. The seven works by Goldstein in the exhibition demonstrate her range from Abstract Expressionist paintings to an exploration of memories and feelings. She was often inspired by nature but never worked representationally. She enjoyed experimenting with differing materials and forms which are evident in the works in *Modernisms*.



Peter Leo Max Scholleck was born in Munich, Germany to Jewish parents. He was named for his father, Leo Max Czollek, who predeceased Peter's birth by just three months. In 1933, after Hitler's appointment as Chancellor, the laws in Germany transformed and in 1938, when a young teenager, Scholleck was forced to leave school. That same year, he experienced *Kristallnacht* (the Night of Broken Glass), the state sanctioned rioting that resulted in the destruction of synagogues and the looting of Jewish owned businesses, and in Scholleck's case, his beloved stepfather being taken to Dachau Concentration Camp for six weeks. The family realized they must depart Germany. They managed to get out and arrived in Baltimore in May 1939 with his stepfather dying just 20 months later from the injuries incurred at Dachau.

Scholleck never went back to school as he needed to support his family. He enlisted in the U.S. Army where he served in the Pacific during World War II (1943–1946). He was extremely useful as an intelligence interpreter as he spoke five languages. Beginning in the early 1940s, he began to make art in his spare time. He was a self-taught modernist who produced about 250 works, including paintings and drawings, during his artistic practice of about 20 years. He seemed to have learned painting largely by looking at images in art publications and through constant practice.



He was not part of an artistic group, did not attend art school, did not travel, and only showed his work in a few regional art fairs during his lifetime. Yet, by the mid-1950s through the 1960s, he had developed a sophisticated, largely expressionist style, often abstracting the figure, which places him within a national conversation on the contemporary art of his time. He is represented in the *Modernisms* exhibition with eight works that span from 1954 to1967. It is only the second showing of any of his work in public since the few art fairs he participated in during his lifetime.

To learn more about the exhibition and the other artists in the show, consider visiting the JMM before *Modernisms* closes on March 15, 2026. Make a day of it. Visit the galleries and take a docent-led tour of the historic synagogues. ■

About The Author:
SUSAN ISAACS (AKA J. Susan Isaacs) is retired from teaching art history and museum studies at Towson University. She has curated many exhibitions for the Department of Art + Design, Art History, and Art Education Galleries as well as numerous institutions across the United States and abroad. She writes and publishes on contemporary art. Isaacs holds a four-year certificate of Fine Arts from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia in painting, B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees in art history from the University of Delaware, and an M.F.A., in studio art from Towson University. You can see her work at susanisaacs.art.

Echoes of Sweida:

A Survivor's Testimony

AN INTERVIEW WITH **BASHAR ALBAROUKI** BY **LOUISE (YOCHEE) KLEIN**

Photo Credit: Bashar Akbarouki

Bashar Albarouki and his family were visiting family in Sweida, Syria, when they heard the first gunfire.

"At first, we thought it was a wedding or a celebration of some kind. The gunfire continued all day and night and started to get closer and closer to the city. Then, I got a call from my farm guard west of the city in the village of Kanaker. The guard told me that heavy gunfire was taking place in the village, and he needed to send his wife and kids to a safe place in the city after seeing all the families fleeing the village. That was when I realized something bigger was planned for our Druze community. That night was so scary for my kids and wife, but I tried to calm them down.

The next morning, we woke up to a huge explosion noise not too far away from our house. That was the first rocket to hit the city of Sweida.

I rushed the kids down to the first floor and chose a room that was far away from the street and had enough floors above in case more rockets or mortars came down, and I took down all the mattresses and built a box around my kids to protect them from any mortars and metal pieces that could penetrate through the cracks and windows. That was the scariest day and night of my life."

Bashar and his wife, Asala, originally from Syria, are long time Delaware residents. Their children were born here, and their restaurant, Ali Baba, is a familiar destination to many in the Newark community and beyond. Shortly after his return from Sweida, Bashar talked about the political changes in Syria, and how that escalated to the slaughter of more than 2000 Syrian Druze citizens during July and August.

The former President of Syria, Bashar al-Assad, was deposed in 2024 and a new government arose, led by Ahmed al-Shara, a former jihadist fighter with past ties to Al Qaeda. The latter made many promises to protect Syria's religious minorities—Christians, Druze, Alawites, and others—and rein in the extremists in his coalition who considered these groups to be heretics. Mr. al-Shara's promises helped him to get support from other countries in Europe, the Gulf nations, and the United States. But in March 2025, his own forces and the armed supporters of his government killed hundreds of civilians, starting with members of Bashar al-Assad's family and members of the same sect.

By the summer, this violence spread to Sweida, starting with a feud between warring militias. Government troops were sent to the area, supposedly to stop the fighting. Instead, they joined in the slaughter of civilians. It was clear that the promises of President al-Shara to protect minorities had instead become a pattern of government and pro-government forces targeting and murdering these minorities.

"The attack continued all day and night and we heard the noise of the mortars getting closer and closer until they hit the house right next to our house. Around 10 PM, after laying on the floor all day and night, I asked my kids if they were ok and they all replied with the same answer. 'We are ok, but we are hungry and thirsty, and our feet are freezing.' At that moment I realized how scared they were. The mortars and rockets continued falling on our city all day until the next morning. Then, we did not hear any gunfire anymore and realized there was a ceasefire.

I felt so relieved at the moment, but then I received a call from my cousin asking me to open my house front gate very quickly and I did so. I saw him with another 23 scared family members rushing into our house. When they entered the house, I took advantage of the extra help to bring in the backyard furniture as well as all the shoes from the front door. I asked them why they ran away since there was a ceasefire and things were supposed to get better, but the shocking answer was hard to believe. They said a group of soldiers were in the street calling *'Allahu Akbar'*—God is the greatest—and shooting all the people they saw moving, as well as filling the main roads with military tanks.

Another call from my best friend's wife's phone number came. At that moment, my heart stopped because I knew something huge happened. She was screaming and saying, 'They killed Sameer, Yousef, and Saleh!' I couldn't believe what I heard.

'Yes!' she shouted again, 'They killed my husband and my two kids!' I knew life had changed when I heard that, but I did not feel anything. We celebrated the younger boy's birthday just a few days ago. I had the video on my phone. Now he was dead.

Another hour passed and we heard many ISIS men shouting at our front gate.

'Come here! Open this gate! he shouted. 'Whose house is this?' he demanded. My neighbor came out and told him, 'This is Bashar's house, but he is American and did not come to Sweida this year.' Then the gunman asked, 'But whose car is this?' I forgot to take the car out of the yard.

Then, we heard gunfire. They killed my neighbor. My poor neighbor got killed trying to save us. Another neighbor got called out to the street with the same question and the answer was the same. 'This is Bashar's house, but he is in America.' Another gunshot was heard and another person killed at our door. That was not enough for that terrorist, and he tried to open the big gate. My electric door opener clicked, and my heart stopped beating. I know I locked the gate with the keys and that saved all of us from being killed."

Government forces and pro-government fighters carried out executions and massacres that occurred during this time. These fighters filmed their actions and circulated the videos online. "They would stop men in the street and demand to know if they are Druze. If they answered, 'I am Syrian,' the fighters would order them to say if they were Muslim or Druze. If they answered Druze, they would be shot in the head." Families would be forced onto the balconies of their homes and ordered to jump or be shot. Bashar's best friend's wife didn't dare open her door to recover the bodies of her husband and sons. They lay in street for days, along with the other dead.

