

FICTION BONANZA: NEW ADULT JEWISH FICTION 2003-2004

**By: *Sally Brown, Merrily F. Hart, Frederick Isaac,
Julie Moss and Rosalind Reisner***

Description: A panel of experts provides an extensive bibliography and suggests the best of the current crop of fiction. Included are mysteries and thrillers, historical and literary fiction, and tips and titles for book discussion groups.

Sally Brown is Librarian at the Minnie Cobey Memorial Library at Congregation Tifereth Israel, Columbus, Ohio, and school librarian at the religious school. She leads adult book groups and a short story class, and will chair the community's JCC Bookfair. She works on the Doris Orenstein Fund and travel subsidies for AJL.

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Rosalind Reisner is the Program Coordinator at Central Jersey Regional Cooperative and the librarian at Monmouth Reform Temple in Tinton Falls, NJ. She is the author of the forthcoming reference book "Jewish American Literature: A Guide for Readers" (Libraries Unlimited).

Introduction

Welcome to our newly expanded session on the best in new Jewish fiction for adult readers. This session was created by Rosalind Reisner and debuted in Denver in 2002. We hope you will sit back and enjoy the show as we share highlights from a bountiful year of new titles. This list, compiled by panelists Sally Brown, Merrily Hart, Fred Isaac, Rosalind Reisner and me, Julie Moss, represents 68 recommended books published since our Toronto Convention last June. We hope that, staying within the confines of your libraries' selection policies, you will find it useful as a collection development tool. We have noted books that have earned prizes and recognition, and have starred the ones we consider to be the best.

Ours is certainly a multi-cultural list, with nine books translated from the Hebrew, one each translated from Spanish, German and Italian and even a book by a French author writing in English for the first time. Settings include modern and ancient Israel, Russia, South Africa, France, London, Portugal - even Brooklyn and Queens - while characters include eccentric teenagers, adventurous college students, a homeless woman, a phone psychic and a protégé of Doctor Mengele.

As you can see, we have coded the titles into categories by genre, differentiating “literary” fiction from “popular” fiction. You can rest assured that the vast majority of our titles are well-written books whose carefully chosen and well-placed words will thrill and even challenge your readers. But, there are other patrons who don’t have the energy or time for such a read. For them, it’s satisfying enough to sit with a book that will provide entertainment, a good laugh or just a short escape. I used to refer to such books as “Jewish housewife novels” because my mother was always reading something by Gloria Goldreich or Belva Plain (who I call the Jewish Danielle Steel) but sometimes I find myself preferring shorter, lighter novels. Am I becoming my mother ?!

Remember that many people will read novels from both genres and that good readers’ advisory work is essential when helping a patron select a book.

What exactly is a “Jewish book?” If you are now perched on the edge of your chair, anxiously awaiting the absolute right “answer” to this question, please sit back and relax. In her efforts to respond to the question when preparing a session on book discussions for the La Jolla Convention, our member Liza Stabler realized that there is no universal “right” answer. According to her, “it’s easier to know what feels right, what belongs in the category of a “Jewish book” than trying to develop a formula....I think a book can be considered if it is about Jews, by Jews or of interest to Jews as Jews.” She suggests including books by “important” writers who are identified as Jews, such as Bellow, though their subjects are not always Jewish. Books about Jews penned by Gentiles, such as this year’s ***Saul and Patsy***, can also qualify as “Jewish.” In the end, you as the professional must decide, based - as I said earlier - on your collection development policy, what belongs in your library!

You will soon hear three panelists speak about their very favorites, accompanied by a colorful power point show of book jackets prepared by Rosalind’s helpful husband Gerald. There will be five minutes for questions and comments at the end of each panelist’s segment. Sally and Roz will cover a variety of genres, to be followed by Fred, whose focus is on Jewish crime fiction. The session will end with Merrily’s advice on book discussion groups, including some recommended titles.

Feel free to make copies of the booklist to share with patrons and colleagues at home. For more information on our topic, watch for Rosalind Reisner’s new book called ***Jewish American Literature: A Guide to Reading Interests*** to be published by Libraries Unlimited this fall.

