



LANE DWORIN



AUTHORS+  
INNOVATORS  
FESTIVAL

# November 10–20, 2025

## Celebrating 100 Years of Jewish Book Month



## Welcome to the **JCC Lane Dworkin Authors + Innovators Festival!**

I've met with many community members about what to bring to the festival this year. The replies: Make it light but make it meaningful. Keep the fiction panel and we'd love a cookbook author. Continue to have a book about the Holocaust. Well, you asked, and we listened. I'm very proud of the lineup.

**This year, the 33rd year of our festival, is also the 100-year anniversary of Jewish Book Week.** In 1925, Jewish librarian Fanny Goldstein did something that no one had ever done. At her West End branch of the Boston Public Library, shortly before Hanukkah, she set up a display of Jewish books. She did it again the next year, which inspired Chicago's Rabbi Mendelssohn to call for the observance of a Jewish Book Week. In 1933, in response to Germany burning books by Jews, Fanny began promoting Jewish Book Week as an "antidote to antisemitism." In 1943, Jewish Book Week became Jewish Book Month. Unfortunately, the struggle against antisemitism continues. **Show your support to our Jewish authors and innovators and come to every event!**



The festival would not be possible without our dedicated committee, community partners, and the generous support of our donors. We are deeply grateful to all of you. You are part of an important movement that celebrates writers and engages our community through literature. Thank you.

To all the book lovers out there, I leave you with this piece of wisdom: "I find television very educating. Every time somebody turns on the set, I go into the other room and read a book."  
—Groucho Marx

Keep reading,

Marni Port, Festival Director

## FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

Sunday Nov. 9	Monday Nov. 10	Tuesday Nov. 11	Wednesday Nov. 12	Thursday Nov. 13	Friday Nov. 14	Saturday Nov. 15
	<b>Rabbi Yitzi Hein</b> 7pm <i>Rabbi Jonathan Sacks' Legacy</i>	<b>Family Day</b> 1–2:30pm <b>Al Kinel</b> 7pm <i>Israeli Innovations</i>	<b>James Druckman, PhD</b> 7pm <i>Partisan Politics + Democracy</i>	<b>Fiction Panel</b> 11:45am <i>Kosher Lunch Included</i>	<b>Professor Gerald Gamm, PhD</b> 12pm <i>The History of the Senate</i>	<b>Scholar in Residence Rabbi Jeffrey K. Salkin</b> (at TBK) 7pm
Sunday Nov. 16	Monday Nov. 17	Tuesday Nov. 18	Wednesday Nov. 19	Thursday Nov. 20	Friday Nov. 21	Saturday Nov. 22
	<b>Diana Goldman</b> 7pm <i>Food Demo + Tasting</i>	<b>Jean Meltzer</b> 7pm <i>Rom-Com Night</i>	<b>Lisa Barr</b> 7pm <i>The Goddess of Warsaw</i> HEADLINER	<b>Dr. Katie Hannigan</b> 4pm <i>Multimedia Performance + Closing Night Party</i>		



**Visit [rjbf.org](http://rjbf.org) for full author bios, event details, and to purchase tickets.**

# Festival Supporters

## DIAMOND \$10,000+

Wendy and David Dworkin  
Sheldon A. Lane Book Festival Fund

## PLATINUM \$5,000+

Rubens Family Foundation



Jewish Federation  
of Greater Rochester



## GOLD \$2,500+

Ames Amzalak Memorial Trust

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Jewish Home



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## SILVER \$1,000+

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Karen and Ron Newman

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## FRIEND: \$360+

Barbara Appelbaum *in memory of E. David*

Henra Briskin

Nancy Haney

Sylvia Rose and Paul Rosenfeld

Edward and Lisa Schwarz



StJohn's

Special thanks to all the JCC staff  
and volunteers who continue to make  
our events possible!

This list reflects pledges received as of  
September 1, 2025. An up-to-date list  
can be found at [rjbf.org](http://rjbf.org).

*The JCC is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.*

# Timeless Wisdom, Timely Voice

**Monday, November 10, 7pm**

JCC Auditoriums

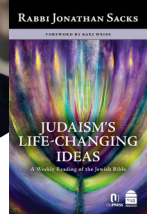
JCC Member: \$8, Non-member: \$10

**Rabbi Yitzi Hein**

*Judaism's Life-Changing Ideas:  
A Weekly Reading of the Jewish Bible*

Join Rabbi Hein as he discusses the works of Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks (1948–2020), of blessed memory. Learn how he transformed how we see Torah, bringing ancient wisdom into the heart of today's moral conversations. His teachings inspired Jews and non-Jews to view daily Torah study as relevant, powerful, and deeply human. Join Rabbi Yitzi Hein as he explores how Rabbi Sacks gave voice to Torah as a guide for the 21st century. Discover how the Rabbi's legacy, through his books and thought leadership, continues to shape minds and hearts around the world.

