



ידיעות פֿון שיקאַגאָ ייִדן

NEWS FROM CHICAGO YIVO

Our Biggest Summer Festival Ever!

**“Voices of the Holocaust”
Wednesday, June 22 – 6:00 p.m.**

Harold Washington Library Center
Multi-Purpose Room

The “Voices of the Holocaust” website of the Illinois Institute of Technology will be presented with commentary by two of its developers: Dr. M. Ellen Mitchell, Dean of IIT’s College of Psychology; and Dr. Ralph Pugh, IIT’s Assistant University Archivist.

Drs. Mitchell and Pugh will concentrate on the life and times of Dr. David P. Boder (1886-1961), the IIT psychology professor whose audiotaped oral history interviews of Holocaust survivors (from 1946) serve as the basis of the website.



Dr. David P. Boder with Armour wire recorder, Europe, 1946. Courtesy Paul V. Galvin Library, IIT.

They will also demonstrate some of the website’s features, with an emphasis on Yiddish testimony.

Music in Wheeling

Indian Trails Public Library District • 355 South Schoenbeck Road

Bibi Marcell – Monday, June 20 – 12:15 p.m.

Vocalist with guitar. Nostalgic Yiddish songs.

Duo Controverso – Thursday, June 30 – 12:15 p.m.

Annette Bjorling, *Klezmer harp*, Kurt Bjorling, *clarinet & basset-horn*

Jazmer – Monday, August 15 – 12:15 p.m.

Klezmer and Israeli music spiced with Jazz. Leader and vocals: Shirlee Todd.

Phone Reservations
Required
847-459-4100



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Khane-Faygl Turtletaub to Lead Chicago YIVO Leyenkrayz

Chicago YIVO is pleased to announce that Dr. Khane-Faygl (Anita) Turtletaub is taking on the leadership of the *leyenkrayz* starting on May 12, 2011.

Dr. Turtletaub currently teaches Yiddish at Northwestern University, where she has been on the faculty since 2005. She has taught Yiddish at the Hebrew Theological College, the City Colleges of Chicago, and Spertus College, and was affiliated with the Dawn

Schuman Institute for Jewish Learning. Khane-Faygl edited and was featured in *Breaking Ground: Careers of 20 Chicago Jewish Women* by Beatrice Michaels Shapiro.

Her latest projects are two books scheduled for publication in Summer 2011 — *Original Yiddish Songs for Children*, for which she wrote the lyrics and music, and *Hans Christian Anderson Stories in Yiddish*, which she edited. Both books are illustrated by the Jerusalem-based artist, Liz Elsbey, and published by Mame Loshn Productions.

Parting Words from Longtime Leader Alan Todres

Dear Friends,

Just a few hours ago I could have said:

זײַט נאָך נײַט געזונט, איך פֿאַר נאָך נײַט אַוועק
(*zayt nokh nit gezunt, ikh for nokh nit avek*)

But now, *leyenkrayzniks*, it's really farewell and be well.



I've had a wonderful time leading the group on behalf of Chicago YIVO. I am especially grateful for the enrichment provided by the *leyenkrayz* members, who have such a diversity of backgrounds, life experiences, interests, and languages. As to languages, we have native (or near native) speakers of Yiddish, Polish, Hebrew, German, Russian, Lithuanian, With all of these talents around the table, even the most obscure passages have become thoroughly intelligible, and the texts have been subject to interesting comments and discussion, with great mutual benefit.

Especially helpful to our activities has been the use of digital Yiddish texts available on line (thanks go to the enthusiasts who have labored to achieve this), which makes for easy distribution by e-mail, with individuals able to print out their own copies and review them ahead of time. That started in full measure in January, 2009, and a list of the texts we covered from then through April 2011 can be found on the Chicago YIVO Society website. It's a good start, but there's a vast literature out there, so keep up the good work. As Sholem Aleykhem wrote, in 1902:

אַבי מע זאָל לײענען!
(*abi me zol leyenen!*)

It's great that Chicago YIVO has arranged for Khane-Faygl Turtletaub to take over the leadership of the *leyenkrayz*. Her first meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 12, 2011, from 12:00 noon until 1:45 p.m., at the usual venue. Khane-Faygl will contact you in due course with the details.