Because of the historical and cultural ties between the Israeli Druze and Syrian Druze, the Israeli Air Force conducted airstrikes to destroy Syrian tanks in Sweida as a warning to the Syrian government to protect the Druze citizens. One of the airstrikes destroyed a tank in front of the house where Bashar and his family were hiding. "We were so grateful that Israel came to help us. Our own government was killing us."

This uneasy ceasefire on July 16th led the family to take a chance and leave Sweida. Bashar loaded his wife and children into the car, and he drove to one of the highest mountains in the region. He knew the elevation would allow him to get a cellular connection, and he began calling American

Photo Credit: Bashar Akbarouki

embassies in Europe. He was able to reach a receptionist in one of them, only to be told to call back the next day because the official had left for the day. Bashar pleaded with her. "Our lives are in danger now! We need to get out of Syria!" The person instructed him again to call back the next day.

Bashar's next call was to the American Embassy in Israel. He told his story to the person who answered and she responded, "Don't worry. I have you. We will get you out of there." She stayed on the line with him while others worked out a plan. He was given driving directions to a destination where they would be met with further help, and a day later the family was flown home from Jordan. Bashar said, "Without their help, we'd be dead."

Of the people murdered, the vast majority of them were Druze. Once he was back in Newark, Bashar was amazed to find that few people had even heard about the massacre. He has been telling his story in the hope that American politicians will learn about these events, and the ongoing hardships faced by the people in Sweida.

In November, when asked about the current situation in Sweida, Bashar explained, "First, our Druze community is still under siege and 34 villages in the southern and northern parts of the city are still under the government's control. All of their residents are living in rescue camps, in schools, and hosting houses, so we support on social media and through pressuring the government to get them to withdraw from these villages before winter. Emotional support is required since all of our Druze families went through a lot of hardships and tragedies since July. Last, and most important, is the financial crisis they are facing. No salaries have been paid for the last four months. There's no government funding or help from the public services, so everything is privately funded and all bought by humanitarian assistance. I tried to help as much as I could before I left and a lot of people who are outside the country are doing the same. Our Druze people in Israel are providing most of the help to keep us alive."

Bashar concluded, "I know my family's dangerous vacation did not stop at the 15th of July 2025, but my life has changed. I am sorry I can't say more than this; I am trying to forget what I have already shared. All that I can say about my wounded city of Sweida is that it's still under siege. Our Druze community never harmed any human, and we deserve to live in peace like humans. God rest the souls of our 2,027 Druze people that we lost. We got rid of the Assad dictator to replace him with an ISIS radical dictator that is trying to change Syria to an Islamic state and get rid of all minorities like our Druze people. Syria is not safe anymore and my family can't go there any more just because we were born Druze." ■

ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

BASHAR ALBAROUKI is the owner of the Ali Baba restaurant in Newark, Delaware.

LOUISE (YOCHEE) KLEIN is a member of Congregation Beth Shalom's Israel Connect Group.

IT'S A KNITZVAH:

LOCAL JEWISH FIBER ARTISTS CONNECT THEIR JEWISH IDENTITIES TO THEIR CRAFTS.

BY **ELLISHA CAPLAN,**
Member of the Jewish Living Delaware Advisory Committee

There is a rich community of Jewish fiber artists in Northern Delaware who I've discovered over the past six or seven years. It started when Jan Goodman invited me to meet at the Starbucks on Concord Pike on a Thursday night with some other knitters and crocheters, and most (or maybe even all) of the six to eight women that showed up were Jewish. So often, the items being knitted were not for the maker, but for a loved one or a charitable purpose. One was preparing for the birth of her first granddaughter by knitting booties and beautiful little sweaters. Week after week, I watched her build up a little cache of handmade items that were sure to become family heirlooms. I watched in amazement as Jan knitted a sweater for her daughter at a speed which seemed faster than I could ever imagine achieving myself, and another member of the group made a scarf for her daughter who was away at college. When COVID hit, the group stopped meeting, but not before solidly rekindling my love for the fiber arts and teaching me that there are plenty of others in the local Jewish community who enthusiastically—and with great skill and creativity—make beautiful items through knit, crochet, tapestry, and other related textile arts. I asked some of the people I have met to share a favorite item or items and how they connect their Jewish identity or Jewish values to their craft.

Myrna Lawrence, Newark

Myrna, who was Director of Education at Congregation Beth Emeth for many years, shared a photo of a tallit that she made at her cousin Carole's request. About it, she said, "This creation was truly a labor of love and my interpretation of the joyful vibe she was looking for! The colors remind me of stained-glass windows in the synagogue." She added that the project helped her connect to her spirituality in a way that she misses.

Patricia Goldberg, Pike Creek

Pat, who is a long-time member of Temple Beth El, is a former art teacher and an artist who has worked in numerous mediums. She is currently learning how to crochet. She chose to hand sew and paint a tallit for her granddaughter's bat mitzvah as a way of crafting a new family tradition. "My grandson wore my husband's tallit for his bar mitzvah. (My husband wore it for his own Bar Mitzvah.) I made this tallit for my granddaughter because women of my generation did not have a bat mitzvah. I am known for my flower paintings so that's why I painted flowers on the tallit."

Becky Gutin, Pike Creek

Becky is Co-State Director for Delaware of America's Tapestry, a commemorative initiative honoring the upcoming Semi-Sesquicentennial, and a regular member of the Hockessin Public Library's "Knot Your Average Fiber Group." She moved to Delaware from Pikesville, Maryland not long after retiring from Baltimore Hebrew Congregation in 2017, where she and her husband are still members.

"I rarely stitch seasonal/holiday/religious items, mostly because I forget to put them on display. When I met my husband (I am a Jew By Choice) 40-something years ago, I stitched a matzah cover and several framed Judaic pieces. It was important to me to blend my needlework with my Judaism."

Gutin shared a family sampler that she cross-stitched. She worked with a designer to create a template in honor of her 25th wedding anniversary in 2010. "It

contains motifs of things we enjoyed—my son's habit of writing in little notebooks, my daughter's summer camp for many years, our cat, our home in Pikesville, my husband's hobby of stamp collecting, our shared interests in cooking and reading, and a menorah. Anywhere you see a date, that's the birth date for the person whose name is hidden in the nearby alphabet. Our son, Marshall, has two dates, as he passed away as an infant, which is why there are dragonflies flitting around his name."

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Jan Goodman, North Wilmington

Jan is a member and past president of Congregation Beth Emeth and is a "connector" in the community of fiber arts enthusiasts: "As a lifelong knitter, knitting has always felt like more than a hobby to me. Knitting grounds me, and at the same time allows me to create something useful and hopefully beautiful.

When I sit with my needles and yarn, I feel a special connection to my grandmother—who taught me to knit—and who had such a gift for turning simple yarn into precious gifts for her family. In many ways, knitting mirrors how I experience my Jewish identity. Knitting is a very repetitive practice, and the steady rhythm often quiets my mind and provides a level of peacefulness that makes me feel as I do when I light Shabbat candles. My favorite knitting recipient these days is my grandson, and I've made it a personal goal to ensure he's always wrapped in love."

Dana Horowitz, North Wilmington

Dana, who also belongs to Congregation Beth Emeth, has knitted nearly three dozen items for the synagogue's Mitzvah Menorah in 2025 alone. Items on the Mitzvah Tree are available on Tuesdays for visitors to Joseph's Pantry to take what they need. "I learned how to knit when I was eight years old and it has been such a wonderful and comforting hobby, carrying me through many seasons of life. One of my favorite things about knitting is what a mitzvah it can be; I love seeing the joy and the feeling of being cared about when I give away one of my hats, blankets, or scarves."

