

Persian, Ladino, Marathi, and Yiddish. Included are various biblical and Talmudic texts, one of the first books ever printed in Egypt, and Zera' Yitshak (Tunis, 1768), a Talmudic commentary, the first book in any language printed in Tunisia. This program was held at the Gelman Library of the George Washington University.

Many AJL/CAC members will be attending and participating in the upcoming AJL Conference Charleston, South Carolina in June. We are all looking forward to this event.

## JUDAICA LIBRARY NETWORK OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO

*Submitted by Stephanie Gelb and Joy Kingsolver*

Rachel Kamin and Marcie Eskin of North Suburban Synagogue Beth El hosted the Jewish Library Network of Metropolitan Chicago on Sunday, February 21. It was an afternoon of Jewish children's books and we were lucky to have a special guest: gifted artist, Suzanne Raphael Berkson. Suzanne illustrated Isaac Bashevis Singer's story *The Parakeet Named Dreidel*, published as a picture book for the first time (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2015).

During her engaging presentation, she shared the amazing original watercolor illustrations along with the multiple drafts she painted for each page. She also revealed the incredible efforts she made to ensure the pictures were authentic; these included convincing both her husband and a young neighbor to model, and purchasing her own parakeet.

## NEW YORK METROPOLITAN AREA CHAPTER (NYMA)

*Submitted by Hallie Cantor and Rita Lifton.*

As NYMA celebrates its 30th year, the 2016 Winter Conference -- organized by Ina Cohen and hosted by Rina Krautwirth (NYMA co-presidents, along with Chaya Wiesman) -- delivered a hard-hitting message: These days, when visibility counts, not only must the library shout, "Hey there!" through social media and interactivity, but so too must the librarian.

The conference, held February 24th at The Jewish Theological Seminary, opened with greetings from Naomi Steinberger, Director of Library Services at JTS. JTS has closed its former Library building and moved into temporary quarters on the seventh floor of the Kripke Tower located on the JTS campus. Naomi went on to describe the new JTS Library currently in the planning stage with completion anticipated in four years. This new Library will contain state-of-the-art facilities that will expand access to its unparalleled collection of Judaica and Hebraica.

The first presenter, Nathan Rosen, Manager of Research & Knowledge Services, Herrick Feinstein and creator and manager of three LinkedIn groups -- spoke about "Hillel - Not Shammai: Learning LinkedIn on One Foot in only a Half Hour," in which he discussed how to best utilize this renowned platform of over 500 million users.

Mr. Rosen listed the "five commandments of LinkedIn profile development" i.e. ways to skillfully navigate the platform: create a complete, compelling profile; craft settings; connect to people you know; contribute -- give to get; and congratulate other people's success. Mr. Rosen's handouts included a bibliography of LinkedIn guides and resources, as well as various social media i.e. Twitter, YouTube, etc.

In "Sefaria: A Living Library of Jewish Texts Online," the second presenter, Daniel Septimus -- Executive Director of Sefaria -- showed alternate forms of sharing. Mr. Septimus described the digital initiative he launched in 2013 to create an infrastructure for the future of Jewish study and conversation. "Sefaria," he said, "is building the future of Jewish learning in an open and participatory way."

How does Sefaria differ from competitors like Bar Ilan? On Sefaria, commentary can be gleaned and arranged on the user's terms, not Bar Ilan's. Sefaria offers the following: access to text; access to translation; and liberation of text. Sefaria is open source and free for use. The official website can be found at <http://www.sefaria.org/>.

The final segment of the conference celebrated NYMA's history and a sea change, when 30 years ago an ad hoc committee evolved into the vibrant AJL chapter of today. In addition, the NYMA board paid tribute to Pearl Berger who, after 30 years at Yeshiva University, officially retired last summer. During those years Pearl served as Dean of YU libraries and aided in their incredible growth.

