



# Levine-Sklut Judaic Library and Resource Center



## Israeli Author to Visit Charlotte

Charlotte Chapter of Hadassah and the Levine Sklut Judaic Library and Resource Center have joined together to welcome Meir Shalev, "the Woody Allen of the desert," world-renowned Israeli author/columnist/commentator on Wednesday, March 26, in Gorelick Hall at 7:30 PM. Refreshments will be served.

**A Pigeon and a Boy by Meir Shalev. Schocken Books. 311 pages. \$25.**

*Reviewed by Jean Blish Siers*

In "A Pigeon and a Boy," award-winning Israeli novelist Meir Shalev creates a mystical story of two love affairs, separated by a generation but tied together by blood and history. Because it is Israel, it is a bloody history. The novel moves from present day, narrated by Yair Mendelsohn, to a lifetime earlier, before and during the 1948 War of Independence.

The story opens as Yair - a birding tour guide - has a chance meeting with a survivor of a pivotal battle of the 1948 War. Shalev writes of the old man's memory: "And suddenly, above that hell, the fighters saw a pigeon. Born from bulbs of smoke, delivered from shrouds of dust, the pigeon rose, she soared. Above the grunts and the shouts, above the whisper of shrapnel in the chill of the air, above the invisible paths of bullets, above the exploding grenades and the barking rifles and the pounding cannons."

Pigeons continue to soar through the novel, the metaphor that weaves the two strands of story together. While the two tales rely on each other, the story of the pigeon handlers before and during the war carries the bulk of the novel's power. A boy who looked unnaturally young, nicknamed

The Baby, was sent by his father and stepmother to live on kibbutz with an aunt and uncle. He never found a place to fit until a pigeon handler came to the community and, so to speak, took him under her wing.

The Baby finds community both in the pigeons and in the people who work with them. There is great power in living things that always return home, to security. He finds love and hope through a lovely young woman, another pigeon handler from Tel Aviv, until they are separated by distance and war.

The story unfolds with twists and turns that don't surprise the reader. From the beginning, the connection between The Baby and the bird-watching Yair is evident. And I never found Yair to come as alive on the page as The Baby who, although unnamed, carried the story of a people on his shoulders - alone, different, struggling to find community amid aggression.

Yair is also an outsider, a short, stocky, dark interloper in his handsome blonde family. As if to remain outside, he marries a rich, beautiful American woman who sets him up in business and spends their marriage being disappointed in him.

Ultimately, "A Pigeon and a Boy" is testimony to the redemp-



tive powers of love and community. The beating wings of the pigeons, purposeful and instinctual, connect the characters as surely as the ties of blood, sex, family and resentment. Filled with sadness and joy, grief and passion, Shalev's novel crosses borders of politics and emotion to bring his readers into a world where something good flies from the jaws of death. ☆

*Jean Blish Siers has been reviewing for the Observer since 1988.*

*Meir Shalev's novels have been translated into more than 20 languages. His awards include the Brenner Prize, an Israeli literary award, for "A Pigeon and a Boy" in 2006. A columnist for the Israeli daily Yedioth Ahronoth, he lives in Jerusalem and in the north of Israel with his wife and children.*

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### Levine-Sklut Judaic Library and Resource Center

*Hours of Operation (during school year)*

- Sunday, 9:30 AM-1:30 PM
- Monday, 8:30 AM-5 PM
- Tuesday, 9:30 AM-6 PM
- Wednesday, 9:30 AM-1 PM and 4-9 PM
- Thursday, 8:30 AM-2:30 PM
- Friday, 9:30 AM-1 PM

*Coming Soon*

The library new website and access to the catalogue. [www.Levine-SklutJudaicLibrary.org](http://www.Levine-SklutJudaicLibrary.org)

For more information please stop by, call 704-944-6783 or email [Library@ShalomCharlotte.org](mailto:Library@ShalomCharlotte.org). ☆

## Youth Visions

### Hebrew High Students Help Stop Hunger

Students in Mrs. Philpott's Tikkun Olam elective class at the Consolidated Hebrew High School are trying to make Wednesday evenings a little more charitable. The group is coordinating a school-wide food and supply drive to support Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina.

The project takes place over two class days, February 6 and 13. Hebrew High students are asked to donate non-perishable food and non-food items including: canned fruits and vegetables, canned tuna, cereal, dry beans, peanut butter, diapers, deodorant and toilet paper. In an effort to help increase donations and promote a little friendly competition among the school's 14 first period classes, the Hebrew High School Administration is hosting an ice cream party for the class that brings in the most items. Plus, if the entire student body can bring it over 2008 items, the entire school earns an ice cream social along



The Tikkun Olam class wants your help collecting 2,008 cans in February 2008.

with some extra, highly-valued socializing time.

Students in the Tikkun Olam class chose to donate to Second Harvest because the organization serves more than 550 charitable programs throughout the Carolinas, including Shalom Park's own Jewish Family Services. One student noted, "Olam means 'world,' so we

thought it would be nice to help as many families as we can." To learn more about Second Harvest, you can visit their website at [www.secondharvestmetrolina.org](http://www.secondharvestmetrolina.org). If you are not a Hebrew High student but you would like to help them earn an ice cream social, you can drop off donations in the school's main office February 7-12. ☆

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Or Contact  
Laurie F. Berzack, MSW  
704-957-4704



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