In 2020, knowing that my eldest son's bar mitzvah would happen over Zoom, I decided to knit *kippot* for members of our immediate family. It was both something that I could control at a time when everything else felt like it was completely out of my hands, and a keepsake that connected our family from afar. Though we were in different Zoom rooms on his bar mitzvah day, we were brought a little bit closer together by the identical *kippot* worn by so many family members. Though my younger son's bar mitzvah was joyfully in person, I decided to learn to crochet kippot for the same family members (plus a few new cousins born since 2020). When I told my friends in "Knot Your Average Fiber Group" that I planned to crochet 14 *kippot*, one member helped me with a pattern and more than a couple crocheting tutorials, and several members volunteered to help me, lightening my load substantially, and adding even more meaning and beauty to the process.

Opportunities to Connect to the Fiber Arts Community

1. **Participate in the Annual Knit-for-Food Knit-a-Thon**
   Cantor Elizabeth Pellen of Congregation Beth Emeth sponsors a team annually. This year's date is April 11, 2026.
2. **Contribute Stitches to Delaware's contribution to America's Tapestry.**
   Visit America's Tapestry-Delaware on Facebook to find out about stitching locations https://www.facebook.com/share/g/1D8tKwchHh/, or email americastapestry.de@gmail.com
3. **Attend a Library-sponsored Fiber Group**
   Mondays at 6 PM, Kirkwood Public Library
   Wednesdays at 1 PM, Hockessin Public Library
   Wednesday, at 6:30 PM, Woodlawn Public Library
   Thursdays at 5:30 PM, Delaware City Public Library
   Thursdays at 3 PM, Lewes Public Library

Ellisha's handmade kippot for her son's bar mitzvah

Find your spiritual home IN DELAWARE

Despite being a "small wonder," Delaware is filled with many synagogue options.

From Traditional to Unaffiliated, Wilmington to Lewes, our synagogues are welcoming, warm communities happy to help you find a spiritual home.

TRADITIONAL:

ADAS KODESCH SHEL EMETH
Wilmington
302-762-2705 | AKSE.org

RECONSTRUCTIONIST:

TEMPLE BETH EL
Newark
302-366-8330 | TBEDE.org

REFORM:

CONGREGATION BETH EMETH
Wilmington
302-764-2393 | BethEmethDE.org

CONSERVATIVE:

CONGREGATION BETH SHALOM
Wilmington
302-654-4462 | CBSWilmDE.org

CONGREGATION BETH SHOLOM
Dover
302-734-5578 | CBSDover.net

CHABAD LUBAVITCH:

CHABAD OF DELAWARE
Wilmington
302-529-9900 | ChabadDE.com

CHABAD OF SOUTHERN DELAWARE
Lewes
302-377-1162 | JewishSouthernDelaware.com

HAVURAH:

CHESTERTOWN HAVURAH
443-837-5186 | facebook.com/ChestertownHavurah

COMMUNITY HAVURAH OF DELAWARE
CommunityHavurah.org

MOT REGIONAL HAVURAH
Middletown, Odessa, Townsend | MOTHavurah@gmail.com

UNAFFILIATED:

SEASIDE JEWISH COMMUNITY
Rehoboth Beach
302-226-8977 | SeasideJewishCommunity.com

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MY FATHER'S WAR:

The Jewish Stories He Carried Home and How They Shaped My Generation

BY **RENNA VAN OOT,** CEO of Jewish Family Services of Delaware

I was asked recently to share something about my parents' experiences during World War II, and how the legacy of their generation shaped my own. There are countless stories of courage, loss, and survival from that period—especially within the Jewish community. I have read Holocaust testimonies, listened to survivors speak, and stood in awe of their resilience. I cannot claim my family lived through anything comparable. But I can share our story, which is woven, in its own way, into the fabric of that history.

I grew up knowing that my father, Jim, served in the war. He arrived in Normandy shortly after D-Day and fought through France, Belgium, and Germany. What I did not fully understand—until reading his unpublished memoir years later—was how deeply the Jewish experience of the war shaped him and shaped the world in which I was raised.

A Young Soldier Leaves Home

Jim was born in 1921 in Richmond, Virginia, the son of a Yankee from upstate New York and a Southern belle. He was a cerebral and sensitive child, the sort of young man who read voraciously, thought deeply, and disliked unnecessary authority—traits not always appreciated when he graduated high school at 16 and was promptly sent to a military college.

He completed his officer's training at 20, spent a few years stateside, and eventually shipped out to England. On June 15, 1944—nine days after the Allied landing—he stepped onto the shores of Normandy.

Photos provided by Renna Van Oot

My grandmother kept all of the numerous letters my dad wrote home. In his retirement years, he gathered them together, filled in the gaps, and put together an unpublished book for his kids and grandkids. He wanted us—his children and grandchildren—to understand what he had witnessed. He hoped that by remembering, we might prevent such cruelty from ever repeating.

Awakening to Jewish Realities

My father was raised Southern Baptist, though as my aunt once said, "it didn't stick." He grew up surrounded by people who looked like him, prayed like him, and believed certain things—until he went to war.

Music was his refuge. Though he made his career as a DuPont chemist, he was, at heart, a musician: a trumpet player, a singer, a man who found harmony where words sometimes failed. In the Army he joined a quartet and soon realized that the other three singers were Jewish.

He listened to their stories. One of the men, Erich Hartmann, was the son of a German Jew who had fought for Germany in World War I, only to flee to the United States as antisemitism escalated.

In one of his letters home, my father wrote:

"I am learning things about America every day I am away from my country . . ."

It was, I think, his first encounter with the idea that Jewish history and American history were entwined—and that both were more complex than he had known.

The Doorway in Cologne

My father fought through some of the war's bloodiest months, witnessing brutality and moral collapse on a scale that defied comprehension. It was in March 1945, in Cologne, that he encountered a moment of humanity in the midst of extreme inhumanity—one that stayed with him for the rest of his life.

His unit entered the Klingelpütz prison, where Jews and political prisoners had been beaten, starved, and tortured. Among the prisoners was a Jewish man in his 50s whose legs had been tied in a lotus-like position for so long that he could no longer straighten them. After triaging others to the hospital, my father helped lift the man into a Jeep and drove him home.

"A woman came to the door. When I asked her name, she answered with

trepidation. A knock from an army officer had long been a cause for fear. I stepped back and gestured to the Jeep. The room behind her went silent as they recognized him. In an instant, people rushed outside crying 'Onkel! Papa!' The celebration began, and I was forgotten. I drove back to the prison with joy and satisfaction that I was able to do something positive in that gruesome world."

The Night He Finally Cried

For years after the war, my father held his memories tightly sealed. He built a life—marriage, children, career—without allowing himself to fully feel the weight of what he had witnessed.

Then, on the 25th anniversary of D-Day, a documentary aired showing footage from the camps.

I was nine or 10. I remember my parents debating whether I was old enough to watch. I remember the black-and-white images, the bodies, the skeletal survivors. And I remember my father suddenly rising to his feet, tears streaming down his face, saying, **"I was there. I saw that."** He left the room.

In his memoir he wrote:

"Finally, I was able to cry. I ran upstairs and sobbed on the bed. That catharsis freed me of the emotions I had been withholding for so long, memories that had been eating away at me. I can speak of those days now, but often tears come with the memories. Why do people have to treat each other this way?"

It was the first time I understood that my father carried a Jewish story—one that wasn't his by birth, but one he experienced through what he saw, whom he helped, and whose suffering he witnessed.