Thank you for choosing to attend this session.

Introduction by Julie Moss

FICTION BONANZA: RECOMMENDED NEW ADULT JEWISH FICTION 2003-2004

Presented at the 39th Annual Convention of the Association of Jewish Libraries (Brooklyn, New York, 2004)

L-LITERARY, P-POPULAR, Ho-HOLOCAUST, Hi-HISTORICAL, SF-
SCIFI/FANTASY.

* BEST NOVELS OF THE YEAR

Baxter, Charles. ***Saul and Patsy***. Pantheon, 2003. Settling into life in the Midwest, a young couple confronts the challenges of love, parenthood, an obsessive student and small-town anti-Semitism. **L**

Be'er, Haim. ***Feathers***. Translated from the Hebrew by Hillel Halkin. Brandeis University Press/University Press of New England, 2004. Be'er's first novel, written in 1979, finally translated into English. **Listed as one of the 100 greatest works of modern Jewish literature by the National Yiddish Book Center.** **L**

Bernstein, Michael Andre. ***Conspirators***. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2004. On the eve of World War I, corruption threatens to topple the Habsburg Empire. Provincial leader Count Wiladowski hires Jewish spy-master Jacob Tausk to protect him from assassination. Tausk's reign of terror, the appearance of a mysterious wonder-working rabbi, and conspiracies within and without the Jewish community fill this densely written, well-researched tale. **L/Hi**

Blum, Jenna. ***Those Who Saved Us***. Harcourt, 2004. Gentile Anna's love affair with a Jewish doctor puts her in danger in Nazi Germany, but she risks her life to help concentration camp inmates until forced into a brutal love affair with a camp officer. This narrative alternates with her daughter Trudy's efforts to understand her mother's silence and her own history. **Ho/Hi**

Bukiet, Melvin Jules. ***A Faker's Dozen: Stories***. W.W. Norton, 2003. Eleven stories of audacious imagination and black humor. **L**

Castel-Bloom, Orly. ***Human Parts***. Translated from the Hebrew by Dalya Bilu. Godine, 2003. The fragmented fateful daily existence of four average Israelis is played out against a bitterly cold winter, increasing terrorist attacks and an outbreak of illness dubbed the "Saudi flu." **A Hadassah Book Club selection.** **L**

Cohen, Paula Marantz. ***Much Ado About Jessie Kaplan***. St. Martin's Press, 2004. Witty and engaging – an amusing tale of love, loss and family rites of passage. **P**

Croci, Pascal. ***Auschwitz***. Abrams, 2004. This graphic novel chillingly conveys the message that the evil of the Holocaust persists today. Croci's interviews with survivors add depth and realism. **Ho**

Eberstadt, Fernanda. ***The Furies***. Knopf, 2003. Two central characters - Gwen Lewis, a wealthy right-wing Gentile from New York's Upper West Side and Gideon Wolkowitz, Lower East Side Jew and puppeteer - meet in Siberia where both of them have gone for work. Much of the story takes place in Russia where Gwen works as director of an institute established to help the former Soviet Union democratize. This is a strong, contemporary story that could promote an interesting discussion. **Hi**

Eisner, Will. ***Fagin the Jew***. Doubleday, 2003. The most recent graphic novel from the creator of the genre is an apologia for the life of Fagin, the trainer of thieves in Dickens' ***Oliver Twist***. As Fagin waits for his turn at the gallows, he describes the misfortunes and prejudice that led him to crime. As always, Eisner's drawings, this time in sepia, convey his characters' emotions and the look and feel of 19th

century London. **Hi**

Eprile, Tony. ***The Persistence of Memory***. Norton, 2003. South African Paul Sweetbread, cursed with a perfect memory in a country where amnesia is endemic, reflects on his traumatic past: a dotting mother plucked from a Chekhov play, authoritarian schoolteachers who spouted the government's version of history and the violence lurking beneath the civilized Jewish world of Johannesburg in the twilight of apartheid. **L**