With best wishes,
Alan Todres
April 12, 2011

Courtney Francis

My Yiddish Adventure



Courtney Francis is a native New Yorker who has lived in Chicago for twenty-two years. She has a BA from Brown University in Economics with a minor in Urban Studies and an MA

from University of Chicago in Social Service Administration and Policy.

To the casual observer, I may seem like someone who is unlikely to have an interest in Yiddish. In fact, I may appear to be an unlikely student in a graduate program in Linguistics. However, I am both. I am also African-American, forty-five years old, a married mother of four, and hold a Bachelor's degree in Economics and a Master's degree in Social Service Administration and Policy. I am a former non-profit manager and was an elementary school principal on Chicago's West Side for seven years. However, I have always loved language and took a Linguistics class as an elective during my senior year in high school—many years ago! Decades later, I am enrolled in the Linguistics program at Northeastern Illinois University.

My interest in Yiddish is natural. Along with the musical sounds of African-American Vernacular English, I heard the lovely sounds of Yiddish as a child growing up in New York City. For those, like my parents, who were born in NYC in the late 30's/early 40's, and for those, like myself, who were born in the mid 60s, and for those born in all the years in between, Yiddish was commonly heard on the streets of NYC. As a child, I became very familiar with Yiddish words and the somewhat flexible Yiddish word order. Since the white people in my life (teachers, friends, shop-keepers, neighbors) were Jewish, there was a time when I thought all white people were Jewish! I can say that people in NYC outside of

the Jewish community have taken on some of the vocabulary and patterns of speech common in Yiddish. In particular, native and near-native New Yorkers between the ages of 65 and 95 can still be heard using features of Yiddish.

Last semester in my Linguistics course, I was required to submit a descriptive grammar project. This project required me to explore a language with respect to vocabulary, phonology, morphology, and syntax. I chose Yiddish. Students were required to identify an informant, someone who is fluent and could respond to my questions about Yiddish. I knew that my quest for a Yiddish speaker might be difficult, since the language is leaving our midst as the Yiddish-speaking population ages. I had no concept of the size of the population of Yiddish speakers in Chicago. Upon hearing my plight, a very helpful professor at NEIU, Dr. Teddy Bofman, told me that she knew a few Yiddish speakers, at least one of whom was in Chicago. This is how I connected with Alan Todres, a native of South Africa who leads a Yiddish Reading Circle in Chicago.

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Chicago YIVO Society

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www.ChicagoYivo.org
www.ChicagoYivoBlog.com

Feature Films and Documentaries

“A Letter to Mother”

(A Brivele der Mamen)

The classic tearjerker! The story of a Jewish mother’s persistent efforts to support her family. Her husband emigrates to America, and Dobrish struggles to care for her three children in pre-WWI Polish Ukraine. After her family is pulled apart by severe poverty and the turmoil of war, Dobrish makes her way to New York in search of a brighter future. Released two weeks after the German blitzkrieg over Poland, this film opened to packed audiences in a New York theater. (1939, 108 minutes.)

Wednesday, June 1 – 6:00 p.m.

HWLC, Video Theater

Thursday, June 2 – 12:15 p.m.

Skokie Public Library

“My Mexican Shiva”

(Morirse está en Hebreo)

An Ashkenazi family in Mexico City celebrates shiva for its patriarch, who had a Gentile mistress many years younger than him. The family is dysfunctional—almost beyond belief. The deceased has brought together family, friends and former lovers who have side-splitting stories, conflicts and rivalries that are catalogued over the seven-day shiva mourning period. The film is a consistently entertaining and wacky cinematic experience! (2007, 98 minutes.)

Wednesday, July 6 – 12:15 p.m.

Skokie Public Library

Thursday, July 7 – 6:00 p.m.

HWLC

Cindy Pritzker Auditorium

“In Search of Yiddish”

On the eve of his 75th birthday, singer-songwriter and poet Alexander Gorodnitsky set out for Belarus, to the City of Mogilev, where his parents were born and lived and where all his family members were exterminated during World War II. His mission was to trace his ancestry and explore the centers of Jewish life before the Holocaust in search of the remnants of Yiddish language and culture. (2008, 90 minutes.)

Wednesday, Aug. 3 – 6:00 p.m.

HWLC, Video Theater

Thursday, Aug. 4 – 12:15 p.m.

