



Coalition for  
Jewish Learning

**MILWAUKEE**  
JEWISH FEDERATION

**NEW JEWISH BOOKS & FILMS**  
**in the READING ROOM**  
**Spring 2011**

**FICTION:**

Appelfeld, Aharon. *Blooms of Darkness*

Acclaimed Israeli writer Appelfeld writes about a young Jewish boy in Nazi occupied Ukraine whose mother leaves him in the care of Mariana (a childhood friend) –a prostitute – to save his life. A poignant coming-of-age tale set during the Holocaust.

Bloom, Amy. *Where the God of Love Hangs Out*

Bloom, author of the bestselling Jewish novel *Away*, writes two series of short stories examining the love relationships of a number of couples, including a biracial family. Her stories explore the complexity of love and the emotions of longing, obsession, and loss.

Cameron, Michelle. *The Fruit of Her Hands: The Story of Shira of Ashkenaz*

This book of historical fiction relates the story of the great Talmudic scholar of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Rabbi Meir of Rothenberg, Germany, as told through the eyes of his wife, Shira. The novel delves into the anti-Semitism of medieval Europe, including a disputation, the burning of the Talmud, and a true story of blood libel. The character of Shira is totally fictionalized, but Rabbi Meir was quite real and an ancestor of the author's.

Cohen, Matt. *Emotional Arithmetic*

The story of Melanie, a middle-aged wife and mother, who is emotionally fragile and still struggling to recover from the scars of her childhood in the Drancy concentration camp. Almost 40 years later, Melanie has two unusual visitors, men who befriended her in the camp – one a famous Soviet dissident, and one a fellow child in the camp who is still in love with her. Note: See the movie in our collection based on this book, *Autumn Hearts: A New Beginning*, with Susan Sarandon.

Dershowitz, Alan M. *The Trials of Zion*

Part thriller, part courtroom drama, Dershowitz's third novel takes readers into the Middle East following an act of terror. Dershowitz's protagonist, celebrity lawyer Abe Ringel, is pulled into a trial when his daughter, an American lawyer, joins the legal team to defend a Palestinian arrested for an act of terror. Abe finds he must win the Palestinian's case to save his daughter's life. This fast-paced novel takes readers inside both the American and the Israeli court systems, showcasing their differences.

Epstein, Joseph. *The Love Song of A. Jerome Minkoff: and Other Stories*

This satirical collection of fourteen short stories focuses mainly on male middle-aged Chicago Jews, looking at their lives – some with regrets, and others attempting new beginnings.

Freed, Lynn. *The Servants' Quarters*

A Jewish girl, her mother and sister are saved from financial ruin by a disfigured pilot from World War II – who invites them to live in the servants' quarters of his large home in South Africa. This unconventional romance spans 20 years.

Gilmore, Jennifer. *Something Red*

Gilmore, the author of *Golden Country*, writes a new novel about an American Jewish family set in 1979 in Washington D.C. The novel shifts between the viewpoints of each character – Sharon, a caterer; Dennis, who works for the government and travels back and forth to Moscow; and their children, a son entering Brandeis and a 16-year-old daughter. The novel looks at how the immigration story has effected second and third generations, and examines what it means to be a “radical”.

Goldstein, Rebecca. *36 Arguments for the Existence of God*

This much acclaimed new work of fiction delves into the debate between faith and reason. Cass Seltzer, a professor of the psychology of religion (and a secular humanist), faces some challenges when his new book becomes a bestseller; an old girlfriend enters his life; and he struggles internally with the teachings of his prior mentor and his encounters with a six-year-old Hasidic mathematical genius. The appendix offers 36 succinct explanations for belief in God.

Grossman, David. *To The End of the Land*

Grossman’s much acclaimed and newest novel focuses on a trio of characters: Ora, Ilan and Avram. When Ora son, Ofer, re-enlists in the army (for a dangerous mission) right after finishing his term of service, Ora decides to hike to the Galilee to escape the situation. She convinces Avram – a friend, former lover (and Ofer’s real father, although they’ve never met) – to join her. Avram himself has never psychologically recovered from his internal wounds being a POW during the Yom Kippur War. Grossman is considered one of Israel’s premier writers today, and this novel continues his theme of exposing the damaging effects of war.

Jenoff, Pam. *Almost Home*

Suspense thriller about a Jordan, a U.S intelligence agent who returns to her native England, where her boyfriend, Jared, had drowned 10 years before. When Jared died, he was conducting research on World War II. Learning that his death may not have been accidental, as believed, she is drawn into Jared’s research and the dangerous secret he had uncovered.

Kellerman, Faye. *Hangman: A Decker/Lazarus Novel*

A new mystery with LAPD detective Peter Decker and his wife, Rina Lazarus. Decker is contacted by a teen who tells him that his parents are missing. Fifteen years before, Decker was involved in a homicide case in which the teen’s father confessed to a murder he didn’t commit to cover for a classmate. After the truth was found, the man became a professional killer. Add to this the homicide of a neonatal nurse, and Decker and Lazarus have their work cut out for them.

Kertes, Joseph. *Gratitude*

Winner of the National Jewish Book Award for Fiction, *Gratitude* is a saga of love, betrayal and redemption set in Hungary during World War II. The story follows a family of wealthy Hungarian Jews from 1944-45, who mirror the fate of the Jews of Hungary.

Levin, Daniel. *The Last Ember*

A gripping thriller that takes Jewish American lawyer Jonathan Meyer from Rome to Israel to search for a 2,000-year-old artifact, uncovering secrets of the illegal antiquities trade. The worlds of politics, archaeology and terrorism collide in this exciting read.