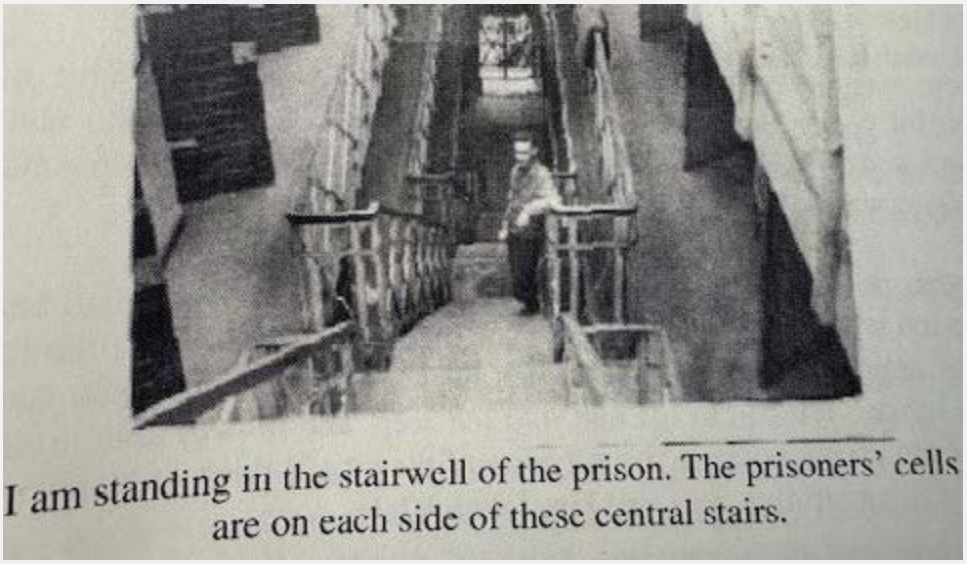
My Mother, Germany, and Choosing a Jewish Neighborhood

There is another story—my mother's. She was raised Catholic in Nazi Germany. Hers is a story for another time. After the war, she worked for the Americans helping identify war criminals and issuing new documents for German citizens. She met my father, who was then the military governor of the county she had been relocated to after her home and city were bombed. In the rubble of postwar Europe, each navigating their grief, exhaustion, and recovery, they found one another. By then he was 24 and she was 23.

When they chose a place to raise their family, they settled in a new neighborhood north of Wilmington. It was one of the first unrestricted developments in the region, built by a Jewish developer, and home to many Jewish families. I believe they chose it deliberately.

They wanted us to grow up surrounded by diversity—but especially by Jewish culture, Jewish friendships, Jewish values. They wanted us to see the beauty of Judaism, the joy of Jewish life, and the importance of standing against bigotry in all its forms.

They wanted us, in their own way, to **never forget**.



Photos provided by Renna Van Oot

Photos provided by Renna Van Oot

What I Carry Forward

I did not grow up Jewish. But, somehow, I grew up with a deep sense that the stories my parents brought home—stories of the people they felt morally bound to witness—were entrusted to me as well.

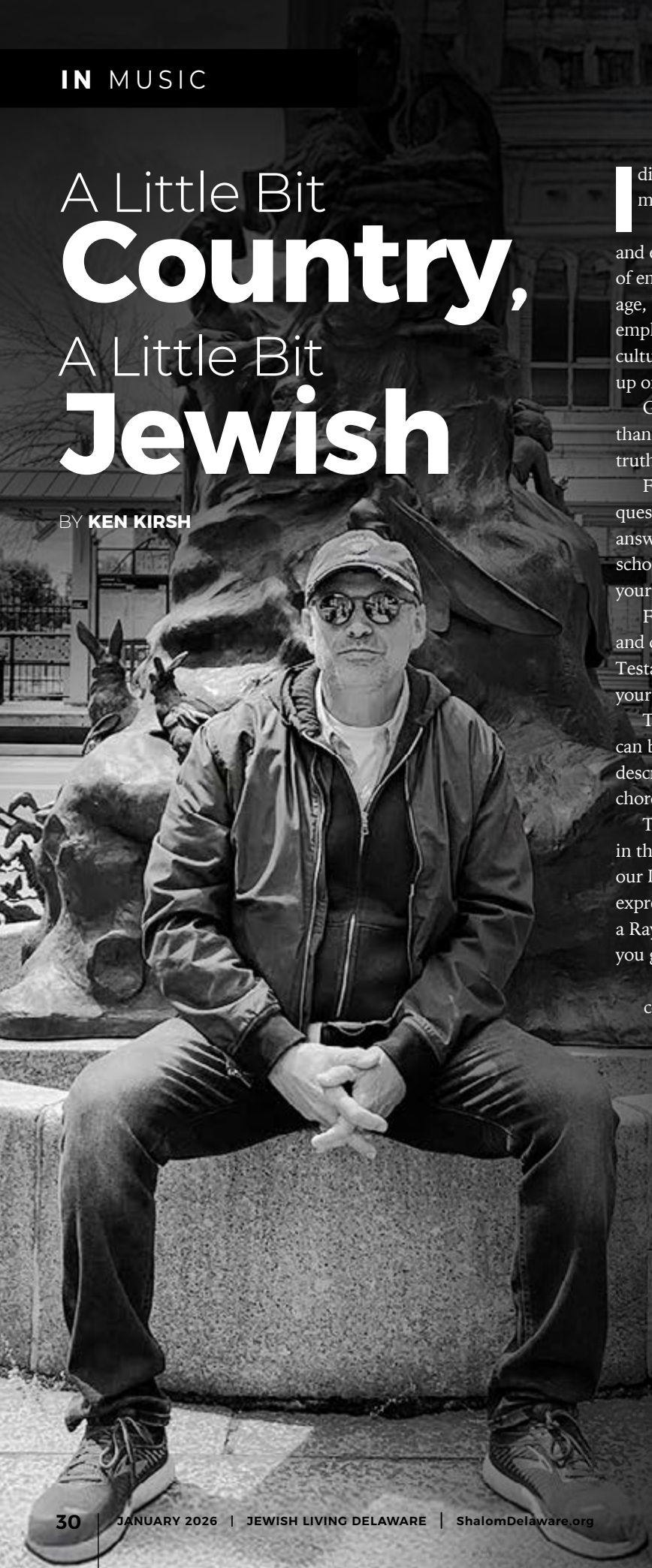
My parents taught us that history is not someone else's responsibility. Remembering is something all of us must do. And so, in sharing my father's story, I hope to honor not only his memory, but the Jewish lives that intersected with his—and shaped mine. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

RENNA VAN OOT, JD, MSS, MLSP, currently serves our community as the Chief Executive Officer of Jewish Family Services of Delaware. She is passionate about nonprofit mission-based work and has served on numerous boards, including her current position on the board of YWCA Delaware. Renna grew up and worked predominantly in northern Delaware and the metropolitan Philadelphia region, and now resides in Chester County, Pennsylvania. She extends warm greeting to all the kids from Green Acres.

A Little Bit **Country,** A Little Bit **Jewish**

BY **KEN KIRSH**



I didn't have a choice. I wanted to be a doctor but my parents made me become a country songwriter.

Not intentionally, of course. But by modeling thoughtful and engaged lives, they instilled in my brothers and me a sense of empathy and a focus on truth. I was encouraged from an early age, both at home and in Hebrew school, to question things. This emphasis has served me well in every aspect of my life. It's partly cultural; I'm guessing many of you had similar experiences growing up or in guiding your children.

Growing up Jewish and country music have more in common than you think. Both are driven by those qualities of empathy and truth while navigating life with curiosity, introspection, and humor.

