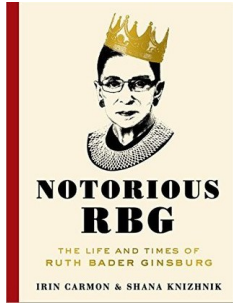


Date: Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 5PM Movie, 7PM Dinner and Book Club

Hosts: Cheryl Hecht and Leonard Thurschwell

Notorious RBG: The Life and Times of Ruth Bader Ginsberg
By Irin Carmon and Shana Knizhnik



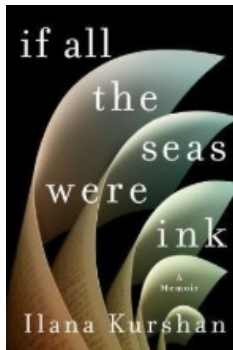
The authors do not claim that their delightful book, filled with pictures, cartoons and clever writing, is a neutral academic analysis of the life's work of Justice Ginsburg. It is instead an abidingly affectionate weltschrift. Their love for the octogenarian is palpable. This is one reason the book succeeds so well. In a time when harsh and belittling criticism appears to be the norm in our public discourse, it is a relief to find a text where the plaudits flow. Ruth "Kiki" Bader is a Brooklynite. She was born into a Jewish immigrant family where success was expected, but only as a result of indefatigable effort. A graduate of Cornell University, the future justice starred at Harvard Law School at a time when the presence of women in the class was an oddity. The CNN documentary and the book opens windows and doors into the life of RBG. "There is no truth without Ruth"

MJCCA Book Festival Nov 3-18, 2018

Date: Wednesday, November 14, 2018, 7PM

Host: Sari Marmur

If All the Seas Were Ink: A Memoir by Ilana Kurshan



The Wall Street Journal: "There is humor and heartbreak in these pages... Ms. Kurshan immerses herself in the demands of daily Talmud study and allows the words of ancient scholars to transform the patterns of her own life."
The Jewish Standard: "Brilliant, beautifully written, sensitive, original."

At the age of 27, alone in Jerusalem in the wake of a painful divorce, Ilana Kurshan joined the world's largest book club, learning daf yomi, Hebrew for "daily page" of the Talmud, a book of rabbinic teachings spanning about 600 years and the basis for all codes of Jewish law. A runner, a reader and a romantic, Kurshan adapted to its pace, attuned her ear to its poetry, and discovered her passions in its pages. She brought the Talmud with her wherever she went, studying in airplanes, supermarket lines, and over a plate of pasta at home, careful not to drip tomato sauce upon discussions about the sprinkling of blood on the Temple altar. By the time she completed the Talmud after seven and a half years, Kurshan was remarried with three young children. With each pregnancy, her Talmud sat perched atop her growing belly.

Date: Wednesday, December 12, 2018, 7PM

Hosts: Patrick and Cindy Tracy

The World is a Narrow Bridge by Aaron Thier



A darkly comic road novel about a millennial couple facing the ultimate questions: how to live and love in a age of catastrophe.

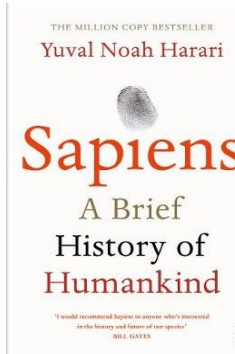
Young Miami couple Murphy and Eva have almost decided to have a baby when Yahweh, the Old Testament God, appears to Eva and makes an unwelcome demand: He wants her to be his prophet. He also wants her to manage his social media presence.

Yahweh sends the two on a wild road trip across the country, making incomprehensible demands and mandating arcane rituals as they go. He gives them a hundred million dollars, but he asks them to use it to build a temple on top of a landfill. He forces them to endure a period of Biblical wandering in the deserts of the southwest. Along the way they are continually mistaken for another couple, a pair of North Carolina society people, and find themselves attending increasingly bizarre events in their names. At odds with their mission but helpless to disobey, Murphy and Eva search their surroundings for signs of a future they can have faith in.

