

THE REPORTER

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BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK

Temple Beth-El Arts Committee to host Summer Jewish Film Festival

The Arts Committee of Temple Beth-El invites the community to its annual Jewish film festival with a series of three films this summer. It will take place in the social hall of the temple, located at the corner of Court and Tioga streets in Ithaca. The line-up includes "Walk on Water" on June 27, "Yoo Hoo Mrs. Goldberg" on July 18 and "The Last Suit" on August 22. These are all Thursday evenings. The doors will open at 6:30 pm for free refreshments and socializing. The films will begin at 7 pm. Tickets are \$8 at the door (check or cash only). All films are appropriate for children ages 10 and above. Teens are encouraged to attend.



A scene from "Walk on Water."

"Walk on Water" (Israel 2004), starring Lior Ashkenazi and Knut Berger, is an award-winning film by internationally-acclaimed director Eytan Fox which explores the motives, strengths and, ultimately, the humanity of an Israeli assassin sent to rectify a wrong committed five decades earlier. Several languages are spoken, as the plot moves from country to country.

The film has English subtitles. "Yoo Hoo Mrs. Goldberg" (USA 2009) is a documentary on television pioneer Gertrude Berg. She was the creator, principal writer and star of "The Goldbergs," a popular radio show for 17 years, which became television's very first character-driven domestic sitcom in 1949. Berg received the first Best Actress Emmy in history and paved the way for women in the entertainment industry.

"The Last Suit" (Spain, Argentina 2018) depicts a Polish-born Holocaust survivor who decides to travel from Buenos Aires to Lodz to fulfill a promise he made nearly 70 years earlier. This late-life road movie

boasts plenty of "poignant and humorous moments" as the protagonist meets a variety of "helpful characters" along his journey. The film has English subtitles.

The film festival is brought to you through Israeli Films, National Center for Jewish Film and Outsider Pictures. For further information, call 257-9924.

Matching gift for Reporter donations

By Reporter staff

An anonymous donor has agreed to match up to \$10,000 for donations made to *The Reporter's* Voluntary Subscription Drive. A letter asking for voluntary donations in support of the paper was sent last week to all members of the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton.

"This is wonderful news," said Rabbi Rachel Esserman, executive editor of *The Reporter*. "It's getting more and more difficult to get advertising, so all community support is appreciated. Our very small staff works hard to create a paper worth reading."

Sima Auerbach, executive director of the Federation, noted, "*The Reporter* is the one-stop place to find out what's happening in our Jewish community. Whether you're interested in what's happening at the Federation,

the JCC, Hillel Academy, the synagogues or the College of Jewish Studies, it's all in the paper. There are also articles about members of our community doing interesting things and articles of interest about Israel, which means there is something in the paper for everyone."

Shelley Hubal, incoming executive director of the Federation, added, "I've come to realize the value of *The Reporter* when it comes to making certain people know what is happening in our community. Whether it's the film fest, organizations' annual meetings or events, the paper lets you know what's happening."

To make a tax deductible donation, send a check made out to *The Reporter* to 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850, or stop by *The Reporter* office. For more information, call 723-2360, ext. 254.

DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT **DOUBLE YOUR GOOD**

"Tribes" at Kitchen Theatre Company

The Kitchen Theatre Company will perform the play "Tribes" through June 23. The show features an "irreverent" Jewish family that struggles to navigate the difficulties of communicating with and including one another. It follows Billy, the youngest son born deaf into a fast-talking, academic family, who was never taught sign language. When a young woman introduces him to the Deaf community, Billy, who has assimilated into the hearing world by reading lips, decides it is time his family learns to communicate with him on his terms.

"It is a play full of people that deeply, deeply love each other, but have never

fully listened to what the other has to say. Argument equals love for this family and in their many ways of arguing, the play unearths truths about their tribe, asking us 'What does it mean to truly be heard?'" said M. Bevin O'Gara, artistic producing director at the Kitchen Theatre Company.

The Kitchen Theatre Company is located at 417 West State/MLK Jr. St., Ithaca. For information about days and times of performance and the price of tickets, visit <http://kitchentheatre.org/tribes.html> or contact the theater at 272-0403. To purchase tickets, call 272-0570.

Holiday celebrations at Hillel Academy



Hillel Academy students waved the Israeli flag as part of their indoor parade for Yom Ha'atzmaut. (See page 2 for more photos of recent Hillel Academy activities.)



Rabbi Moshe Shmaryahu and students participated in the Hillel Academy model seder on April 17.

Save the Dates!

September 15 Day of Caring, Temple Israel Cemetery
Repairing the gravesites of indigent members of the community

September 22 Jewish Federation Party for Sima Auerbach's Retirement
(Please watch *The Reporter* for details!)



