



# The Lehigh Valley Center for Jewish Studies



FALL 1987

## Newsletter

VOLUME III, NO. 1

### Robert Cohn Appointed As First Fully Affiliated Berman Scholar

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Robert Cohn as the Lehigh Valley Center for Jewish Studies' first tenure track Philip and Muriel Berman Scholar. Cohn, a biblical scholar and historian of religion, has been appointed to the faculty of Lafayette College, where he teaches in the Department of Religion. For the past six years he served on the faculty of Northwestern University, where he was the recipient of the Arts and Sciences Award for Outstanding Teaching. He has taught at The Pennsylvania State University and served as the Aaron-Roland Visiting Assistant Professor at Stanford University.

Professor Cohn's primary scholarly interest is the literary study of the Hebrew Bible. His book-length studies in the field include *The Shape of Sacred Space: Four Biblical Studies* (1981),

and the forthcoming Harper Bible Commentary volume on 1 Samuel. He has also published numerous articles including "Convention and Creativity in The Book of Kings: The Case of the Dying Monarch" (1985), "Literary Technique in the Jeroboam Narrative" (1985), and "Narrative Structure and Canonical Perspective in Genesis" (1983). Cohn's work in the field of history of religion includes essays on the concept of sainthood in Judaism which will appear in *Saints and Virtues*, John Hawley, editor, and *Sainthood in World Religions*, edited by George Bond and Richard Kieckhefer. He also contributed an article on sainthood to the recently published *Encyclopedia of Religion*, edited by the late Mircea Eliade.

Professor Cohn's position is one of the two new permanent positions in

Jewish Studies established by Philip and Muriel Berman and known as the Philip and Muriel Berman Scholars. The Bermans previously endowed the Philip and Muriel Berman Chair in Jewish Studies at Lehigh University and provided the initial funds for the Lehigh Valley Center for Jewish Studies. The Bermans' latest gift comes in response to a proposal generated by the Task Group on Academic Coordination in Jewish Studies, composed of administrators and faculty from the six LVAIC (Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges) institutions and chaired by Center director Laurence Silberstein. The gift also provides for an annual visiting professorship which will be filled next semester by Professor Gad Gilbar of Haifa University. According to the terms of the Berman grant, students at all the LVAIC campuses (Allentown College of St. Francis de Sales, Cedar Crest College, Lafayette College, Lehigh University, Moravian College, Muhlenberg College) will benefit from these faculty. Through the coordination of the Lehigh Valley Center for Jewish Studies, Cohn and the other new faculty members will teach Jewish Studies courses on each of the LVAIC campuses. During the spring semester, 1988, Professor Cohn will teach, in addition to his courses at Lafayette, a course titled "Jewish Responses to Catastrophe" at Allentown College.

### Vera Moreen and Jacob Meskin Are Visiting Faculty in Jewish Studies

The Center welcomes Dr. Vera Moreen and Mr. Jacob Meskin, currently serving as visiting faculty in Jewish Studies in the Lehigh Valley. Meskin holds a one-year appointment as a visiting Philip and Muriel Berman Scholar in the Department of Religion



Craig Hofses

Robert Cohn, Jacob Meskin, and Vera Moreen at a Center-sponsored reception given in their honor.

continued on page 5





## Silbersteins Lead Second Educators Trip to Israel

Nineteen Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges deans, faculty, and administrators participated in the second Center-sponsored educational trip to Israel, from June 13 to 28. Like the first trip, in December, 1985, this trip was generously subvented by Philip and Muriel Berman. The trip was led jointly by Center director Laurence Silberstein and his wife, Mimi Silberstein, Director of Career Planning and Internship at Cedar Crest College.

