University on Wheels
Monday, January 8, 10:30 A.M., Tucson JCC
Continental Breakfast, $18 per person

Brandeis University Speakers:
Eileen McNamara, Professor of the Practice of Journalism
AND Maura Farrelly, Associate Professor of American Studies

Speaking on “From Election to Investigation and All the ‘Fake News’ in Between: Media Coverage of the Presidency.”

The Sign-Up Sheet is on the bottom of page 3. See the biographies of our speakers on page 4.

Book & Author Writer Takes You from Jerusalem to Moscow

Talia Carner says that, at heart, she is “an activist, a feminist, and a humanitarian who gives a voice to those without one.” A proud seventh-generation Sabra, the New York-based author describes herself as “a woman unafraid to tackle controversial issues.” Her psychological suspense novels bring to the forefront indignities and atrocities long ignored.

Carner, a committed supporter of global human rights, is a board member of HBI—the Jewish women research center at Brandeis University. Before turning to fiction writing, she worked for Redbook and served as the publisher of Savvy Woman magazine. An adjunct professor of marketing at Long Island University and a marketing consultant to Fortune 500 companies, she was a volunteer counselor and lecturer for the Small Business Administration and a member of United States Information Agency (USIA) missions to Russia, teaching women entrepreneurial skills.

In 1993, on Carner’s second such mission, she was caught up in the uprising of the parliament against then-president Boris Yeltsin. Her report to the USIA about continued on page 3, top left

Third B&A Author Ranges from Comedy to Culture to Kids

Are you a parent, a grandparent, or just a child at heart? If so, you will want to dive into Wild Things: The Joy of Reading Children’s Literature as an Adult.

In a departure from his lifelong, more-sophisticated writing career and as the father of two children, Bruce Handy has produced Wild Things. Not surprisingly, this voyage into well-remembered stories has been acclaimed by Publishers Weekly as “spirited, perceptive and just outright funny.” In a starred review, Kirkus Review stated, “The author demonstrates a deep love of children’s literature and keen understanding of the ways in which reapproaching beloved texts can highlight the connections and differences between a child’s perception and adult reality.”

Wild Things invites readers to revisit favorites and to understand how children’s literature has traveled from the dour New England Primer to the delightful Where the Wild Things Are and beyond.

In his tour de force, Handy revisits the classics of American childhood, from fairy tales to The Very Hungry Caterpillar, and continued on page 3, top right
Happy New Year 2018! WOW! 2017 just flew by. We hope this holiday season is a good time for all of you.

We at the Tucson Chapter can look back with pride and happiness at the fun, fund-raising, and friendships created while learning and helping to raise money so the students at Brandeis could receive scholarships for research, for its “Sustaining the Mind Program,” and for its state-of-the-art library updated with the latest technological innovations.

At the local level, we take pride in our social action activities chaired by Marilyn Lobell.

You should have this bulletin in time for the Winter Holiday Party on Sunday, December 24, from 4 to 7 p.m. Enjoy food, drinks, socializing, and celebrating. I can taste the latkes and holiday treats already! For information and to RSVP, please contact me, Marsha Rosenblum, at marsha29ros@earthlink.net or 529-7477. I look forward to hearing from you and seeing you there.

As we welcome 2018, we are excited to present our first event on Monday, January 8. We can’t wait to see you at our fantastic University on Wheels program. Eileen McNamara and Maura Farrelly will be our guest professors from the University with a very current topic! See pages 1, 3, and 4 in this bulletin for information and registration.

Our Study Group committee is busy all year. Right now they are in the process of adding a few new groups that will run from January through April or May to accommodate our winter visitors.

We offer our wonderful Book & Author Events on Wednesday, March 7, and Thursday, March 8. See page 1 for information on two of our terrific authors. Thursday is jam packed with the boutiques, a silent auction, book sales and signings, authors, and a wonderful buffet served at Skyline Country Club. Please mark your calendars and save the date. Sheila Rothenberg has selected wonderful guest speakers. The committee coordinated by Elaine Lisberg and the luncheon chaired by Zelda Aaronson promise us a wonderful day.

My wish for all of us is a healthy, happy, peaceful, productive, and profitable New Year 2018, celebrated with family, friends, and Tucson BNC!

