Non-Profit Org. U.S. POSTAGE PAID Pittsfield, MA Permit No. 19

Serving the Jewish community in Berkshire County and neighboring New York, Connecticut, and Vermont

Vol. 17, No. 7 Sivan/Tammuz 5769 June 5 to July 9, 2009 32 pages

He's Back! Sam Glaser in Concert, July 12!

Federation Benefits: "Jewish Agency Fund For Victims of Terror"

By David Verzi

Ready to reprise his soul-riveting, roof rockin' 2007 Berkshire appearance, Sam Glaser and his Band will perform in concert at 7:30 p.m. on Sunday, July 12, at the Duffin Theater at Lenox High School, 197 East Street, Lenox.

Presented by the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, Glaser — internationally hailed as the "hardest working man in Jewish music" — will perform to benefit the "Jewish Agency Fund For Victims of Terror."

In recognition of current economic conditions, the Federation has reduced tickets to \$25; with information and reservations available through Arlene D. Schiff, Executive Director, at (413) 442-4360, ext. 12 or arlene.schiff@verizon.net.

With over twenty albums under his belt and annually winning the enthusiastic applause of over 100,000 fans during his fifty-city tours, Glaser's mix of poignant and powerful sounds has become part of the fabric of Jewish life.

Appearing at venues as diverse as synagogues, the Broadway stage, and Dodger Stadium — and worldwide from Sydney to London to Hong Kong to Tel Aviv — Glaser's fans, both young and old, span the range of Jewish tradition, as the



The dynamic Sam Glaser

performer has been lauded by the Reform and Conservative movements as well as the Modern Orthodox and Chassidim.

In a fire of energy and passion, Glaser melds his audiences with their Judaism through intense compositions and arrangements that have an enigmatic appeal.

Complex, catchy, reverent, witty,

SAM GLASER, continued on page 6

Federation's 'Major Donors' to Hear Music

Larry Berke, Chair of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires' "2009 Major Donors' Campaign" announced that the "Major Donors Breakfast" will take place from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. on Sunday, July 19, at the Country Club of Pittsfield, 639 South Street, Pittsfield.

Donors who contribute a minimum of \$1,000 to the Federation's 2009 "Annual Campaign" are invited and requested to send a check, by Friday, July 10, for the cover charge of \$18 per person to: Arlene D. Schiff, Executive Director, Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, 196 South Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201. Please note "Major Donors' Breakfast" in the check memo.

The 'Breakfast's' special guest will be violinist Gabriel Lefkowitz who will perform a program of solo works by Bach, Paganini, Fritz Kreisler, and Eugene Ysaye — as well as duets with his father, Ronan Lefkowitz.

From a family of violinists, Gabriel Lefkowitz' father is a member of the Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO) and his grandfather is the noted musicologist Murray Lefkowitz, professor emeritus at Boston University.

Performing for fifteen years, Gabriel earned his Bachelors Degree, magna cum laude, in three years from Columbia College where he studied Music Composition and Economics. He is currently earning his Masters Degree in Violin Performance at The Juilliard School, where he studies with Joel Smirnoff and Masao Kawasaki.

Gabriel is a concertmaster of the Juilliard Orchestra and frequently performs orchestral, chamber, and solo repertoires in New York City.

Before moving to New York, Gabriel



Gabriel Lefkowitz

was concertmaster of the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra for five years on three international tours of Western, Central, and Eastern Europe. During this time, he also performed solo concerti with several local orchestras — including the North Shore Philharmonic, the New Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Boston Youth Symphony, after winning first prize in the latter's annual concerto competition.

BREAKFAST MUSIC, continued on page 6

Inside

Features & Local News	6-12, 16-18, 24
Your Federation Presents	13-15, 19-23
National & World News	25-29, 31-32
Mazel Tovs	24
Calendar	30

Film Festival!



The 23rd Annual "Berkshire Jewish Film Festival" will run Mondays from July 6 through August 10, at Lenox Memorial High School's Duffin Theater. The July 20 evening presentation, "Eichmann," recounts the final confession regarding Hitler's "final solution" (story and photos, pages 16 and 17).