Jewish Federation
OF GREATER BINGHAMTON

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Book Club reading list
The Tuesday Morning Book Club at Temple Concord announces the reading list for its 16th year.
..... Page 3

Saperstein sermon contest
Cornell's Center for Jewish Living announces the winner of the annual Saperstein sermon contest.
..... Page 5

News in brief...
Israeli campaign against BDS groups; Palestinians plan uprising against peace plan; and more.
..... Pages 7-8

Special Sections
Legal Notices..... 4
Book Review..... 4
Summer Camps..... 5
Classifieds..... 8

Hillel Academy spring activities



From the end of February through April, Hillel Academy students met after school on Mondays for Chess Club. At the beginning of each session, students were asked to solve a series of chess puzzles.



During Chess Club, the coaches guided the students as they solved presented puzzles.



Above and below: Rabbi Moshe Shmaryahu led the model seder for students and visitors.



Hillel Academy students were busy with many spring activities.

Residents from the adjacent Elderwood Village at Vestal (formerly Brookdale Vestal East) assisted living center participated in a model seder on April 17. For several weeks, Rabbi Moshe Shmaryahu and students visited Elderwood to honor the “special and crucial bond” between generations, as conveyed by the Hebrew saying *vehigadata levincha*. One of the most important components of the Passover holiday is the re-telling of the Exodus from Egypt. The bond between past, present and future generations is reinforced by the re-telling of the story.

From the end of February through April, Hillel Academy students met after school on Mondays for Chess Club.

On April 30, the second-fifth-graders went on a trip to the Bundy Museum of History and Art. Students learned a lot about the Bundy family and about general life in the 19th century.

The Yom Ha’atzmaut celebration included a parade, songs and Israeli cuisine for snacks.



During Chess Club, students challenged each other, applying what they learned.



On April 30, the second-fifth-graders went on a trip to the Bundy Museum of History and Art. Students learned about the Bundy family, how they lived and about general life in the 19th century.



The pre-kindergarten through first grade students were ready to enjoy the Yom Ha’atzmaut meal.



Second-graders during the Yom Ha’atzmaut celebration. Front (l-r): Lilly Sullivan, Yehuda Weiss, Asaf Weiss, Meyer Knapp and Sloane Weinstein. Back: Stella Titus.



Students were interviewed about what they learned during the trip and discussed their favorite Jewish holidays.

Opinion

In My Own Words

Fake news, fake videos and fake history

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

When a friend first went on Facebook about a decade ago, he had a question. His niece had posted, “Going to the movies tonight. So excited.” He was wondering why someone would post that. I told him that it was exactly what people did on Facebook: share details of their life with friends, even if they might not seem important to anyone else. For most people, Facebook was a simple and easy way to keep track of friends and family. Learning the small details of someone’s life is actually a good way to keep in touch with those who live far away.

A few years later, this same friend told me he blocked someone because the person posted so many political comments and links. It’s not that their politics were different because they agreed on most issues and even supported the same candidate. He just didn’t want to read through 20 political posts a day. Someone else I know once posted what would serve as a reply to this friend’s action: “I’m sorry if you think my politics are less interesting than your picture of dinner.”

None of this would really be a problem if Facebook hadn’t morphed into a place from which many people get their news. My Facebook friends frequently post links to articles about everything from the arts to politics. When this becomes dangerous is when these posts feature headlines, news and videos that are fake. In case you think this isn’t happening, note that Facebook recently announced that it would *not* delete Holocaust denial posts. It has also refused to remove the video of Nancy Pelosi that was doctored to make her look as if she was drunk. The issue has been called one of free speech since Facebook also allows people to post links to satirical articles from The New Yorker magazine or videos that make fun of President Donald Trump.

Facebook has morphed into something far beyond a simple social media site that allows you to share your daily life and photographs with friends. People’s emotions have been manipulated by pages that deliberately offer fake news – a great deal of which is sensationalist,

meaning that people are more likely to share and/or repost the material. Even scarier is that Russian organizations used Facebook posts in an attempt to influence the last two U.S. elections. What’s particularly insidious is that this manipulation is so subtle most people are unaware they are being manipulated. If an ad appears in a newspaper or on TV, laws and restrictions apply as to what can be published. So far, Facebook does not have the same restrictions and that’s a real danger.

Facebook has its uses, particularly its ability to let us share information with a large number of people with one post. But we do need to consider ways to deal with posts that deliberately contain fake news, fake videos or fake history. Maybe posts should be required to have a “satire” or Photoshopped notice placed above them. At the moment, it seems unlikely that Facebook would agree to these additions. So, until our legislators find an answer to this problem, we need to do our own research before believing *anything* we see on Facebook is real news.



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OPINIONS

The views expressed in editorials and opinion pieces are those of each author and not necessarily the views of the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton.

LETTERS

The Reporter welcomes letters on subjects of interest to the Jewish community. All letters must be signed and include a phone number; names may be withheld upon request.

ADS

The Reporter does not necessarily endorse any advertised products and services. In addition, the paper is not responsible for the kashruth of any advertiser’s product or establishment.