Skokie Public Library

“The World Was Ours: The Jewish Community of Vilna Before Its Destruction in World War II”

Mira Jedwabnik Van Doren, Executive Producer/Director. Narrated by Mandy Patinkin. Video interviews with dozens of survivors and scholars; archival photographs and film footage; excerpts from diaries, letters, poems and newspaper stories. Archival music and specially recorded performances in Yiddish and Polish evoke the spirit of the times. (2006, 58 minutes.)

Thursday, Sept. 8 – 12:15 p.m.

Skokie Public Library

Music and Talk



Stewart Figa and Ilya Levinson (Skokie, June 6)



Gypsy Rhythm Project (Skokie, June 15; Sulzer, June 16)



Jan Schwarz



Jeff Mallow



Anette Isaacs



Barry Schechter



Tzivi Huttner



Irwin Weil

“Avrom Sutzkever (1913-2010) – Yiddish Poet, Partisan, Patriot.”

The Danny Greenberg Memorial Lecture. Dr. Jan Schwarz’s talk on Tuesday, June 28 in Wilmette is enhanced with historic recordings of the poet reading his work.

Prof. Jeffrey Mallow discusses a problematic Holocaust story in Evanston on Monday, July 18. He regales us with examples of Jewish humor in Wilmette on Monday, July 25. A book-signing follows.

Rabbi Barry Schechter is sure to please a capacity crowd with his wit and humor in Skokie on Thursday, August 11.

“Hodel – From Sofievka to Siberia.” This is the third of Jan Lisa (Tzivi) Huttner’s insightful annual lectures on “Fiddler on the Roof.” Thursday, August 18, Northbrook and HWLC.

Prof. Irwin Weil always pleases with his charming, erudite annual talk on Russian culture. Monday, August 29 in Evanston. *More programs, further details in the flyer!*



David Ben-Gurion and Konrad Adenauer

Anette Isaacs:

“Germany and Israel: A story of guilt and an unlikely friendship”

German historian Anette Isaacs discusses how her native country has attempted to cope with the guilt of causing the Holocaust and how this painful but necessary process heralded a new era in German-Israeli relations. *Slide lecture, 90 minutes.*

Thursday, July 28 – 12:15 p.m.
Northbrook Public Library

Adventure *continued from page 3*

On a cold fall day, I visited Alan at his home in Skokie. My approach with questions was not to be technical, and I never used the words “syntax” or “morphology.” Instead, I tried to create a more natural conversation about Yiddish, and how and whether certain phrases can be said in Yiddish. In the end, I spent hours with Alan, and I am grateful for his incredible patience with my questions, and for his commitment to Yiddish, and for a lovely lunch with Alan and his wife at their home. All told, I learned a great deal about Yiddish and there were several surprises.

Prior to my research, I had no idea that Yiddish had such a rich and varied history. The language has been influenced by Hebrew, German, French, Italian and Slavic languages. Language contact is an area of Linguistics that interests me greatly and development of Yiddish, over centuries, is a nice illustration of how languages are dynamic and interactive. I also learned that there is more than one dialect of Yiddish, and this fact is related to “where Yiddish lived” throughout the years. The dialects are usually marked by differentiated use of some vowel sounds, among other differences. One of the most pronounced differences is the *oy* (Poland) and the *ay* (Lithuania) sounds.

I was also interested to learn that many Orthodox Jewish people do not speak Hebrew in their day-to-day lives. Instead, because Hebrew is a sacred language, they reserve it for the occasion of worship. In fact, the Orthodox Jew uses Yiddish in their daily lives. The numbers surprised me also. Although I was aware that many families have not “passed down” Yiddish to younger generations, I didn’t realize that, at one time, Chicago had the second largest number of Yiddish speakers compared to other US cities. In 1940, there were 112,680 Yiddish speakers in Chicago. Currently, Chicago is home to the fourth largest population of Yiddish speakers. Although the figure is unknown, Chicago is fourth to NYC, New Jersey, and Florida.

In Linguistics, we are taught to use the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). The IPA helps us to write words in a way that reflects their pronunciation. I enjoyed learning Yiddish vocabulary pronunciation, and using the IPA to represent sounds. I also had the opportunity to analyze the distribution of vowel sounds in a large set of Yiddish words. This was wonderful practice for my future classes and my future career.

The sounds of Yiddish are “music to my ears,” and my hope is that the language does not leave us.