Participants in the trip included Professor Richard Aronson, Department of Economics, Lehigh University, and Mrs. Judith Aronson; Dr. Sarah Blanshei, Provost and Dean of Faculty, Lafayette College, and Mr. Jack Blanshei; Dr. Kathleen Dubs, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty, Cedar Crest College; Dr. Roy Herrenkohl, Director, Center for Social Research, Lehigh University, and Dr. Ellen Herrenkohl; Dr. Hwa Yol Jung, Professor and Chairman, Department of Political Science, Moravian College, and Dr. Petee Jung; Professor Laurence Lipkis, Department of Music, Moravian College; Dr. Myra Rosenhaus, Program Administrator, Lehigh Valley Center for Jewish Studies, and Dr. Mike Zeller; Dr. June Schlueter, Department of English, Lafayette College, and Dr. Paul Schlueter; Dr. Karen Doyle Walton, Academic Dean and Director of Planning, Allentown College of St. Francis de Sales, and Mr. Joseph Walton; and Dr. Rob-

ert C. Williams, Academic Vice President and Dean of the College, Muhlenberg College. Regrettably, this year's trip was tragically marred by Dean Williams' sudden death. (see page 3)

The primary purposes of the trip were to introduce the American educators to Israeli higher education, orient them to the academic field of Jewish Studies, and strengthen the ties between Lehigh Valley campuses and Israeli universities. Dr. Moshe Davis, Director of the International Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization, surveyed the current status of academic programs in Jewish Studies throughout the world. Dr. Aaron Singer, Director of One-Year Programs at Hebrew University, and Amos Gilboa, Director of Overseas Student Programs at Tel Aviv University, provided the members of the group with in-depth descriptions of the opportunities available to American students at each institution.

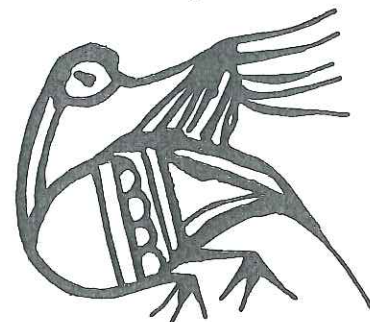
In Jerusalem, the group was hosted at a luncheon by Hebrew University chancellor Avraham Harman. Professor Amnon Shiloah, rector of the Rothberg School for Overseas Students and world renowned musicologist, discussed the ethnic roots of Jewish music, while Professor of English Literature Alice Shalvi, one of Israel's leading feminists, surveyed the current situation of women in Israel. At Tel Aviv University, Professor Itamar Rabinovitch, Director of the Dayan Center for Middle

Eastern and African Studies, analyzed the political situation in the Middle East. The visit to Tel Aviv University included lunch with administrators and faculty colleagues.

During two weeks of intensive travel, the group was introduced to the society and culture of Israel through meetings with prominent Israeli academicians and intellectuals. Speakers included Nachman Raz, Chairman of the Knesset Committee on Education; Meron Benvenisti, director of the West Bank Data Project and former deputy mayor of Jerusalem; Noemi Teasdale, Coordinator for Christian Affairs of the Mayor's Office for the City of Jerusalem; Subhi Abu-Ghosh, Director of the Moslem Court System in Israel; and Mordechai Bar-On, former Knesset member and former Chief Education Officer of the Israel Defense Forces. Topics discussed included Israel's political and educational system, Jewish-Arab relations, Israel's foreign policy, and the prospects for peace in the Middle East.

In addition to the normal touring, the group visited kibbutz Nir David, where they were hosted by Haifa University Professor Michal Palgi, a member of the kibbutz who had previously lectured in the Lehigh Valley. Palgi and other kibbutz members provided a comprehensive orientation to the social, cultural, and ideological foundations of kibbutz life.

At the archaeological excavation at Tel Miqne-Ekron, a project co-sponsored by the Center through the generosity of the Philip and Muriel Berman Foundation, the group explored the site under the guidance of project directors Dr. Trude Dothan of the Hebrew University and Dr. Sy Gitin of the Albright Institute. Earlier in the week, the academicians had visited the Albright Institute in Jerusalem, where they were hosted by Dr. Gitin and shown the extensive collection of pottery remains taken from the Miqne excavation.



Tel Miqne-Ekron



## In Memory of Robert Williams by Laurence J. Silberstein

It is with deep sadness that we announce the untimely death of Dr. Robert Williams, Vice President, Academic Dean and Professor of Philosophy at Muhlenberg College and a good friend and supporter of the Center. Dean Williams was stricken with a heart attack and died while visiting Israel with other faculty and administrators from the Lehigh Valley colleges. Prior to coming to Muhlenberg, Robert Williams had a distinguished career as a college professor, public administrator, and parish minister, and had taught at Vanderbilt University and Fisk University. A noted scholar, he published numerous articles in the field of philosophy, theology, and Black studies. At Vanderbilt he directed the Afro-American Studies program for several years.