For one thing, if you want to get at the truth, you have to question and debate things. It's how we arrive at single best answers, at least for that moment in time. Ask any Talumdic scholar. Better yet, ask a nine-year-old. You'll learn a lot about yourself, including how to think fast and argue more intelligently.

For another, if you want to understand what motivates, inhibits, and confuses us—and how we cope—you can pore through the Old Testament or just listen to a country song, in which case you'll have your answer in three minutes, give or take.

The grappling search for truth and solace in the face of struggle can be found in both places. It's how Harlan Howard famously described the simplicity and authenticity of country music as "three chords and the truth."

There may not be a ton of humor in the Torah (is there a rabbi in the house?) but it's definitely part of the Jewish culture. It's in our DNA, how we cope to relieve stress. One great example of expressing conflict through humor in country music can be found in a Ray Stevens lyric: "Take your tongue out of my mouth, I'm kissing you goodbye."

But as much as humor plays a role, it's the parallel between country themes and living a Jewish life—how we think, act, and navigate the world—that intrigues me. Both entail conflict, heartache, and persistence against a backdrop of struggle, where reality is embraced, not swept under the rug.

The human condition—in all its pain and glory, *tsuris* and *naches*—is front and center in both the Jewish mentality and country music stories. You won't find that corollary in Ken Burns' documentary on country music. But that wasn't his point. It's mine.

As someone who spends a lot of time writing country and other styles, I can tell you it's as grueling as climbing Masada. In a way, it's harder. Scaling the mountain requires physical endurance, one that tests your stamina, but there's a defined path and general timeline. And it begins and ends with you alone.

Writing a song requires mental fortitude challenged by the blank page, a search for inspiration with no map or time constraints, and the obsession of creating the perfect rhyme, rhythm, and reason—a story set to music that moves people, sometimes to tears. And it begins with you but ends with others. Once you put a song out there, it's no longer yours. It belongs to strangers. Hopefully a lot of them. The song means whatever they think it means.

When you scale a mountain, the air gets thin, but you can manage it. When you write a song, you make something out of thin air, but it often manages you.

Case in point, Leonard Cohen, a famous Canadian songwriter born into an Orthodox Jewish family, wrote 150 draft verses in a five year pursuit to complete his magnum opus "Hallelujah." That's obsession. It's also persistence in the face of struggle that ended in an anthemic masterpiece.

Two other Jewish country and folk songwriters include Bob Dylan (raised Jewish as Robert Zimmerman) and Shel Silverstein (children's author and writer of Johnny Cash's biggest single, "A Boy Named Sue").

Country music may be more popular in the Delaware Valley than you think. There are no empty seats when Kenny Chesney, Zac Brown, Morgan Wallen, and others play large venues in the area. The energy rivals that of an Eagles game. I've witnessed it firsthand.

Another parallel between country music and Jewish living is that both acknowledge pain and problems but attempt a positive spin. This is done with wordplay and irony—huge components of Jewish humor and country lyrics—and with the music itself. Very often, the lyrics are sad, but the arrangement conveys a brighter sentiment; in this case, the music belies the lyric so it goes down easier. I call it heartache set to happiness. We know it's bad. Why make it worse?

Neil Diamond not only demonstrates this in "Song Sung Blue" but the lyric is specifically about this very concept. Putting a happy face on a sad situation isn't denial or delusion; it's a coping mechanism to express your way out of it, to one extent or another. It wasn't produced as a country song but I can sure hear Willie Nelson singing it.

Examples of country songs that use this cathartic technique of contrasting the tone of lyrics and music are Dierks Bentley's "She Hates Me," Brad Paisley's "Bucked Off", and Maddie & Tae's "Die From A Broken Heart." Here's an example of a lyric set to an upbeat song of mine, "Wishing":

> *We had a good run*
> *I didn't wanna see it end*
> *I'm not unhappy now*
> *But I was happier then*
> *He loves me good*
> *And he's my guy*
> *But it's not him I had in mind*
> *There's nothing more that I can do*
> *So I stare off wishing it was you*

The lyric already conveys regret, sadness, and lack of closure so the music avoids amplifying those emotions with an engaging sound that's more comforting. When you're getting your shoulder popped back into place, would you rather hear *"This is gonna be painful"* or *"This'll hurt for a moment then you'll feel much better"*? Even truth has its limits.

You won't like every country artist or song any more than you find every Jewish comedian funny. But if you like irony as much as I do, you can appreciate the difference in faith, broadly speaking, while the similarity in culture and human experience is undeniable.

I like to explore themes of inner conflict in relationships. These are easy to come by because mine all have one thing in common: they end. On the other hand, my parents were married for 70 years and it didn't end in a breakup. It's an admirable milestone but where's the angst in that?

In the final analysis, whether it's country music or an episode of *Curb Your Enthusiasm,* the common ground is truth, persistence, and softening pain. Country music has a lot more to offer than you think. Take it from a Jewish Cowboy. It's the *emes*.

About The Author:
KEN KIRSH grew up in Philadelphia. Cut him and he bleeds music and cheesesteaks. If you hear strains of Philly Soul in his Country Pop, you've got a good ear and that's the reason. He had a show that ran on and off in New York for three years, writes in many styles, and aspires to be a late bloomer. His music and lyrics are at KenKirshMusic.com and can be heard on all major music platforms. He can be reached at ken@kenkirshmusic.com.

Destiny, Detours, and the Unexpected:

A Review of *In Five Years* by Rebecca Serle

BY **PHILI MILLER**

Where do you see yourself in five years?

At some point we have all asked or been asked this proverbial question. But, what would you do if you were given the opportunity to live NOW what is really one hour in your future? And what would you do if that one hour was very different than your present life? Different apartment, different engagement ring, and different man. Would you think it is just a dream? Or a glimpse at your future?

Dannie Kohan is your regular nice Jewish girl from the Main Line in Philadelphia. At 28, she is living in Murray Hill—where almost every Jewish fraternity and sorority kid in the tri-state area moves after graduation—with her investment banker boyfriend, soon to be fiancé, David. When we first meet her, Dannie is preparing for an interview for which she has been waiting since she was ten: a corporate attorney position at Wachtell—the pinnacle. Following her interview, she is set to meet David for dinner, where she knows he is about to propose. Falling asleep that night, after nailing her interview and saying yes to David, she doesn't want anything to change. Then, she wakes up in the middle of the night, and everything *has* changed. This isn't her apartment, this isn't her ring, the man in her bed is not David. Not to mention that the TV is saying it is 2025—five years in the future! An hour later, she wakes up again and everything is back to normal.

Dream or not, she doesn't share this glimpse of the future with David and doesn't think too much of it. That is, until she meets the man from her dream in real life. He isn't just any man either; he is her best friend's boyfriend. Over the next five years, as other signs from this premonition of sorts seem to appear, Dannie keeps the dream to herself, and keeps her distance.

Dannie is not a litigator. She loves the order of deal making, the clarity of the language and how there is little room for interpretation and none for error. People think that her form of corporate law is less ambitious than being a corporate litigator. It may not hold the grandeur of media interviews or arguments but, at the end of the day, the law comes down to what is written, and she is the writer. Her writing and meticulous work are what got her hired. Sometimes, though, that isn't enough. All the preparedness in the world cannot stop the unexpected from happening.

So, what is Dannie to do? She has her future set for her—the apartment, the job, the man. But now, with elements of her dream appearing in her life, she isn't prepared for what is to come. Do you embrace what the future may hold or hold on to what you planned for the future?