Epstein, Joseph. ***Fabulous Small Jews***. Houghton Mifflin, 2003. Epstein's graceful vignettes capture a variety of people at crucial moments of understanding, coping with the indignities of aging, unexpected news, family heartbreak, or making sense of life's messy truths. **L**

Freud, Esther. ***The Sea House***. Ecco Press, 2004. Restless graduate student Lily Brannan spends the summer in the village of Steerforth, England to study the letters German-Jewish architect Klaus Lehman wrote to his wife in the 1950s. In parallel, readers learn the events of the fateful summer of 1953 when the lives of Lehman, his wife, and artist Max Meyer collided. Stylish, atmospheric and elegantly written. **L**

Goldstein, Naama. ***This Place Will Comfort You: Short Stories***. Scribner, 2003. A debut collection of eight stories. Goldstein unravels strands of youthful Jewish identity in America and in Israel, as well as the question of home. **L**

Gregory, Philippa. ***The Queen's Fool***. Touchstone, 2004. A popular author of historical fiction (*The Other Boleyn Girl*) has written an engaging story of a 14-year-old Jewish girl, Hannah Green, who flees the Spanish Inquisition with her father. When it is noted that Hannah has the gift of sight (the ability to see the future), she makes her way into the courts of Queen Mary, and eventually Queen Elizabeth. **Hi**

Grossman, David. ***Someone to Run With***. Translated from the Hebrew by Vered Almog & Maya Gurantz. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2004. Grossman's most popular work yet explores the life of Israeli street kids and the angst of family life in a society beset by self-doubt. **L**

Halter, Marek. ***Sarah***. Crown, 2004. The first novel of Halter's Canaan trilogy, with others forthcoming about Lilah and Zipporah. The story begins at Sarah's tomb in Hebron, where the matriarch awaits her death and remembers her life. **Hi**

Hamburger, Aaron. ***The View From Stalin's Head***. Random House, 2004. Ten stories of callow young Americans struggling with Judaism and homosexuality in post-Communist Prague. **L**

Hendel, Yehudit. ***Small Change: A Collection of Stories***. Translated from the Hebrew. Brandeis University Press/University Press of New England, 2003. Eight stories offer variations on the themes of loneliness, family ties, obsession and regret in contemporary Israel. **L**

Honigmann, Barbara. ***A Love Made Out of Nothing and Zohara's Journey***. Translated from the German by John Barrett. David R. Godine, 2003. Stories of two very different women's attempts to rise from the ashes of their former lives. The narrator of the first novella is a woman who leaves Berlin to start over as a student in Paris. The second novella tells the story of a devoutly religious Sephardic Jew repatriated during the Algerian War. Honigmann's is a powerful new voice from Germany, communicating in spare prose both the terror and the thrill that come with beginning anew. **Koret Foundation Jewish Book Award Winner. L**

Jensen, Jane. ***Dante's Equation***. Del Rey, 2003. Rabbi and physicist Yosef Kobinski vanished from Auschwitz in a flash of light, leaving behind his Kabbalist masterpiece. Fifty years later, physicist Jill Talcott and Rabbi Aharon Handalman are both searching for the manuscript, convinced it holds the

key to a physical law of good and evil, but others are hoping to thwart their search. A science fiction thriller that combines Kabbalah with modern physics. **SF/Ho**

Kenaz, Yehoshua. ***Infiltration***. Translated from the Hebrew by Dalya Bilu. Zoland Books, 2003. A story of basic training in a platoon comprised of conscripts with minor disabilities, set in the idealistic Israel of the 1950s. **Koret Foundation Jewish Book Award Finalist. L**

King, Ruchama. ***Seven Blessings***. St. Martin's Press, 2003. The closed, secret world of matchmaking in contemporary Israel provides the titillating pivot for a story of uncommon proportions. **A Hadassah Book Club selection. L**

