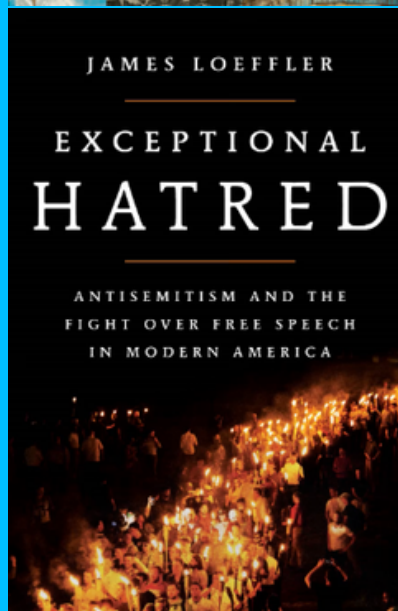
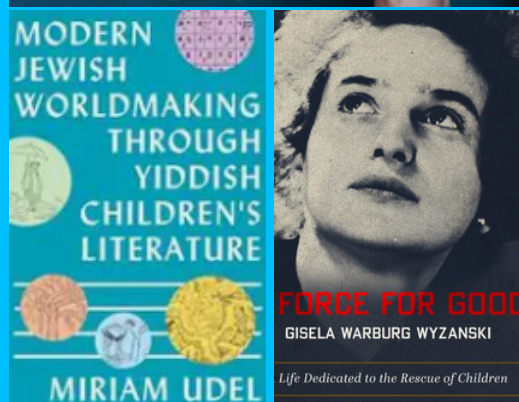
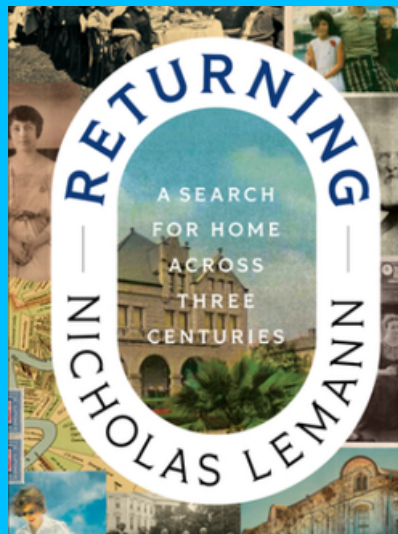


Pittsburgh Jewish Book Festival

Congregation Beth Shalom

October 18-25, 2026



5915 Beacon St., Pittsburgh, PA 15217 | BethShalomPgh.org

WELCOME TO OUR 2026 PITTSBURGH JEWISH BOOK FESTIVAL

Welcome! We are proud to host the 2026 Pittsburgh Jewish Book Festival. These challenging times call for gathering our diverse community to celebrate Jewish culture and traditions and to engage in civil discourse. Our festival includes authors from around the corner and around the globe.

Join us and be inspired!

Shari R. Woldenberg
Festival Director and Derekh Coordinator at Congregation Beth Shalom



THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING WHO MADE THIS EVENT POSSIBLE

Carolyn Slayton and Seth Glick

Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle
Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh



THANK YOU TO JEWISH FEDERATION OF GREATER PITTSBURGH FUNDS

This Pittsburgh Jewish Book Festival is made possible by a generous grant from the Arthur J. and Betty F. Diskin Cultural Endowment Fund

Early in her career as a teacher and graduate student at NYU, Betty Diskin eagerly partook of Broadway shows, operas, ballets and concerts. Moving to Pittsburgh in 1952, she continued her lifelong love of the performing arts and was herself active in local theater, including the Little Lake Theater and the original Pittsburgh Playhouse. She never stopped studying and learning and earned her PhD from the University of Pittsburgh later in life. Betty and her husband, Arthur Diskin, a highly respected attorney, were enthusiastic and generous supporters of the cultural and civic organizations of the Pittsburgh community.



After the tragic loss of her husband, Arthur, and their two sons, William Diskin and Robert Diskin, Betty felt strongly about creating a legacy to honor their memory. Betty established the Arthur J. and Betty F. Diskin Cultural Endowment Fund to be administered by the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh. The goal of the Fund is to reflect the Jewish values of cultural literacy and increased understanding of humanity through the support of cultural, educational, literary and civic organizations of the Pittsburgh community, particularly those organizations devoted to music and theater.



