

2022-2023

WHY DO WE...  
BESTO FOR 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY  
SH PEOPLEHOOD

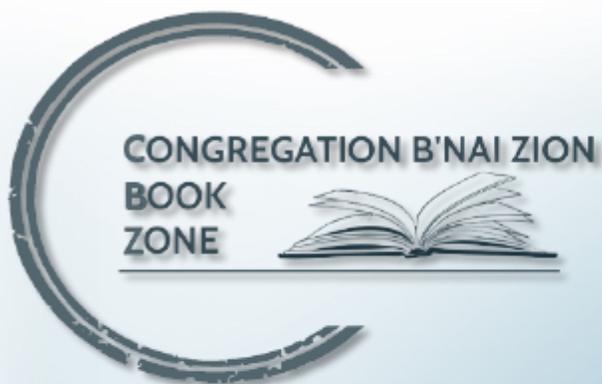
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One Holocaust Family's  
Desperate Plea for Help  
Faris C

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# Zack Bodner

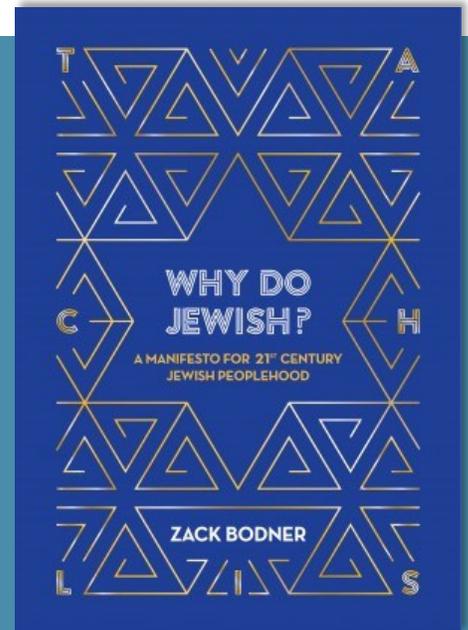


Zack Bodner is a seeker, writer, storyteller, community organizer, and above all else, a doer. He has been the CEO of the Oshman Family JCC for nearly 9 years. Before that, Zack worked for 14 years at AIPAC. Zack holds an MA in Philosophy of Religion and Theology from Claremont Graduate University and a BA from Yale, where he played varsity soccer. Zack is an accomplished speaker, including as a MOTH storyteller and TEDx presenter. He writes regularly for publications including *The Forward*, *Times of Israel*, *The J Weekly*, and *eJewish Philanthropy*. He is a member of YPO and was in the Executive Leadership Seminar at The Aspen Institute. He served as an iFellow Mentor for the iCenter, is an Amitim Fellow for JCC Global, is a member of the Board of Directors of the JCC Association of North America, and is on the Advisory Board of the Taube Center for Jewish Studies at Stanford University.

## Why Do Jewish?:

### A Manifesto for 21st Century Jewish Peoplehood

How do I live a more meaningful life? In an era when we can choose our own identities, why might we choose to identify as Jews? Zack Bodner addresses these questions and others as he shifts from asking “Why be Jewish?” to “Why do Jewish?” After laying out a compelling answer, he goes on to explain what Jewish Peoplehood is and why he believes we are in the throes of an evolution to the next era: Jewish Peoplehood 4.0. He provides a road map for how to do Jewish in the 21st century including proposing “the next big Jewish idea.” Insisting that taking action is what matters most, Bodner proposes a creative framework for doing Jewish based on an acronym from the Yiddish word TACHLIS, which means “getting down to brass tacks.” Through a combination of personal stories, insights from some of the world’s greatest teachers, and contemporary analysis, *Why Do Jewish?* takes one of our oldest wisdom traditions and provides an accessible guide for anyone looking for answers to life’s most important questions.