Israeli Decorative Arts: In Lenox, June 21 to July 23



The Barn Gallery at Stonover Farm, 169 Under Mountain Road, Lenox, has announced its summer exhibition, "A SHARED PERSPECTIVE." The show will include selected works by both Israeli textile, ceramic, and jewelry artists from the Association of Israel's Decorative Artists (AIDA), and Northampton sculptor and installation artist Emmett Leader, whose highly praised exhibition "Celebrating the Impermanent" appeared at the Ferrin Gallery in the autumn of 2008 and explored the celebration of the holiday of Sukkot.

Leader's work is primarily informed and inspired by the wooden synagogues, Jewish gravestone carvings, ritual objects, and intricate papercuts of pre-World War Two Europe.

"A SHARED PERSPECTIVE" opens Sunday, June 21 and continues through Thursday, July 23. The gallery will host an opening day reception from 2 to 5 p.m.

"A SHARED PERSPECTIVE" will be co-hosted by the Association of Israel's Decorative Arts, whose mission is to foster the development of contemporary artists from Israel by connecting them to an international audience of galleries, institutions, and collectors.

In 2003, Charles Bronfman and his late wife, Andrea, along with Doug and Dale Anderson, created AIDA out of

ISRAELI ARTS, continued on page 7

Texts and Tunes

Within Three Books: Between Parable and History; A Searing Portrait; A Plot to Kill Hitler

By Seth Rogovoy



Aharon Appelfeld is one of Israel's greatest writers, a national treasure such that any new work from him immediately draws the attention of the literary population of his adopted homeland, as well as readers throughout the world who have been following his career since he first began publishing his fiction in the early 1960s.

Laish, his latest novel to be translated from Hebrew into English, is typical in many ways of Appelfeld's work. While having lived in Israel since 1946 after surviving the Shoah as a young boy, Appelfeld always returns to Europe in his fiction, although he never directly confronts the machinery of the Holocaust. Rather, he writes of

a netherworld, neither here nor there – what Philip Roth has called "midway between parable and history."

Laish (Schocken Books, 2009, 240 pages, \$24) is the story of a caravan of Jews on a harrowing journey through Eastern Europe intent on reaching the Promised Land. It's an age-old story — as old as the Bible, really — yet in Appelfeld's hands it becomes both palpable and dreamlike. His movable village of ragtag dreamers, rabbis and mystics, and black-market traders who do what they can, what they must, to see that all survive to arrive eventually in the city on the shining hill, speaks to all who have ever felt exiled, rudderless, and abandoned,

With more than forty published works behind him, all written in Hebrew — a language he only learned in his teen years (he refused to write in his

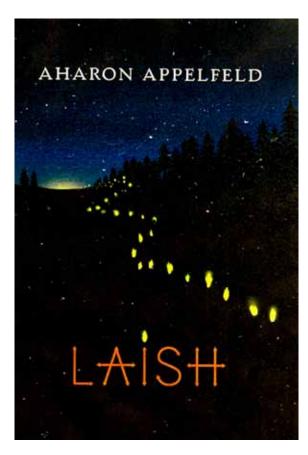
native language, German, or in Yiddish, Ukrainian, Russian, English, or Italian, all of which he knows) — Appelfeld himself has become a figure hovering between parable and history, having won countless literary honors in Israel and around the world. He is an active, living link to a world long gone, and with stories like *Laish*, which harken back in some ways to the works of Yiddish writers like Sholem Aleichem and I.L. Peretz, he keeps that world alive and in front of us.

Those who saw the Academy Award-nominated film, "Beaufort," about a group of Israeli soldiers manning a military outpost in southern Lebanon, and those who wish they had seen it but didn't, now have the opportunity to read the novel upon which the film was based. Ron Leshem's debut novel was published to great acclaim in Israel, winning the 2006 Sapir Prize — Israel's top literary award. Now translated into English, *Beaufort* (Delta, 2009, 368 pages, \$12) a kind of Israeli update of Joseph Heller's *Catch 22*, is a searing portrait of a dozen young soldiers — only eighteen years old — struggling with the demands, pressures, and boredom of their impossible but necessary mission.