In the two years that he had been at Muhlenberg, Robert Williams had earned the deep respect and affection of students and faculty alike. His key role in Muhlenberg's academic development was an essential part of the college's plan for academic growth and his loss has been deeply felt. Within the Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges, he was widely respected by his fellow administrators, who will sorely miss his academic insight and counsel.

Along with the other members of our group in Israel, I was deeply pained by Bob Williams' death. On the eve of his death, Bob and I spent several hours together walking around Jerusalem and, as we frequently did, discussing many subjects ranging from contemporary philosophy to current life in Israel. We resumed our discussion on the next day, shortly before he was stricken. In that last conversation, as in so many others, Bob dis-



played his unceasing passion for truth and his continual concern for moral justice.

Bob's sudden death had a profound impact on all of the members of our group travelling in Israel. In a few short days, he had earned everyone's respect and affection. As a demonstration of that respect and affection, we somberly gathered early Friday morning in a forest on a mountain overlooking the old city of Jerusalem, a city that Bob had grown to love during an extended stay in Israel several years ago. After reading several psalms and a contemporary Hebrew poem, we each planted a tree in his memory.

Robert Williams was a man of unusual talents, who combined a powerful intellect with a great compassion for his fellow human beings. His death leaves a deep lacuna in the academic life of the Lehigh Valley. We offer our deepest condolences to his wife, Delores, and their four children. May his soul be bound up in the bond of life.

## Psychologist Finds Growing Number of Israelis Seeking Private Salvation

According to University of Haifa psychology professor Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, the idea and practice of individual salvation, a "rare and culturally deviant" phenomenon in Israel before the 1970's, increased dramatically after 1973. Speaking at Lafayette and Lehigh in September, Beit-Hallahmi traced the rise of Israeli interest in individual salvation, and the possible reasons for it. His lecture, "Despair and Deliverance:

Private Salvation in Contemporary Israel," was drawn from a forthcoming book, which is based on interviews, observations, and documents collected over a six-year period.

Beit-Hallahmi found four paths to individual salvation prevalent in Israeli society: the return to Judaism on the part of secular Israelis; the turn to new religions (Hare Krishna, meditation, Est); psychotherapy; and the occult,

particularly astrology. He attributed this "epidemic of individual bliss" to the changed Israeli society created in the aftermath of the 1973 war. According to Beit-Hallahmi, these paths to personal happiness are symptoms of a widespread crisis mentality among Israelis. Although involving a far smaller number of people, they should be classified with new right-wing political movements, emigration from Israel, and increased drug use, crime, and suicide.

Beit-Hallahmi noted that Israeli institutions, including the courts, differ in their responses to members of these groups. Not surprisingly, those who return to Judaism receive favorable treatment, while proponents of Est or members of Hare Krishna are more likely to evoke hostile reactions.

Beit-Hallahmi is a clinical psychologist and Senior Research Associate in the Institute of Middle East Studies, University of Haifa. He has written extensively on the psychology of religion, the kibbutz family, and the psychology of the Arab-Israeli conflict. His most recent book in the area of politics is *The Israeli Connection*, which documents Israel's connections with repressive regimes, including South Africa.

## Laskers Discuss Responses to Reproductive Technology

In a joint presentation in September sponsored by the Center and the Science, Technology, and Society Program at Lehigh, Professors Judith Lasker and Daniel Lasker contrasted sociological and rabbinic perspectives on issues relating to reproductive technology. In their joint presentation, the Laskers, who are sister and brother, compared the traditional Jewish religious perspective on reproductive technology with the perspective of modern social science.