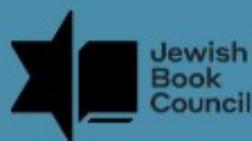


**Thursday, November 17, 2022**

**7:00 PM**

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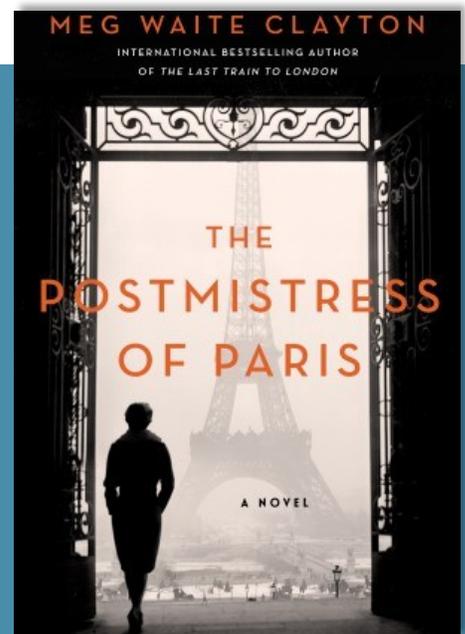
# Meg Waite Clayton



Meg Waite Clayton is the *New York Times* bestselling author of eight novels, including the forthcoming *The Postmistress of Paris* and the National Jewish Book Award finalist *The Last Train to London* (publishing in 20 languages). A graduate of the University of Michigan law school, Meg's short works have appeared in major newspapers and magazines and on public radio.

## The Postmistress of Paris: A Novel

At once thrilling and historically edifying, *The Postmistress of Paris* illuminates the often overlooked stories of non-Jewish people who put their lives on the line during World War II to help refugees escape Europe. The efforts of the Emergency Rescue committee serve as a testament to the power of resistance in the face of barbarism. Author Meg Waite Clayton fictionalizes the life of heiress Mary Jayne Gold through the character of Nanée, an independent, progressive socialite who cannot look away from the struggles of the Jews in her free-spirited social circle. She knows she can always go home to America, but she also knows her American citizenship is an indispensable asset to getting the artists and intellectuals she loves out of danger.

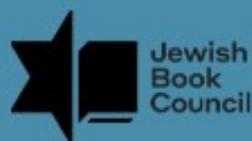


**Sunday, December 4, 2022**

**7:00 PM**

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Funded by a grant from Jewish El Paso

# James McAuley

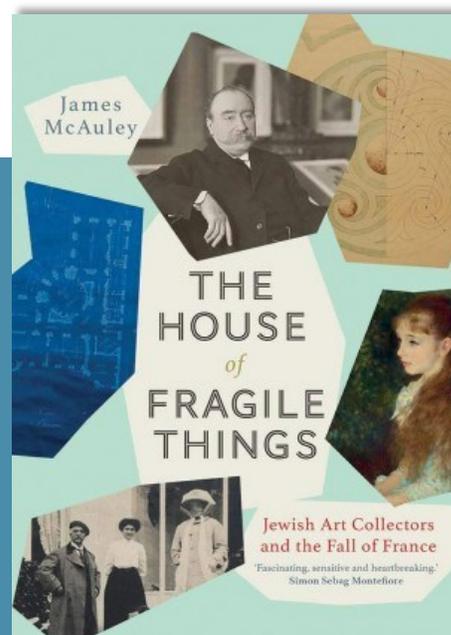


James McAuley is a European affairs columnist for *The Washington Post*. He recently completed his doctorate in modern history at the University of Oxford, where he was Marshall scholar.

## The House of Fragile Things:

*Jewish Art Collectors and the Fall of France*

The superbly crafted, well-researched book *The House of Fragile Things*, swirls around the themes of entanglements and attachments. Author James McAuley focuses on four Jewish families who belonged to the French grand bourgeoisie in the late nineteenth century. They were deeply entwined with one another, through the bonds of marriage, through the exclusiveness of a Right Bank neighborhood, and through the full calendar of their social lives. The Camondos, the Cahens d'Anvers, the Reinachs, and the Rothschilds all also felt a deep attachment to the Third Republic; its ideal of civic equality, transcending differences of religion and race, inspired feelings of intense and unwavering loyalty. Until the military defeat in 1940, the patriotism of these privileged citizens seemed to be reciprocated. They were blessed with unimpeded opportunities to acquire and transfer wealth, and they could adopt with almost no ridicule the habits and practices of the nation's most venerable Catholic grandees. This social success was achieved despite the sting of antisemitic attacks from the scurrilous press, and despite the eruption of the Dreyfus affair.