Community Partner:



# Family Day: Read to Dogs and Read About Dogs!

**Tuesday, November 11**

**1–2:30pm**

JCC Auditoriums

**FREE, All Ages**

**Read to Dogs:** Grab a book and read to a gentle dog! We'll have handlers from RocDog on hand to keep you and your child company. Reading to trained therapy dogs is a great way for your child to practice their reading skills.

**PJ Library:** Join us for a fun, interactive program featuring stories about dogs. We will have special guests reading, acting, and engaging our young friends with a "Paw-nderful" story.

Community Partners:

**Temple Sinai: The School of Jewish Life and Learning**



**Jewish Federation**  
of Greater Rochester

**PJ Library**

**Tuesday, November 11, 7pm**

JCC Auditoriums

JCC Member: \$8, Non-member: \$10

**AI Kinel, R2i Connect**  
with **Eric Weinberg, MD and Ram Haddas, PhD**  
*Enhancing Research, Collaboration,  
and Commerce with Israel*



Join us as AI and guests provide an overview of Israeli innovation and its impact on the world, along with examples of how our community has benefited. The session will share activities and ways in which members of our community can help enhance research, collaboration, and commerce between our community and Israel.

Underwritten by:  
**Sharon Kovalsky**

Community  
Partners:



**Ruach**



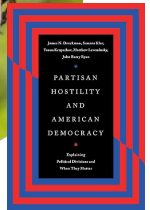
## Partisan Hostility and American Democracy

**Wednesday, November 12, 7pm**

JCC Hart Theater

JCC Member: \$8, Non-member: \$10

**Professor James Druckman, PhD**  
*Partisan Hostility and American Democracy:  
Explaining Political Divisions and When They Matter*



Moderated by **Adam Chodak**,  
Evening Anchor and Managing Editor News 8.

The rise of partisan animosity — the tendency of Democrats and Republicans to dislike and distrust one another — is one of the most notable developments of 21st century American politics. Professor Druckman and Adam Chodak will discuss how animus influences a wide range of political behaviors and why the growth of partisan animosity does not inevitably mean that democracy is eroding.

Underwritten by:  
**Kate and Jonathan Goldstein**  
**Judy and Harold Samloff**  
**Joyce Schachter**

Community Partners:



**Thursday, November 13, 11:45am**

JCC Auditoriums

JCC Member: \$25, Non-member: \$30

**Includes boxed lunch by Lipman's Kosher Market.** Meat and veggie options available.

Moderated by journalist **Stacey Freed**, Authors + Innovators committee member.



## Laney Katz Becker

### *In the Family Way*

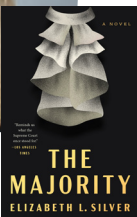
Set in 1965 America, this novel captures the experiences of women on the cusp of liberation as they struggle with their complex feelings about being wives, mothers, and women with their own dreams and ambitions.



## Jennifer S. Brown

### *The Whisper Sister*

In this historical coming of age novel set in New York during the Prohibition, Minnie, a Jewish immigrant, navigates the misogyny, antisemitism, and class struggles of the times.



## Elizabeth L. Silver

### *The Majority*

A riveting novel of motherhood, ambition, love, friendship, and one woman's fight to be a Supreme Court Justice. Caught in a tug-of-war between career and family, truth and convenience, progress and patience, Sylvia Olin Bernstein has a chance to change the course of American history.

Underwritten by:

**Rubens Family  
Foundation**

Community  
Partners:



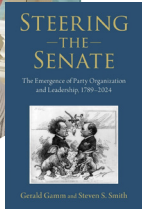
TEMPLE SINAI

# Steering the Senate



**Friday, November 14, 12pm**  
JCC Auditoriums  
JCC Member: \$8, Non-member: \$10

**Professor Gerald Gamm, PhD**  
*Steering the Senate: The Emergence of Party Organization and Leadership 1789–2024*  
(with Steven S. Smith)



Drawing on the history of the Senate, from 1789 to 2024, the co-authors identify, for the first time ever, the origins of the Senate party caucus, steering committees, and floor leadership. This book is unparalleled in detailing how the position of floor leader was invented in 1890, then strengthened through the 20th and 21st centuries.