The audience, many of them staff from YU's Mendel Gottesman and Hedi Steinberg Libraries,

watched a PowerPoint presentation filled with YU and AJL archival items, among them photos of Pearl at her early days at YU and the first NYMA newsletter (Fall 1985), featuring an advertisement for Pearl's cataloging workshop – and an “exciting, new” *Hebrew word processor*.

The speaker, Edith Lubetski – Head Librarian, Hedi Steinberg Library, and herself first president of NYMA and past president of AJL -- reminisced about her relationship with Pearl that extended far beyond the library stacks. “Pearl was my boss,” she said, “but she has always treated me as a colleague, a friend. It is not only within the university that Pearl has achieved such standing,” Edith concluded. “As past president of both the Association of Jewish Libraries and METRO, she has earned the admiration of those who have worked with her.”

After being presented with a gift (bowl from the Jewish Museum) and a donation to Yad Sarah in her honor, Pearl herself spoke, ending with a final comment on NYMA: “I am proud to see its direction.”

NYMA's 2016 Day School Workshop, held on March 29th at The Ramaz Lower School, was organized by Haviva Donin Peters and Noreen Wachs (NYMA School Workshop Coordinators). After a welcome from Rabbi Eric Grossman, Ramaz Head of School, Esther Nussbaum, retired Head Librarian, Ramaz Upper School, spoke movingly in memory of Yael Penkower, former NYMA member, who had only just passed away (see last paragraph).

Presentations included: Haviva Peters, Librarian, Lower School, and Noreen Wachs, Librarian, Middle School, speaking about “Librarianship in the Digital Age.” Haviva compared traditional print books to e-books, and Noreen focused on the role of the modern librarian. Next, Steven Stotsky, Senior Research Analyst, CAMERA (Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America), presented on “The Status of Curricula and Student Resources in Teaching about Israel and the Middle East: Empowering Librarians to Make Change.” This final presentation was followed by a tour of the new Ramaz Lower School Library.

Digital recordings of all presentations will be available in several months on NYMA's website, [www.ajlny.org](http://www.ajlny.org).

Finally, AJL-NYMA notes with sorrow the loss of one of its founding members. Yael Penkower, z"l, passed away on March 26th in Jerusalem. Yael was NYMA's first treasurer and went on to serve the chapter in various capacities. While Reference Librarian at The Jewish Theological Seminary, she gave memorable presentations at NYMA's annual reference workshop on such topics as rabbinic reference sources. Then, when Yael became the Librarian of Yeshiva of Flatbush Joel Braverman High School, she hosted and participated in NYMA's annual day school workshops. In the words of Noreen Wachs, “Yael was a friend to many of us and a great librarian.” We extend condolences to her husband, Professor Monty Penkower, their children and to the entire family. *Yehi zikhronah barukh/May her memory be blessed.*



Yael Penkower z"l in 1982, photographed by her brother-in-law Jordan Penkower (taken with permission from *Judaica Librarianship*, Vol. 19 (2016))

Editor's note: Yael Penkower contributed to the AJL Newsletter and *Judica Librarianship*. See also [Yael Penkower, 1945–2016](#) for Esther Nussbaum's eulogy on Mrs. Penkower in *Judaica Librarianship*, Vol. 19 (2016).

## AJL ONTARIO CHAPTER

*Submitted by Steven M. Bergson*

On May 15th, the [Ontario Chapter](#) of AJL with Community Partners [Miles Nadal JCC](#) and [TCAF \(Toronto Comic Arts Festival\)](#) presented an evening panel titled *Adapting Jewish Stories into Comics* at the downtown Toronto Jewish Community Centre. The panel brought together three of the artists whose comic artwork appears in *Jewish Comix Anthology*, as well as its editor (AJL member Steven M. Bergson). The artists are: [Liat Shalom](#) of Toronto (freelance animator / illustrator / graphic designer), [Ellis Rosen](#) of New York (illustrator of *Woundabout*) and [David G. Klein](#) of Brooklyn (writer & artist of *The Golem's Voice*). The panel was moderated by Keith Friedlander (Professor of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Humber College).

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