Date: Wednesday, January 9, 2019, 7PM

Hosts: Sheila and Michael Dalmat

Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind by Yuval Noah Harari



#1 New York Times Bestseller, 35 weeks on list as of 8/18.

From a renowned historian comes a groundbreaking narrative of humanity's creation and evolution—a #1 international bestseller—that explores the ways in which biology and history have defined us and enhanced our understanding of what it means to be "human."

One hundred thousand years ago, at least six different species of humans inhabited Earth. Yet today there is only one—homo sapiens. What happened to the others? And what may happen to us?

Most books about the history of humanity pursue either a historical or a biological approach, but Dr. Yuval Noah Harari breaks the mold with this highly original book that begins about 70,000 years ago with the appearance of modern cognition. From examining the role evolving humans have played in the global ecosystem to charting the rise of empires, Sapiens integrates history and science to reconsider accepted narratives, connect past developments with contemporary concerns, and examine specific events within the context of larger ideas.

Sapiens...

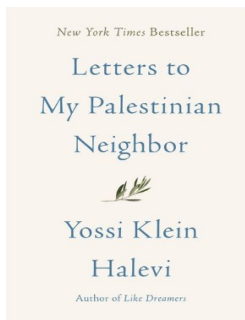
Dr. Harari also compels us to look ahead, because over the last few decades humans have begun to bend laws of natural selection that have governed life for the past four billion years. We are acquiring the ability to design not only the world around us, but also ourselves. Where is this leading us, and what do we want to become?

AJFF Feb 6 - 26, 2019

Date: Wednesday, February 13, 2019, 7PM

Host: Cathy Jacobson/Rabbi Analia Bortz (facilitator)

Letters to my Palestinian Neighbor by Yossi Klein Halevi



Attempting to break the agonizing impasse between Israelis and Palestinians, the Israeli commentator and award-winning author of Like Dreamers directly addresses his Palestinian neighbors in this taut and provocative book, empathizing with Palestinian suffering and longing for reconciliation as he explores how the conflict looks through Israeli eyes. I call you

"neighbor" because I don't know your name, or anything personal about you. Given our circumstances, "neighbor" might be too casual a word to describe our relationship. We are intruders into each other's dream, violators of each other's sense of home. We are incarnations of each other's worst historical nightmares. Neighbors?

Letters to My Palestinian Neighbor is one Israeli's powerful attempt to reach beyond the wall that separates Israelis and Palestinians and into the hearts of "the enemy." In a series of letters, Yossi Klein Halevi explains what motivated him to leave his native New York in his twenties and move to Israel to participate in the drama of the renewal of a Jewish homeland, which he is committed to see succeed as a morally responsible, democratic state in the Middle East.

Date: Wednesday, March 13, 2019, 7PM

Host: Ilene Zier/Sara Ghitis (facilitator)

The Angel by Uri Bar-Joseph



A gripping feat of reportage that exposes—for the first time in English—the sensational life and mysterious death of Ashraf Marwan, an Egyptian senior official who spied for Israel, offering new insight into the turbulent modern history of the Middle East. As the son-in-law of Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser and a close advisor to his successor, Anwar Sadat, Ashraf Marwan had access to the deepest secrets of the country's government. But Marwan himself had a secret:

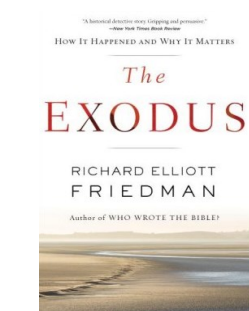
Angel...

He was a spy for the Mossad, Israel's intelligence service. Under the codename "The Angel," Marwan turned Egypt into an open book for the Israeli intelligence services—and, by alerting the Mossad in advance of the joint Egyptian-Syrian attack on Yom Kippur, saved Israel from a devastating defeat. Drawing on meticulous research and interviews with many key participants, Uri Bar Joseph pieces together Marwan's story. In the process, he sheds new light on this volatile time in modern Egyptian and Middle Eastern history, culminating in 2011's Arab Spring. The Angel also chronicles the discord within the Israeli government that brought down Prime Minister Golda Meir. However, this nail-biting narrative doesn't end with Israel's victory in the Yom Kippur War. Marwan eluded Egypt's ruthless secret services for many years, but then somebody talked. Five years later, in 2007, his body was found in the garden of his London apartment building. Police suspected he had been thrown from his fifth-floor balcony, and thanks to explosive new evidence, Bar-Joseph can finally reveal who, how, and why.