**Stop by Fox's Deli at the JCC to purchase a grab-and-go lunch before the start of the talk, or bring your own.**

Underwritten by:  
**Debi and Ralph Brenner**



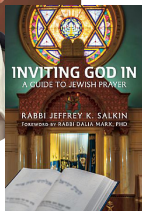
Community Partner:



# TBK Scholar in Residence

**Saturday, November 15**  
**7pm Havdalah and Dessert**  
**7:30pm Speaker**  
Temple B'rith Kodesh  
General Admission: \$8

**Rabbi Jeffrey K. Salkin**  
*Inviting God In: A Guide to Jewish Prayer*



Rabbi Salkin first set the Jewish world on fire with the publication of *Putting God On The Guest List*. This new book is the rightful successor — a deep dive into the meaning of Jewish prayer, written for students of all ages.

**Dessert provided by Malek's Bakery.**

Underwritten by:  
**Temple B'rith Kodesh**



# Cooking Demo and Tasting

**Monday, November 17, 7pm**

JCC Auditoriums

JCC Member: \$25, Non-member: \$30

**Diana Goldman**  
*Plants for You*

*Plants for You* is a guide to embracing plant-based eating. It features accessible recipes that will appeal to all skill levels and tastes.

Diana will be making quinoa salad with sweet potato, apricot, and pistachio nuts, and a vegan chocolate mousse.

**A tasting prepared by Malek's Bakery will follow.**



Underwritten by:

**Deborah G. Goldman**  
**Gary and Marcia Stern Family Foundation**

Community Partners:

**ROCHESTER**  
REGIONAL HEALTH



**Rochester Lifestyle**  
**Medicine Institute**

# Rom-Com Night

**Tuesday, November 18, 7pm**

JCC Hart Theater

JCC Member: \$25, Non-member: \$30

**Jean Meltzer**  
*The Eight Heartbreaks of Hanukkah*

Can these exes rekindle their love this Hanukkah? Evelyn Schwartz has the perfect Hanukkah planned: eight jam-packed days producing the live-action televised musical of *A Christmas Carol*. Who needs family when you've got long hours, impossible deadlines, and a dream job? That is, until an accident on set lands her in the medical bay with one of her chronic migraines and she's shocked to find her ex-husband, David Adler, filling in for the usual studio doctor.

**Join us after the event for kosher wine, and dessert provided by Malek's Bakery.**



Underwritten by:

**Linda Epstein**  
**Wendy Howitt and Jeffrey Levinson**

Community Partners:

**HADASSAH**  
Rochester Chapter

**WOMEN OF**  
**REFORM JUDAISM**

**Wednesday, November 19, 7pm**

JCC Hart Theater

JCC Member: \$15, Non-member: \$18

**Lisa Barr**

*The Goddess of Warsaw*

Lisa Barr is the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of *The Goddess of Warsaw*, *Woman on Fire*, *The Unbreakables* and the award-winning *Fugitive Colors*.



In this enthralling tale, a legendary Hollywood screen goddess keeps a dark secret about her life in the Warsaw Ghetto. When the famous actress is threatened by someone from her past, she must put her skills into play to protect herself, her illustrious career, and those she loves. A tale of survival, love, revenge, and courage.

Moderated by Rochester native **Mitzi Rapkin**, founder, host, and producer of the literary podcast *First Draft: A Dialogue on Writing*.

Underwritten by:



Jewish Federation  
of Greater Rochester



## We Go On, Oswego

**Thursday, November 20, 4pm**

JCC Hart Theater

JCC Member: \$20, Non-member: \$25

**Professor Katie Hannigan, PhD**

*Coordinator of Vocal Studies at Nazareth University*

"We Go On, Oswego" is a multimedia vocal presentation dedicated to women's narratives of the emergency refugee shelter at Fort Ontario in Oswego, NY. The Fort was the only U.S.-sanctioned shelter during WWII to assist those fleeing persecution in Nazi Europe.



ROCHESTER'S  
OWN

Join Professor Hannigan as she discusses the history and scope of her sabbatical project. There will also be a vocal/piano performance. **This is an exclusive sneak preview for the world premiere performance** at Nazareth University on December 4.

**Please join us for a reception after the event. Nosh provided by Malek's Bakery.**

Underwritten by:

Ames Amzalak  
Memorial Trust



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Community Partners:



December 10, 2025, 1pm  
**Monica Gebell**

**JReads Book Review: *We Were the Lucky Ones***

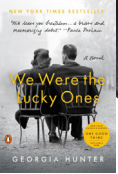
Monica will present a review of Georgia Hunter's book *We Were the Lucky Ones*. This event is an opportunity to discuss the book before Hunter's January visit to Rochester.