THANK YOU TO OUR COMMITTEE

Ronna Harris Askin
Barbara Barnett
Jessica Durkin
Mark Frisch

Seth Glick
Chris Hall
Bob Russman-Halperin
Eleanor Hersherberg

Beth Kissileff
Jean Reznick
Toby Tabachnick
Nancy Tuckfelt

THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS



BOOK FESTIVAL PRICING OPTIONS

To attend, please pre-register at
www.Bethshalompggh.org/2026-Jewish-Book-Festival/



\$360 VIP Pass

Includes access to all book festival events and VIP Receptions with
Headliners at 6:45pm in the Lehman Library.

\$36 All Festival Pass

Access to all book festival events

Single headliner events are \$18 each



FREE EVENTS

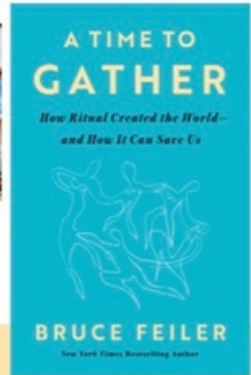
Bonus Zoom Session, 10/15/26

We are proud to partner with The Jewish Book Council, which is offering this free event to our community.

Bruce Feiler in Conversation with Rabbi Angela Buchdahl

October 15
1:00 PM ET
Zoom

Register at Jewishbookcouncil.org/events



In partnership with JBC Network Sites

Photo credit (top to bottom): Jonica Moore, Lavin Kiani

USED BOOK SALE WITH AMAZING BOOKS

Come shop for used Judaica books on Sunday, October 18, 2026
11:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Palkovitz Library



Buy festival books now!

<https://bookshop.org/shop/amazingbookspgh>



FREE EVENTS

LOCAL AUTHOR BOOKSHELF

From Illness to Exodus



Dr. Jonathan Weinkle

From Illness to Exodus

**11:00 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. Presentation followed by
book sales and signing
Helfant Chapel**

From Illness to Exodus: Being sick, especially being chronically ill, can feel like being trapped in a narrow place, with no way out. Even professional healers can feel trapped, not knowing how to lift that person up. One of the oldest stories in the world, the exodus, is a tale of

escaping that kind of trap.

Dr. Weinkle is an internist and pediatrician who practices primary care and serves as Chief Medical Officer at the Squirrel Hill Health Center in Pittsburgh, PA. He is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and the Medicine-Pediatrics residency at UPMC Shadyside and Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. Dr. Weinkle serves as Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and as a part-time instructor in Pitt's Department of Religious Studies and the Conceptual Foundations of Medicine certificate program, where he teaches the undergraduate courses, "Death and the Healthcare Professions" and "Healing and Humanity." He is the author of the books *Healing People, Not Patients: Creating Authentic Relationships in Modern Healthcare* and *From Illness to Exodus*, creator of the website www.healerswholisten.com, and hosts the podcast, "Healing People, Not Patients," on the Doctor Podcast Network.



Barbara Barnett

*The Renaissance Faire Companion: From
Turkey Legs to the Jousting Lists*

**12:00 p.m. - 12:45 p.m. Presentation
followed by book sales and signing
Helfant Chapel**

The Renaissance Faire Companion: From Turkey Legs to the Jousting Lists, by Barbara Barnett, brings to life the magic, music, community, and occasional macabre of the Renaissance faire — through the voices of the passionate, creative, gloriously eccentric people who make it happen.

Cantor Barbara Barnett is an author, journalist, and cantor whose work spans dark fantasy fiction, pop culture criticism, and Jewish history. Her debut novel *The Apothecary's Curse* (Pyr Books) was shortlisted for the Bram Stoker Award®; its sequel, *Alchemy of Glass*, followed in 2020. Her forthcoming book *The Renaissance Faire Handbook: From Turkey Legs to the Jousting Lists* (Rizzoli USA, Fall 2027) is a richly illustrated celebration of Renaissance faire culture in America. A longtime student of Jewish music and history, Barbara serves as an independent cantor and educator and brings that deep well of knowledge to her exploration of the hidden Jewish and converso presence at the Tudor and early Stuart courts.