Daniel Lasker, a Senior Lecturer in Jewish Thought, Department of History, Ben-Gurion University, described the ways in which orthodox and conservative rabbis apply principles of Jewish law to such issues as *in vitro* fertilization, artificial insemination, and surrogate motherhood. He emphasized that in contrast to modern social thought which focuses on the rights of the individual, rabbinic legal thought seeks to preserve the ideals that have been developed over the centuries and that derive their authority from the

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## David Shipler Speaks at Third Wallenberg Tribute

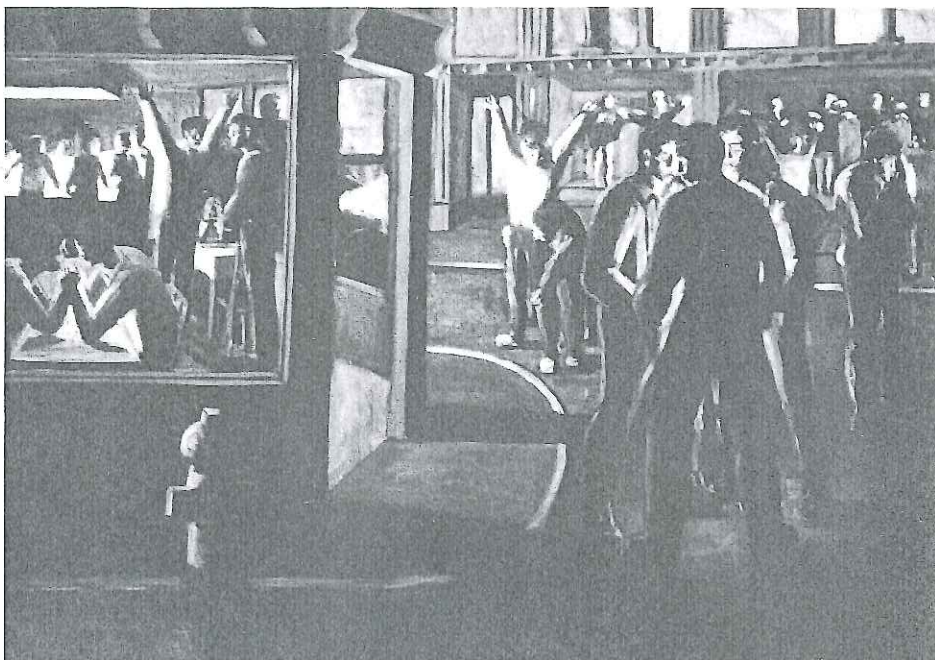
New York Times reporter and human rights advocate David Shipler was the featured speaker at the Third Wallenberg Tribute, held last April at Muhlenberg College. The lecture was originated by Muhlenberg College to commemorate the heroic actions of Raoul Wallenberg and to foster intercultural dialogue between Jews and Christians in the Lehigh Valley. The lecture, attended by more than 300 people, was jointly sponsored by Muhlenberg College, the Allentown Area Lutheran Parish, the Jewish Federation of Allentown, the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the Lutheran Church in America, the Muhlenberg and Cedar Crest Hillel chapter, and the Center. Last year's speaker was author Chaim Potok.

In his address, "The Journalist and Human Rights," Shipler compared his experiences as a reporter in Vietnam, the Soviet Union, and Israel and emphasized the journalist's responsibility to raise public awareness about human rights issues. His recent book, *Arab and Jew: Wounded Spirits in a Promised Land*, which received wide critical acclaim, is an outgrowth of his activism. It is the work of a journalist intent on presenting complex issues for public discussion. Based upon extensive investigation and hundreds of personal interviews, the book discusses the divisions between Arabs and Jews. Analyzing the ways in which deep-seated prejudices in both communities have negatively affected the prospects of reconciliation, he refrains from offering facile solutions to the problem.

Responses to Shipler's book by the Jewish community have included accusations of his being anti-Jewish. These strong reactions illustrate the point Shipler made in his lecture that taking an activist stance as a journalist is not without its consequences. That his position vis à vis the Jewish people is more complex than the reactions to his book suggest is illustrated by his reports from the Soviet Union. In his lecture, Shipler spoke with great feeling about attending a seder in the Soviet Union and meeting with then *refusenik* Vladimir Slepak. His 1983 book *Russia: Broken Idols, Solemn Dreams*, with its chapter on the *refuseniks*, further reveals his sympathy for the plight of Soviet Jews.