Mawer, Simon. *The Glass Room*

Set in Czechoslovakia between the two World Wars, *The Glass Room* focuses on a real house – The Landauer House – designed as an example of modern architecture in the 1920's. The centerpiece of the house is its unique room surrounded by glass windows. The novel begins between the two wars, and mirrors history in this region as it looks at the shifting owners of the house, and what fate holds for each through the Second World War. *The Glass Room* was a finalist for the 2009 Man Book Prize.

Ratner, Austin. *The Jump Artist*

Fictionalized account of the true story of photographer Phillippe Halsman, who was falsely accused in interwar Austria of murdering his own father. Halsman and his father were hiking when his father fell off a cliff. An anti-Semitic kangaroo court convicted Halsman and sent him to prison, stirring up anti-Semitism throughout Austria.

Rice, Anne. *Angel Time*

A seraph, or angel, comes into the world of Toby O'Dare, a murderer by trade. The seraph offers Toby a chance to save lives rather than to murder. The seraph takes Toby back in time to thirteenth-century England during the blood libels, when Jews are accused of ritual murder, and Toby is offered a chance of salvation in this highly unusual tale.

Rosner, Elizabeth – *Blue Nude*

Danzig, a 58-year-old German painter in San Francisco, becomes intrigued when Merav, a young Israeli artist begins to model for his art classes. She begins to model for him privately, and a relationship develops revealing roots in the past. Danzig and his sister (also a narrator) were the children of a Nazi official, while Merav is the granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor. The paperback version features a Reader's Group Guide and an interview with the author.

Sabato, Haim. *From the Four Winds*

Well-known Israeli author Sabato writes a semi-autobiographical novel of a young boy who moves to Israel with his family after they are from Egypt in the 1950s. The story focuses on the boy's friendship with Farkash, an older Hungarian Holocaust survivor who takes the boy under his wing and mentors him

Schine, Cathleen. *The Three Weissmanns of Westport*

A Jewish adaptation of Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, this version involves a Jewish woman, Betty Weissmann, whose husband says he's divorcing her after almost 50 years - for his young secretary. Betty, left without ample funds, must move to a Westport, Connecticut beach cottage where her two daughters – both single – console her. Due to their own financial predicaments, they move in as well – and struggle with matters of the heart. Often clever, funny and light-hearted, *The Three Weissmanns of Westport* is an enjoyable read.

Skibell, Joseph. *A Curable Romantic*

Described as “intellectual comedy of the highest order”, this complex novel juxtaposes the life of fictional character Dr. Jakob Sammelsohn, an incurable romantic, who falls in love with Freud's most famous patient, Emma Eckstein. Unfortunately for all concerned, a dybbuk appears, and Jakob moves on to a new lover – a patron of the Esperanto movement. The dybbuk, however, is hard to shake off. Set in Eastern Europe and Vienna in the 1890's, this inventive novel travels between the worlds of superstition and science – with much humor along the way.

Spark, Debra. *Good for the Jews*

Described as a “smart, funny, sexy novel set in Madison, Wisconsin”, this novel looks at a group of Jews who are culturally, versus religiously Jewish. Young, attractive Ellen Hirschorn is at the heart of the novel. Alex, a man eighteen years her senior, is attracted to Ellen. Alex also happens to be the superintendent of the school in which Ellen’s older cousin, Mose, is a high school teacher. Loosely based on the book of Esther, this fresh novel touches on themes of rivalry in the workplace, romantic entanglements, family and anti-Semitism.

Steinberg, Milton. *The Prophet’s Wife*

Milton Steinberg is famous for his classic novel *As a Driven Leaf*, set in Talmudic times. *The Prophet’s Wife*, was a manuscript of Steinberg’s, a novel of love, faith and infidelity that is newly published posthumously. It tells the story of the prophet Hosea, commanded by G-d to take the prostitute Gomer as a wife.

Stern, Steve. *The Frozen Rabbi*

In a combination of fantasy and satire, Stern writes about a rabbi from an 18<sup>th</sup> century shtetl of Europe who has been frozen in a block of ice and handed down as a “family inheritance”. Then one day, in 1999, he thaws during a power outage in 15-year-old Bernie Karp’s basement. The rabbi, Rabbi Eliezer ben Zephyr, was a mystic who performed out-of-body experiences. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, he is enthralled by capitalism and decides to make a business out of Enlightenment. The story vacillates between the present day and the past – telling about how Bernie changes through meeting the rabbi, and sharing the story of the rabbi’s past. Often funny – and certainly unusual – *The Frozen Rabbi* received a starred review from Booklist magazine.

Weber, Katharine. *True Confections*

Alice Ziplinsky was raised a Unitarian, but married into the Ziplinsky family – owners of the famous “Zips’ Candies” chocolate factory. Throughout this novel, Alice uncovers the truth of the company’s history, beginning with its creation by Hungarian Jewish immigrants. Weber blends fact with fiction in this delectable tale of three generations, told by an unusual narrator.

New Spring Titles:

Frank, Rina	Every House Needs a Balcony
Jenoff, Pam	A Hidden Affair
Krauss, Nicole	The Great House
Ragen, Naomi	The Tenth Song
Reiken, Frederick	Day for Night
Roth, Philip	Nemesis
Schwarz, Ghita	Displaced Persons
Solomons, Natasha	Mr. Rosenblum Dreams in English

**NONFICTION:**

Avrutin, Eugene. *Photographing the Jewish Nation: Pictures from S. Ansky’s Ethnographic Expeditions.*

Contains 169 photographs of the shtetl taken by S. Ansky, author of the classic Yiddish play *The Dybbuk*, accompanied by six essays written by members of the Petersburg Judaica. Many of Ansky’s ethnographic studies had previously been locked for decades in Soviet vaults.