**Thursday, January 5, 2023**

**7:00 PM**

**Congregation B'nai Zion**

**805 Cherry Hill Ln**

**El Paso, TX 79912**



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# Shannon Sarna



Shannon Sarna is founding editor of *The Nosh*, the widest-reaching website dedicated to Jewish food, which is part of the 70 Faces Media group. Shannon grew up in upstate New York immersed in performance and music as well as surrounded by diverse culinary experiences: Her Sicilian American mother loved to bake, her Ashkenazi Jewish father loved to experiment, and her grandfather was a food chemist who patented Tang, among other products. Her writing and recipes have been featured in *Bake from Scratch Magazine*, *Taste of Home Magazine*, *Parade Magazine*, *Food52*, *The Kitchn*, *Tablet Magazine*, *JTA News*, *New Jersey Monthly Magazine Vinepair*, and *Modern Loss*. Her first cookbook, *Modern Jewish Baker: Challah, Babka, Bagels & More*, was released in September 2017 by Countryman Press.



## Modern Jewish Comfort Food:

100 Fresh Recipes for Classic Dishes from Kugel to Kreplach

Comfort food varies from person to person, family to family, region to region. As the author of *Modern Jewish Baker* and editor of *The Nosh*, Shannon Sarna has always wanted to tell the story of the Jewish people through food and continues to do so here in her latest book. *Modern Jewish Comfort Food* showcases recipes and variations that have shaped Jewish cuisine from around the world—including immigration waves from Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, New York City, and beyond. Sarna shares many traditional dishes, and then provides exciting variations to cleverly interpret tomato & pepper shakshuka into a deep-dish pizza; classic potato latkes invite vegetable-focused variations such as beet & carrot and summer corn zucchini; and a multitude of dumplings reflect the range of the Jewish diaspora. Sweets includes two kinds of Israeli-style yeasted rugelach, funfetti macaroons, and more— ready to complete the holiday dessert table. *Modern Jewish Comfort Food* will inspire home cooks to connect to Jewish foodways and explore the history of this diverse cuisine.

**Monday, March 13, 2023**

**6:00 PM**

**Congregation B'nai Zion**

**805 Cherry Hill Ln**

**El Paso, TX 79912**

**(with a light dinner)**



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# Faris Cassell



Faris Cassell, a journalist and writer, lives with her husband in Eugene, Oregon. She earned a B.A. in history from Mount Holyoke College and an M.S. in journalism from the University of Oregon. Her decades of research into Alfred and Hedwig Berger's story was supported by a Mount Holyoke Alumnae Scholarship and by the generous cooperation of the Berger family.

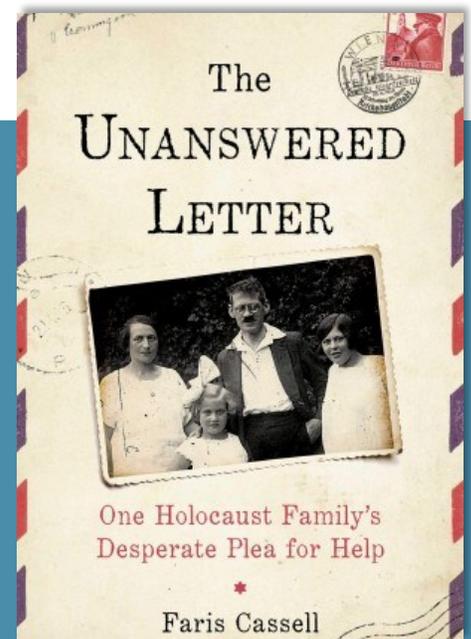
## The Unanswered Letter:

### One Holocaust Family's Desperate Plea for Help

One day in 2000, Faris Cassell's physician husband came home with a fifty-year-old letter that had been handed to him by a patient. The letter was a plea for help from a Jewish couple named Berger trying to escape Vienna in 1939 as the Nazis were advancing on Austria. They had sent the letter in desperation to an unknown family in America also named Berger, but not related. The plea went unanswered but the letter was saved, lying forgotten in a California attic.