Speaking of books that inspired movies, the recent Tom Cruise movie, "Valkyrie," based on true accounts of a plot to kill Hitler, was based on the real life story of Philipp Freiherr von Boeslanger, whose first person account of the plot, also called *Valkyrie* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2009, 211 pages, \$25), has been translated from the original French.

Remarkable documents like Boeslanger's are no less essential than memoirs of the last few living survivors. What can be more telling than a German army officer who writes: "The shooting of Jews and Gypsies turned out to be a commonly shared war goal. According to the SS, the instructions were clear and came from the highest level of the government."

Seth Rogovoy (seth@rogovoy. com) is the editor-in-chief of Berkshire Living Magazine and the author of The Essential Klezmer: A Music Lover's Guide to Jewish Roots and Soul Music. His book, Bob Dylan: Prophet, Mystic, Poet, is due from Scribner Books in December 2009.









Philipp Freiherr von Boeslanger



Published ten times a year by the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires

Arlene D. Schiff: Executive Director & Publisher

David Verzi: Editor

Rose Tannenbaum: Graphic Design & Layout **Jenny Greenfeld:** Advertising Sales Representative

and Assistant Editor

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

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

Subscriber to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency wire service.

Serves the Jewish community in Berkshire County and neighboring New York, Connecticut, and Vermont. Voluntary subscription donations: \$18, \$36, \$72, \$108, other.

Berkshire Jewish Voice e-mail: jfb.berkshirevoice@verizon.net Phone: (413) 442-4360 Fax (413) 443-6070 (Outside area): Toll Free (866) 442-4360 Create A Jewish Legacy Campaign
Please remember the Jewish Community in your will

DEADLINES

The next *Berkshire Jewish Voice* (Vol. 17, No. 8) will cover the period July 10 through August 13, 2009. The following edition (Vol. 17, No. 9) covers August 14 through September 13, 2009. The deadline for press releases and other written submissions, all of which are subject to being edited, is July 10. Because of limitations of space and time, please be so kind as to not submit lengthy articles without first contacting the editor. Advertising deadline is July 28. For a complete *Berkshire Jewish Voice* schedule, contact (413) 442-4360, ext. 11, or e-mail jfb.berkshirevoice@verizon.net.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The *Berkshire Jewish Voice* welcomes signed letters from our community on subjects of interest to the Jewish community. Letters are printed upon space availability. The BJV reserves the right to edit all letters for content and style. The BJV does not print anonymous letters, insults, libelous or defamatory statements. For verification purposes, please include full name, home address, and a day and evening telephone number. Concise letters are less likely to be condensed. Send letters to: *Berkshire Jewish Voice*, 196 South Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201, or email: jfb.berkshirevoice@verizon.net.

In My View

To Dance with the Devil?

By Arlene D. Schiff



I am constantly surprised to find that Jewish communities exist in places where one wouldn't suspect they could – and that when they ask for assistance, the North American and Israeli communities are always there to lend whatever help is required.

However, the assistance does not always come with a clear conscience as I recently experienced.

In mid-March, I was asked to participate in a UJC Ex-

ecutive Committee emergency "conference call" to discuss the emigration, resettlement, and absorption of Yemenite Jews whose lives are in danger amid rising anti-Jewish violence.

The Jewish community of Yemen dates back to the period following the destruction of the first Temple. Immigration from Yemen to Palestine began in 1881 and continued almost without interruption until 1914; during this period nearly ten percent of Yemenite Jews made aliyah.

The second wave of Yemenite immigration to Israel began in 1949, following the establishment of the State of Israel, and in response to growing Arab attacks. Between mid 1949 and the end of 1950, "Operation Magic Carpet" brought more than 50,000 Yemenite Jews to Israel.

In 1962 a civil war in Yemen halted the Jewish exodus, but secret rescue efforts continued in 1964 and, again, in 1992. Today it is believed that about 270 Jews remain in Yemen, scattered in various villages.

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) has been monitoring and working with the Yemenite community since 1991. They have provided holiday packages, supplies, and other assistance to allow the community to sustain a Jewish life in Yemen.

In December 2008, thirty-year-old Rabbi Moshe Yaish Naharai of Rayda, Yemen, was shot and killed by Islamic extremists. In February, a Jewish family experienced a grenade attack on their home.

