RECOMMENDED READS FROM THE AJL JEWISH FICTION AWARD COMMITTEE

Paula Breger, Rena Citrin, Sarah Feldman, Dina Herbert, Laura Schutzman and Hannah Srour-Zackon

Description: Each year, the AJL Fiction Award Committee reads over seventy books with Jewish content. Come hear all about the committee’s favorites from 2022 and 2023. The group will cover literary fiction and genre fiction, the buzz-worthy names in Jewish literature and the lesser gems that you may have missed, the best books for discussion groups and the notable forthcoming titles. Bring your thoughts and opinions about the books you've read for a lively audience discussion, too!

Paula Breger is the volunteer librarian at Temple Emanu-El in Haverhill, MA, where she also serves as communications director and webmaster. She is the co-founder of Temple Emanu-El’s highly successful author and Yiddish cultural exploration series and facilitates the temple’s book club. A former attorney and bookseller, Paula is now a freelance copyeditor. She is the chair of the AJL Jewish Fiction Award Committee and serves as AJL’s public relations/communications chair.

Rena Citrin is recently retired from Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School in Chicago, where she served as Library Director of the nursery through 8th grade school for 23 years. While Rena is basking in retirement and aspires to learning pickleball and new needlepoint stitches, she is still deeply immersed in the book world. She moderates a weekly book group for seniors at the Chicago Mitzvah Campaign, is a member of the AJL Fiction Award Committee as well as the JBC Picture Book Committee, and is called upon to give book talks in her community. She is a former member of the Sydney Taylor Book Award Committee. Rena is also working toward certification as a docent at the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center.

Sarah Feldman is the librarian at Gann Academy, a Jewish high school in Greater Boston. Sarah has worked in both public and private schools and as a book editor for trade and educational publishers in London and New York, including a memorable stint at the Guinness Book of Records (UK). Sarah holds a BA in English literature from the University of Sussex (UK), a PGCE from Sheffield Hallam University (UK), and an MSIS from the State University of New York at Albany. She is the editor of the Spotlight feature for the Massachusetts School Library Association newsletter and is co-chair of the New England Chapter of AJL.

Dina Herbert is a librarian for the federal government. She is a past president of AJL and will begin a term on the AJL Jewish Fiction Award Committee in 2023. She lives in Northern Virginia with her spouse and two small, well-read children.

Laura Schutzman has been the librarian at the Hebrew Academy of Nassau County in Uniondale, NY for the past eleven years. She has been a member of the AJL Council as the Publications chair since 2016. She also writes for, and is an editor of, the AJL News and Reviews. Laura holds a BA in Judaic studies and music from Yeshiva University and an MLIS from Pratt Institute. She has been a member of the AJL Jewish Fiction Award since 2019 and previously served as committee chair.
Hannah Sroun-Zackon is the archivist and museum director at Congregation Shaar Hashomayim in Montreal, Quebec. She also is the book columnist for the Canadian Jewish News. Hannah received her bachelor's degree in Jewish studies and English literature at McGill University in 2019, and her Master of Information (with a focus in archives and book history) from the University of Toronto in 2021. She serves on several AJL committees including the executive board of AJL-Canada, the Jewish Fiction Award committee, the Education committee, and more. Hannah has a particular interest in Jewish archives in Canada and in bringing more people in contact with the rich histories of Canadian Jewry.