January 27, 2026, 7pm  
**Georgia Hunter,**  
*We Were the Lucky Ones*

It is the spring of 1939 and three generations of the Kurc family are doing their best to live normal lives, even as the shadow of war grows closer. But soon the horrors overtaking Europe will become inescapable. *We Were the Lucky Ones* demonstrates how in the face of the 20th century's darkest moment, the human spirit can endure and even thrive.

**Presented with the Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester**  
**Underwritten by Terri and Harold Bobry**



March 24, 2026, 7pm  
**Bonnie Reichert**

**How to Share an Egg:**  
*A True Story of Hunger, Love and Plenty*

A moving culinary memoir about the relationship between food and family, sustenance and survival, from a chef, award-winning journalist and the daughter of a Holocaust Survivor.

**Underwritten by Ed and Blanche Fenster**



May 11, 2026, 7pm  
**Rabbi Shira Stutman**

**The Jewish Way to a Good Life: Find Happiness, Build Community, and Embrace Loving Kindness**

From love and sex, to mourning and money, Rabbi Shira visits ten realms where we all get lost on occasion to deliver spirited, surprising wisdom. Hear practical, time-tested ways to enrich our daily routines.

**Underwritten by Mona Friedman Kolko**



June 28, 2026  
**Corey Rosen**

**A Story for Everything:**  
*Mastering Diverse Storytelling for Any Occasion*

Corey, originally from Rochester, hosts the Moth StorySlams and GrandSlams in the Bay Area and has been featured on the Moth Radio Hour. He has written and directed television commercials and award-winning short films. Join him for a storytelling event! **Underwritten by Friends of Corey Rosen**



# About the Festival

## JCC Lane Dworkin Authors + Innovators Festival Mission Statement

The JCC Lane Dworkin Authors + Innovators Festival exists to create a showcase for Jewish authors and innovators and books of Jewish content. In so doing, the Festival promotes awareness, appreciation, and pride in the diversity of the Jewish people; strengthens community consciousness of Jewish identity, history, and culture; and provides a community forum to stimulate dynamic and provocative dialogue.

## With Fond Memories of Sheldon A. Lane

The JCC Lane Dworkin Authors + Innovators Festival is presented in memory of Sheldon A. Lane. His vision for the Festival continues through the support of his loving family.

## JCC Thanks JBC!

The Jewish Book Council is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1943 to promote the publishing, writing, and reading of books of Jewish interest. Visit [jewishbookcouncil.org](http://jewishbookcouncil.org) for more information.



## NEW! Festival Passes

### All Festival Pass:

Come to all 2025 Festival events

### Rochester's Own Festival Pass:

All 2025 events indicated by the "Rochester's Own" icon



When you purchase a Festival Pass you elevate and celebrate Jewish programming at the JCC. Wear your pass proudly and show your support of Jewish authors, innovators and events.

Passholders get JCC Member pricing for the sum of all included events. Physical passes can be picked up at your first event.



**Visit [rjbf.org](http://rjbf.org) for full author bios, event details, and to purchase tickets and passes.**

Call (585) 461-2000 for assistance.

LANE DWORKIN



## AUTHORS+ INNOVATORS FESTIVAL

### FESTIVAL DIRECTOR

Marni Port

### FESTIVAL CHAIR

Wendy Howitt

### FESTIVAL COMMITTEE

Henra Briskin

Ellen Comisar

Nikki Druckman

David Dworkin

Wendy Dworkin

Linda Epstein

Adina Feldman

Stacey Freed

Hannah Harnest

Sharon Kovalsky

Jacqui Lipschitz

Ron Newman

Liza Robbins Theuman

Lisa Waltzer

### FESTIVAL FOUNDER

Barbara Lane<sup>z"l</sup>

### COMPANY MANAGER

Marc Cataldi

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### COORDINATOR

Elaina Bachmann

### JCC PRESIDENT

Isobel Goldman

### CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Jason Vasquez

### CHIEF JEWISH LIFE AND

### ENGAGEMENT OFFICER

Rachel Kest



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A vertical stack of several old, worn books with various colored spines and pages, positioned on the left side of the page.

# festival bookstore

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Location: JCC Yiddish Center

Open 1 hour before and after all  
scheduled festival events at the JCC.

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