We do not yet know what is coming. So be it. Let it be. Friendship and love. Bring tissues.

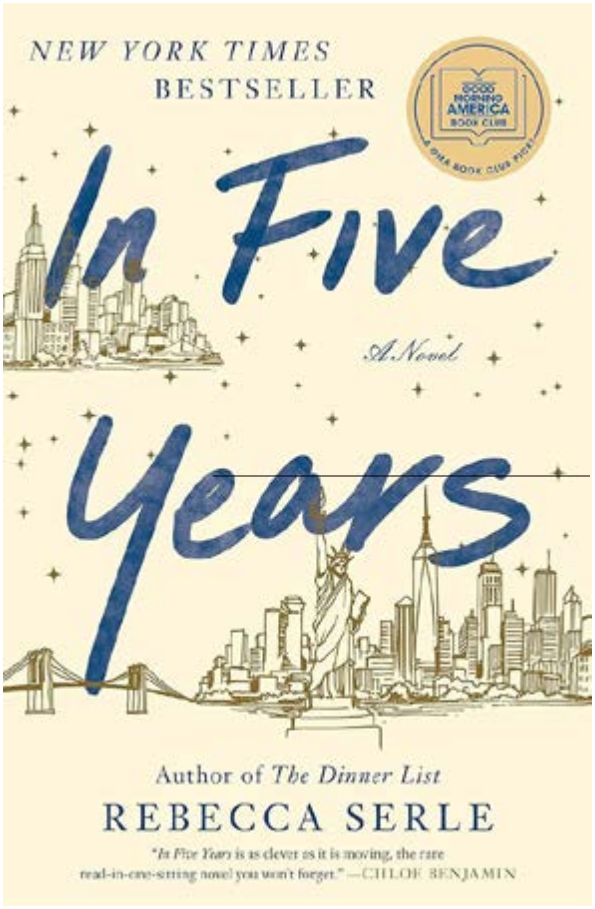


Photo Credit: SimonAndSchuster.com

About the Author:

Now that all four of her children can read independently, **PHILIPPA "PHILI" MILLER** has more time to read books of her own choosing. She is excited to share some of those books with this new column highlighting books with Jewish themes. As a former PJ Coordinator, she wants to make sure that your kids from 0–12 are signed up for PJ Library or PJ Our Way so they, too, can read great Jewish-themed books.

Bagel Power

BY **MELANIE ROSS LEVIN,**
Development Manager at Jewish Federation of Delaware

Photos provided by Melanie Ross Levin

Growing up, my dad, Dean Ross, had a bagel shop. What that practically meant was that his day started at 2 AM. While the rest of the world slept, he was already at his shop, shaping dough, boiling it, baking it, and prepping for his customers.

Unlike most of my friends' dads, who wore suits and commuted to the city, my dad was covered in flour and bagel seeds. His schedule was different, too. While other parents headed to the office, he had already put in a full day's work. And when school let out in the afternoon, he was already home. He was tired, sure—but he was there.

He always smelled like bagels. There was flour in the cuffs of his jeans, poppy seeds in the car, sesame seeds in our shoes. Bagel seeds were just part of our lives.

And we ate a lot of bagels. Every day, there was a big paper bag on the counter with that day's batch. I thought that was normal. I didn't even know people froze bagels until college—we never had to. I also found out that most people slice bagels the wrong way—frankly, in a dangerous way. At camp, I became the unofficial bagel slicer for Shabbat, cutting hundreds every Saturday for brunch. I know how to do it right and fast.

When someone in our life retired, my dad didn't just say congratulations. He baked them a giant bagel, something comically oversized. That was his way of showing someone they mattered. When someone faced a tough time, he dropped off a bag of bagels. He didn't always ring the bell—he just left them out front—and they always knew who it was from.

And when he wanted something—an upgrade on a flight, a hard-to-get doctor's appointment, a favor—he never showed up empty-handed. He brought bagels. It worked. All the time. We called it bagel power. It was his currency.

And nothing stopped him from opening that shop. Not even a blizzard.

During the Nor'easter in 1996, the snow came down so hard the city declared a state of emergency. No one was supposed to be on the roads—not by car, not even on foot. But that didn't stop my dad. He bundled up and started walking the mile to the shop. On the way, he got stopped by the police.

But of course, they knew him. He gave them bagels and coffee. They didn't give him a ticket—they gave him a ride.

When he got to the shop, he tore part of a cardboard box, scribbled "OPEN" on it, and stuck it into a giant snowbank out front. That's the photo that ended up in the paper. "Why close?" he said. "You could lose business."

While I didn't continue the family business, I learned a lot just by watching. My dad has always been deeply involved in our local Jewish community. He never considered himself particularly religious—he's the guy who rushes to the synagogue when the alarm goes off, the one who runs Mitzvah Day, and now, the President of the synagogue. He can talk to anyone, meet them where they are, and make them feel seen. And he always remembers to feed people.

Nowadays, my dad is retired. The shop has been sold. But he still bakes when there's an emergency, and he still eats a lot of bagels. Some things never change.

What else could I ask for?

Coming Full Circle: A Very Abbreviated History of Bagels

BY **EMMA DRIBAN,** Editor

Though we all know bagels are a quintessential Jewish food, many of us may NOT know why.

In the early Middle Ages, Church officials forbade Jews from baking bread altogether. In their eyes, bread—symbolically used in religious ceremony (knows as the sacrament) as the body of Christ—was a holy food and, therefore, too good to be enjoyed by Jews. This, and the Jews overall poor treatment in Medieval Europe, sparked a mass migration to Poland, which was considered relatively progressive at the time. As many Germans made their way to their new home, they brought the tradition of making pretzels with them. In their new land, the Jewish Poles quickly favored this bread, turning the twists into a round pastry with a hole in the middle called *obwarzanek*.

As for the name bagel, the origin of the word itself is oft disputed. Some say it is the German word for "bracelet," while others attribute the name to the Yiddish word beigen, meaning to bend. Others, still, "trace the name to 1683, when a Viennese baker crated the ring-like pastry in honor of King Jan Sobieski of Poland, to thank him for leading the Austrian troops to repel the invading Turkish army. Because the king loved horses, this pastry was supposedly called a 'stirrup,' or *beugel* in German."
(Aish.com)

Bagels became more common across the globe in the 20th century, as many Jews left Eastern Europe and came to North America and other areas of Europe and began selling bagels from pushcarts in places like the lower East Side of Manhattan and in the East End of London.

There is a lot to learn about the history of one of our people's most iconic foods, and I highly recommend reading up on some of it. Familiar sites like My Jewish Learning and Aish have a lot to offer in the way of modern Jewish history and other bagel-loving sources share in the storied past of the beloved bread.

If you, too, believe in the power of bagels, try your hand at making your own with this recipe from *Modern Jewish Cooking* by Leah Koenig.

Ingredients:

- 2 ¼ tsp active dry yeast
- 2 tsp sugar
- 1 ½ cups/360 ml warm water (110° F)
- 4 cups/500 g bread flour
- 1 Tbsp Kosher salt
- 1 Tbsp barley malt syrup
- 1 Tbsp baking soda
- 2 Tbsp honey
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- Sesame seeds or poppy seeds for sprinkling

Instructions:

1. Stir together the yeast, sugar, and warm water in a small bowl. Let stand until foaming, 5 to 10 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, whisk together the flour and salt in a large bowl. Stir the malt syrup into the yeast mixture. Make a well in the center of the flour mixture and pour in the yeast mixture. Gently stir with a wooden spoon until the dough begins to form, then turn out the dough onto a flat, lightly floured surface and knead well, until a supple but not sticky dough forms, 8 to 10 minutes. Rub 1 tsp oil around the bottom of a large bowl, add the dough, and turn to coat. Cover with plastic wrap or a dish towel and let stand in a warm place until puffed, about 30 minutes.

