

# ICCJ Book Café



A project of the



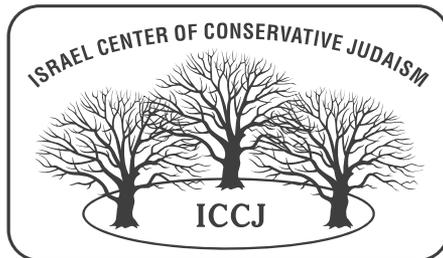
*Bella M. and Harry Richter Memorial Library*

## Intersecting Lives

**2017-2018 Book Talks and Author Visits**

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 December 17, 2017 at 10:00 am**  
**“And After the Fire” by Lauren Belfer**

### **The Book**



This fascinating novel, a National Jewish Book Award winner, was inspired by historical events—about two women, one European and one American, and the mysterious choral masterpiece by Johann Sebastian Bach that changes both their lives. In the ruins of Germany in 1945, at the end of World War II, American soldier Henry Sachs takes a souvenir, an old music manuscript, from a seemingly deserted mansion and mistakenly kills the girl who tries to stop him. In America in 2010, Henry’s niece, Susanna Kessler, struggles to rebuild her life after she experiences a devastating act of violence on the streets of New York City.

When Henry dies soon after, she uncovers the long-hidden music manuscript. She becomes determined to discover what it is and to return it to its rightful owner, a journey that will challenge her preconceptions about herself and her family’s history and offer her an opportunity to finally make peace with the past.

### **The Author**

Lauren Belfer was born in Rochester, New York, and grew up in Buffalo, where she attended the Buffalo Seminary. At Swarthmore College, she majored in Medieval Studies. After graduating, she worked as a file clerk at an art gallery, a paralegal, an assistant photo editor at a newspaper, a fact checker at magazines, and as a researcher and associate producer on documentary films. She has an M.F.A. from Columbia University. Her debut novel, *City of Light*, was a New York Times bestseller, as well as a *New York Times* Notable Book, a Library Journal Best Book, and a Main Selection of the Book of the Month Club. *City of Light* was a bestseller in Great Britain and has been translated into six languages. Her second novel, *A Fierce Radiance*, was named a Washington Post Best Novel of 2010 and an NPR Best Mystery of 2010. Her third novel, *And After the Fire*, received a 2016 National Jewish Book Award.



**Wednesday, February 7, 2018 at 7:30 PM**  
**GUEST AUTHOR - PAUL BOORSTIN**

We are delighted to welcome author, Paul Boorstin, to ICCJ. He will talk about his latest book, *David and the Philistine Woman*.

### **The Book**

The clash of David and Goliath, one of the world’s most beloved stories, is only a few pages long in the Bible (I Samuel, Chapter 17). The author set out to write a novel based on the narrative he envisioned between the lines.

Nara is a young Philistine woman who has given up hope of ever finding a husband. No man will take a wife who towers head and shoulders above him. She lives in isolation with her father, until she is discovered by the Philistine priests. They betroth her to Goliath, to give him warrior sons. What happens when Nara's fate collides with that of David, who is destined to face Goliath in combat? Boorstin re-imagines David's dangerous path from shepherd to charismatic leader, interweaving his life not only with Nara's, but with key Biblical characters including King Saul, and Saul's daughter Michal, who will later become David's wife.



### The Author

Paul Boorstin is an award-winning documentary filmmaker and screenwriter whose work has appeared on Discovery, A&E and the History Channel, as well as on NBC, ABC and CBS. A resident of Los Angeles, Paul graduated magna cum laude from Princeton and attended UCLA Graduate School of Film. He has traveled around the world making documentaries for National Geographic, and his screenplays have been produced as motion pictures by Paramount and 20th Century Fox. He is also a blogger for the Huffington Post and a contributor to the Los Angeles Times.



**Sunday, February 11, 2018 at 10:00 am**

**“The First Love Story: Adam, Eve, and Us” by Bruce Feiler**

### The Book

In this astonishing re-examination of their lives, Bruce Feiler has taken one of our culture's most fundamental stories and reimagined it for our time, dispelling centuries of conventional wisdom to present history's most famous couple in a dazzling new light. In this fresh retelling of their story, Feiler travels from the Garden of Eden in Iraq to the Sistine Chapel in Rome, from John Milton's London to Mae West's Hollywood, discovering how Adam and Eve should be hailed as exemplars of a long-term, healthy, resilient relationship. At a time of discord and fear over the strength of our social fabric, Feiler shows how history's first couple can again be role models for unity, forgiveness, and love.