As a result of these two incidents, the remaining Yemenite-Jewish community now lives in fear of Islamic extremists and the actions they may take in response to Israeli and world events.

With the assistance of the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), a family of ten made *aliyah* in February. Now more than half of the Yemenite Jews are expected to make *aliyah* to Israel. The remaining 113 have applied to come to the United States as refugees.

In keeping with the Federation's mission to rescue Jews in need anywhere in the world, during the conference call the Federation system agreed to commit resources from overseas allocations to help JAFI resettle the Yemenite Jews wishing to make *aliyah* and financially support, with new dollars, those who have chosen to immigrate to the United States.

There are a variety of organizations that will assist with the resettlement and UJC has been asked to be part of the consortium. The total cost of the resettlement is estimated to be \$2 million. The funds provided by the Federation system for the U.S. resettlement would cover such expenses as housing, medical needs, transportation, clothing, employment services, and food.

During the conference call there was discussion that the U.S. operation would be a joint effort that included the Satmar Community of Monsey, New York — a community that has ties to Yemenite Jewry and is determined that they preserve their traditional religious practices.

During the conference call there was a lot of discussion regarding whether we should only aid the Jews who choose to make *aliyah* or if we should also aid those who requested to come to the U.S.

One reason for this concern was the beliefs of the Satmar community to which they would be relocated. The Satmars have influenced the Yemenite community with inaccurate propaganda, persuading many that Israelis don't treat Yemenites well, and that their life would be at risk were they to relocate to the Jewish homeland.

Additionally, the Satmar Community is one of the most vocal of anti-Zionist sects.

How could the Federation system collaborate with them?

At the end of the conference call it was determined that we needed to assist the Jews of Yemen to relocate to whichever country they choose to — Israel or the United States — despite the fact that it would require us to work with the Satmar Community.

I must say, I was sick for hours after the call ended, but as was pointed out to me, the Jewish people have had to "dance with the devil" in the past in order to rescue Jews — this time is no different.

When I initially wrote this article, back in early April, I didn't know if the immigration would actually take place. There was some concern that once the information surrounding this effort was made public the Yemeni government might clamp down on Jewish emigration.

However, on May 8 the Federation received a request to financially support the resettlement effort which is expected to take place by the end of June. The letter states:

These 113 Yemenite Jews are the antithesis of modern (apparently they had never seen a clock before). They are poorly educated and deeply religious. Five are over age 65, 40 are between the ages of 18 and 65, and 68 are under



A family of Yemenite Jews, circa 1905

the age of 18. These 25 families are likely to be the most challenging Jewish community that the American Jewish Community has ever resettled. Monsey contains a number of deeply observant Jewish communities, including pockets of Yemenite Jews. After considering all of the facts and circumstances and consulting with many in our community, it appears that this new population would probably do best in the near-term if it were to be resettled in Monsey.

The letter also states:

While reports have been raised in Jewish and Israeli press that UJC is partnering with the Satmars, this is incorrect. UJO of Williamsburg [i.e., United Jewish Organizations of Williamsburg], which will provide some of the services for this resettlement, is a 501 (c)(3) organization registered under the laws of New York, and a decades-old widely respected community provider of non-sectarian services to a wide cross section of Jewish and non-Jewish populations in Brooklyn. During their resettlement in Monsey, these Yemenite refugees will be exposed to many different Jewish viewpoints.

However, the problematic nature of the decision to aid with the immigration still haunts me.

Yes, I wholeheartedly support the Federation system's mission of helping Jews in need and saving Jewish lives. However, does this mandate require us to possibly now, or in the foreseeable future increase the population of an anti-Zionist sect and allow inappropriate and inaccurate information regarding life in Israel to be perpetuated, or do we have the right to only provide assistance when we know it will have a positive impact on the Jewish community? Where do we draw the line between: assisting a Jew to get out of harm's way no matter what the consequence and only providing assistance when it is to the benefit of the community at large?

My heart tells me that it is our obligation to rescue Jews in danger and relocate them to the community of their choice ...but my conscious is struggling with the idea.

Arlene D. Schiff is Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires. She may be reached at (413) 442-4360, ext. 12 or arlene.schiff@verizon.net.

