

FAMILY... TRADITION... HISTORY...

*The Story of Jewish Heritage
in Southern Most New Jersey*



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'Fridays with Eva'



Bethanie Gorny, author of the recently published "Fridays with Eva" (ComteQpublishing.com, \$17.95), spoke at the JFS Holocaust Survivors Luncheon last Wednesday. From left are JFS Holocaust Survivors Group Coordinator Sharon Linker, JFS Executive Director Andrea Steinberg, author Bethanie Gorny, JFS Director of Older Adult Services B.J. Pinnock and Publisher Rob Huberman.

"Fridays with Eva" is the story of Bethanie Gorny's Fridays with her mother-in-law, Eva, an octogenarian Holocaust survivor. When Eva's advancing age necessitates a move closer to her son and daughter-in-law, Bethanie begins the routine of assisting Eva on Fridays. A surprising and beautiful relationship blossoms between two women who are very different from each other physically, culturally, and spiritually. Bethanie is a middle aged, pragmatic professor while Eva is an observant Jew, joke teller, and widow who has survived some of life's worst tragedies. Whether this odd couple goes shopping, visits doctors, or sips tea, comical scenes and wrenching emotional ones will resonate with readers.

The story takes place during the last ten years of Eva's life supplemented by flashbacks that reveal Eva's early idyllic life in Poland, her escape to Russia, and

her incarceration in a harsh, bleak, Siberian forced labor camp. Bethanie learns that although the Holocaust ended in 1945, the survivors and their children were affected for the rest of their lives.

As their relationship develops, the practical professor discovers a spiritual, intuitive side to herself that she had neglected. She begins approaching life using some of Eva's everyday survival strategies. There is a gradual role reversal and Eva unwittingly becomes the teacher with Bethanie the student. Much to her surprise, Bethanie learns that the role of caregiver provides more benefits to her than to Eva.

"Fridays with Eva" is a heart warming and charming story that will entertain, educate, and inspire caregivers and people of all ages. It is ultimately about how relationships have the power to change us, what makes life meaningful, and how to survive life's vicissitudes.

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happened in 1947 during the partition of British India into India and Pakistan. In the largest and most rapid population transfer in history, about 18 million Muslims and Hindus left their homes to relocate with their co-religionists. Had the Arabs accepted the U.N. Partition Plan for Palestine in 1947, Israel would have fewer Arab citizens today. The Arabs could have grouped themselves in the West Bank and Gaza, either as citizens of Jordan and Egypt or as citizens of their own state.

Emphasizing the pragmatism of population transfer is the exodus of Jews from Arab countries in North Africa and Arabia, which happened throughout the decade following Israel's Declaration of Independence. Up to 800,000 Jews left their homes, almost all unwillingly, when the hostility of their Arab neighbors forced them to flee – usually with little but what they could carry with them. Since the number of Jewish refugees is roughly equivalent to the number of Palestinian refugees in 1948, population transfer of the Palestinians

would have been a pragmatic solution to their problem. (It wasn't that any of the transferred populations chose to be exiled ... it was a necessary evil.)

Instead of accepting the U.N. Partition Plan or later peace offers, the Palestinians have wallowed in their self-induced misery, complaining bitterly about their conditions. They have made a habit of turning down every peace overture from Israeli leaders, and later complaining that the Israelis won't begin new negotiations starting with the terms that were summarily refused.

The Palestinians even managed to set up a unique U.N. agency, UNRWA, to prolong their refugee status until such time as they could usurp the Jewish state. Instead of building lives for themselves in their own negotiated state or in neighboring Arab countries, they have concentrated on trying to destroy Israel. Palestinians are the crybabies, not Israelis.

Stephen Kramer resided and worked in the Atlantic City area until 1991, when he moved to Israel with his wife, Michal Langweiler, and two sons. He can be reached at Sjk1@jhu.edu.