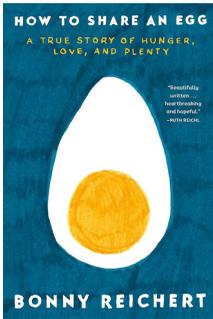


2025-2026

JCC BOOK CLUB

Monthly Tuesday meetings from 1:30-3PM at the Uptown JCC.

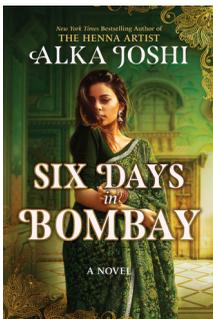


September 16

HOW TO SHARE AN EGG by Bonny Reichert

Reviewer: Elizabeth Kahn. Former Librarian and Media Specialist ; Patrick F. Taylor Academy and Tulane University

How to Share an Egg is a poignant culinary memoir by Bonny Reichert, blending personal narrative with themes of survival, identity, and intergenerational trauma. Reichert, a chef and award-winning journalist, reflects on her upbringing as the daughter of a Holocaust survivor. Her father, who endured starvation in Auschwitz-Birkenau, instilled in her a profound respect for food's role in sustaining both body and spirit. The memoir delves into Reichert's journey of understanding her father's past, her own culinary path, and the healing power of shared meals. A pivotal moment occurs during a trip to Poland, where a bowl of borscht reconnects her with her heritage and propels her into a deeper exploration of her family's history.

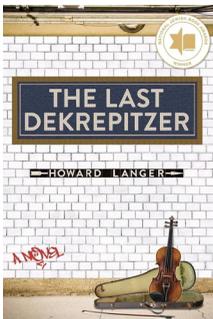


October 28

SIX DAYS IN BOMBAY by Alka Joshi

Reviewer: Rachel Ruth, Master of Social Work, JCC Director of Adult Programs

In Six Days in Bombay, nurse Sona's life changes when artist Mira Novak dies mysteriously under her care. To clear her name, Sona follows clues across Europe, uncovering Mira's hidden past and discovering her own sense of identity and purpose along the way.



November 18

THE LAST DEKREPITIZER by Howard Langer

Reviewer: Chloe Evans, English Studies Major & English Department Office Manager, Loyola University

The Last Dekrepitizer follows the journey of Shmuel Meir Lichtbencher, the sole survivor of a Hasidic sect known for its fiddling tradition. After losing his family in the Holocaust, Shmuel Meir, now known as Sam Lightup, is smuggled into the United States by Black American soldiers. He settles in rural Mississippi, where he lives among the Black community, speaks Black English, preaches, and plays the blues with the Brown Sugar Ramblers trio. His marriage to a Black woman, Lula Curtin, leads to a cross-burning incident, prompting their move to New York City. In Manhattan, he collaborates with the Reverend Gary Davis, a renowned blind guitarist. Throughout his journey, Shmuel Meir grapples with his faith, expressing his prayers through his music, seeking solace and meaning in a world marked by loss and displacement.



December 16

HAPPY NEW YEARS by Maya Arad

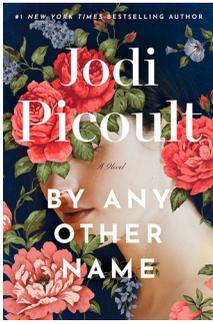
Reviewer: Debbie Pesses, Jewish Family Services of Greater New Orleans Board President, Retired New Orleans JCC Jewish Enrichment Director

Happy New Years is an epistolary novel spanning five decades, chronicling the life of Leah Zuckerman, an Israeli émigré who moves to the United States in the mid-1960s. To maintain her connection to her homeland, Leah writes an annual New Year's letter to her former classmates from a women's teaching college in Israel. These letters, composed between 1966 and 2016, serve as a window into Leah's experiences as she navigates relationships, marriage, divorce, single motherhood, financial struggles, and professional challenges. While her letters project optimism and cheerfulness, they gradually reveal deeper truths about her life, exposing the secrets and shame that have shaped her journey. Through Leah's correspondence, the novel explores themes of identity, belonging, and the complexities of self-perception.