Date: Wednesday, April 10, 7PM

Hosts: David and Deborah Woodsfellow

The Exodus by Richard Elliott Friedman



Like a detective on an intricate case no one has yet solved, pioneering Bible scholar and bestselling author of Who Wrote the Bible? Richard Elliott Friedman cuts through the noise — the serious studies and the wild theories — merging new findings with new insight. From a spectrum of disciplines, state-of-the-art archeological breakthroughs,

and fresh discoveries within scripture, he brings real evidence of a historical basis for the exodus — the history behind the story. The biblical account of millions fleeing Egypt may be an exaggeration, but the exodus itself is not a myth.

Friedman does not stop there. Known for his ability to make Bible scholarship accessible to readers, Friedman proceeds to reveal how much is at stake when we explore the historicity of the exodus. The implications, he writes, are monumental. We learn that it became the starting-point of the formation of monotheism, the defining concept of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Moreover, we learn that it precipitated the foundational ethic of loving one's neighbors — including strangers — as oneself. He concludes, the actual exodus was the cradle of global values of compassion and equal rights today while at the same time rigorously argued and supported. I'm very curious now about the origins and meanings behind the stories of the patriarchs, as well as the genealogies - hopefully Friedman will address this in future work.

Date: Wednesday, May 8, 2019, 7PM

Host: Shlomit Finkelstein

Trouble in the Tribe: The American Jewish Conflict Over Israel

By Dov Waxman



A Decades-Long Divorce by Jay Michaelson for Moment Magazine: If you ever want to convince someone not to be Jewish, invite them to an argument over Israel. The rancor, the ignorance, the accusations of racism and anti-Semitism—there's a reason the topic is often banned from polite conversation: The conversation is rarely polite. How did we get to this point, where what was once a uniting force is

now so divisive? Longtime Middle East politics expert and Northeastern University professor Dov Waxman attempts to tell us in his new volume *Trouble in the Tribe: The American Jewish Conflict over Israel* (too jocular a title for such an important, depressing book). He has succeeded, but has also managed to surprise this bruised, cynical veteran of the "conflict" (I play a bit part in the book) several times—and to make me even more pessimistic about it. ... Supporting Israel could become merely an Orthodox cause, not one that unites most American Jews", Waxman concludes.

Looking around at the Celebrate Israel parade and the recent AIPAC conference, where Donald Trump was loudly applauded for defaming President Obama, there does seem to be strong evidence for this warning. And that should give pause to all of us who find ourselves between the extremes, praying for peace and overwhelmed by a nasty, alienating shouting match. Jay Michaelson is an ordained rabbi, a weekly columnist for *The Forward* and *The Daily Beast*, and the author of six books, most recently *The Gate of Tears: Sadness & the Spiritual Path*.

Date: June 12, 2019

Hosts: Elizabeth Appley and Sandy Epstein

Famous Father Girl: A Memoir Growing up Bernstein

by Jamie Bernstein



The oldest daughter of revered composer/conductor Leonard Bernstein offers a rare look at her father on the centennial of his birth in a deeply intimate and broadly evocative memoir

The composer of *On the Town* and *West Side Story*, chief conductor of the New York Philharmonic, television star, humanitarian, friend of the powerful and influential, and the life of every party, Leonard

Bernstein was an enormous celebrity during one of the headiest periods of American cultural life, as well as the most protean musician in twentieth century America.

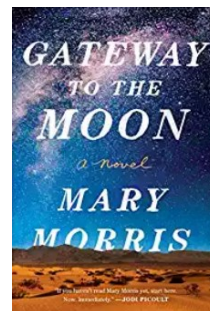
Famous Father Girl...