Marsha Rosenblum, President

It is you, our members, who are the source of our continuing increase in membership. We depend on you to tell your friends, acquaintances, and neighbors about the benefits of belonging to the Tucson Chapter of Brandeis:

• We continue to educate our members through our Study Groups and the speakers at our events.
• We help our Tucson area with our Social Justice/Community Service program, benefitting Youth on Their Own, the Emerge! Center Against Domestic Abuse, and the Sister Jose Women’s Center.
• We help our Tucson area by providing an Endowed Scholarship, for a Tucson-area student, who has been accepted to Brandeis University.
• We support the libraries of Brandeis University.
• We support scholarships for and research in neurodegenerative diseases, such as autism, Parkinson’s, Alzheimer’s, multiple sclerosis, and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS, Lou Gehrig’s disease).

For more information, contact Roni Bader-Tables, prek01@aol.com or 305-898-5754, or Pam Shaw, PamShaw123@aol.com or 617-593-8300.
Talia Carner continued from page 1

her escape was the seed of her fiction-writing career. Twenty-two years later, her experiences in Russia provided authentic background for her new novel, *Hotel Moscow*, in which her heroine finds herself embroiled in a perilous conspiracy that could destroy her life.

An excerpt from Carner’s previous book, *Jerusalem Maiden*, was included in *The Best New Writing 2011* as the Editor’s Choice Award and was nominated for the prestigious Pushcart Prize. It is a poignant, colorful, and unforgettable story of a young woman in early 20th-century Jerusalem who must choose between her faith and her passion. The story evokes the sights and sounds of the Middle East during the final days of the Ottoman Empire. Historical fiction fans will be captivated by this thrilling tale of a young Jewish woman during a fascinating era, her inner struggle with breaking the Second Commandment, and her ultimate transcendence through self-discovery.

Bruce Handy continued from page 1

explores the back stories of their creators to understand how some of the most insightful, creative, and witty authors and illustrators of their times created their often deeply personal masterpieces. Along the way, Handy learned what *The Cat In the Hat* says about anarchy and absentee parenting.

Bruce Handy joined *Vanity Fair* as a senior articles editor in 1999 and is currently a contributing editor. He began his career at *Spy* magazine as a writer and editor in 1987, and his article “A Spy Guide to Postmodern Everything” was a finalist for an American Society of Magazine Editors award in 1989.

In 1993, he spent a season on the writing team of “Saturday Night Live,” during which they were nominated for an Emmy. Handy went on to *Time*, where he wrote a column on society and popular culture before joining *Vanity Fair*. His articles have appeared in such publications as *The New York Times Magazine*, *The New York Times Book Review*, *Rolling Stone*, *Vogue*, and *The New Yorker*.

---

**University on Wheels**

Monday, January 8, 10:30 A.M., Tucson JCC

Continental Breakfast, $18 per person

Speakers: Eileen McNamara, Professor of the Practice of Journalism AND Maura Farrelly, Associate Professor of American Studies

Anything you contribute over $8.00 is a charitable contribution to BNC.

Funds raised will benefit the Tucson Chapter’s Endowed Scholarship for a Tucson-area student accepted to Brandeis University.

Please bring hotel toiletries, personal-care items, and NEW socks and underwear for children, teens, and women for the Emerge! Center Against Domestic Abuse.

Yes, I’m coming to the University on Wheels at $18 per person:

Name(s) _______________________________

______________________________________

Phone & e-mail __________________________

Send your check made out to BNC to Rhoda Cohen, 5500 N. Valley View Rd. #128, Tucson 85718, by December 31.
Mission Statement

Brandeis National Committee

Brandeis National Committee is dedicated to providing philanthropic support to Brandeis University, a distinguished liberal arts and research university founded by the American Jewish community. Its membership is connected to the university through fund-raising and through activities that reflect the values on which the university was founded: academic excellence, social justice, nonsectarianism, and service to the community.

Social Justice/Community Service

The Tucson chapter gives back to our community.

Marilyn Lobell, our Community Service Chairman, reminds us of the organizations we are supporting this year:

The Emerge! Center Against Domestic Abuse is in need of hotel toiletries and personal-care items. They also need NEW socks and underwear for children, teens, and women.

Youth On Their Own (YOTO) is an organization that supports high school graduation of homeless youth by providing financial assistance, basic human needs, and guidance. They always need teen hygiene products and school supplies.

Sister Jose Women’s Center is a program to assist homeless women. We help by donating walking shoes and sweat clothes in good condition and women’s hygiene products.

Brandeis is always looking for new ways to help our community. If you have a way to help or wish to make a donation, contact Marilyn Lobell, MMLobell@msn.com or 615-0877.