Cassell, a journalist, made it her mission to trace the travels and travails of the Berger family. It took several years of research but she located many living family members in the United States and around the world, and worked extensively with them to construct a timeline with their saved letters. We read about the ways in which various parts of the family tried to leave their respective countries for safety elsewhere, and the ever-tightening restrictions on immigration they faced.

Cassell's vivid storytelling transports the reader through emotional highs and lows as the Berger family confronts dire situations at every turn. This book provides an excellent education about the situation of the Viennese Jews during the Holocaust era. It's also a great read.

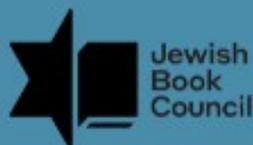


**Thursday April 27, 2023**

**7:00 PM**

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# Anna Salton Eisen



Anna Salton Eisen was the founding president of Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, Texas. She served as a docent for the Dallas Memorial Center for Holocaust Studies and conducted Holocaust survivor interviews for the USC Shoah Foundation. A licensed social worker, Salton Eisen formerly practiced as a therapist. She is the co-author of her father's Holocaust memoir, *The 23rd Psalm*.

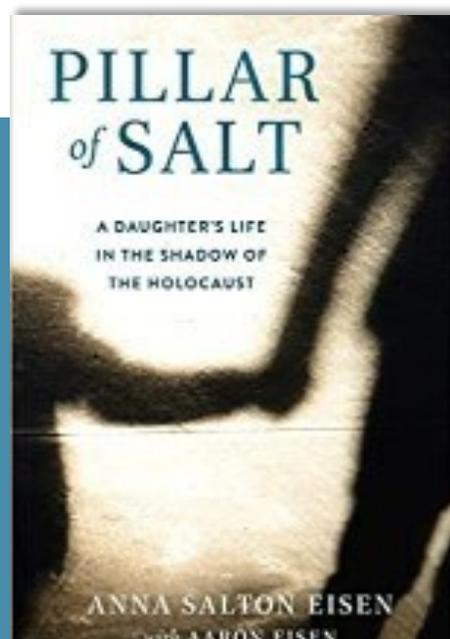
## Pillar of Salt:

### A Daughter's Life in the Shadow of the Holocaust

Anna Salton Eisen grows up surrounded by all the trappings of an idyllic Jewish American childhood: a house in the Maryland suburbs, Hebrew school, clothes, books, lavish meals, and unquestioning, all-enveloping love. But, as we learn from *Pillar of Salt*, Salton Eisen's affecting memoir, there is an abyss yawning at the heart of this deceptively happy family, one that draws in anything, or anyone, who comes too close.

That abyss is the Holocaust. Her father, George Salton (born Lucjan Salzman) is a survivor of ten concentration camps. Her mother fled Poland only to end up in a Soviet labor camp. Both managed to claw their way out. But it claimed Anna's grandparents, her uncles, her aunts, and all the unborn cousins that she, a child of the 1950s, would never know but would forever miss.

The Salton family's journey into its own past unleashes a flood of memory and creativity. *Pillar of Salt* is itself a sort of backstory to her father George Salton's own Holocaust memoir, *The 23rd Psalm*, which Salton Eisen helped to write. But with its clear, unadorned recounting of a family's pain, and of the echoes of the Shoah that continue down through generations, *Pillar of Salt* stands alone as a firsthand account of "survivor syndrome." Salton Eisen's thumbnail accounts of the people, places and events associated with the destruction of the Jews, meanwhile, serve as a useful introduction for readers unfamiliar with the period.