Kirshenbaum, Binnie. ***An Almost Perfect Moment***. Ecco Press, 2004. A quirky novel centered on an unremarkable teenager named Valentine who is a dead ringer for the Virgin Mary as she appeared to Bernadette at Lourdes. Her very being, through some inexplicable conspiracy of fate, seems to shatter the dreams and hopes of people around her. **L**

Kohn, Rebecca. ***The Gilded Chamber: A Novel of Queen Esther***. RuggedLand, 2004. Kohn adheres closely to the Biblical story of Esther, but adds her own well-researched descriptions of palace life and customs. Esther is at first a shy country girl, but in the exotic and treacherous world of the harem, she rises to her role of champion of the Jewish community. **Hi**

Kubert, Joe. ***Yossel: April 19, 1943: a Story of the Warsaw Ghetto***. ibooks, dist. by Simon & Schuster, 2003. When the Nazis force Yossel and his family to live in the overcrowded tenements of the Warsaw Ghetto, it appears that Yossel's artistic gift will be shattered. Instead, the awful suffering of his family, the terrible conditions of the Ghetto and their increasingly barbaric treatment inspire him to create this compelling graphic novel. **Ho**

*Lebrecht, Norman. ***The Song of Names***. Anchor, 2004. The story of a man's 40-year search for his childhood friend, a violin prodigy named Dovidl who mysteriously disappeared. Lebrecht, a BBC commentator, explores themes of love, envy and genius. **Winner of the Whitbread First Novel Award. L**

*Leegant, Joan. ***An Hour in Paradise: Stories***. W.W. Norton, 2003. In settings from Jerusalem to Queens, from Hollywood's outskirts to Sarasota, Florida, the characters in this mesmerizing debut collection are drawn to the seductions of religion, soldiering on in search of divine and human connection. **L**

Matalon, Ronit. ***Bliss***. Translated from the Hebrew by Jessica Cohen. Metropolitan Books, 2003. When Ofra is called from Tel Aviv to France to attend the funeral of her beloved cousin Michel, she escapes a life lived vicariously through Sarah, her oldest friend, a photographer and political activist. **L**

*Megged, Aharon. ***Foiglmán***. Translated from the Hebrew by Marganit Weinberger-Rotman. The Toby Press, 2003. Through the exploration of the relationship between a reserved Israeli historian and a haunted yet enthusiastic Yiddish poet, Megged investigates the writing of Hebrew and Yiddish literature and history. **Koret Foundation Jewish Book Award Winner. L**

Michael, Sami. ***A Trumpet in the Wadi***. Translated from the Hebrew by Yael Lotan. Simon & Schuster, 2003. Set in Haifa just before the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, this spirited, bittersweet novel captures the Arab-Israeli conflict in microcosm. **L**

*Mirvis, Tova. ***The Outside World***. Knopf, 2004. Set inside the Orthodox world, a story portraying two very different Orthodox families who are brought together by the marriage of their children. **P**

Moss, Barbara Klein. ***Little Edens: Stories***. W.W. Norton, 2004. Eight magical stories about the idyllic spaces that people create in their lives and the serpents that subtly inhabit them; in each case, a form of revelation accompanies the threat of expulsion from the earthly paradise. **L**

Muñoz Molina, Antonio. ***Sepharad***. Translated from the Spanish by Margaret Sayers Peden. Harcourt, 2003. From one of Spain's most celebrated writers, an extraordinary, inspired book - at once fiction, history, and memoir - that draws on the Sephardic diaspora, the Holocaust and Stalin's purges to tell a 20th century story. **L**

*Murphy, Louise. ***The True Story of Hansel and Gretel***. Penguin, 2003. Two children, whose names are changed to hide their Jewish identities, are led into the forest by their father during the final days of the Nazi occupation of Poland. Depicts how war is experienced by families and especially by children. **Ho**

Nattel, Lillian. ***The Singing Fire***. Scribner, 2004. An historical work set in London at the turn of the last century, focusing on two women who've arrived there from Eastern Europe, united by their pasts and by a daughter given up by one and adopted by the other. **L/Hi**

Oates, Joyce Carol. ***The Tattooed Girl***. Ecco, 2003. Explores the relationship between an ailing young author and the troubled homeless woman he hires as his assistant. **L/Ho**