Bamberger, Rabbi Moshe. *Great Jewish Letters A Collection of Classic and Inspirational Writings of Torah Sages and Jewish Leaders*

Collected in this large attractive volume are 120 letters, translated from the Hebrew, written by renowned Torah scholars and leaders including Rashi, Rambam and the Vilna Gaon. The letters reveal much about history, as well as the men who wrote them. The letters are organized by topic and there is a brief biography given of each writer, as well as the context of the time period in which the letter was written.

Begley, Louis. *Why the Dreyfus Affair Matters*

Begley, a novelist and retired lawyer, gives an accurate and succinct account of the Dreyfus Affair, in which a Jewish captain in the French army in 1897 was falsely accused of selling secrets to the Germans. Begley also writes what we can learn from the Dreyfus Affair and trial that applies to political situations in our world today.

Chasnoff, Joel. *The 188<sup>th</sup> Crybaby Brigade: A Skinny Jewish Kid from Chicago Fights Hezbollah – A Memoir*

A hilarious, often poignant account of author Chasnoff's experiences as a 24-year-old American Jew entering the Israeli army and living among 18-year-old Israeli males. Chasnoff, an Ivy League graduate, entered the Israeli army after being unable to make a living as a stand-up comic in New York. He follows his Israeli girlfriend to Israel, and ends up being trained on a Merkava tank headed for Lebanon. This irreverent, often funny personal account will be hard to put down, and dispels many pre-conceived notions of what the Israeli army is really like.

Fader, Ayala. *Mitzvah Girls*

Winner of a National Jewish Book Award, this ethnographic study examines how Hasidic girls are trained to become Hasidic women. The author spent years studying and interviewing young women in Borough Park, Brooklyn, analyzing how they are mentored and how they view their lives and their futures. The author, who specializes in ethno linguistics, looks at both their formal and informal educations, and the role language plays in their lives.

Feiler, Bruce. *America's Prophet: Moses and the American Story*

Feiler, author of *Walking the Bible* and *Abraham*, presents another biblical exploration, this time of Moses. Feiler postulates that Moses is one of the biggest inspirations in American life, a model for politicians and leaders in throughout our history in movements such as civil rights and religious freedom. As in his previous books, Feiler walks through actual sites from American history and consults with experts as to Moses's influence on our nation and its leaders.

Gilder, George *The Israel Test*

Best selling author and respected economist Gilder presents Israel as a "leader of human civilization, technological progress and scientific advance". He contends that hatred of Israel stems from jealousy and resentment of its success. According to Gilder, countries that support Israel ultimately have done well with this choice, and those who oppose Israel have not. Gilder provides evidence to show how Israel has become a leader in technology, military invention and entrepreneurial creativity – and discusses how the Palestinian Arabs have benefited from living in Israel.

Greenberg, Michael. *Beg, Borrow, Steal: a Writer's Life*

Greenberg, the author of *Hurry Down Sunshine*, writes about the difficulties of being a writer in New York City today. In a series of short essays, he writes about his background growing up in a Jewish family in the scrap metal business in New York, and how he evolved - from cab driving, selling cosmetics and working in the stock market - into the professional writer he is today.

Halkin, Hillel. *Yehuda Halevi*

Halkin, well known as a writer and a translator of Hebrew literature, presents a biography of Yehuda Halevi – one of the most famous Hebrew poets. Halevi was a philosopher, poet and physician who lived during the Golden Age of Spain. He is best known for writing *The Kuzari* and "songs of Zion", as well as secular poetry. Part of the "Jewish Encounters" series by Nextbook Press.

Kaunfer, Elie. ***Empowered Judaism: What Independent Minyanim Can Teach Us About Building Vibrant Jewish Communities***

Rabbi Kaunfer examines the growing trend in America today of independent minyanim. Himself a leader of one such minyan, Kaunfer analyzes the needs of young American Jews today and ways in which we can build community.

Klitsner, Judy. ***Subversive Sequels in the Bible***

Klitsner, a disciple of biblical scholar Nechama Leibowitz, has taught at Pardes, JTS and Limmud. Most noted in this book, winner of a National Jewish Book Award, is her ability to make new and unusual connections between Biblical stories, such as Noah and Jonah. The book is filled with these surprising connections, while remaining faithful to biblical text.

Koenig, Rivky. ***Crafting Jewish: Fun Holiday Crafts and Party Ideas for the Whole Family***

This colorful, attractive book offers over 120 step-by-step Jewish projects for holidays and every day. Apple stamp cards for Rosh Hashanah, hanging flower balls, children's costume accessories for Purim, and a beautiful seder plate are just a few of the craft projects presented. Recipes are also given for traditional foods for each holiday.

Ladies Auxiliary of Yeshiva Masoras Avos. ***Dining In Again***

Over 550 new kosher recipes are presented in this sequel to the popular *Dining In* cookbook. Also available is a supplement booklet of recipes exclusively for Pesach

Marks, Gil. ***Encyclopedia of Jewish Food***

Look up a food and you'll learn its origin, it's history – and if you're lucky, a recipe for preparing it. The histories, in particular, are fascinating. What we know today as "blintzes", for example, actually can be traced back to a 14<sup>th</sup> century food the Turks brought when they conquered the Balkans. Although there are a few black & white photos, the book consists primarily of text - as the purpose of this volume is to provide extensive background information on foods rather than recipes.