THE FIRST LOVE STORY  
 Bruce Feiler  
 The First  
 Love Story  
 Adam, Eve,  
 and Us



### The Author

Feiler (born October 25, 1964) is an American writer and television personality. He is the author of 12 books, including six consecutive *New York Times* nonfiction best-sellers. He writes the “This Life” column in the Sunday *New York Times* and is also the writer and presenter of the PBS miniseries, *Walking the Bible* and *Sacred Journeys*, with Bruce Feiler (2014). Feiler is one of America's most popular voices on contemporary life. Feiler completed his undergraduate degree at Yale University where he was a member of Ezra Stiles



College, before spending time teaching English in Japan as part of the JET Program. This experience led to his first book, *Learning to Bow: Inside the Heart of Japan*, a popular portrait of life in a small Japanese town. Upon his return he earned a master's degree in international relations from the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom. For more than a decade, Bruce has explored the intersection of families, relationships, health, and happiness.

**Sunday, April 29, 2018 at 10:00 am**  
**“The Orphan’s Tale” by Pam Jenoff**

## The Book

A novel of friendship set in a traveling circus during World War II, *The Orphan’s Tale* introduces two extraordinary women and their harrowing stories of sacrifice and survival. Sixteen-year-old Noa has been cast out in disgrace after becoming pregnant by a Nazi soldier and being forced to give up her baby. She lives above a small rail station, which she cleans in order to earn her keep. When Noa discovers a boxcar containing dozens of Jewish infants bound for a concentration camp, she is reminded of the child that was taken from her. And in a moment that will change the course of her life, she snatches one of the babies and flees into the snowy night. Noa finds refuge with a German circus, but she must learn the flying trapeze act so she can blend in undetected, spurning the resentment of the lead aerialist, Astrid. At first rivals, Noa and Astrid soon forge a powerful bond. But as the facade that protects them proves increasingly tenuous, Noa and Astrid must decide whether their friendship is enough to save one another—or if the secrets that burn between them will destroy everything.



## The Author

Jenoff was born in Maryland and raised outside Philadelphia. She attended George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and Cambridge University in England. Upon receiving her masters degree in history from Cambridge, she accepted an appointment as Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Army. The position provided a unique opportunity to witness and participate in operations at the most senior levels of government.

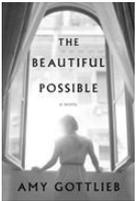


Following her work at the Pentagon, Pam moved to the State Department. In 1996 she was assigned to the U.S. Consulate in Krakow, Poland. It was during this period that Pam developed her expertise in Polish-Jewish relations and the Holocaust. Working on matters such as preservation of Auschwitz and the restitution of Jewish property in Poland, Pam developed close relations with the surviving Jewish community. Pam left the Foreign Service in 1998 to attend law school and graduated from the University of Pennsylvania. She worked for several years as a labor and employment attorney both at a firm and in-house in Philadelphia and now teaches law school at Rutgers. Pam is the author of *The Kommandant’s Girl*, as well as *The Winter Guest*, *The Diplomat’s Wife*, *The Ambassador’s Daughter*, *Almost Home*, *A Hidden Affair* and *The Things We*

*Cherished*. She also authored a short story in the anthology *Grand Central: Original Postwar Stories of Love and Reunion*. She lives outside Philadelphia with her husband and three children.

**Sunday June 17, 2018 at 10:00 am**  
**“The Beautiful Possible” by Amy Gottlieb**

### **The Book**



Spanning seventy years and several continents—from a refugee’s shattered dreams in 1938 Berlin, to a discontented American couple in the 1950s, to a young woman’s life in modern-day Jerusalem—this novel tells the braided love story of three unforgettable characters. In 1946, Walter Westhaus, a German Jew who spent the war years at Tagore’s ashram in India, arrives at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City, where he meets Sol Kerem, a promising rabbinical student. A brilliant nonbeliever, Walter is the perfect foil for Sol’s spiritual questions—and their extraordinary connection is too wonderful not to share with Sol’s free-spirited fiancée Rosalie. Soon Walter and Rosalie are exchanging notes, sketches, and secrets, and begin a transcendent love affair in his attic room. Months later they shatter their impossible bond, retreating to opposite sides of the country—Walter to pursue an academic career in Berkeley and Rosalie and Sol to lead a congregation in suburban New York. A chance meeting years later reconnects Walter, Sol, and Rosalie—catching three hearts and minds in a complex web of desire, heartbreak, and redemption. *The Beautiful Possible* considers the hidden boundaries of marriage and faith, and the mysterious ways we negotiate our desires.

### **The Author**

Amy Gottlieb’s debut novel, *The Beautiful Possible*, was a runner-up for the 2016 Edward Lewis Wallant Award and a 2016 National Jewish Book Award Finalist. Her fiction and poetry have been published in *Other Voices*, *Lilith*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Zeek*, *Storyscape*, *The Bloomsbury Anthology of Contemporary Jewish American Poetry*, and elsewhere. She has received a Literary Fellowship and Residency from the Bronx Council on the Arts, and an Arts Fellowship from the Drisha Institute for Jewish Education. Amy is a graduate of Clark University and the University of Chicago. She lives with her family on the edge of the Hudson River in New York City.