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18

CO-SPONSORED BY:
THE RAUH PITTSBURGH JEWISH ARCHIVE/HHC, AND BETH SHALOM

OPENING NIGHT: 7:30 P.M.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Join us at 7:30p.m. for the opening night of the 2026 Pittsburgh Jewish Book Festival starting with a presentation of Lifetime Achievement Awards to Barbara Burstin, Ph.D and Joan Nathan, award winning cookbook author.

BARBARA BURSTIN, PH.D

This Lifetime Achievement Award honors Barbara Burstin's years of dedicated scholarship and research. Barbara Burstin is a professor who has published multiple books about the Holocaust and the Pittsburgh Jewish Community, a true Pittsburgh icon.

JOAN NATHAN

Joan Nathan is a matriarch of Jewish cooking, and a role model to so many of us in this community who grew up with her recipes. This Lifetime Achievement Award honors Joan Nathan's lasting influence and the generations she has inspired through her food and traditions.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

JOAN NATHAN



My Life in Recipes: Food, Family and Memories

**Presentation followed by book sales and signing
Faye Rubenstein Weiss Sanctuary**

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18

Building friendships around the world, Joan Nathan uses food and flavors to connect with each person's origin story. A remarkable food expert and cookbook writer, in 2024 Joan combined her best-loved recipes with her fascinating life story in *My Life in Recipes: Food, Family, and Memories*, weaving home, career and global travel highlights into a compelling read. Warm and charming, Joan reveals the beginnings of her passion for food linked to discovering the stories of others:

"I come from a family of eaters. My family food preferences and favorite recipes became the folklore of my life, as did the stories that accompanied the food they served. I have learned through the years that each person's defining recipe may be different—chicken and dumplings, lasagna, tacos, tamales, brisket, or steak and potatoes—but whatever it is, most of us have a dish that stays with us throughout our life. The thought, taste, and smell of that one dish reminds us of being safe as a child within our homes. Many of these foods become family folktales that appear again and again at the dinner table."

Joan gains her in-depth knowledge of food, ingredients, and recipes through on-the-ground research along with guest visits to kitchens everywhere. She gets particularly excited wrangling invites to homes with uncommon meal traditions and preparations, spending time in the kitchen to watch, listen, and learn while intently scribbling notes for future reference.

Across decades Joan has been tapped by the New York Times, Washington Post, and PBS as a regular contributor to food education and commentary. Distinguished throughout her career, Joan's honors include multiple James Beard awards plus the Who's Who of Food & Beverage in America. Working with colleagues throughout the food world, her collaborations include Julia Child, Ruth Reichl, Alice Waters, Tom Colicchio, Madhur Jaffrey, Craig Claiborne, and Paul Prudhomme.

Often referenced as the foremost authority on Jewish cooking, landmark achievements include her seminal collection *Jewish Cooking in America*, and her PBS series "Jewish Cooking in America," available today on YouTube. Her twelve books include *The New American Cooking* and *King Solomon's Table*, reaching out to home cooks in every kitchen.

Joan appeals to all audiences, blending her love of food with her compassion and humanity. Energetic and insightful, Joan inspires everyone to get into the kitchen and try something new, or whip up a lifelong favorite.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 19

CO-SPONSORED BY:
HADASSAH AND THE JEWISH BOOK COUNCIL

ANITA WYZANSKI ROBBOY



A Force for Good

**7:30 p.m. - 8:45 p.m. Presentation followed
by book sales and signing
Samuel and Minni Hyman Ballroom**

Join us with Hadassah as we welcome Anita Wyzanski Robboy, who will discuss how her mother Gisela worked with Henrietta Szold to found Hadassah.

Robboy's book, *A Force for Good* tells the remarkable story of her mother, Gisela Warburg Wyzanski. Gisela worked with important Jewish leaders, including Henrietta Szold and Chaim Weizmann, to help rescue thousands of Jewish children from Nazi persecution during the Holocaust. She raised awareness and funding to save and resettle children who were in danger of being killed.

The book uses letters and documents that Gisela carefully preserved and that were later discovered by her daughter. Readers follow Gisela's journey through Germany, England, the United States, and what is now Israel as she worked to save Jewish children.

A Force for Good shows the horrors of the Holocaust while also showing how one person's courage and determination can make a lasting difference in the lives of others.