**Sunday, July 10: Chicago YIVO Society
Sarah Lazarus Memorial Concert
Will Honor a Beloved Music Teacher**

Sarah Rose Lazarus (1911–2000) was born in Warsaw, Poland and became a Chicagoan. She attended Roosevelt High School and received her degree in music at DePaul University.

Early in her teaching career, in Chicago’s *folkshuln*, she taught thousands of children the joys of Yiddish music. She later taught at Hebrew day schools where her happy personality and nurturing attitude made her beloved to her students. Perhaps *you* participated in some of the memorable Third Seders she orchestrated with her students for many years. While maintaining her busy teaching schedule, she was also a soloist and choir member in synagogues and was a featured entertainer at hundreds of events around the city. After retiring from her work in Chicago Sarah joined her son Jerry and his family in Denver, where she continued as a teacher and choir consultant.

Report: March 6 Yiddish-English Program

„דאָ ווײַנט דאָס ייִדישע פֿאַלק:
דער ייִדישער שרײַבער אין ניו יאָרק“

**“Here Lives the Jewish
People: The Yiddish Writer
in New York”**

The Chicago YIVO Society presented *two* lectures on Sunday afternoon, March 6, 2011, at Temple Beth Israel in Skokie.

Avraham Novershtern, Professor of Yiddish Literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Director of Beit Sholem Aleichem in Tel Aviv, is currently a



Fellow at the Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan. He spoke on New York City as a hub of Yiddish poets and journalists

in the early twentieth century. In America, and specifically in NYC, they were free of the oppressive restrictions of the Russian government. He spoke first in Yiddish.

He discussed „שטורעמס און טורעמס“ (*Storms and Towers*) a rhapsodic poem by A. Leyeless (journalist Aaron Glanz) about the new Woolworth Building. The Yiddish poet identifies himself with François Villon “my brother,” and all of “the rememberers, the knowers, the creators” of world poetry.

After the Yiddish talk in the Temple Social Hall, Prof. Novershtern moved to the Sanctuary where, in English, he discussed poet H. Leivick’s dark view of the city’s “Jewish East Side” in *Here Live the Jewish People*. In Cynthia Ozick’s translation, Leivick concludes: “The years of my childhood cry in me, the longing.”

Jacob Glatstein’s modernist poem, *1919*, was the last subject in the program.

*The Society gratefully acknowledges
the generosity of the sponsors
of the Avraham Novershtern program
March 6, 2011*

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It begins, “Lately, there’s no trace left of Yankl, son of Yitskhok, but for a tiny red dot that rolls crazily through the streets...”

The planners of the program were delighted with our guest’s presentation, the large attendance at *both* lectures, and the enthusiastic audience response. The delicious *gebeks* were also appreciated.



Chicago YIVO Society

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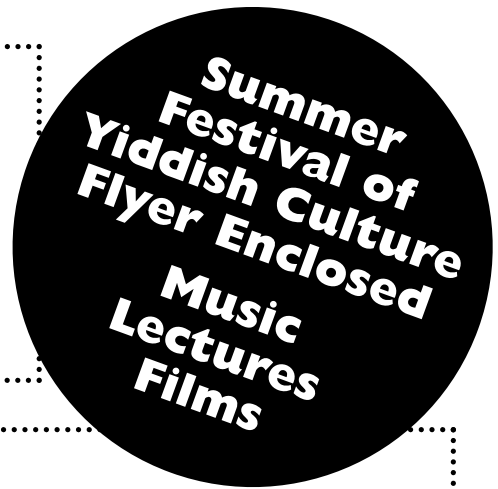
**Chicago YIVO Society
Leyenkrayz (Yiddish Reading Circle)**

New Day: Second Thursday of the Month

New Time: 12:00 Noon to 1:25 p.m.

Same Venue:

Northtown Branch, Chicago Public Library
6435 North California Avenue



Save the Date!

Chicago YIVO Society
Sarah Lazarus Memorial Concert

“Mayses un Klängen – Stories and Sounds”

Texts Based on Jewish Folklore

Music by Daniel Galay

Racheli Galay *cello*

Ilya Levinson *piano* • **Stewart Figa** *narrator*

Sunday, July 10

1:30 p.m.

Goodman Auditorium

Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center

9603 Wood Drive, Skokie, Illinois

Reservations required — Details to Come