Minkoff, David. ***Oy Vey: More!: The Ultimate Book of Jewish Jokes Part 2***

This sequel to the popular *Oy! The Ultimate Book of Jewish Jokes* offers even more jokes and Jewish anecdotes to liven your spirits. The jokes are organized by subjects such as: "Romance"; "Family Fortunes"; "Matters of Faith"; and "People and Professions".

Podhoretz, Norman. ***Why are Jews Liberals?***

Commentary Magazine editor Podhoretz theorizes that as a reaction to the many historic anti-Semitic persecutions of the past, Jews have been attracted to democracy and to liberal politics. In this book Podhoretz urges Jews to switch their allegiance from the Democratic Party of the past to the current Republicans – who he believes are much greater friends to the state of Israel today.

Shabi, Rachel. ***We Look Like the Enemy: The Hidden Story of Israel's Jews from Arab Lands***

Shabi, the Israeli-born daughter of Iraqi Jews, writes about the inequities in Israeli society for Jews who come from Mizrahi (Jews from Arab speaking lands) or North African backgrounds – as compared to Ashkenazi Jews. She provides a view of Jewish history in both European and Arab lands, and includes interviews with numerous Mizrahi Jews who describe their experiences in Israel, and how they feel they have been discriminated against due to their origins, culture, and darker skin.

Senor, Dan and Singer, Saul *Start Up Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle*

Senor, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, and Singer examine how Israel has become so successful in the business world, especially in the area of technology. They look at factors that may have contributed to making Israel a leader in entrepreneurship such as: an open immigration policy (enabling motivated people to move there); the leadership and social networking qualities learned through mandatory army service; and skills of independent and critical thinking inherent in Jewish culture and educational training for centuries. The authors interviewed many of Israel's top innovators to help provide them with some of the data to support their conclusions.

Telushkin, Joseph. *Hillel: If Not Now, When? (Jewish Encounters series)*

Telushkin - a well-known rabbi, scholar, lecturer and author – distills the teachings of Hillel, one of the greatest rabbis of the Talmudic era, in this highly readable book. Hillel is known for his emphasis on ethics and righteous behavior versus strictly observance of rituals. Telushkin shows how especially in today's day and age, with increasing intermarriage and assimilation rates, there is a need to go back to the teachings and the openness of Hillel. He discusses core teachings of Hillel, Hillel's longstanding adversarial relationship with Shammai, Hillel and Jesus, and lessons of Hillel that are particularly relevant to the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Wex, Michael. *How to Be a Mentsh (and Not a Shmuck)*

A humorous book that actually presents how to go about being a mentsh - or good person - using basic morals and ethics stemming from Judaism. Wex, a yiddishist and scholar in his own right, also provides Jewish cultural and historical background, hidden within a fun read. Readers will also discover the meanings of many familiar Yiddish words they didn't actually know the true meanings of previously.

Wistrich, Robert. *A Legal Obsession: Anti-Semitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad*

Wistrich, one of the world's leading scholars on anti-Semitism, has written a monumental volume that provides a comprehensive history of anti-Semitism prior to AND after 1945. With passion and scholarship, Wistrich analyzes this "culture of hatred" still prevalent today. He shows how modern anti-Semitism, often directed against Israel, may be even more virulent in modern times than in the past.

New Spring Titles:

Fishkoff, Sue                      Koshers Nation: Why More and More of America's Food Answers  
To a Higher Authority

## **HOLOCAUST ADULT BOOKS**

Brenner, Hannelore. *The Girls of Room 28: Friendship, Hope and Survival in Theresienstadt*

Brenner, a Berlin-based journalist, interviewed ten women who survived Theresienstadt as young teenagers, and gathered for a reunion in 1991. She based this book on their experiences, using their diaries from the war as well. Of the 12,000 children interned in the camp, only a few hundred actually survived. Their experiences and photographs provide poignant and meaningful reading.

Browning, Christopher. *Remembering Survival: Inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp*

Browning, a noted Holocaust scholar and the author of the groundbreaking book "Ordinary Men", focuses here on German slave labor camps. He focuses special attention on the

camp Starachowice in Poland. Through using interviews and memoirs, Browning shows how conditions in these camps often was comparable to the Nazi extermination camps. Browning became interested in the topic after learning how the leader of one of these slave labor camps was acquitted by a German court in the 1970's.

Burger, Adolf. ***The Devil's Workshop: A Memoir of the Nazi Counterfeiting Operation***

True story of the counterfeiting operation at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp during the Holocaust – in which 144 Jewish prisoners were forced to work on creating pound and dollar notes worth billions. Burger, the last survivor of the Czech counterfeiters, provides a first person account of the operation and of his experiences. The film *The Counterfeiters* was based on this operation, known as “Operation Bernhard”.

Dwork, Deborah and Jan van Pelt, Robert. ***Flight From the Reich: Refugee Jews, 1933-1946***

Unlike the focus of most books on the Holocaust, this one looks at the Jews who attempted escape before and directly following the war. An interesting aspect of this book is that Dwork and van Pelt examine the motives of the countries who were willing to accept Jews – as well as which Jews they were willing to accept. Includes the stories of individuals as well the difficult process of escape

Gershman, Norma. ***Besa: Muslims Who Saved Jews in World War II***

The fascinating stories of Albanian Muslims who helped to shelter Jews during the Holocaust. Gershman, a photojournalist, spent five years creating this documentation. The book includes photographs of the aging children of Muslims who aided Jews during the war, as well as the stories of their families and of those they saved

Lurie-Gilbert, Leslie. ***Bending Toward the Sun: A Mother and Daughter Memoir***

A multi-generational memoir. Rita Gilbert- was 5-years-old when her family went into hiding in a family friend's attic. Eleven individuals were hidden, and both her mother and younger brother died in hiding. This memoir is written by Rita's daughter, Leslie Lurie-Gilbert, telling Rita's story as well as Leslie's story, as the child of a Holocaust survivor.