Plain, Belva. ***The Sight of the Stars***. Delacorte Press, 2004. A novel that spans three generations as it tells the story of Adam Arning, child of a Jewish peddler father and an Irish immigrant mother. **P/Hi**

Pye, Michael. ***The Pieces from Berlin***. Vintage, 2004. When Sarah Freeman, a Holocaust survivor, sees a table she once owned in a Zurich antiques shop window, it sets off a chain of events that uncovers a Holocaust tale of greed and immorality. **L/Ho**

*Ravel, Edeet. ***10,000 Lovers***. Perennial, 2003. Lily, a young emigrant student in 1970s Israel, explores the wonders and terrors of her new land and meets Ami, the man of her dreams. As their relationship grows, so too does the shadow that hangs over them. **Koret Foundation Jewish Book Award Finalist. A Hadassah Book Club selection. L**

Roiphe, Anne. ***Secrets of the City***. Shaye Areheart Books, 2003. Originally serialized in *The Forward*, short punchy chapters relate the adventures of Mel Rosenberg, the Jewish mayor of a large unnamed city. **P**

Rosenstone, Robert A. ***King of Odessa***. Northwestern University Press, 2003. Hard-boiled thriller, suspenseful love story and captivating imagined portrait of the writer Babel on the last visit to his hometown of Odessa in 1936. **Hi**

Sandor, Marjorie. ***Portrait of My Mother, Who Posed Nude in Wartime***. Sarabande, 2003. Linked stories follow a Jewish-American family across several generations. Taut narrative tension results as the big secret is not revealed until the last story. **L**

Schmidt, Eric-Emmanuel. ***Monsieur Ibrahim and the Flowers of the Koran and Oscar and the Lady in Pink***. Other Press, 2004. Two novellas by a French writer in his English-language debut. One is about a troubled Jewish boy, Moses or Momo, who strikes up an unlikely friendship with a solitary Muslim shopkeeper. The other, also about a boy abandoned by his parents, is an uplifting story of a 10-year-old's last days. **L**

Schwartz, Lynn Sharon. ***Referred Pain and Other Stories***. Counterpoint, 2004. A dozen precisely written stories are at times realistic and fanciful. The title novella recalls a man's immigrant parents' suffering during World War II as he undergoes elaborate dental work. **L**

Shapiro, Laurie Gwen. ***The Matzo Ball Heiress***. Red Dress Ink. 2004. A novel in which the 31 year-old heiress to the world's leading matzo company stages an unlikely seder to be covered by the Food Channel. **P**

Shapiro, Rochelle Jewel. ***Miriam the Medium***. Simon & Schuster, 2004. A phone psychic and otherwise ordinary modern-day Long Island housewife uses her gifts to try to save her family. **P**

Shrayer-Petrov, David. ***Jonah and Sarah: Jewish Stories of Russia and America***. Edited by Maxim D. Shrayer. Syracuse University Press, 2003. Love, talent and magic oppose – and sometimes vanquish – anti-Semitism, totalitarianism and vulgarity in this collection. **L**

Spitz, Marc. ***How Soon is Never?*** Three Rivers Press, 2003. Poignant, funny novel about a 30-something man getting a broken up band back together. **L**

Tel, Jonathan. ***Freud's Alphabet***. Counterpoint, 2003. A dreamy, fragmented re-imagining of Freud's last days in London. Very artful but short on plot, action, characters and Jewish content. **L**

van Straten, Giorgio. ***My Name, A Living Memory***. Translated from the Italian by Martha King. Steerforth Italia, 2003. A fictionalized account of six generations. The author reconstructs his family history, much as in real life he reconstructs damaged frescos – carefully, painstakingly and with the slightest embellishments – to produce a breathtaking masterpiece that details a personalized history of the Jews in Europe. **L/Hi**

Vapnyar, Lara. ***There are Jews in My House: Stories***. Pantheon, 2003. Innocence rounds the bend to experience in these beautifully shaped stories of Moscow and Brooklyn, reflecting the worldview of the young and overlooked. **L**

Winner of the 2004 Goldberg Prize for Jewish fiction by an emerging writer.