*continued on page 5*

## Painter Speaks in Conjunction with Israeli Art Exhibit



William Greco

"Cafe," Oil on Canvas, 58" x 84", 1986

Israeli painter Avner Moriah spoke at Lehigh University in April on the place of his work in the context of contemporary Israeli art. His talk coincided with an exhibit of recent Israeli art presented by the Lehigh Art Galleries under the supervision of Galleries' director Ricardo Viera. The exhibit, "ARTisrael, The 1980's," was loaned to Lehigh from the New England Center for Contemporary Art, Brooklyn, Connecticut. It included works by Lea Nickel and Ygaël Tumarkin, representing the generation of the 1950's, and younger artists such as Tamar Getter, Judith Levin, Tsibi Geva, Yaacov Hefetz, and Pamela Levy.

In his talk, Moriah noted that his realistic portrayal of Israelis at war set his work apart from that of most Israeli artists. Moriah's paintings force the viewer into confrontation with the violence in Israeli society, violence which the viewers may or may not equate with oppression. If the paintings do not espouse a political position, and Moriah insists that they do not, they still have the capacity to elicit a political

response. Moriah believes that in general the Israeli art world shuns realistic representations of war in favor of more current modes of artistic expression. He holds that his dramatic depictions of war's intrusion into the everyday life of Israel (as illustrated, for example, in "Cafe") are simply records of his experience.

Born in Jerusalem, Moriah received his B.F.A. from the Bezalel Academy of Art and his M.F.A. in 1983 from the Yale University School of Art. His works are part of the permanent collections in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Jewish Museum in New York City, the Israel Museum, and the Cleveland Museum of Art.

The artists featured in "ARTisrael" spanned several periods in the recent history of Israeli art, a history characterized, as is so much of Israeli culture, by "the stormy dialectics of intense battles and controversial ideological searchings." As described by Bezalel Academy Senior Lecturer Gideon Ofrat, "It is an art world full of rivalries and hostilities. Some of it is fruitful."

## Bank of Israel Chief Economist Speaks on Welfare

In March, Meir Tamari, Chief Economist, Office of the Governor of the Bank of Israel, addressed the Lehigh University Economics Department Colloquium on "Some Problems in Welfare Economics: A Jewish Perspective." The lecture was sponsored by Lehigh's Department of Econom-

ics, The Fairchild-Martindale Center for the Study of Private Enterprise, and the Center.

Tamari's most recent book is "With All Your Possessions": *Jewish Ethics and Economic Life* (1987). There he argues for the concept of a distinct "Jewish economic man,"

*continued on page 5*



## Women and the Holocaust is Subject of Ringelheim Lecture

In February lectures at Lehigh and Muhlenberg, "Women and the Holocaust: A Feminist Perspective," philosopher and historian Joan Ringelheim presented the most recent results of her ongoing study into the deaths of women and men during the Holocaust. Drawing on statistical evidence from the open-air killing operations in Russia, the ghettos of Warsaw, Lodz, and Teresienstadt and Auschwitz, Ringelheim concludes that "women may have been the most victimized of the Jews who either died in, or survived, the Holocaust."

Ringelheim began her investigation into women and the Holocaust with the assumption that women's experiences were different from men's, and with the belief, echoing the majority voice, that "women survived better than men." She then asked a question that radically changed the direction of her research from a focus on narrative and anecdotal material to an examination of statistical records: "If women survived better, does that mean (among other possibilities) that they survived in greater numbers or in some higher percentage than men?" According to Ringelheim, the answer appears to be no. She argues that women were deported and died in greater numbers because they had more limited access to power than did men, the kinds of power, primarily work, money, food, that would keep them safer and offer them a greater chance at survival.

Ringelheim's work addresses issues often sidestepped by the majority of Holocaust scholars: the experiences of women, the fact of women's dying rather than their survival, the concentration camp conditions and how these affected women's deaths, and the structures and dynamics within the Nazi machine and the Jewish ghetto and camp society as these related to the deaths and deportation of women.

Ringelheim is one of the pioneers in the field of women and the Holocaust. She was project director of a Goldsmith Foundation Grant which produced *Holocaust Catalog: Oral and Video Archives*, a member of the Board of Directors of the Institute for Research in History, and has directed, since 1980, the Institute's Women and Holocaust Project. Her 1985 *Signs*



Vick Monaco

Joan Ringelheim

article, "Women and the Holocaust—A Reconsideration of Research," serves as a preface to her current research, which was presented in 1986 to the Women and Society Seminar at Columbia University.

