

# ICCJ Book Café



A project of the



*Bella M. and Harry Richter Memorial Library*

**2016-2017**

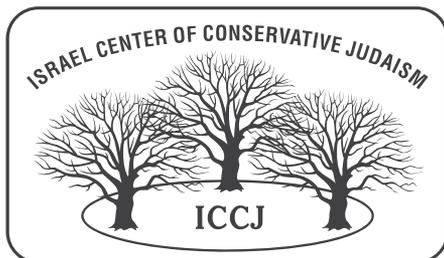
## **Book Talks and Programs**

Please join us at the 2016-2017 ICCJ Book Café as we explore

### **Secrets, Lies, and Spies**

Most book discussions will take place on Sunday mornings at 10:00 am, with a light breakfast followed by the program. Please check individual programs for specific days and times.

The fee for each of those programs is \$5.00.



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**Sunday, October 30, 2016 at 10:00 am**

**“The Beauty Queen of Jerusalem” by Sarit Yishai-Levi**

### **The Book**

*From a review by the Jewish Book Council:* In Sarit Yishai-Levi’s newly-translated novel, *The Beauty Queen of Jerusalem*, Gabriela feels compelled to understand the conflicts and misunderstandings ever-present in her Sephardic family. Her empty relationship with her mother Luna—the most beautiful woman in Jerusalem—is finally addressed when her grandmother Rosa and Aunt Rachel hesitatingly reveal the tragedies, secrets, and betrayals that have molded the Ermosa family’s complex lives. Set against the Golden Age of Hollywood, the dark days of World War II, and the swinging ’70s, *The Beauty Queen of Jerusalem* follows generations of unforgettable women as they forge their own paths through times of dramatic change.



### **The Author**

Sarit Yishai-Levi, a journalist and author, was born in Jerusalem in 1947 to a Sephardic family that has lived in the city for seven generations. She studied at the Nissan Nativ Acting Studio and later at Tel Aviv University. Before turning to journalism, Yishai-Levi acted in theater and film for several years. Later, she was a correspondent for various Israeli newspapers and magazines, including *At*, *Monitin*, *HaOlam HaZeh* and *Hadashot*; she also hosted Hebrew TV and radio programs in Los Angeles. At present, she is a senior correspondent for *Olam Ha’Isha* magazine and hosts TV shows on tourism and lifestyle. Yishai-Levi has published four non-fiction books. Her first novel, *The Beauty Queen of Jerusalem*, a bestseller in Israel, received the Publishers Association’s Gold and Platinum Prizes (2014) and the Steimatzky Prize for best-selling book of the year (2014). It is now being made into a feature film.



**Thursday, Nov. 10, 2016 at 8:00 pm — SPECIAL EVENT**

**Guest author, Maggie Anton, will speak about her latest book, “Fifty Shades of Talmud: What the First Rabbis Had to Say About You-Know-What”**

### **The Book**

Ms. Anton will speak about her new book which coincides with Rabbi Fryer Bodzin’s new class on Thursdays. Her book is a kind of in-depth tour of sexuality within the Talmud where we can eavesdrop at the first rabbis’ locker-room door as they discuss every aspect of sexual relations how, when, where, with whom often in startlingly explicit fashion. Maggie Anton reveals how Jewish tradition is more progressive in many respects, and more bawdy, than one might think.



## The Author

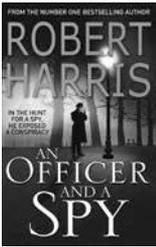
Maggie Anton was born Margaret Antonofsky in Los Angeles, California, where she still resides. Raised in a secular, socialist household, she reached adulthood with little knowledge of her Jewish religion. All that changed when David Parkhurst, who was to become her husband, entered her life, and they both discovered Judaism as adults. That was the start of a lifetime of Jewish education, synagogue involvement, and ritual observance. This was in addition to raising their children, Emily and Ari, and working full-time as a clinical chemist for Kaiser Permanente for over 30 years. In 1992 Anton joined a women's Talmud class taught by Rachel Adler, now a professor at Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles. To her surprise, she fell in love with Talmud, a passion that has continued unabated for twenty years. Intrigued that the great Talmudic scholar Rashi had no sons, only daughters, Anton researched the family and decided to write novels about them. Thus the award-winning trilogy, *Rashi's Daughters*, was born, to be followed by National Jewish Book Award finalist, *Rav Hisda's Daughter: Apprentice* and its sequel, *Enchantress*. Still studying women and Talmud, Anton has lectured throughout North America and Israel about the history behind her novels.