Wenner, Kate. ***Dancing with Einstein***. Scribner, 2004. A novel about growing up in the nuclear age. Set in 1970s NYC, the story flashes back to an earlier time when children were used to school bomb drills. Here, the daughter of a nuclear physicist, whose childhood home was visited by Albert Einstein, tries to make sense of her world. **L**

*Yehoshua, A.B. ***The Liberated Bride***. Translated from the Hebrew by Hillel Halkin. Harcourt, 2003. A wonderfully absorbing novel by one of Israel's premier novelists. Rivlin, a professor at Haifa University, is obsessed by his son's ex-wife and failed marriage while becoming involved with his Arab students' relationships and problems. **A National Yiddish Book Center Selection. L**

*Zakrzewski, Paul, ed. ***Lost Tribe: Jewish Fiction From the Edge***. Perennial, 2003. Funny, raw, dark, sometimes outrageous, the 25 contributors explore themes such as conflicted identities, sexual fetishes, religious intolerance, and even the troubled legacy of the Holocaust, to create a stirring picture of contemporary Jewish life. **A Hadassah Book Club selection. L**

Zimler, Richard. ***Hunting Midnight***. Delacorte Press, 2003. A colorful novel set in 18th and 19th century Portugal and South Carolina involving John Zarco Stewart, who discovers his Marrano heritage and gets caught up in avenging an act of treachery. Well-researched detail about the slave trade, Marranos in America and Portugal, and the antebellum South. **L/Hi**

JEWISH CRIME FICTION

Harris, Lee. ***Bar Mitzvah Murder***. Fawcett Books, 2004. In the 15th of this series, Christine Bennett and her family go to Israel (before the current troubles). There is very little detail here, and it seems like the work of a Christian tourist rather than someone interested in serious examination of the State

and its people. But the mysterious character, who feeds Chris vital information, seems very much like the Prophet Elijah.

Kellerman, Faye. **Street Dreams**. Warner Books, 2003. After over a dozen novels, Peter Decker's daughter Cindy gets center stage here. While there are references to Peter and Rina's Jewish life in Los Angeles throughout the book, they are only place-holders, and do not affect the story or its telling.

* Krich, Rochelle. **Dream House**. Ballantine Books, 2003. Molly Blume, true-crime reporter and modern Orthodox woman, gets involved in historic preservation and real estate issues in L.A. Her choices in life and love are worth pursuing.

Land, Jon. **The Blue Widows**. Forge, 2003. Part of a series featuring Danielle Barnea and her Arab colleague/lover Ben Kamal. The pair work together and separately to thwart plots against both sides and restore order, ultimately working toward the elusive aim of peace. The books are quite violent, but offer a current view of Israel and the Palestinians.

Land, Jon. **The Last Prophecy**. Forge, 2004. In this seventh installment of the Barnea & Kamal series, Land taps into every element the thriller has to give.

Liss, David. **A Spectacle of Corruption**. Random House, 2004. Second in a series set in 1720 London, Benjamin Weaver (who first appeared in *A Conspiracy of Paper*) privately acknowledges his Jewish background but hides it from the outside world as he investigates crime in high places.

*Newman, Sharan. **Outcast Dove**. Forge, 2003. This book features Catharine LeVendeur's cousin Solomon who is on a journey to the south of France and Spain. The novel has continuous references to Jewish practice and to medieval anti-Semitism (including Hebrew headers for chapters). The background novel in the series is **Strong as Death**.

Pottinger, Stan. **The Last Nazi**. St. Martin's Press, 2003. A thriller involving a protégé of the infamous Dr. Mengele. The protagonist chases and is chased by the villain in a complex web of deceit to avoid worldwide peril.

*Silva, Daniel. **Death in Vienna**. Putnam, 2004. Last in a trilogy of thrillers, this volume deals with the Death Camps and the escape routes of high Nazi officers after the War. It also reveals some of Gabriel Allon's background.