Letters to the Editor

Union for Reform Judaism Thankful for Camp Funding

Dear BJV Editor,

I recently read about the nearly \$16,000 that the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires distributed in scholarship money to children in the Berkshires so that they might attend Jewish Camps. I want to thank the Federation for its generosity and its commitment to Jewish camping. While, of course, I am grateful that your gifts have enabled some campers to attend our URJ camps in the region — Eisner in Great Barrington and Crane Lake in West Stockbridge — I am thrilled that the Federation recognizes the general importance of Jewish camping and is dedicated to fostering Judaism in our youth.

As you well know, Jewish camping is the premier way in which we can instill love of Jewish living in our kids, along with Jewish day schools and Israel programs. Camp gives our kids the opportunity to learn and live Jewishly every day in a safe and caring environment.

We are proud to offer our campers a deep and lasting connection to Judaism. The Berkshires are unique in that so many other camps, like ours, which can offer a similarly profound Jewish experience, call the region home.

We thank the Federation again for its commitment to the Jewish camps and Jewish children of the Berkshires, and look forward to working in tandem with you and with other Jewish camps of the area to produce a new generation of dedicated and involved Jews.

L'Shalom, Louis Bordman Executive Director Union for Reform Judaism

Jewish Agency for Israel: Thankful for Blankets

Dear BJV Editor,

I am delighted to extend heartfelt thanks to the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires for a recently received package of blankets, collected by children of the Berkshire Jewish Community, dedicated to infants in the Barne'a Absorption Center.

The blankets were handed out in the Absorption Center, which is situated in the Southern town of Ashkelon. I am pleased to attach photos of the infants and their mothers, enjoying their new gifts. In addition we will be sending, as a token of gratitude and appreciation, a package with pictures drawn by the infants' older siblings and friends, which I hope the Federation will be able to show



the kids who initiated this wonderful operation,

It is truly touching to learn that the education in the Berkshires Jewish Community of generosity and acts of "tikkun olam" begins at such a young age. Thanks again to the Federation for this wonderful contribution to the

immigrant children of Israel.

Sincerely, Diklah Cohen Donor Relations Manager Jewish Agency for Israel Jerusalem

 $\textbf{LETTERS}, \ continued \ on \ page \ 4$

Rabbi Reflections

Brave New "Jewish" World

By Rabbi Jeffrey Goldwasser



About the only thing you can say with any certainty about the future is that it will not be like the present.

I am not in the habit of trying to predict the future, but there are some changes in the American Jewish Community today that might inform us of what is yet to be. Knowing where the future may take us, it only makes sense to prepare today for challenges and opportunities to come. Here are some things to consider:

• American Judaism is becoming more ethnically diverse. There used to be a series of jokes with the punch line, "Funny, he doesn't look Jewish." It's not a joke anymore. There is now no such thing as a person who "looks Jewish" because Jews today come from all different ethnic and racial backgrounds. In our congregations we have Jewish children with Hispanic, African, and Asian backgrounds who have been adopted into their families. We have adults with Scandinavian, Irish, South American, and Japanese cultural identities who also took on a Jewish identity when they converted. The American Jewish Community of the

future will be more multi-colored and it will be seasoned with the flavors of many cultures.

• **Geographical distances are becoming less important.** Ten years ago, there was no such thing as "IMing," laptop video conferencing, blogging, or "Skype." (If you are unfamiliar with any of these terms, please consult a

Mazel Tov, graduates!

Sinai Academy wishes you the

same happiness in the future as

shines on your faces today.



'The Pastrami' ...get beyond it!

teenager.) Twenty years ago, there was no such thing as a website. As communications technology makes the world smaller, Jewish communities are becoming more interconnected with each other. In the future, innovation and change will travel through the Jewish community with the speed of pressing the "enter" key. Geography matters less; connection matters more.

• Israel is becoming the center of the Jewish world. No one will know the date on which it occurs and many say that it already has happened. Either way, in the near future, there will be many more Jews living in Israel than in the United States. In fifteen or twenty years, a majority of the world's Jews will live in Israel. The future of Judaism is inextricable from the future of Israel. The innovations, institutions and priorities of Israeli

Judaism will gain greater weight in American Jewish Communities.