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January 20

BY ANY OTHER NAME by Jodi Picoult

Reviewer: Dr. Molly Abel Travis, Associate Dean, Newcomb-Tulane College | Associate Professor of English

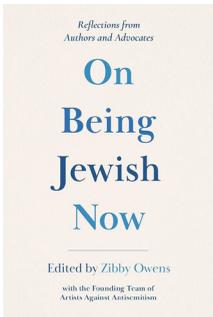
By Any Other Name follows the story of Esme and her father, a single dad navigating life after the death of Esme's mother. When Esme starts school, she struggles with fitting in and understanding her identity amid cultural and family complexities. The novel explores themes of belonging, self-discovery, and the bonds between parents and children as Esme and her father learn to face life's challenges together.

February 24

ON BEING JEWISH NOW by Zibby Owens

Reviewer: Rabbi Katie Bauman, Touro Synagogue

On Being Jewish Now is a powerful anthology edited by Zibby Owens, featuring 75 essays from Jewish writers, actors, artists, and religious leaders. Published in the wake of the October 7, 2023, attacks in Israel—the deadliest pogrom against Jews since the Holocaust—the collection reflects on the evolving experience of Jewish identity in a time of rising antisemitism. The contributors share personal stories that encompass themes of joy, trauma, resilience, humor, and community. Organized into sections like “Jewish Pride and Joy,” “Jewish Mom Life,” and “Am I a Good Enough Jew?,” the book offers a multifaceted view of contemporary Jewish life. Profits from the book support Artists Against Antisemitism, a nonprofit dedicated to combating hate and promoting understanding.

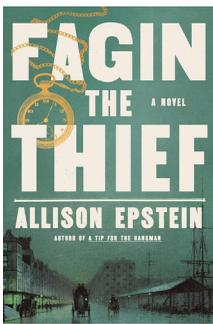


March 17

FAGIN THE THIEF by Allison Epstein

Reviewer: Dr. Leah Rosenberg, Professor of Literature, Loyola University New Orleans, Ph.D. (Emory University); M.A. (UC Irvine); B.A. (University of Maryland)

Fagin the Thief reimagines the notorious character from Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist*, presenting Jacob Fagin as a multifaceted figure shaped by his circumstances. Born to a Jewish mother in 18th-century London, Jacob's early life is marked by hardship and loss. After his mother's death, he turns to pickpocketing as a means of survival. Over time, he becomes a mentor to orphaned children, including the infamous Bill Sikes, whom he takes under his wing. As Jacob navigates the complexities of his relationships with his proteges and the challenges of living on the fringes of society, he grapples with questions of morality, loyalty, and identity. Epstein's novel offers a nuanced portrayal of a character often vilified, delving into themes of survival, compassion, and the gray areas of human nature.

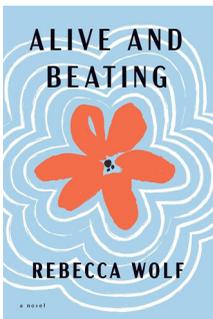


April 21

ALIVE AND BEATING by Rebecca Wolf

Reviewer: Kathy Rush, Retired cultural anthropologist and one of the founders of the Oral History of the University Women's Club of Buenos Aires

Alive and Beating is a poignant debut novel inspired by a true story. Set in Jerusalem, it follows the intersecting lives of six individuals from diverse backgrounds—Leah, Yael, Hoda, David, Severin, and two teenage boys, Youssef and Yosef—all in desperate need of organ transplants. Their fates become intertwined following a tragic event, leading to profound reflections on faith, identity, and the shared human experience.



May 19

AN INSIDE JOB by Daniel Silva

Reviewer: Judy Steinberg

In *An Inside Job*, legendary spy and art restorer Gabriel Allon races against time to recover a stolen Leonardo da Vinci masterpiece. From the Venetian Lagoon to London galleries and the French Riviera, Allon navigates murder, corruption, and the shadowy world of the art market. Daniel Silva delivers a gripping, stylish thriller where greed, power, and intrigue collide, and the fate of a pope hangs in the balance.