**Thursday, May 11 2023  
7:00 PM**

**El Paso Holocaust Museum  
and Study Center**

**715 N Oregon St,  
El Paso, TX 79902**



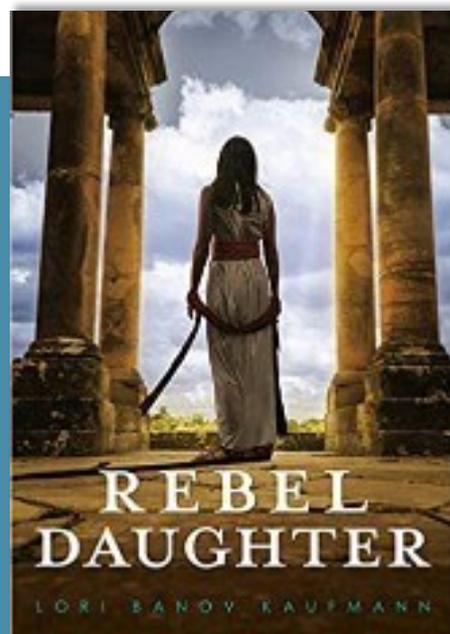
# Lori Banov Kaufmann



As soon as she learned of the first-century tombstone that inspired *Rebel Daughter*, Lori Banov Kaufmann wanted to know more. She resolved to bring this ancient love story to life. Before becoming a full-time writer, Lori was a strategy consultant for high-tech companies. She has a BA from Princeton University and a MBA from Harvard Business School. She lives in Israel with her family.

## Rebel Daughter

Esther Bat Hanan, the heroine of Lori Banov Kaufmann's new historical novel for young adults, *Rebel Daughter*, is the daughter of a Temple priest in Jerusalem during the tragic Jewish War against Roman occupation. Between 66 and 70 C.E., the colony of Judea was torn by internal factions but ultimately chose to fight against the overwhelming power of the Roman Empire. This formative episode in Jewish history unfolds from the perspective of one exceptional young woman, whose character is based on an intriguing grave inscription found in Italy, marking the resting place of a Jewish captive brought to Rome. Esther is intelligent, curious, and insightful. She questions her own motives as well as those of everyone around her, including the members of her conflicted family. In spite of the fact that readers may know the outcome of the larger picture, which culminated in the destruction of the Temple and the cruel repression of Judea's inhabitants, Esther's personal fate is undetermined. Kaufmann's carefully researched and well-crafted narrative draws readers into Esther's role in turbulent events, as well as her full range of emotions and difficult personal decisions.

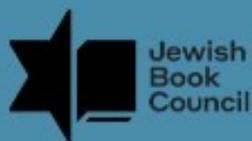


**Sunday, June 4, 2023**

**12:00 PM**

**Zoom ID: 849 6681 4827**

**Password: 805**



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# Book Zone Calendar

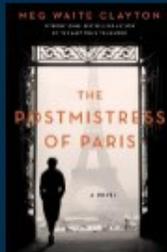
2022

November - December

**17**  
NOV  
**ZACK BODNER**  
ZOOM | 7:00 PM



**04**  
DEC  
**MEG WAITE CLAYTON**  
ZOOM | 7:00 PM



# Book Zone Calendar

2023

January - June

05  
JAN

**JAMES MCAULEY**

CONGREGATION B'NAI ZION | 7:00 PM



13  
MAR

**SHANNON SARNA**

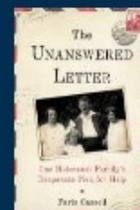
CONGREGATION B'NAI ZION | 6:00 PM



27  
APR

**FARIS CASSELL**

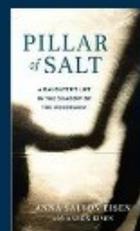
ZOOM | 7:00 PM



11  
MAY

**ANNA SALTON EISEN**

EL PASO HOLOCAUST MUSEUM  
AND STUDY CENTER | 7:00 PM



04  
JUN

**LORI BANOV KAUFMANN**

ZOOM | 12:00 PM



# Acknowledgements

The Congregation B'nai Zion Zone/Zoom (CBZ) is presented thanks to a grant from Jewish El Paso and dedicated efforts of our CBZ committee: Patty Hutman, Dana Frank, Debra Pazos, and Rabbi Scott Rosenberg.

We are also grateful for the support and creativity of the CBZ staff, Cynthia Arras and Diane Oberman.

**Partnering with us this season to present these wonderful programs are:**

**JEWISH EL PASO**

CONNECTING EL PASO-LAS CRUCES

Funded by a grant from Jewish El Paso

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Congregation B'nai Zion