Anita Wyzanski Robboy is a lawyer, scholar, and author. She is a partner at a Boston law firm and has worked as a visiting scholar at Brandeis University and Cambridge University. She is also the daughter of Gisela Warburg Wyzanski and Judge Charles E. Wyzanski.



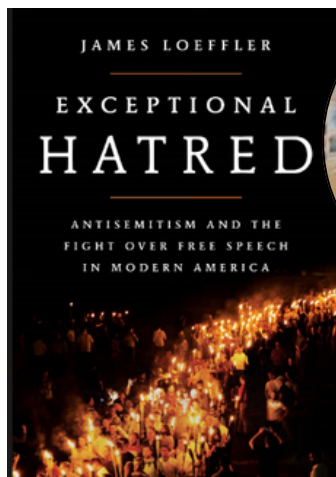
HADASSAH



TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20

CO-SPONSORED BY:
CLASSROOMS WITHOUT BORDERS AND THE JEWISH BOOK COUNCIL

DR. JAMES LOEFFLER



Exceptional Hatred: Antisemitism and the Fight Over Free Speech in Modern America

7:30 p.m. - 8:45 p.m. Presentation followed by book sales and signing
Faye Rubenstein Weiss Sanctuary

Exceptional Hatred by Professor James Loeffler examines the complicated relationship between antisemitism, hate speech, and free speech in America. The book explores how the United States has historically dealt with antisemitic incidents, from riots and neo-Nazi demonstrations to more recent events such as Charlottesville. Loeffler focuses on the difficult balance between protecting people from hatred and preserving First Amendment rights.

The book ultimately asks whether society can effectively confront antisemitism and other forms of hatred without sacrificing the principles of free speech, equality, and individual freedom. It uses American legal and political history to show that these debates are not new, but are part of an ongoing struggle within liberal democracy.

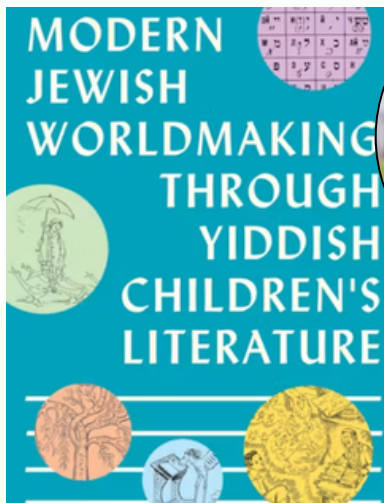
Professor James Loeffler is an American historian, professor, and author specializing in modern Jewish history. He is Felix Posen Professor at Johns Hopkins University, Senior Fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute, and former co-editor of *AJS Review*. His research covers antisemitism, human rights, international law, and the concept of genocide. Loeffler has authored award-winning books including *Rooted Cosmopolitans*, *The Most Musical Nation*, and *The Law of Strangers*, and is working on a biography of Raphael Lemkin. His work often explores Jewish political thought across Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and America.



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21

CO-SPONSORED BY:
THE YIDDISH BOOK CENTER, COMMUNITY DAY SCHOOL, PITT
JEWISH STUDIES PROGRAM

DR. MIRIAM UDEL



***Modern Jewish Worldmaking Through
Yiddish Children's Literature***

**6:30 p.m. - 7:30 Pre lecture Klezmer
concert**

**7:30 p.m. - 8:45 p.m. Presentation
followed by book sales and signing
Samuel and Minni Hyman Ballroom**

Professor Miriam Udel is Professor of Yiddish Literature and Culture at Emory University, where she studies Jewish encounters with modernity, with a focus on Yiddish literature, Jewish children's literature, and cultural identity. She holds degrees from Harvard University.

Her research examines how Yiddish children's literature shaped Jewish identity and transmitted cultural values across Europe and the Americas. Her book *Modern Jewish Worldmaking Through Yiddish Children's Literature* (2025) won the National Jewish Book Award in Education and Jewish Identity. She is also the author of *Never Better!: The Modern Jewish Picaresque* (2016), winner of a National Jewish Book Award, and *Honey on the Page* (2020), a collection of translated Yiddish stories and poems for children.

Udel was ordained by Yeshivat Maharatz in 2019 and uses the rabbinic title *darshanit* ("interpreter"). Her scholarship and teaching connect Yiddish culture, Jewish history, literature, and contemporary Jewish identity.