What do we do to prepare ourselves for this brave new world of American Judaism? Here are some suggestions:

- **Get beyond "the pastrami."** Jewish culture is powerful and it is beautiful. It evokes strong nostalgia and connection for those who hold it dear. However, it is not the heart of Judaism. Excessive focus on cultural Judaism can alienate people who don't have chicken soup flowing through their veins. We need to do more to make our synagogues and communities places that welcome and embrace the cultures and identities of all who come to Torah.
- **Build broader connections.** When you hear Jews talking about "our Jewish community," you usually assume that they are talking about their particular synagogue, their movement, their city, or maybe, at most, their state. We need to expand the circle. The world is getting smaller and we need to take down the artificial boundaries that separate Jews from Jews. "Our Jewish community" should be one that includes Jews who live far from us, who use different prayerbooks than us, and who disagree with us.
- **Go to Israel.** Yes, I know that it is far. I know that it is expensive. I know that there are security concerns. However, there always have been more good reasons to go to Israel than not to. It is our homeland. It needs our support. It is the place where Judaism lives on every street corner. Now, you can add one more reason: It is the future of the Jewish people. Just look at the numbers.

While we try to look into the crystal ball to catch a glimpse of the changes in store for American Judaism, we also should remember that some things do not change. Judaism is not a cuisine or a fashion statement. It is a conversation that we have been having with God for a very long time. As we try to negotiate our way through the challenge of changing times, let us also stay true to a tradition that has taught us that we have an opportunity – through the way we treat others and the way we reach toward the divine – to make our lives an expression of the very highest within us and beyond us.

That part doesn't change.

Rabbi Jeffrey Goldwasser serves Congregation Beth Israel in North Adams.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, continued from page 3

Memorial Committee Formed

Dear BJV Editor,

A committee has been formed in Pittsfield to restore the bronze WW I Memorial at Memorial Park. The cost is estimated up to \$80,000. A restoration drive is now underway. Checks should be made out to "The Veteran's Memorial Trust" and mailed to: Veteran's Service Office, City Hall, 70 Allen Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201

Those seeking information may contact me at kizayde@aol.com.

Bob Shindler, Commander Jewish War Veterans Louis Green Post 140 Pittsfield



Sinai Academy

199 South Street Pittsfield, MA 01201

(413) 499-4167 www.sinai-academy.com



Photographs Copied and Restored

Trusted with Preserving our Heritage for Over 30 Years

Fine Art Reproduction / Giclée Prints

Howard J. Levitz tglhowie@aol.com

Nuturing the Future

One Child at a Time

413.663.3113 www.tglphotoworks.com



an elegant bed and breakfast 74 Wendell Avenue, Pittsfield, MA 01201

413-499-6840

www.clapphouse.com

Your home away from home in the Berkshires Restored Victorian mansion; walking distance to Pittsfield synagogues.

Young Judaism

In Amsterdam: Gaining Experience

By Jonathan Chabon



Almost sixty years have come and gone since the Holocaust — one of history's most tragic events — came to an end. And yet, the topic remains prominent in today's public consciousness, occupying not only high school and college curricula, but also engendering intensified research and reassessment.

Despite Germany's economic downfall brought about by World War One, and despite the bigotry, the propaganda, and the political and social pressures of that time people of today want to know: Why were normal, ordinary men capable of committing the greatest mass murder

the world has ever known? And how were their victims, such as Anne Frank, able to keep a faith in humanity.

During vacation, I was among thirty confirmation class students from Great Barrington's Hevreh of Southern Berkshire who visited Amsterdam, Holland — a city where the Holocaust is not merely a picture in a book, or a caption noting six million died.

Now I have been there — where every street, every corner, every canal is a reminder of Holocaust history, which in the minds of many residents and visitors is "still happening."

I now have walked down those cobbled streets, and I have heard the same bell that Anne Frank heard every hour during the last years of her life.

I walked up the same stairs that led to the Frank's "Secret Annex," reaching and then ducking to get in, just as Anne stated in her 'Diary'. And I have seen her infamous room, with its movie star posters, and its yellow wallpaper.

But, I could not, and still cannot see or feel how she kept her faith in humanity.