Photo credit: Freepik.com

3. Gently deflate the dough with the heel of your hand, turn it out onto a flat surface, and divide into 12 equal pieces with a knife. Working with one piece at a time (keeping the other covered with a dish towel, use your hands to roll a rope about 8 ½ inches/20 cm long. Bring the ends together to form a circle, slightly overlapping one side, and pinch to seal. Repeat with the remaining pieces of dough. Place the bagels on a lightly floured flat surface, cover with a damp dish towel, and let stand for 15 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 425° F and line a large rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Fill a large saucepan with water, set it over high heat, and stir in the baking soda and honey. Bring to a boil, then turn the heat to medium-low and keep at a gentle simmer. Working in batches of 3 or 4, gently drop the bagels into the simmering water. Cook for 30 seconds, flip with a slotted spoon, and cook for another 30 seconds. Transfer to a prepared baking sheet.
5. Lightly brush the tops of the boiled bagels with the beaten egg and generously sprinkle with your topping seeds. Bake, rotating the baking sheet halfway through, until the bagels are golden brown, 16 to 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool on a wire rack. Serve warm or at room temperature. Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 5 days. Reheat leftovers in a toaster or toaster oven.

And one last bit of wisdom from Dean Ross, **The secret to the best at-home bagels?**
"Patience, patience, patience. The dough needs to rest in the fridge overnight so it can properly cure. The next day, you must boil the dough before baking. The biggest mistake people make is trying to rush and do everything in one day."

SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION FROM:

DELAWARE GRATZ ENDOWMENT FUND

The mission of Delaware Gratz has always been and will continue to be the education of Jewish teens. Although we are no longer offering traditional classes, we are continuing to offer Jewish teens the opportunity to continue their Jewish education.

Delaware Gratz Endowment Fund will now be offering grants and scholarships to Delaware teens (currently in 9th grade) to attend educational opportunities.

These opportunities can include:

- Trips to Israel
- Semesters abroad in Israel
- Gap year educational programs
- Attending Jewish summer camps
- Attending special programs in Israel or in the United States

... as well as many other educational opportunities

Research has shown that the best way to not only give teens a Jewish education but also encourage them to become active and engaged Jewish adults is through experiential learning. These studies have shown that experiences in Jewish camps, youth groups, spending a semester in a school in Israel, and trips to Israel have a much greater impact on these teens than actually attending traditional classrooms.

The Delaware Gratz Board is committed to continuing to enrich the lives of our Jewish teens by supporting their continued Jewish education.

Jewish Federation of Delaware

If your teen is interested in applying for a scholarship, download the Gratz application at: ShalomDelaware.org/Scholarships

Questions may be directed to Scholarships@ShalomDel.org or to the Federation office at 302-427-2100.

Young Adult Division

Creating an inclusive community for Delaware's Jewish young adults, ages 22-45.

Jewish Federation of Delaware's Young Adult Division (YAD) brings together young adults to socialize, connect with their Jewish roots, and engage in social action.

You are not one thing, and neither are we. We are all unique and YAD is here to celebrate our differences. We welcome people from all Jewish backgrounds, as well as those interested in Judaism.

For more information or to join, visit linktr.ee/YAD.JFD

Get connected with YAD! Fill out this form to join our WhatsApp server.

Our Partners:

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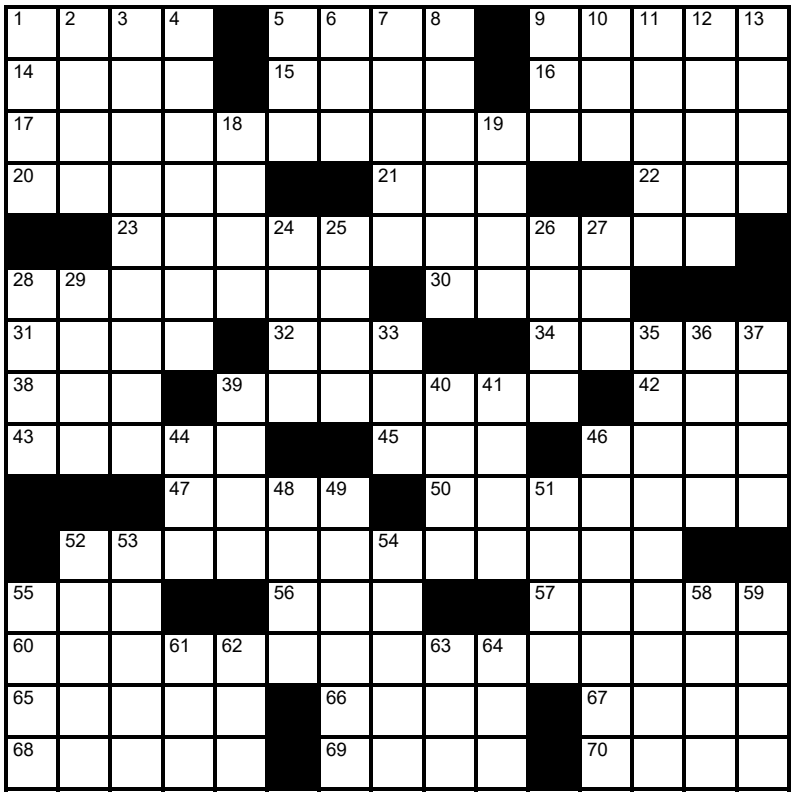
At The Deli

BY **YONI GLATT**
koshercrosswords@gmail.com

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: MEDIUM
SOLUTION: PAGE 44



ACROSS
1. Notable Rabbi Norman
5. Like all MLB players
9. One way to be taken
14. On the Mediterranean
15. Idol worshipped in Kings 1
16. Wife of Abram
17. No way she's gonna stand for matzah at the deli?
20. "Esa ___" (classic song from Psalms)
21. Chanukah buy
22. "You've got mail!" brand
23. Game show decision at the deli?
28. Activity for many a little girl
30. To be, in Paris
31. Like a Hasmonean coin
32. Mark Zuckerberg, for one
34. Knight's garb
38. Get older
39. Break into the deli and choose nova?
42. Touro email ender
43. Architectural style named after a royal family
45. MMY or Aish, e.g.
46. Yesh follower
47. Kind of pear
50. Penn State ___ Lions
52. Reveal all at the deli (flaky layers included)?
55. Bonds rating
56. Baseball had a Steroids one
57. Bar brawl, e.g.
60. Talk trash about the deli?
65. Electronic brand
66. The longest serving Jewish leader ever
67. Edinburgher
68. Shire who often co-starred with Stalone
69. Posing activity
70. Sits in the sun

DOWN
1. Sneaker string
2. Great Talmudic Rav
3. Wandered aimlessly
4. Crummy feeling
5. Degree for many a GM
6. "That's soothing"
7. Israeli party
8. "Seinfeld" character with the catchphrase "get out"
9. Pose
10. Tefillin or tallit item
11. The font, not the mermaid
12. "Brady Bunch" mom
13. A good thing to do on stage
18. Abner and Wayne
19. Congeal, as blood
24. Lyndon Johnson's younger daughter
25. Gp. that delivers crude material
26. One of the "Guardians of the Galaxy"
27. "Cash" or "cop" chaser
28. "Aw, heck!"
29. Big name in pasta sauce
33. Approves, briefly
35. "Holier Than Thou" and "One" band
36. Chief Asgard god
37. 1993 film where the title character's name is chanted
39. MLBers, e.g.
40. Function as a bank
41. Censor, say
44. Samurai sash
46. In any event
48. Where Doc Gooden often operated?
49. "Dumb and Dumber To" star
51. Day-to-day worker, for short
52. Like this, to Lior
53. Israeli brigade
54. Kind of chip
55. Stat. for Stockton
58. A Ghostbuster
59. MDs for sinus sufferers
61. Picture of health, for short?
62. Org. concerned with air quality
63. It coincides with Av: Abbr.
64. Longtime Labor Day telethon org.