Nobody can help everybody, but everybody can help somebody!
We were thrilled by numerous exclamations of excitement and happy chatter as Brandeis members walked out of the Book & Author luncheon last March after hearing the four authors, Linda Hirshman, Steve Berry, Anne Hillerman, and Sherri Duskey Rinker. It was gratifying to hear “Best one ever” and “You have really outdone yourself! Thank you for all the hard work and expertise you brought. . . . Not only were the authors outstanding writers, they also were superb speakers.”

Well, we haven’t rested on our laurels. We have a line-up that promises to top that this March. We will be presenting five terrific and stimulating authors who run the gamut from historical fiction to thrillers, with fascinating nonfiction spanning the worlds of entertainment and childhood classics.

We will find out why stories filled with magic fascinate us so; find out how come a well-known critic thinks TV can be praised as “terrific”; learn why revisiting your favorite children’s books as an adult can prove a joy; take a breathtaking roller-coaster ride through Washington, D.C. skullduggery; and delve into the oppression of women and their roles in 1911 Jerusalem and post-Soviet-era Russia.

All this and book sales and signing, eight wondrous boutiques, and an amazing silent auction, topped off by a fabulous Skyline Country Club buffet lunch. Don’t get left out. You too can be raving about the 2018 B&A Events come March. Send in your reservation as soon as you receive it to be there and make sure you are seated with your friends.

Can We Top Last Year’s Book & Author Events? We Not So Humbly Think We Can!

Sometimes, what seems like a disaster turns out to be a blessing in disguise. That’s what has happened to Book & Author after David Oshinsky informed us that he had to cancel his acceptance to the 2018 B&A Events.

Picking herself up and dusting herself off, Sheila Rothenberg, our intrepid author wrangler, started searching for a replacement and, to her surprise and joy, was able to corral best-selling writer Alice Hoffman, who will now join us for the 22nd Annual Book & Author Events March 7 and 8.

Sometimes you win, and sometimes you lose, but in this case, we’ve definitely won! For a wrap-up of Alice Hoffman’s illustrious career, see the February Bulletin, along with the announcement of a special BONUS FIFTH AUTHOR.

From the Brink of Disaster

Sometimes, what seems like a disaster turns out to be a blessing in disguise. That’s what has happened to Book & Author after David Oshinsky informed us that he had to cancel his acceptance to the 2018 B&A Events.

Picking herself up and dusting herself off, Sheila Rothenberg, our intrepid author wrangler, started searching for a replacement and, to her surprise and joy, was able to corral best-selling writer Alice Hoffman, who will now join us for the 22nd Annual Book & Author Events March 7 and 8.

Sometimes you win, and sometimes you lose, but in this case, we’ve definitely won! For a wrap-up of Alice Hoffman’s illustrious career, see the February Bulletin, along with the announcement of a special BONUS FIFTH AUTHOR.

Holiday Party

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24,
4:00 - 7:00 P.M.
Don’t miss it!

I’m coming to the Holiday Party at $25 per person:
Name(s)_____________________________________
Phone & e-mail________________________________

5221 N. Foothills Drive, Tucson
Enter from N. 1st Ave.,
one block north of River Road.

Send your check made out to BNC to Arlene Zuckerman, 5448 N. Paseo Sonoyta, Tucson, AZ 85750, by December 20.
Sit With an Author

Our major event for the year is our spectacular Book & Author Events. A great opportunity for these events is getting to sit and schmooze with an author. For only $125, an attendee can sit with an author during either the Wednesday, March 7, dinner or the Thursday, March 8, luncheon. For less than twice that, only $225, one can sit with an author at both events, a different one each time.

When you receive your invitation, look at all the options, not just the basic price. Make this your special occasion and sit with one of our fascinating authors or the moderator. You probably know the name of at least one of them.

Our authors this year are (alphabetically) David Bianculli, television critic on Terry Gross’ “Fresh Air” on NPR; Talia Carner, well known for her novel Hotel Moscow; Bruce Handy, a popular magazine columnist and author of his first book; Alice Hoffman, famous for her many novels; Mike Lawson, award-winning author of 12 thrillers; and moderator Victoria Lucas, Hollywood actress, production manager, and producer, and now host of the KUAZ-TV’s weekly commercial-free, classic film series “Hollywood at Home.”

Don’t miss the chance to sit with one or two of these fabulous people, have an opportunity to chat with them, and learn.