Kramer, Clara. ***Clara's War: One Girl's Story of Survival***

Clara Kramer's wartime diary can be found in the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. In this moving story of hiding from the Nazis, the 81-year-old Clara, a teacher and a Holocaust speaker, writes about how she was saved. The teenage Clara and 17 other Jews were hidden in a bunker dug under the home of an anti-Semitic neighbor in their Nazi occupied town in Poland – with Nazis living right above their heads. After the war, Clara and the other Jews did all they could to save their rescuers from the liberators in this moving tale.

Oren, Ram. ***Gertruda's Oath: A Child, a Promise, and a Heroic Escape During World War II***

When Michael Stolowitzky was 3-years-old, he was left with his mother and his Catholic nanny, Gertruda, while his father traveled from Poland to France on business during World War II. When Michael's mother gets ill, Gertruda takes an oath to take care of him and raise him as her own son in Palestine. This is the incredible true story of remarkable people – including an SS officer who helped to save them.

Bachrach, Susan. ***State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda***

A much-needed resource, this oversize volume presents many examples – including color posters and photographs – illustrating Nazi propaganda of the 1920's and 1930's. Published by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and written by Susan Bachrach – a historian and curator from the Museum – this book shows how the Nazis utilized posters, newspapers, rallies, radio and film to disseminate anti-Semitism and pro-Nazi propaganda.

Prose, Francine. *Anne Frank: The Book the Life, the Afterlife*

According to Prose, Anne Frank's diary is "the greatest book written about a thirteen-year-old girl". Prose purports that the book is "a conscientiously crafted piece of literature" rather than a simple diary – one that Anne was constantly revising in the hopes of an eventual audience, as Anne had aspirations of becoming a writer someday. Prose divides the book into four sections: "The Life", "The Book", "The Afterlife" and "Anne Frank in the Schools (which should be of interest to teachers).

Segev, Tom. *Simon Wiesenthal: The Life and Legends*

Israeli historian and newspaper columnist Segev chronicles the life of Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal in this fully documented biography. Wiesenthal himself was known for telling many varied versions of his own life story. Segev obtained access to Wiesenthal's private papers and to sixteen archives to write this biography, which includes Wiesenthal's role in the capture of Nazi criminal Adolph Eichmann.

New Spring Titles:

Berman, Irene Levin  
Buergenthal, Thomas

We are Going to Pick Potatoes: Norway and the Holocaust  
A Lucky Child

### **CHILDREN'S PICTURE BOOKS:**

(Most were donated as part of the Bess Mendelson Collection)

Bogati, Tomek. *The Champion of Children: The Story of Janusz Korczak*

A picture book biography of Korczak (pen name for Henryk Goldszmit) – the physician, writer, and pioneer in educational thought in Poland - who ran an orphanage for Jewish children. During the Holocaust, Korczak refused opportunities for escape, accompanying the orphans through deportation and the gas chambers. Although in picture book format, due to the subject nature, this book is most suitable for middle grades

Geras, Adele. *Rebecca's Passover*

Attractive, colorful picture book by National Jewish Book Award winner Geras about a young girl helping her Granny prepare for Passover. Includes Granny's retelling of the Passover story.

Glaser, Linda. *Emma's Poem: The Voice of the Statue of Liberty*

The true story of the poem at the base of the Statue of Liberty, written by a young Jewish American named Emma Lazarus. Lazarus, herself from a privileged family in America, penned the poem after being moved by the suffering of the immigrants she saw. Emma became a volunteer, helping the immigrants, and was asked – along with other writers – to write a poem in commemoration, to help raise money for the Statue. Her poem was chosen to be written on the Statue's base.

Herman, Charlotte. *First Rain*

Lovely story about a girl and her family who make aliyah (move to Israel) – and although there is much she loves in Israel, she misses her grandma in America. She remembers especially how she and Grandma used to play in the rain. Then one day, in the midst of a rainstorm, her family has a special guest.

Hirsh, Marilyn. *The Rabbi and the 29 Witches*

Re-issue of the popular story. Beautiful paintings enhance this lovely book in which a boy and his grandfather discuss the principle of “Do Unto Others As You Would Have Them Do Unto You”. A universal book that points out that many religions and cultures have variations of this rule.

Kimmelman, Leslie. *The Little Red Hen and the Passover Matzah*

Vibrant photos show multicultural kids taking a pretend flight to Israel to celebrate Israeli Independence Day. The classroom includes a Western Wall of blocks, a blue blanket for the sea, and a falafel stand.

Jules, Jacqueline. *Abraham’s Search for God*

A lovely book for very young children introducing them to the bedtime ritual of saying the Sh’ma. Jewish Book Award winner!

Pinkwater, Daniel *Beautiful Yetta: The Yiddish Chicken*

A Yiddish speaking chicken escapes from the wagon leading to the slaughterhouse. She is lonely in Brooklyn until she saves the life of a beautiful parrot (who speaks Spanish) from a cat. Yetta goes to live with the wild parrots of Brooklyn, who think that she is beautiful and brave. Sprinkled throughout the text are Yiddish expressions, as well as a little Spanish.