But to his eldest daughter, Jamie, he was above all the man in the scratchy brown bathrobe who smelled of cigarettes; the jokester and compulsive teacher who enthused about Beethoven and the Beatles; the insomniac whose 4 a.m. composing breaks involved spooning baby food out of the jar. He taught his daughter to love the world in all its beauty and complexity. In public and private, Lenny was larger than life. In *Famous Father Girl*, Bernstein mines the emotional depths of her childhood and invites us into her family's private world. A fantastic set of characters populates the Bernsteins' lives, including: the Kennedys, Mike Nichols, John Lennon, Richard Avedon, Stephen Sondheim, Jerome Robbins, and Betty (Lauren) Bacall. An intoxicating tale, *Famous Father Girl* is an intimate meditation on a complex and sometimes troubled man, the family he raised, and the music he composed that became the soundtrack to their entwined lives. Deeply moving and often hilarious, Bernstein's beautifully written memoir is a great American story about one of the greatest Americans of the modern age.

Date: Wednesday, July 10, 2019

Hosts: Louise Meller and Jay Lukowski

Gateway to the Moon by Mary Morris



From award-winning novelist Mary Morris comes the remarkable story of a remote New Mexican town coming to grips with a dark history it never imagined.

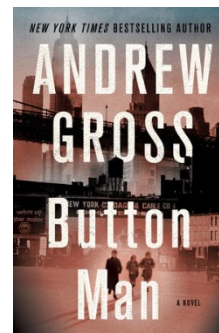
In 1492, the Jewish and Muslim populations of Spain were expelled, and Columbus set sail for America. Luis de Torres, a Spanish Jew, accompanies Columbus as his interpreter. His journey is only the beginning of a long migration, across many generations. Over the centuries, de Torres' descendants travel from Spain and Portugal to Mexico, finally settling in the hills of New Mexico. Five hundred years later, it is in these same hills that Miguel Torres, a young amateur astronomer, finds himself trying to understand the mystery that surrounds him and the town he grew up in.

Entrada de la Luna is a place that holds a profound secret—one that its residents cannot even imagine. It is also a place that ambitious children, such as Miguel, try to leave. Poor health, broken marriages, and poverty are the norm. Luck is unusual. When Miguel sees a flyer for a babysitting job, he jumps at the opportunity, and begins work for a Jewish family new to the area. Rachel Rothstein is not the sort of parent Miguel expected. A frustrated artist, Rachel moved her family from New York in search of a fresh start, but so far New Mexico has not solved any of the problems she brought with her. Miguel loves the work, yet he is surprised to find many of the Rothstein family's customs similar to ones he's grown up with and never understood.

Date: August 14, 2019, 7PM

Host: Jody Kassel/Robin Lewis (facilitator)

Button Man by Andrew Gross



After a string of New York Times bestselling suburban thrillers, Andrew Gross has reinvented himself as a writer of historical thrillers. In his latest novel, *Button Man*, he delivers a stirring story of a Jewish family brought together in the dawn of the women's garment business and torn apart by the birth of organized crime in New York City in the 1930s.

Morris, Sol, and Harry Rabishevsky grew up poor and rough in a tiny flat on the Lower East Side, until the death of their father thrust them into having to fend for themselves and support their large family. Morris, the youngest, dropped out of school at twelve years old and apprenticed himself to a garment cutter in a clothing factory; Sol headed to accounting school; but Harry, scarred by a family tragedy, fell in with a gang of thugs as a teenager. Morris steadily climbs through the ranks at the factory until at twenty-one he finally goes out on his own, convincing Sol to come work with him. But Harry can't be lured away from the glamour, the power, and the money that come from his association with Louis Buchalter, whom Morris has battled with since his youth and who has risen to become the most ruthless mobster in New York. And when Buchalter sets his sights on the unions that staff the garment makers' factories, a fatal showdown is inevitable, pitting brother against brother.

This new novel is equal parts historical thriller, rich with the detail of a vibrant New York City in the 1920s and 1930s, and family saga, based on Andrew Gross's own family story and on the history of the era, complete with appearances by real-life characters like mobsters Louis Lepke and Dutch Schultz and special prosecutor Thomas Dewey, and cements Gross's reputation as today's most atmospheric and original historical thriller writer.

All preceding summaries have been plagiarized. CLH



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