**Sunday, December 11, 2016 at 10:00 am**  
**“An Officer and a Spy” by Robert Harris**

## The Book

A historical fiction thriller that tells the true story of French officer Georges Picquart from 1896-1906, as he struggles to expose the doctored evidence that sent Alfred Dreyfus to Devil's Island. Upon being promoted to run the *Statistical Section*, the top secret headquarters of French military intelligence, Georges Picquart begins to discover that the evidence used to convict Alfred Dreyfus of espionage, which resulted in his imprisonment for life on Devil's Island, is flimsy at best. As he investigates further, he discovers that the military and the government doctored much of the evidence. Moreover, the spy who actually passed the information Dreyfus was convicted of sending to the Germans is, in fact, still operating. Warned off the investigation by his superiors, Picquart persists, risking his career and his life to free an innocent man from unjust imprisonment and to stop a spy operating within the military who has gone unpunished.



## The Author

English novelist Harris, born March 7, 1957 in Nottingham, England, spent his childhood in a small rented house on a Nottingham council estate. His ambition to become a writer arose at an early age, from visits to the local printing plant where his father worked. Harris went to Belvoir High School in Bottes-



ford, and then King Edward VII School, Melton Mowbray, where a hall was named after him. There he wrote plays and edited the school magazine. Harris read English literature at Selwyn College, Cambridge, where he was president of the Union and editor of the student newspaper *Varsity*. He is a former journalist and BBC television reporter. Although he began his career in non-fiction, his fame rests upon his works of historical fiction. Beginning with the best-seller *Fatherland*, Harris focused on events surrounding the Second World War, followed by works set in ancient Rome. His most recent works center on contemporary history. At the age of thirty, he became political editor of *The Observer*. He later wrote regular columns for the *Sunday Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*. Harris was inspired to write his novel *An Officer and a Spy* by Polanski's longtime interest in the Dreyfus affair. He has written a screenplay based on the story, which Polanski is set to direct. The screenplay is titled *D*, after the initial written on the secret file that secured Dreyfus' conviction. Harris lives in a former vicarage near Newbury, Berkshire, with his wife Gill Hornby, herself a writer and sister of best-selling novelist Nick Hornby. They have four children.

**Sunday, February 19, 2017 at 10:00 am**  
**“Moonglow” by Michael Chabon**

### **The Book**

From the Jewish slums of prewar South Philadelphia to the invasion of Germany, from a Florida retirement village to the penal utopia of New York's Wallkill prison, from the heyday of the space program to the twilight of the “American Century,” the novel revisits an entire era through a single life and collapses a lifetime into a single week. A lie that tells the truth, a work of fictional nonfiction, an autobiography wrapped in a novel disguised as a memoir. The story unfolds as the deathbed confession of a man the narrator refers to only as “my grandfather.” It is a tale of madness, of war and adventure, of sex and marriage and desire, of existential doubt and model rocketry, of the shining aspirations and demonic underpinnings of American technological accomplishment at midcentury, and, above all, of the destructive impact—and the creative power—of keeping secrets and telling lies. It is a portrait of the difficult but passionate love between the narrator's grandfather and his grandmother, an enigmatic woman broken by her experience growing up in war-torn France.

### **The Author**

Prolific author Chabon was born May 24, 1963 in Washington, DC to Robert Chabon, a physician and lawyer, and Sharon Chabon, a lawyer. Chabon said he knew he wanted to be a writer when, at the age of ten, he wrote his first short story for a class assignment. His parents divorced when Chabon

was 11, and he grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Columbia, Maryland where Chabon lived nine months of the year with his mother, in “a progressive planned living community in which racial, economic, and religious diversity were actively fostered.” He grew up hearing Yiddish spoken by his mother’s parents and siblings.



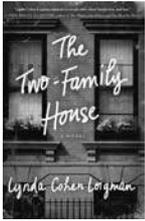
Chabon attended Carnegie Mellon University for a year before transferring to the University of Pittsburgh, where he studied under Chuck Kinder and received a Bachelor of Arts in 1984. He then went to graduate school at the University of California, Irvine, where he received a Master of Fine Arts in creative writing.

After divorcing his first wife, poet Lollie Groth, he married the writer Ayelet Waldman in 1993. They currently live together in Berkeley, California with their four children.