Book & Author

In Memoriam

Member Herb Meshel

Condolences

Tucson Chapter sends its condolences to Lois Bodin on the loss of her soulmate Herb Meshel

2018 Tucson Chapter Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holiday Party Fund-Raiser</td>
<td>Sunday, December 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University on Wheels</td>
<td>Monday, January 8, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Meeting*</td>
<td>Monday, January 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Meeting*</td>
<td>Monday, February 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Meeting*</td>
<td>Monday, March 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book &amp; Author Dinner</td>
<td>Wednesday, March 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book &amp; Author Luncheon</td>
<td>Thursday, March 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Meeting*</td>
<td>Monday, April 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Luncheon and Installation</td>
<td>Tuesday, April 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board and Planning Meeting*</td>
<td>Monday, May 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All are welcome to our open Board Meetings.

Save the dates and mark your calendar

Your Officers

President ............................................. Marsha Rosenblum
VPs of the Book Business ............. Rachel Barker & Meg Sivitz
Vice-President of Book Fund .............. Lois Bodin
VPs of Membership ............... Roni Bader-Tables & Pam Shaw
Vice-President of Publications .......... Steve Seltzer
Vice-President of Study Groups ........... Lynn Cramer
Recording Secretary ...................... Barbara Wilder
Financial Secretary ..................... Terry Sherman
Corresponding Secretary ............... Davya Cohen
Treasurers .................. Arlene Zuckerman & Marilyn Sternstein
Advisor .............................. Elaine Lisberg

Questions? Leave a message at the Book Depot phone, 747-3224, or e-mail us at BNCtucsonbooks@yahoo.com.

Tucson Chapter Bulletin

Editor-in-chief.................................. Steve Seltzer
Board Liaison..................................... Meg Sivitz
Associate Editor ............................... Bob Rothenberg
Proofreaders .. Sorale Fortman, Lois Bodin, & Janet Seltzer

To provide articles or information for the newsletter, contact Meg Sivitz, megaron3@msn.com, or Steve Seltzer, seltz5001@aol.com.

The bulletin is published from September through May.
The deadline is the 10th of the preceding month.
Brandeis Speaker for U of A Judaic Studies

On Monday, February 12, at 7:00 p.m., the Arizona Center for Judaic Studies will be hosting Brandeis University Professor Shai Feldman for the Pozez Memorial lecture at the Tucson JCC. He will speak on “A Year into the Trump Presidency: The U.S. and the Middle East.”

Dr. Feldman is the Judy and Sidney Swartz Director, Crown Center for Middle East Studies, and professor of politics at Brandeis. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of Harvard Kennedy School’s Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs and a senior fellow there. He is an associate fellow of the Royal United Services Institute in London. In 1997-2005, he was head of the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University. He also served as a member of the UN Secretary General’s Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters.

Very important: the event is FREE.

Freshman Book

Be sure to read the award-winning freshman book Citizen: An American Lyric, by Claudia Rankine, which will be reviewed on Thursday, January 18, by Jean Nerenberg. It is a chapter custom to read the book the freshman class reads before freshman week and to meet the students and author via DVD. This will take place at the Northern Trust Bank at the southwest corner of Sunrise Drive and Campo Abierto (enter from Campo Abierto, turn right, and turn left). You can sign up for the discussion by sending an $18 check made out to BNC to Terry Sherman, 7580 E. Rio Verde Dr., Tucson, AZ 85715, marked “Freshman Book.”

Social Justice

I want to thank our Brandeis members for all the wonderful items they brought to support our Social Action/Community Service. From the goods received at the Fall Opening Luncheon, I delivered large containers to Youth on Their Own (YOTO), the Emerge! Center Against Domestic Abuse, and the Sister Jose Women’s Center.

These local organizations all appreciate the items and thanked me over and over. Keep bringing things to all our meetings and events. Thank you,
Marilyn Lobell, Chair
Express Your Thoughtfulness
With a Book Fund Card or Journal Donation

Sending a Brandeis tribute card or a Learned Research Journal (LRJ) is a quick, meaningful, and philanthropic way to express support, congratulations, get-well wishes, sympathy, and appreciation. No more running to the store to find an appropriate card — just contact Lois Bodin (contact information below). The recipient is acknowledged in the bulletin so others can learn about the simchah or sorrow and respond. Show you care—send a Brandeis card or LRJ.