OBITUARIES

Ha'makom yenahem etkhem betokh she'ar avelei tziyon vi'Yerushalayim.
May God console you among the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

Jay Gordon Cohen

Age 98, of Wilmington, DE formerly of Midlothian, VA, passed away peacefully on October 23, 2025.

Jay was born on July 5, 1927, in Jacksonville, FL, the second child of the late Frances Greenwald Cohen and Herman Cohen. He grew up in Wilmington, DE with his older brother, Bernard, and younger sister, Sydney. After he served in the U. S. Navy from 1994 to 1945, Jay stayed in the Navy Reserves and went on to Jewelry School in New Castle, PA. He apprenticed with a jeweler in Wilmington and later opened his own shop. He built his jewelry business, eventually marrying Miriam (nee Landsman) Cohen in 1951. Jay and Miriam had two sons, Arthur (1954) and Paul (1956).

In 1959, Jay opened, with partners Andrew Gallagher Sr. and Harry Rofel, a branch of Continental Jewelers. He grew the business until his career took him to New York City in 1977.

Life in New York was exciting and fulfilling with the second love of his life, Marian, and sons, Brian Johnson (1963) and Paul Johnson (1966).

Jay enjoyed photography, for which he earned assorted amateur competition awards. He diligently documented family history, leaving a valued record for generations to come. A man of gentle nature, with kindness and a keen intellect, he leaves behind his wife, Marian; his sister, Cyd; four sons, Art (Cathy), Paul (Eileen), Brian (Joyce), and Paul (Kristin); as well as six grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, the family would request donations in Jay's name to Delaware Hospice (www.delawarehospice.org) or Jewish Family Services Richmond (https://jfsrichmond.org/donate).

Richard Bernard Flippen

Age 95, passed away November 8, 2025. Born August 23, 1930 in Williamson, WV, he was the son of the late Ralph and Mildred (nee Strahan) Flippen. Richard received his undergraduate degree from West Virginia University and his PhD from Carnegie Mellon. He worked as a research physicist at Dupont for decades.

Preceded in death by his brother, William; Richard is survived by his wife of 64 years, Dorothy (nee Miller); son, Alan (Joey); daughter, Annette (Jeff); grandchildren, Rachel and Nicole.

Dr. Gershon Klein

Dr. Gershon A. Klein passed away on Wednesday, November 26 at the age of 86. Gershon is survived by his wife, Goldie; sister, Barbara Miller; three children: Philip Klein, Sandy Bryan, and Ted Klein; and six grandchildren.

Gershon was a long-time pediatrician in Newark, Delaware. He spent 31 years in the Delaware Army National Guard and retired as a Brigadier General and State Surgeon General. He also co-founded Albert Einstein Academy in 1970. Gershon enjoyed playing tennis and kayaking.

In lieu of flowers, send donations to Albert Einstein Academy.

Joseph Edward Rich

Joseph Edward Rich, M.D., 78, of Wilmington, Delaware, passed away November 29, 2025, in Memphis, Tennessee, while visiting family for Thanksgiving.

Born in Wasserburg am Inn, Germany, to Hungarian Holocaust survivors, Joseph was the son of a resistance fighter who survived a work camp and a mother who survived by hiding in Budapest. The family immigrated to Rockland County, New York, when Joseph was a child.

Dr. Rich graduated from Muhlenberg College in 1968 and earned his medical degree from the University of Saarland, Germany, in 1976. He completed OBGYN training at Stanford University and delivered approximately 3,900 babies throughout his distinguished career. Dr. Rich served as an Air Force base physician in Oklahoma City, responding as first physician during the 1995 bombing. He later provided medical assistance after Hurricane Katrina.

A man of boundless curiosity and infectious enthusiasm, Dr. Rich's greatest passion was travel. Over a decade, he visited more than 270 countries and provinces, often solo, staying in hostels, riding cargo ships, and documenting each journey in detailed travel logs.

Dr. Rich brought joy through elaborate adventures and magical experiences for those he loved. In his final years in Delaware, he found community through his synagogue and the Jewish Community Center, treasuring weekly family

gatherings and working to strengthen bonds with his children and grandchildren.

He is survived by his children Elizabeth (Kristian), Julia (Henry), and Alexander (Svetlana); eight grandchildren; his brother David (Bey); and his niece.

Memorial donations may be made to the Jane Goodall Institute at https://www.janegoodall.org.

Bonnie Sherr

Bonnie Sherr (nee Milgrom) of Wilmington, DE, passed away on November 5, 2025, surrounded by her loved ones. She leaves behind her children Erik, Scott (Nancy), Charles (Beth), Kate (Thomas), and Rachel (Francis); as well as her seven grandchildren. She will also be greatly missed by her dear friend and colleague, Meredith Rosenthal, whom we consider to be part of our family.

She is predeceased by her loving husband of over 30 years, Selvino Cericola; as well as her first husband, Herb Sherr; and her sister, Adrienne Edelstein.

Born in Philadelphia in December 1946, Bonnie was a graduate of Germantown High School and attended the University of Delaware. She was a role model for businesswomen in the community. She spent years as a well-respected, celebrated real estate agent, who was known for being bold, confident, and creative.

Although she spent a lot of time committed to beautifying the city, Bonnie was just as passionate about her non-profit work. She spent years volunteering, fundraising, and helping with events. She served on the board of the Alzheimer's Association of the Delaware Valley and was a founder with the Fund for Women.

Bonnie was just as active in her everyday life. She loved to exercise and travel all over the world. She was also a wonderful mother and grandmother. She adored her grandchildren and never missed the chance to celebrate them.

She will be dearly missed by her family, her friends, and her peers.

In lieu of flowers, please join us in making a donation to the Alzheimer's Association Delaware Valley Chapter online at alz.org or by mail to 399 Market Street, Suite 250, Philadelphia, PA 19106.

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Obituaries are placed free of charge.

For more information or to submit an obituary, please email:
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1 L	2 A	3 M	4 M		5 M	6 A	7 L	8 E		9 A	10 B	11 A	12 C	13 K
14 A	S	E	A		15 B	A	A	L		16 S	A	R	A	I
17 C	H	A	L	18 L	A	H	B	A	19 C	K	G	I	R	L
20 E	I	N	A	I			21 O	I	L			22 A	O	L
		23 D	I	L	24 L	25 O	R	N	O	26 D	27 I	L	L	
28 D	29 R	E	S	S	U	P		30 E	T	R	E			
31 R	A	R	E		32 C	E	33 O			34 A	R	35 M	36 O	37 R
38 A	G	E		39 P	I	C	K	40 L	41 O	X		42 E	D	U
43 T	U	D	44 O	R			45 S	E	M		46 A	T	I	D
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60 S	C	H	61 M	62 E	A	R	C	63 A	64 M	P	A	I	G	N
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68 T	A	L	I	A		69 Y	O	G	A		70 T	A	N	S

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