Rubin, Susan Goldman. *The Anne Frank Case: Simon Wiesenthal’s Search for the Truth*

A new book for Rosh Hashanah in which God asks each creature in turn whether he or she has been the best that they can be..

Ruelie, Karen. *The Grand Mosque of Paris: A Story of How Muslims Saved Jews During the Holocaust*

When a little boy discovers his elderly babysitter is sick with the flu, he decides it’s time for him to take care of her for a change. With his mother’s help, he makes some chicken soup, and while he cooks he recounts good times they have shared together.

Schotter, Roni. *Passover!*

The hilarious tale of five little gefiltes who went out of the jar one day to go exploring, while poor mother gefilte was left behind (saying “Oy Vey!”). A real favorite with kids!

Taback, Simms. *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat*

Jodie learns that she and the Maccabees have something in common when her dad takes her on an archaeological dig to Modi’in, the ancient home of the Maccabees..

Wiviott, Meg. *Benno and the Night of Broken Glass*

Immigrant story in which Hannah and her brother gather bottles, cans and other “junk” to sell and help the family, not knowing it will turn into a successful family business.

Ziefert, Harriet. *Passover: Celebrating Now, Remembering Then*

An alphabet book with beautiful illustrations that presents a different aspect of Jewish life for each letter.

### **AUDIO BOOKS:**

Ackerman, Diane. *The Zookeeper’s Wife*

Albom, Mitch *Have a Little Faith*

DeRosenay, Tatiana *Sarah’s Key*

Diamant, Anita. *Day After Night*

Horn, Dara *All Other Nights*

Kellerman, Faye *The Burnt House*  
Klein, Zoe *Drawing in the Dust*  
Silva, Daniel. *The Defector*  
Silva, Daniel *Moscow Rules*

### **NEW JEWISH DVDS:**

#### ***\$9.99 (2008)***

A unique stop-motion animated feature based on the short stories of contemporary Israeli writer Etgar Keret. A 28-year-old unemployed young man buys a book for \$9.99 on the meaning of life. Various characters in the film try to tackle a wide range of problems, looking for love and redemption. This is the first joint animated film produced between Israel and Australia. *Rated R.*  
1 hr. 18 min..

#### ***Ajami (2009)***

Nominated for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Film, *Ajami* is set in a poor Arab neighborhood near Jaffa. The film takes the same incident and views it from different angles – all inhabitants of the Ajami neighborhood. This includes a close-up look into Arab culture and into what life is like in crime-ridden, dangerous and poor areas where Arabs and Jews both reside. Characters include an Israeli Muslim caught in a violent family feud; an illegal Palestinian worker; an Arab Christian in love with a Muslim; and a Jewish police officer whose brother has been murdered. Many of the characters are played by non-professional actors from the region, giving the film a strong sense of reality. *Note: For mature audiences, ages 18 and up. Contains violence and obscene language. In Arabic and Hebrew with subtitles.* 2 hrs.

#### ***Being Jewish in France (2007)***

This fascinating documentary explores the history of the Jews in France. Highlights include the Dreyfus Affair; France's Vichy collaboration with the Nazis; the absorption, in France, of Sephardic immigrants after World War II; and current day anti-Semitism in France. The film is created to be viewed in two parts (Part I is 73 minutes, while Part II is 112 minutes). Throughout there are countless interviews, as well as documentary film footage. *In French with subtitles.* 3 hrs. 5 min.

#### ***Belzec (2005)***

Chilling documentary that focuses on the Belzec extermination camp, where over 600,000 Jews were murdered in the Holocaust. At the end of the war, the Nazis removed almost all traces of the camp. Guillaume Moscovitz, the director of this film, was inspired by Claude Lanzmann, producer of the epic Holocaust documentary Shoah, to continue his work. Through many interviews with both survivors, and with Poles who were living close to the camp, he presents a stark picture of life in the camp. *In Polish with subtitles.* 1 hr. 40 min.

#### ***Death In Love (2008)***

A dark and disturbing film about how one woman's Holocaust experience has lasting effects on her family. Jacqueline Bisset stars as a Jewish woman who, after surviving a concentration camp during the Holocaust by her sexual involvement with the Nazi doctor. Set in 1990, the film shows the ramifications her past life has on the current lives of her two grown sons. Directed by Boaz Yakin (*A Price Above Rubies*). *Rated R.* 1 hr. 37 min.

#### ***Dudu Fisher: In Concert from Israel (2009)***

Concert with acclaimed singer Dudu Fisher who sings a wide variety of songs in concert in Israel including classic Jewish songs, songs from the Broadway musical Les Miserables as well as other Broadway musicals, and Israeli and cantorial selections. Includes *Eli, Eli; Beit Hamikdash; Bring Him Home; Phantom of the Opera; Halleluyah* & many others. 1 hr.30 min.

### ***Falling Star (aka: Goyband -2008)***

This sometimes hilarious, sometimes campy satire is set in the Mazel Hotel - the first kosher casino in the Catskills. Adam Pascal stars as Bobby Star, a non-Jewish former “boy band” singer who is down on his luck and gets a job at the kosher casino – not knowing what he is getting into. The casino owner also does not understand, and Star’s routine is totally inappropriate for an Orthodox crowd. The owner’s daughter, however, has always secretly been a fan of the singer, as is more than delighted to have a chance to meet her idol. 1 hr.37 min.