In the Jewish section of east Amsterdam we visited the renowned Portuguese Synagogue. This beautiful edifice, built during the Spanish Inquisition by Portuguese Jews, is lit by one thousand candles hoisted by immense, golden chandeliers. We, regrettably, did not have the opportunity to see such a sight of illumination but, we did not miss a chance to sing — so, with expressions of embarrassment, soon the lyrics of "Am Yisrael" were echoing through the massive temple.

That synagogue had managed to survive the Holocaust unscathed, and that building, which had existed for almost four hundred years, created a connection that really brought us together and strengthened our belief in the Jewish religion and the Jewish people.

Our large group, only chaperoned by four, strolled down the block from



The Dutch countryside

the synagogue to see the Rembrandt house. Here, we engaged two unique perspectives: one was of seeing the manner in which people from Rembrandt's era lived, the second was his art.

Holding some of the most magnificent paintings in history Amsterdam is the home of both Rembrandt and Van Gogh, so afterward we were privileged to visit the Van Gogh Museum and enjoy the freedom to wander the halls and see famous portraits by Van Gogh and other artists.

But art was not the only form of culture we explored. As a group, we walked through the Amsterdam's "Red Light District" – hands in pockets and clenching wallets.

I alone was offered two types of hard narcotics — by three different people! However, this was not just a walk to "sightsee"— it was also an "experience" of one of Amsterdam's main attractions that evokes emotions: ranging from "fear" to "pity."

"Fear," because the scent of drugs and alcohol loomed in the air; "pity," for the young women and that which led them to choose or plummet into such a life.

Check out our website! www.jewishberkshires.org

Includes a Calendar of Programs and Events Sponsored by the Berkshire Jewish Community



An Amsterdam side street

I know Amsterdam is "one of a kind" — but what does it say about a society whose social boundaries are so open?

I cannot speak for the whole group but here was an experience that I will never forget, even though it hardly lasted a minute.

However, on the whole, Holland is a country to savor. Amsterdam, a majestic city, is bustling, while the Dutch countryside is in contrast calming. Life is beautiful and history is still present.

The only thing left to say is: please visit Holland; visit Amsterdam. Perhaps, you — as I — will make a special connection not only to Judaism, but to every aspect of Dutch culture.

Go to experience firsthand through an emotionally riveting journey: the Holocaust and the broader history of the Jews; and the art and street-scene of Amsterdam.

Born in Israel, Jonathan Chabon moved to the United States at age six. He is currently completing his junior year at Monument Mountain Regional High School in Great Barrington.

Affiliate with a Congregation.

You, the congregation, and the Jewish community benefit when you do

- YOU GET the Jewish enrichment and spiritual nourishment you are seeking.
- YOU GET the rabbinical support you need in times of joy and sorrow.
- YOU RECONNECT with your community and your Jewish roots.
- YOU CAN PARTICIPATE in a variety
 of services, classes, and programs that keep Judaism alive and flourishing in Berkshire County.
- THE CONGREGATION IS THE INSTITUTION that has sustained the Jewish people for two millenia throughout the world. Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist, or Reform, the Jew-

ish community wins when you join the congregation of your choice.

The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires

encourages you to affiliate.

The Pines at Bousquet Mountain

New Luxury Townhouses at historic Bousquet Mountain Ski Resort

Devon Meadow

Gated Upscale Luxury Condominiums On the Lenox/Stockbridge line

MAKE CUSTOMIZED SELECTIONS AND BE IN FOR SUMMER 2009!

15 minutes to Tanglewood!

Furnished Model Open Daily

3 to 5 Bedrooms 2 1/2 to 4 1/2 Bathrooms 2 Car Garage First Floor Master Bedroom Suite

Fireplace Screen Porch / Oversize deck Great Location Beautiful View

www.pinesatbousquet.com

Maintenance Free Living Central Air

For Information call 413-443-8866

5 minutes to Tanglewood!

Gated Community 3 to 5 Bedrooms Furnished Model Open Daily 3 1/2 to 4 1/2 Bathrooms

First Floor Master Bedroom Suite Fireplace Screen Porch / Oversize deck Country Setting Maintenance Free Living

2 Car Garage
Central Air
WWW. devonmeadow. com

For Information call 413-443-8866