Ringelheim's lectures were sponsored by the Center and the Lehigh Women's Alliance.

### Shipler *continued from page 4*

At the conclusion of his presentation Shipler pleaded with the audience, especially the students, to act in their own communities to ameliorate human rights violations. Shipler reminded the audience that it does not necessarily follow from the constitutional guarantee of inalienable rights that all individuals are free to exercise those rights, and it is therefore everyone's responsibility to ensure that these guarantees are fulfilled.

### Laskers *continued from page 3*

sacred Biblical and rabbinic writings. Among the concerns influencing rabbinic decisions are the prevention of incestuous marriages and the protection of inheritance rights.

According to Judith Lasker, Associate Professor of Sociology, and Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Lehigh University, most couples do not consult religious authorities when considering the option of technological assistance in conception. In her recent study, *In Search of Parenthood: Coping with Infertility and High Tech Conception*, written jointly with Susan Borg, Lasker, a medical sociologist, recounts the histories of couples involved with reproductive technology. Their stories reveal both the joy and the pain attendant on the road to parenthood.

### Moreen and Meskin *continued* *continued from page 1*

Studies at Lehigh University, while Moreen is teaching in Muhlenberg's Religion Department for the current academic year as the first Muhlenberg Scholar in Jewish Studies.

Moreen holds a doctorate from Harvard in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. A historian, she has written extensively on the Jewish community in Iran and the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and is currently working, in collaboration with Joseph Guttman, on a book entitled *Old Testament Themes in Muslim Miniature Paintings*. She has taught at Bryn Mawr, Dropsie College, and Temple University. Her position at Muhlenberg has been created by the college to show its continuing support for Jewish Studies in the Valley.

Meskin is completing his doctorate in religion at Princeton. His interests range from modern religious thought to philosophy of religion to Buddhism. He is writing his dissertation on the thought of the twentieth-century French-Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas. At Princeton, Meskin has been both lecturer and preceptor in courses including "The Self in World Religions" and "Religion and Its Critics."

Both Meskin and Moreen will participate in the Center's cooperative teaching program. In the spring semester, 1988, Moreen will offer "Introduction to Judaism" at Moravian College, while Meskin teaches the same course at Cedar Crest College.

### Economist Speaks *continued*

molded by religious law and communal practice." "Moreover," he writes, "the Bible and the homiletical literature established an ethical and moral framework within which Jewish communities operated, introducing nonmaterialistic considerations, a unique social structure, and distinctive role models, which together tempered and restrained the excesses of more egoistic economic activity."

For many years Senior Lecturer in the Department of Economics at Bar Ilan University, Tamari has served as special consultant in the area of small business for the United States Small Business Administration, the Wharton Business School, and the City University (London) Business School.



## FALL SEMESTER PROGRAMS

**Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi**, Department of Psychology,  
University of Haifa

"Despair and Deliverance: Private Salvation in Contemporary Israel," faculty seminar presented at Lafayette and Lehigh. Co-sponsored with the Psychology Department, Lehigh.

**Daniel Lasker**, Department of History, Ben-Gurion University

**Judy Lasker**, Associate Dean, Arts and Science, and Department of Social Relations, Lehigh

"Reproductive Technology: The Perspectives of Sociology and Jewish Law," presented at Lehigh. Co-sponsored with Science, Technology, and Society Program, Lehigh

**Daniel Matt**, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley

"The Concept of Nothingness in Jewish Mysticism," faculty and student seminars presented at Moravian College. Co-sponsored with the Lehigh Valley Ecumenical Seminar.

**"Hide and Seek,"** Israeli film, Hebrew with English subtitles  
Presented at Lehigh. Co-sponsored with the Office of the Chaplain and Hillel, Lehigh.

**Jack Gottlieb**, composer, author, historian

"Funny It Doesn't Sound Jewish. A Study in American Popular Music," a Lecture-Entertainment at the Piano with Rare Slides and Recordings, presented at the Jewish Community Center, Allentown.

### Fourth Faculty Colloquium in Jewish Studies

**Myra Rosenhaus**, Program Administrator, LVCJS

"Writing Princesses: The Fiction of American Jewish Women," presented at Moravian College.

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