Book Fund donations:
- $5.50, Philanthropy, learning, and community (or six for $25)
- $10.50, Light of Reason Card.
- $10.50, Goldfarb Library at night (or three for $25)
- $14.00, Brandeis art cards (set of four different covers)
- $18.50, Louis Dembitz Brandeis portrait card
- $25.50 or more, Sustaining the Mind Tribute Card
- $36.50, Learned Research Journal
- $56.50, Learned Research Journal Folio
- $100.00 to $499.00, Special Book Collection
- $500.00 or more, Major Book Collection

Contact Book Fund VP Lois Bodin, LoisBodin@gmail.com, or 702-219-6704.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donor</th>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Recipient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friends &amp; Fellow Chicago Book Club Members</td>
<td>In memory of wife Baila Miller</td>
<td>Irving Miller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabulous Flicks Friends</td>
<td>Get well wishes</td>
<td>Stuart Taussig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandeis Friends</td>
<td>Wishing you a speedy and complete recovery</td>
<td>Stuart Taussig</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To make a donation, contact Book Fund VP Lois Bodin, LoisBodin@gmail.com or 702-219-6704.

Next Board Meeting
Monday, January 9, 2018
10:00 a.m. to noon
Martha Cooper Library
1377 North Catalina Avenue
All members are encouraged to come to this open meeting.
## Tucson Chapter Calendar January 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>New Year's Day</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>10 Mindfulness</td>
<td>12 Contemp.</td>
<td>1 Mah Jongg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Foreign Film</td>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TBD Singles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cinema</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>5 Nostalgia</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trip</td>
<td>Trip</td>
<td>10:30 UOW</td>
<td>10 Page</td>
<td>1 Gotta Have</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Intermediate</td>
<td>1 Intermediate</td>
<td>Turners</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td></td>
<td>5:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>Book Club</td>
<td>Have Art</td>
<td></td>
<td>Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Art Talks</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Women's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>10 Books &amp;</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagels</td>
<td>Bagels</td>
<td>10 Board Meeting</td>
<td>9 Sonoran</td>
<td>12:30 Sit 'n'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 Moving On</td>
<td>Desert</td>
<td>Stitch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 CPR</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>1 Mah Jongg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Intermediate</td>
<td>11:30 Mystery</td>
<td>1:30 Freshman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>Books</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>211</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Intermediate</td>
<td>7 pm Fab Flicks</td>
<td>12 Ethnic</td>
<td>10 Women in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>the Bible</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 Moving On</td>
<td>10 Jewish</td>
<td>Tu B’Shvat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Intermediate</td>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New Year's Day, January 1; Martin Luther King Day, January 15; Tu B’Shvat, January 31.

## Getting to Brandeis Study Groups and Events

If you don’t have the transportation to get to a Brandeis Study Group or Event, we may be able to help you. We have members who will pick up other people if their homes are reasonably close.

To see if we can make arrangements for you, contact the Study Group leader to see if she or he can find another member of the group to drive you. For events, contact the person who receives the check to see if she or he can find another attendee who might help bring you.

We hope this will encourage more people to attend events and Study Groups.
Eminent historian and scholar Jonathan Sarna ’75, MA’75 was formally recognized as a University Professor, Brandeis University’s highest academic honor, with a lecture and dinner on November 28, 2017. Sarna, the Joseph H. and Belle R. Braun Professor of American Jewish History, marked the occasion by delivering a lecture titled “Jews and American Politics: Historical Ideals and Contemporary Realities” to a large gathering that included members of the Brandeis administration, faculty, current and former students, and many of the professor’s longtime mentors, friends, and colleagues. The lecture chronicled the changes in Jewish political identity from the mid-19th century to the present day.

“Jews have moved, in recent decades, from fearful outsiders to confident insiders, in American life generally and certainly in politics,” Sarna said. “The subject of Jewish politics, a secret or even a scandal in Abraham Lincoln’s day, can in our day become a subject for scholarly investigation.”

The talk was also a striking and comprehensive display of Sarna’s breadth of knowledge. He included years of research, even some from his undergraduate days at Brandeis, plus information he gathered while co-writing with Benjamin Shapell his 2015 book Lincoln and the Jews: A History. As it turns out, President Abraham Lincoln played a profound part in shaping the early political identity of Jews, who, according to Sarna, were against the notion of “Jewish politics” in the mid-19th century.

Sarna revealed that the first Jewish political broadside, the Jewish Union Republican Association, surfaced in 1864. Lincoln, hoping to seek re-election that year, enlisted the help of prominent Jewish figures, including his podiatrist and close friend Issachar Zacharie, to secure the so-called Jewish vote.

Jewish political identity gained more prominence through the end of the 1800s and at the start of the 20th century with Presidents William Howard Taft, Theodore Roosevelt, and Woodrow Wilson. The latter, Sarna noted, nominated Louis Brandeis, the university’s namesake, to the Supreme Court in 1916 as the first Jewish Supreme Court Justice, serving on the court from 1916 to 1939.