

Monthly on Thursdays at Noon!

LUNCH &

LEARN

**at
OZ**

Ohavi  Zedek

188 North Prospect Street, Burlington VT 05401

Thursday, September 18, 2025:

Jewish Life & Antisemitism in Today's Germany

// a talk by UVM Professor Alan Steinweis

Germany is today home to about 120,000 people who identify as Jews: less than one percent of the world's Jews and to less than two-tenths of one percent of Germany's total population. But for obvious historical reasons there is great interest in Jewish life, as well as antisemitism, in contemporary Germany.

Alan Steinweis, Professor of History and Raul Hilberg Distinguished Professor of Holocaust Studies at the University of Vermont, will share his insights into that subject based on his extensive experience living in Germany and teaching Jewish history and the history of the Holocaust at several German universities.



Thursday, October 16, 2025:

Working to Advance Legal Protections for Animals

// a talk by Animal Law lawyer Laura Ireland

Join Laura Ireland, Associate Director of the Animal Law and Policy Institute at Vermont Law and Graduate School, to learn more about work being done there to advance legal protections for animals.

Ireland will also discuss the growing concern among consumers about the treatment of farmed animals, and how "humane" animal welfare labels on food products are often misleading and don't guarantee improved conditions for animals. From certifications to various health claims, ambiguous language and imagery can make



Thursday, November 20, 2025:

From Berlin to Hollywood: the life and times of Ernst Lubitsch, Fritz Lang, and Billy Wilder

// a talk, with film clips, by UVM Lane Series Director Natalie Neuert

Natalie Neuert will discuss how these Weimar Era Jewish directors became three of the most successful, influential, and revered artists in American cinema. Her talk will include a look at their early German work; their arrival and establishment of careers in Hollywood; and their lasting impact on the American film industry. She will also discuss some of the stars -- and fellow refugees -- whose work is entwined with theirs: Marlene Dietrich, Pola Negri, Peter Lorre, Hedy Lamarr, and share clips of a few films that made these directors great.



Thursday, December 18, 2025:

An Introduction to the Me2 Orchestra

// a presentation by Orchestra Manager and Cellist Phoenix Crockett

The Me2/ ("Me, too") Orchestra -- which involves 50 Burlington musicians and over 200 musicians in all of New England -- is the world's only classical music ensemble created specifically for individuals living with mental illness, and those who support them. Founded in 2011 in Burlington by conductor Ronald Braunstein (who was diagnosed with bipolar disorder), its mission is to "erase stigma" surrounding mental health through welcoming rehearsals and inspiring concerts. Roughly half of its musicians live with a mental-health diagnosis. Me2/ operates several ensembles where all participants play as equals in a supportive, transparent community dedicated to wellness through music.



Thursday, January 15, 2026:

Supporting Kids & Families -- the Work of the Boys & Girls Club of Burlington

// an illustrated talk by Development Manager Pamela Unsworth

Serving 250 kids a day, The Boys & Girls Club of Burlington plays a critical role in supporting the kids and families of the Old North End. More than just an afterschool program, the Boys & Girls Club works hard to support Burlington youth from kindergarten all the way through higher ed and beyond. If you've ever driven by and wondered what actually happens beyond our doors, please join us for a presentation by Pam Unsworth. We think you'll be pleasantly surprised and really inspired.



Thursday, February 19, 2026:

Volunteers Helping People Seeking Asylum

// an introduction by CASAN Board Members Jan Steinbauer and Kim Watkin

The Chittenden Asylum Seekers Assistance Network (CASAN) is a volunteer group that welcomes people seeking asylum who are in our local communities.

A non-profit since 2019, CASAN has assisted traumatized — yet resilient — people from many countries who come to begin new lives in safety. It provides longer-term, wrap-around assistance for several individuals or families at a time as they become financially independent.



Thursday, March 19, 2026:

The Kurdish-led Local Democracy Revolution in the Middle East

// an illustrated talk by author and translator Janet Biehl

During the war against the Islamic State (from 2014), the U.S.-led coalition coordinated with Kurdish-led ground forces to defeat ISIS in Syria and Iraq. Almost unreported in U.S. media, those Kurdish fighters represented a new society in northeastern Syria that, since 2012, had been advancing gender equality, religious and ethnic inclusivity, and bottom-up democracy. This astonishingly progressive revolutionary project, which continues to this day, was inspired in great part by the writings of a Jewish Vermonter, the late Murray Bookchin (d. 2006). His close friend and colleague Janet Biehl tells the story.



Thursday, April 16, 2026:

Ernest Bloch's Sacred Service

// an exploration by Musicologist & Choral Conductor Nathaniel G. Lew

In May, the Vermont Choral Union will perform the Sacred Service (Avodath Hakodesh) by Swiss-American composer Ernest Bloch (1880-1959). In preparation for this concert, musicologist and choral conductor Nathaniel Lew will introduce this seminal 1933 composition for chorus and orchestra or organ, widely considered the finest concert-music setting of the Shabbat morning liturgy.

We will examine the circumstances of the work's commission by Congregation Emanu-El in San Francisco, and its composition, premiere, and performance history. And we will listen to and delve into its music, which draws deeply on the European oratorio and Jewish musical traditions, as well as Bloch's own uniquely expressive idiom.



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In-person at OZ's Social Hall - **12pm to 1:15pm**

All talks are free and open to all

Donations gratefully accepted

Please register!

ohavizedek.org/series/lunch-and-learn-2025-2026