**Professor Miriam Udel will also be speaking at two other locations with
our co-sponsors:**

October 21, 2026: Morning - Community Day School

**October 22, 2026: Morning - University of Pittsburgh Jewish Studies
Program**

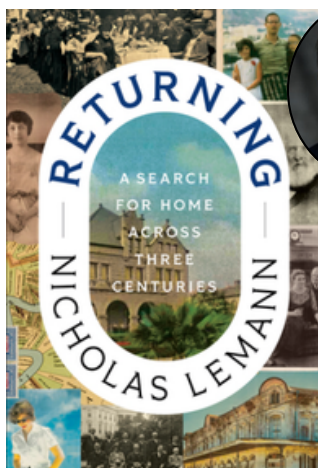


SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25

CO-SPONSORED BY:
THE JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER OF GREATER PITTSBURGH

CLOSING NIGHT

DR. NICHOLAS LEMANN



Returning: A Search for Home Across Three Centuries

**7:30 p.m. - 8:45 p.m. Presentation
followed by book sales and signing
Faye Rubenstein Weiss Sanctuary**

Returning, an explanation of a diaspora community often overlooked in US history: the Jewish immigration to the American South in the 19th century, and the effect of the assimilation on that community in the generation to follow. Told via the perspective of the Lemann family, German Jews who came to Louisiana in the 1830s who meticulously documented their own personal and professional ups and downs across the years.

Professor Nicholas Lemann is an American writer, journalist, and academic, serving as the Joseph Pulitzer II and Edith Pulitzer Moore Professor of Journalism and Dean Emeritus at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. A staff writer at *The New Yorker* since 1999, he was dean of Columbia Journalism School from 2003 to 2013, leading major curriculum reforms and launching new programs. Lemann founded Columbia Global Reports and directed Columbia World Projects. His acclaimed books include *Returning: A Search for Home Across Three Centuries*, *Transaction Man*, *Redemption*, *The Big Test*, and *The Promised Land*, the last winning several book prizes. Lemann recently published a powerful opinion piece in the *New York Times* titled, *A Profound Question Haunting Jews*.



FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

Thursday 10/15/26

Bonus Zoom Session: Jewishbookcouncil.org/events

1:00p - 2:00p: Zoom conversation with Bruce Feiler and Rabbi Angela Buchdahl

Sponsored by the Jewish Book Council

Sunday 10/18/26

Used Book Sale: Palkovitz Lobby

11:00a - 6:00p: Used Judaica Book Sale with Amazing Books

Local Author Bookshelf: Helfant Chapel

11:00a - 11:45a: Dr. Jonathan Weinkle

12:00p - 12:45p: Barbara Barnett

Lifetime Achievement Awards and Keynote Speaker: Sanctuary

7:30p - 9:00p: Lifetime Achievement Awards honoring Barbara Burstin, Ph.D and Joan Nathan followed by **Joan Nathan**, *My Life in Recipes: Food, Family and Memories*

Co-sponsored by the Heinz History Center, Rauh Jewish Program and Archives, and Beth Shalom Sisterhood

Monday 10/19/26

Headliner: Ballroom

7:30p - 8:45p: **Anita Wyzanski Robboy**, *A Force for Good*

Co-sponsored by Hadassah, The Jewish Book Council and Beth Shalom

Tuesday 10/20/26

Headliner: Sanctuary

7:30p - 8:45p: **Dr. James Loeffler**, *Exceptional Hatred*

Co-sponsored by Classrooms Without Borders, The Jewish Book Council and Beth Shalom

Wednesday 10/21/26

6:30p - 7:30p: Klezmer music in the ballroom

Headliner: Ballroom

7:30p - 8:45p: **Dr. Miriam Udel**, *Modern Jewish Worldmaking Through Yiddish Literature*

Co-sponsored by Community Day School, Pitt Jewish Studies Program, Yiddish Book Center and Beth Shalom

Sunday 10/25/26

Headliner: Sanctuary

7:30p - 8:45p: **Dr. Nicholas Lemann**, *Returning: A Search for Home Across Three Centuries*

Co-sponsored by The JCC of Pittsburgh, The Jewish Book Council and Beth Shalom



5915 Beacon St., Pittsburgh, PA 15217

www.bethshalompg.org