Simon, Roger L. **Director's Cut**. Atria Books, 2003. In this revival of the '70s detective series, Moses Wine travels to Europe to investigate shenanigans at a film shoot. While the story includes references to Prague Jewish history, the Protocols and 9/11, the murder's solution is only tangentially connected to the many Jewish threads.

Waldman, Ayelet. **Death Gets a Time Out**. Prime Crime, 2003. Juliet Appelbaum's life as an amateur sleuth has a fourth episode. There is very little Jewish content here, but Juliet is fun to watch in action.

Wilson, Jonathan. **A Palestine Affair**. Pantheon, 2003. Assorted outcasts converge in Mandate Jerusalem, circa 1924. When one of them dies under mysterious circumstances, the tension rises. An interesting, though not deep, view into life under the British. The mystery is resolved as an afterthought.

JEWISH CRIME NON-FICTION AND OTHER INFORMATION

Isaac, Fred. "*Jewish Detective Fiction*." My own take on crime fiction with Jewish content. Presented at a Popular Conference in 2002 and available on request.

Raphael, Rabbi Lawrence. *jewishmysteries.com*. Rabbi Raphael has compiled a list of over 300 volumes, divided into three categories based on the protagonists' Jewish connections.

Roth, Lawrence. *Detecting Jews*. Rutgers University Press, 2004. This short but serious analysis examines several major crime series featuring Jewish characters. While the book delves deeply into several topics, its coverage is limited.

ESTABLISHING A BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

Stabler, Elizabeth F. "*Starting and Running Book Discussion Groups: Reading Groups and Reading Selections, Including What Constitutes a 'Jewish Book.'*" **Proceedings of the 36th Annual Convention of the AJL**, June 24-27, 2001. <http://www.jewishlibraries.org>

Jacobsohn, Rachel W. *The Reading Group Handbook*. Revised edition. Hyperion, 1998.

Slezak, Ellen, ed. *The Book Group Book*. 3rd edition. Chicago Review Press, 2000.

Tips for Title Suggestions, Discussion Guides, Reviews

Sites & sources for book suggestions, discussion guides, etc.

- <http://www.myjewishbooks.com> (includes the newest titles)
- <http://www.jbooks.com>
- <http://urj.org/books> (Significant Jewish Books)
e.g. *The English Disease, The Coffee Trader, In the Image*
- <http://www.yiddishbookcenter.org/+12> (The Jewish Reader: A Guide for Book Groups)
e.g. *Centaur in the Garden, Fateless, The Liberated Bride*
- Hadassah sponsors a book club with discussion guides for 10 titles a year. Send e-mail to communityoutreach@hadassah.org for guides.
e.g. *Human Parts, Seven Blessings, Ten Thousand Lovers, Lost Tribe*
- <http://www.jwa.org/aboutjwa/programs/350years/readingseries.html>
- Jewish Women's Archive has discussion guides on selected themes for sale at a reasonable price; authors discussed include Tova Mirvis, Letty Cottin Pogrebin
- <http://www.readinggroupguides.com/index.asp> (collects guides from all publishers)

Publisher sites: These guides are probably all on Amazon.com or appear easily on a Google search.

- <http://www.randomhouse.com/vintage/read/rgg/>
- <http://www.penguinputnam.com/static/html/us/readingguides/index.html>
- <http://www.picadorusa.com/picador/rgg/rgg.html>
- http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/readers_guides/fiction.shtml

Selected sites & sources for reviews:

- <http://www.nytimes.com/pages/books/index.html> (Reviews are accessible at no cost)
- <http://www.forward.com/main/search.php> (Excellent book reviews by the Forward)
- <http://www.Amazon.com> (Reviews from Library Journal, Booklist, &/or Publishers Weekly etc.)
- Index to Jewish Periodicals

Proprietary online sites: Accessible through your local public library's site.

- Novelist
- Contemporary Authors
- Gale Literature Resource Center

And of course Google and other search engines!

PANELISTS:

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6/17/04