### ***The Girl on the Train (La Fille du RERE) (2009)***

Based in part on a true incident, this film centers on a lie: a young woman in France claims that she was attacked by neo-Nazis on a train in an act of anti-Semitism (even though she herself was not Jewish, she claimed they saw the name of a Jewish lawyer in her purse). The film is uneven. The first half deals with Jeanne, a young woman in Paris looking for a job without great skills – a girl who rollerblades and moves in with a wrestler). Her mom (Catherine Deneuve) hopes to get her a job with a Jewish lawyer she knew years ago. The second half focuses more on the Jewish lawyer and his family, as well as the consequences of Jeanne’s lie and of her relationship with her boyfriend. *In French with subtitles.* 1 hr.45 min.

### ***Four Seasons Lodge (2008)***

Every year, for twenty-five years, a group of Holocaust survivors (mainly from Poland) have vacationed together in the Catskills. This may be their last year together, as the bungalow has been sold. This uplifting documentary shows the survivors as real individuals with a shared common past – individuals who have gone through hell but are now part of the living, and want to enjoy life. Viewers get to know this vibrant population (who are more like an extended family) and watch as members of the group fight to keep alive the community they have grown to love. 1 hr.37 min.

### ***Hello Goodbye (2008)***

Starring Gerard Depardieu and Fanny Ardant, this light romantic comedy looks at the mishaps of a comfortable, middle-aged couple in France who decide to make aliyah. Depardieu plays a marginally Jewish gynecologist married to the beautiful Gisele, who converted upon marriage. After a visit to Israel, Giselle is immediately enthralled with the country – as well as to the handsome rabbi she learns with (Lior Ashkenazi). This story about a French couple and their mid-life foibles in Israel is both humorous and touching. *In French with subtitles* 1 hr.39 min.

### ***Hey Hey It’s Esther Blueburger (2008)***

A coming of age comedy, set in Australia, about an adolescent girl who is an outsider – but longs to be an “insider”. Esther Blueburger is an individual caught in a girls’ prep school where conformity is the law, and the students are uniformed. Feeling isolated – except for her pet baby duck – Esther eventually meets Sunni – a free spirited girl from another school. She secretly begins to attend the other school as a visiting foreigner. The film deals with issues of identity and Jewish identity, conformity versus individuality, and the usual adolescent issues. A quirky film that highlights Australian Jewish culture, as well as coming-of-age and friendship. The cast includes Keisha Castle-Hughes (Whalerider) and Toni Colette. 1 hr.43 min.

### ***A History of Israeli Cinema (2009)***

This two-part documentary looks at film clips that illustrate the historical development of Israeli film, including interviews with Israeli film directors, producers and actors. Part I covers 1933-1978, and Part II looks at 1978-2005 – an era that began to highlight more personal, as well as more political cinema. *In Hebrew with subtitles.* 3 hr.28 min.

### ***A History of Jewish American Achievement (2010)***

This four-disc set examines the vast achievements of Jews in America – chronologically, from Jewish settlement in America until the present day. There are eight separate programs (each under 30 minutes in length), so that the film may be used for individual classes. 3 hr.44 min.

### ***Inglorious Basterds (2009)***

In this World War II “violent fantasy”, a Nazi-scalping group of vengeful American commandos, most of them Jewish, leave for Europe to take down the Nazis. Brad Pitt is the leader of the group, and Christopher Waltz plays a Jew hunting Nazi in this controversial film, directed by Quentin Tarantino. *Rated R.* 2 hr.33 min.

### ***A Look Into Kabbalah: A Deeper Reality***

This film addresses questions such as: “What is the Kabbalah?”, “What does science think about the existence of God?”, “What can I do to feel fulfilled?”, and “Why is there suffering in the world”. The documentary includes commentary from a Traditional perspective by a number of Chasidic, Lubavitch and Orthodox rabbis and educators.

### ***Lost Islands (2008)***

The highest grossing Israeli film in 2008, *Lost Islands* is a comic film that centers on the relationship between twin brothers in a large Sephardic family in Israel in 1980. Ofer dreams of being an elite commando in the Israeli army, while Erez, the main protagonist searches for love and acceptance. Tension heightens when both boys fall in love with the same girl, and when the father is in a debilitating accident. Winner of 4 Israeli Academy Awards, and stars Michael Moshonov, Oshri Cohen and Orly Silbersatz Banai. *Note: This DVD will is in the PAL system and can not be viewed on most American DVD players – but can be viewed through most computers. Contains some explicit language, adolescent humor, and sexual situations. In Hebrew with subtitles.* 1 hr.43 min.

### ***Love and Dance (2006)***

Russian immigrants and their acculturation into Israeli life is a major theme of *Love and Dance*, a film that highlights two young people in the world of ballroom dancing. Chen is the son of a sabra (Israeli born) father and a Russian immigrant mother who are having marital and cultural conflicts. Chen’s father wants him to be a “tough Israeli”, and disapproves when Chen begins to take ballroom dance lessons (to meet a beautiful Russian dance student in the class). The dance teachers, former Russian world champions, are sympathetic to Chen’s dilemma. *In Hebrew and Russian with subtitles. Note: This DVD will is in the PAL system and can not be viewed on most American DVD players – but can be viewed through most computers.*

1 hr.35 min.

### ***Making Trouble: Three Generations of Funny Jewish Women (2007)***

Do Jewish women have their own special brand of humor, unique to their sex and their culture? Spanning over a century, this delightful documentary takes an in-depth look at famous Jewish comedienne including Molly Picon, Fanny Brice, Sophie Tucker, Joan Rivers, Gilda Radner and Wendy Wasserstein. 1 hr.25 min.

