



Dear Friend,

A few weeks ago, I shared with the JBI board and staff the news that I have decided to retire from my role as JBI's executive director effective in mid-April. Saying goodbye to JBI, this organization I care so deeply about, is far from easy. But after four decades serving Jewish nonprofits, it is the right time for me to begin my next chapter: spending time with my husband, family, and friends in retirement.

I am proud that, due in no small part to the efforts and dedication of my incredibly hardworking and dedicated colleagues, JBI is a vibrant and healthy organization. We have continued to expand our services, provide a greater number of offerings to an ever-increasing number of patrons, and we continue to partner with a growing number of organizations across the country. Together we have implemented a strategic plan that builds upon past successes, reshapes JBI's mission, values, and programs to meet current needs, and solidifies our footing for future growth. We're building JBI to be more than a place for texts and books, but also a hub of learning and community engagement. I am incredibly grateful and honored to have had the opportunity to serve you and JBI, and to work alongside an incredible team of staff, board members, volunteers, and organizational partners.

It's important to note, I'm not leaving just yet and JBI is definitely not

slowing down! I'm looking forward to accomplishing even more in the coming months, so stay tuned for some exciting news, announcements, and upcoming programs—including a few shared below.

Thank you for making my last official role in the Jewish world such a deeply rewarding and meaningful one.

With heartfelt gratitude to this amazing community,



Livia Thompson

## **Programs**

### **Judaism 101: Intro to Chanukah**

**Tuesday, December 17, 4:30 pm ET**

#### **Via Zoom**

Whether you're new to Judaism, curious to know more about Chanukah, or just looking to share the holiday with others, JBI welcomes you to discuss miracles, perseverance, light, and other themes in this special holiday edition of our Judaism 101 series. Texts are available in braille, large print, and audio formats upon request for registrants. Register for free at <https://jbilibrary.org/catalog/judaism-101/>.

### **Beyond the Booth: Exploring the Dynamic Between Author and Audiobook Narrator**

**Tuesday, December 10, 4:30 pm ET**

#### **Via Zoom**

Friends and collaborators author Elinor Lipman and audiobook narrator Piper Goodeve kibbitz over working together on Lipman's books ("The Inn at Lake Devine" and forthcoming "Every Tom, Dick & Harry") and the nuances that arise when recording books with Jewish content. Sure to be as fun as it is informative, you won't want to miss this insider's look at the

art of audiobooks. Register for free at the following link: <https://bit.ly/LipmanBTB>. Request “The Inn at Lake Devine” by contacting our librarians at [library@jbilibrary.org](mailto:library@jbilibrary.org) or 212-545-8025.

### **In Case You Missed It: Walking the Narrow Bridge: Jewish Poetry as a Path of Resilience**

Earlier this month, poets Edward Hirsch and Jessica Jacobs joined Central Synagogue’s Rabbi Sivan Rotholz live in NYC to kick off JBI’s poetry series with a reading and discussion on how poetry can be a tool of resilience in this time of transformation, anxiety, and possibility. “The community in Judaism, the humor of Judaism, the humanity of poetry.... This is where poetry steps in,” said Hirsch. “Poetry speaks to our inner lives almost better than anything else.” [A recording of the event is now available.](#)

### **Featured Jewish Poetry Reads**

#### **“Walking the Narrow Bridge: JBI Program Poetry” (large print, audio, braille) EN408805**

This special compilation recorded as a supplement to our Jewish poetry series program features poet Jessica Jacobs reading from her book “Unalone” (Four Way Books, 2024) and poet Edward Hirsch reading a selection of poems from his books.

#### **“National Cold Storage Company” by Harvey Shapiro (large print) LTE00655**

Although his career in publishing often overshadowed his poetry, this collection of new and selected poems—spanning 30 years of Shapiro’s life exploring American Jewish identity, family, New York City, and love—reveal just how excellent a poet he is.

### **Join a JBI Book Group**

Our three book groups—two in English and one in Russian—continue and are always open to new members interested in reading, chatting, and having a great time together. Join us for vibrant discussions of wonderful

reads. Please contact our librarians Sarah Feldman and Inna Suholutsky at [library@JBILibrary.org](mailto:library@JBILibrary.org); they will be delighted to share options with you.

## **Featured Book Club Reads**

- **“The Yellow Bird Sings” by Jennifer Rosner (audio)**

As Nazi soldiers round up the Jews in their Polish town, Róza and her 5-year-old daughter, Shira, flee, seeking shelter in a neighbor's barn. To soothe her daughter and pass the time, Róza tells her a story about a girl in an enchanted garden.