**Sunday, April 2, 2017 at 10:00 am**  
**“The Two-Family House” by Lynda Cohen Loigman**

**The Book**

Brooklyn, 1947: in the midst of a blizzard, in a two-family brownstone, two babies are born, minutes apart. The mothers are sisters by marriage with an impenetrable bond forged before and during that dramatic night.



When the storm passes, everyone seems to have gotten what they wanted, but the truth is not that simple. The consequences of that night, of one misguided choice, shape the course of the families – friendships unravel, marriages change and even the sacred bonds between mothers and children are tested. No one knows why, and no one can stop it, but everyone’s lives have been shaped by that evening. In Loigman’s debut novel we encounter a moving family saga filled with heart, longing, love, and mystery.

**The Author**

Lynda Cohen Loigman grew up in Longmeadow, MA. She received a B.A. in English and American Literature from Harvard College and a J.D. from Columbia Law School. She is now a student of the Writing Institute at Sarah Lawrence College, and lives with her husband and two children in Chappaqua, New York. Highly praised, *The Two-Family House* is her first novel.



**Sunday, May 7, 2017 at 10:00 am – SPECIAL EVENT**  
**In a joint program with ICCJ Sisterhood,**  
**guest author Linda Cohen Loigman will speak about**  
**her book *The Two-Family House*, described above.**

**Sunday, June 11, 2017 at 10:00 am**  
**“Enchanted Islands” by Allison Amend**

### **The Book**

Inspired by the midcentury memoirs of Frances Conway, *Enchanted Islands* is the dazzling story of an independent American woman whose path takes her far from her native Minnesota when she and her husband, an undercover intelligence officer, are sent to the Galápagos Islands at the brink of World War II. Born in Duluth, Minnesota, in 1882 to immigrant parents, Frances Frankowski covets the life of her best friend, Rosalie Mendel, who has everything Fanny could wish for—money, parents who value education, and an effervescent and winning personality. When, at age fifteen, Rosalie decides they should run away to Chicago, Fanny jumps at the chance to escape her unexceptional life. But, within a year, Rosalie commits an unforgivable betrayal, inciting Frances to strike out on her own. Decades later, the women reconnect in San Francisco and realize how widely their lives have diverged. *Enchanted Islands* examines the complexity of female friendship, the universal pursuit of a place to call home, and the reverberations of secrets we keep from others and from ourselves.



### **The Author**

Amend was born in Chicago, Illinois, on a day when the Cubs beat the Mets 2-0. In high school, Allison lived for a year with a Spanish family in Barcelona. She attended Stanford University, graduating with honors in Comparative Literature. After college, she lived in Lyon, France on a Fulbright Teaching Fellowship. Allison then attended the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop, receiving a Maytag and a Teaching/Writing Fellowship. Allison's debut short story collection, *Things That Pass for Love* (OV/Dzanc Books, 2008) won a bronze Independent Publisher's award. *Stations West*, a historical novel, was published by Louisiana State University Press as part of its Yellow Shoe Fiction series in March 2010 and was a finalist for the Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature and the Oklahoma Book Award. Allison lives in New York City, where she teaches creative writing at Lehman College in the Bronx and at the Red Earth MFA.

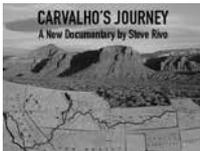


### **Date TBA**

### **Carvalho's Journey – Written and Directed by Steve Rivo**

Mr. Rivo will introduce the film and hold a Q&A afterward. The film is 85 minutes long.

### **The Movie**



*Carvalho's Journey* tells the extraordinary story of Solomon Nunes Carvalho (1815-1897), an observant Sephardic Jew born in Charleston, South Carolina, and his life as a groundbreaking explorer and artist. In 1853, traveling with famed explorer John Fremont's Fifth Westward Expedition,

Carvalho became one of the first photographers to document the sweeping vistas and treacherous terrain of the far American West. Carvalho's experience as a Jew on the western trail was unprecedented, and his experience—and his writing about it—grant a clear window into the inter-ethnic cultural exchanges that were commonplace in this period in American history.

### The Director

Born in Boston, an alumnus of Brookline High, Steve Rivo grew up in a film-loving family. He was exposed at an early age to many of the great films, but he always had a warm spot for Robert Aldrich's *The Frisco Kid* (1979), in which Gene Wilder plays a rabbi assigned to a synagogue in San Francisco in 1850. To get there, the rabbi must cross the Rockies on horseback with a varmint played by Harrison Ford.



*Arlene Ratzabi*  
ICCJ Book Café