### ***The Memory Thief (2007)***

This captivating and disturbing film involves Lukas, a young man who works at an L.A. freeway tollbooth, whose encounter with a Holocaust survivor changes his life. Lukas becomes obsessed with both the Holocaust – and with guilt –in this psychological thriller. . 1 hr.34 min.

### ***The Powder and the Glory (2007)***

Did you know that the cosmetic industry, so much a part of our modern culture, was actually started in this country by Jewish women? *The Powder and the Glory* looks at two of the female founders of the industry – one Jewish and one Christian – who were bitter rivals throughout their careers: Helena Rubinstein and Elizabeth Arden. 1 hr. 26 min.

### ***A Serious Man (2008)***

One of the most controversial Jewish films in years, the Coen brothers' *A Serious Man* tells the story of modern-day Job Larry Gupnick, a Midwestern professor of physics for whom everything seems to go wrong. He desperately turns to three different rabbis for answers as to why bad things happen to good people. 1 hr.10 min.

### ***Seven Days (2008)***

Moshe Ivgy and Ronit Elkabetz star in this popular Israeli film about a Moroccan extended Jewish family gathering for shiva after one of the grown brothers dies. This family has its share of complications – both financial and romantic – that become clear when the family must share the same home for the seven day mourning period. *In Hebrew with subtitles. Note: This DVD will be in the PAL system and can not be viewed on most American DVD players – but can be viewed through most computers. The plot may be somewhat difficult for an American audience to follow without a second viewing or some explanation of both Mizrahi culture and shiva customs.* 1 hr.43 min.

### ***Souvenirs (Suvenirim) (2006)***

Hip young Israeli director Shahar Cohen takes viewers on a journey as he and his father travel together by car from Israel to the Netherlands. His father, Sleiman, fought in the Jewish Brigade, and spoke of his relationship with girls while there. Shahar wonders whether his 82-year-old father may have left some “souvenirs” behind (whether any of his girlfriends may have had babies, who would be Shahar’s siblings). The two men retrace Sleiman’s route as part of the Jewish Brigade and track down Sleiman’s former girlfriends – now old women – to see what they will find. *Note: This DVD will be in the PAL system and can not be viewed on most American DVD players – but can be viewed through most computers. In Hebrew with English subtitles.* 1 hr.15 min.

### ***The Specialist – Portrait of a Modern Criminal (1999)***

Chilling documentary that utilizes real footage of the trial of Nazi criminal Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem in 1961 to create a portrait of the man. Throughout the trial – even through the testimony of survivors – Eichmann appears expressionless and devoid of feeling, always responding that he was “simply following orders” - and efficiently following them, at that. 2 hr.8 min.

### ***Spring 1941 (2008)***

Joseph Fiennes and an international cast star in *Spring 1941*, the first collaborative Polish and Israeli film. Clara, a famous cellist, returns to Poland for a concert. Thirty years before, Clara and her family were hidden from the Nazis on the farm of their peasant grocer, Emilia – and a treacherous love triangle ensued. The story alternates between the past and the present, illuminating the types of impossible moral choices many Jews were confronted with during the Holocaust. Based on stories of Ida Fink. **Note: Rated R. Includes violence and some brief sexual situations.** 2 hrs.

***St. Urbain's Horseman (2007)***

Canadian mini-series based on the prize-winning novel by Jewish author Mordechai Richler. The story focuses around Jake, a Jewish film director who escapes the anti-Semitism of his youth and marries the girl of his dreams – but ends up in scandal. Knowing he will never achieve greatness, Jake is constantly haunted by the image of his cousin Joey, his personal hero who he views as a Nazi hunter and hero of the Spanish civil war. The cast includes actor Elliott Gould. 3 hrs.

***Virtuoso Violinist Itzhak Perlman (2008)***

This DVD consists of three distinct parts. Its feature piece is a 1978 film called “I Know I Played Every Note”, which lasts 58 minutes and provides an inspiring biography of the famous violinist, with Perlman narrating. The other two pieces are “The Trout Remembered” and “Jacqueline du Pre Remembered” include Perlman reminiscing about the cellist and performing Bach’s E Major and D Minor Partitas. 2 hr.40 min.

***Visions of Israel (2010)***

Using high definition aerial photography, this stunning tour of Israel shows highlights of interest to the Jewish, Christian and Muslim cultures. Includes Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Akko, Masada, the Galilee, and the site of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Some history is also given on each area. Narration is by Itzhak Perlman. 1 hr.18 min.

***The Wedding Song (Les Chant des Mariees) (2008)***

Two girlfriends, a Jew and a Muslim, both prepare to enter arranged marriages in Tunisia during World War II (1942). This fascinating drama looks at the Tunisian Jewish and Muslim communities, who lived together peacefully as friendly neighbors until the Nazi invasion of Tunisia. The story views the change in the girls’ relationship when the Muslim girl’s fiancé aligns with the Nazis. *Note: Includes nudity (sometimes explicit), sexuality, and some violence. In Arabic and French with subtitles.* 1 hr.40 min.

***Yoo Hoo Mrs Goldberg (2009)***

Engaging film biography of Gertrude Berg, who created the radio and later, television beloved Jewish character “Molly Goldberg”. Berg created the popular radio show of the 1930’s called “The Goldbergs”, which later became a hit television series and earned Goldberg the first Best Actress Emmy for her work. The series was known for its portrayal of a warm Jewish family with its stereotypical Jewish mother figure, who was always involved – both to meddle and to “fix”. The DVD includes extras such as episodes of the real TV show and an interview with filmmaker Aviva Kempner. 1 hr.32 min.

New Spring DVDs  
A Day in October  
Good Conversation! A Talk with Chaim Potok  
Yossi & Jagger