- **“People Love Dead Jews: Reports from a Haunted Present” by Dara Horn (audio) EN408728**

This winner of a 2021 National Jewish Book Award is a startling and profound exploration of how Jewish history is exploited to comfort the living.

- **“Jerusalem Maiden” by Talia Carner (audio) EN408442**

Esther, a young Orthodox Jewish woman living in Jerusalem, understands her obligations to marry, but her artistic talent inspires her to secretly explore worlds beyond her religion and dream of studying in Paris. She's forced to confront the question: To whom must she be true, God or herself?

## **Patrons' Council: We Want to Hear from You**

Our Patrons' Council provides JBI with essential information and acts as a sounding board for sharing our thinking about future programs and focus—we welcome your involvement, ideas, and concerns. Please contact our librarians Sarah Feldman and Inna Suholutsky at [library@JBILibrary.org](mailto:library@JBILibrary.org) to get involved.

## **Books**

## **More from the JBI Library**

Read on for Librarian Sarah Feldman's latest roundup of JBI releases now available in braille, audio, and large print formats.

### **New Nonfiction**

#### **“Dating Secrets of the Ten Commandments,” by Rabbi Shmuley Boteach (audio) EN407219**

Speaking from an Orthodox perspective, Rabbi Boteach shares his advice on how to find that special someone, replete with up-to-date cultural references and humor. “Dating Secrets” is aimed at singles of all faiths.

#### **“Jazz Age Jews” by Michael Alexander (audio) EN4007573**

By the 1920s, Jews were by all economic, political, and cultural measures of the day “making it” in America. But as these children of immigrants took their places in American society, many deliberately identified with groups that remained excluded. Despite their success, Jews embraced resistance more than acculturation, preferring marginal status to assimilation.

#### **“Coming Home to Jerusalem: A Personal Journey” by Wendy Orange (audio) EN407815**

Amid language barriers, household drama, homesickness, and a halting job search, Orange strives to settle her small family in Israel for the long term. Her sociability and interest in her surroundings quickly connect her to a wide assortment of Israel's varied personalities: famous authors, obscure artists, politicians, psychologists, journalists, American-Israeli housewives, and evangelical Christian teachers, alike.

#### **“Be Strong and of Good Courage: How Israel's Most Important Leaders Shaped Its Destiny” by Dennis Ross and David Makovsky (audio) EN408773**

Modern Israel's founding fathers provided some of the boldest and most principled leadership of any nation. At a time when the political destiny of Israel is more uncertain than at any moment since its modern founding, this book celebrates the defining generation of leaders who took on the task of safeguarding the country's future.

## New Fiction

- **COMING SOON: “Blue Mountain” by Meir Shalev (audio)**  
EN406468

This best-selling Israeli book, recounts the story of four young Russian pioneers who immigrated to Israel before WWI. Baruch, the novel's narrator, tells the tales of three generations of villagers who are enigmatic, crotchety, larger-than-life, and always memorable.

## Chanukah Reads

- **“The Power of Light: Eight Stories for Hanukkah” by Isaac Bashevis Singer (audio)** EN403719

Set in Poland, these inspirational tales demonstrate the miraculous power of faith, hope, and love.

- **“Hanukkah Book” by Harriet Marcus (audio)** EN405000

A comprehensive account of the history and traditions of Hanukkah from gifts to food to celebrations.

## For Families & Children

- **“K'Tonton in the Circus: A Hanukkah Adventure” by Sadie Rose Weilerstein (audio)** EN403863

The fanciful adventures of a thumb-sized Jewish boy named K'Tonton, who joins the circus by mistake and teaches his new friends about Hanukkah. Weilerstein's classic 1930s children's series featuring K'Tonton were some of the first Jewish children's stories to be written in English, first appearing in magazine form. They still delight today.

- **“The Hanukkah Play” by Robert Garvey (braille)** BR006490

Twins Rachel and David are angry. Again, this year Miss Keene gave them "baby" roles in the Hanukkah play, so they decide to act out the play themselves at home for their family —with unexpected and amusing results.

- **“Judah Who Always Said ‘No!’” by Harriet K. Feder (braille)**  
BR006807

"No," said Judah Maccabee, when the Syrian king wanted him to change his name. "No," he said again, when ordered to pray to strange gods. Judah's defiance helped the Maccabees to victory. Only after the miracle of Hanukkah, did Judah finally say, "Yes."

- **“Light Another Candle: The Story and Meaning of Hanukkah” by Miriam Chaiken (large print) LTE00448**

In this children's book, Chaiken explains the Hanukkah story and describes the variety of modern ways that Jews observe the holiday.

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Get in touch!

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JB I

(established in 1931 as the Jewish Braille Institute)

Enabling access to Jewish life through audio, braille and large print texts

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