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www.thereporter.org

TI service honoring Jewish women on June 14

On Friday, June 14, at 7 pm, the Temple Israel Sisterhood will welcome the community to a *Kabbalat Shabbat* program honoring and celebrating all Jewish women, regardless of affiliation.

The event will commence with a dessert buffet in the social hall. During the pre-Shabbat refreshment hour, musical entertainment will be presented by Eileen Miller and Rochelle Goldberg. All in attendance will then have the opportunity to participate in a communal Shabbat candle-lighting ceremony; an *erev Shabbat* service in the sanctuary will follow.

The evening service, with liturgy planned by Julie Piaker,

Sylvia Horowitz and Rita Bleier, will be conducted by a group of women volunteers currently being organized by Bobbi Markowitz. Those interested in reading or leading portions of the service should contact Markowitz (bmarkowitz@nycap.rr.com) to make appropriate arrangements for doing a section of the siddur. As the service will include recitations in English in addition to Hebrew, the organizers have emphasized that "it will not be a requirement to read Hebrew in order to participate in the service."

To ensure sufficient food preparation, everyone is asked to contact Tammy Kunsman in the temple office with their RSVP at 723-7461 or titammy@stny.twcbc.com.

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TC Sisterhood to host adult ed. event on June 25

Temple Concord Sisterhood Adult Education will present "Jewish Customs and Traditions Around the World" on Tuesday, June 25, from 7-8:30 pm, at Temple Concord, 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton.



Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell

Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell will speak about Jewish customs and traditions. A discussion will follow her talk. Attendees are encouraged to bring a Jewish item that has been part of their family's traditions or Jewish memorabilia from travels in the United States and other countries.

The program is free and open to all Sisterhood members, members of Temple Concord and community members. Light refreshments will be served.

Reservations should be made by Sunday, June 23, to Lani Dunthorn at lani.dunthorn@yahoo.com or 348-4099.

Early deadline for *The Reporter*

The July 12 issue of *The Reporter* will have an early deadline of Monday, July 1. No exceptions will be made.

Tuesday Morning Book Club announces 2019-20 reading list

On June 4, the Tuesday Morning Book Club at Temple Concord celebrated the end of its 15th reading season with a luncheon and discussion about which books to read beginning in July.

On July 2, the book to be discussed is "Inheritance: A Memoir of Paternity, Genealogy, and Love" by Dani Shapiro. Binghamton University Distinguished Teaching Professor of Philosophy Tony Preus will talk about the ethical issues raised in Shapiro's latest memoir.

On August 6, the book to be discussed is "The Fox Hunt: A Refugee's Memoir of Coming to America" by Mohammed Al Samawi. Al Samawi's escape from Yemen was organized via a social media network of interfaith friends and acquaintances.

The rest of the books – which include eight novels (two written in the 1890s), another memoir and a single work of non-fiction – that were selected to be read during the 16th year of Book Club are:

- ◆ "The Rise of David Levinsky" by Abraham Cahan
 - ◆ "Jews Without Money" by Michael Gold
 - ◆ "The Room on Rue Amelie" by Kristin Harmel
 - ◆ "The Wartime Sisters" by Lynda Cohen Loigman
 - ◆ "The Last Watchman of Old Cairo: A Novel" by Michael David Lukas
 - ◆ "Dangerous Crossings" by Rachel Rhys
 - ◆ "There Are Jews in My House" by Lara Vapnyar
 - ◆ "Not Our Kind: A Novel" by Kitty Zeldis
- See "Book" on page 7

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Federation held calendar meeting



On June 4, the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton held its annual calendar meeting. L-r: Sima Auerbach, executive director of the Federation, listened to Rabbi Zev Silber, spiritual leader of Beth David Synagogue, as incoming Federation Executive Director Shelley Hubal looked on.



Members of several organizations wrote their events on the calendar. Seated (l-r): Barbara Gilbert, Phyllis Kellenberger and Gina Santiago. Standing: Suzanne Holwitt, president of the Federation.



We won't make you jump through hoops to advertise. It's easier than that.

For information, please contact Bonnie Rozen at 724-2360, ext. 244 or bonnie@thereportergroup.org.

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Off the Shelf

Russian American Jews in fact and fiction

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Some immigrants who came to the United States as children feel torn between two cultures. This seems to be especially true for Russian Jews. Are they American or Russian? Defining their own identity seems extremely difficult, at least according to works they publish. Two recent explorations of this problem can be found in Boris Fishman's nonfiction "Savage Feast: Three Generations, Two Continents, and a Dinner Table (A Memoir with Recipes)" (Harper) and Maria Kuznetsova's novel "Oksana, Behave!" (Spiegel and Grau).

Fishman, the author of two novels*, wants to better understand his Russian inheritance, particularly his inability to withstand being hungry. He knows why his grandparents feel that way: they suffered through World War II and the Soviet years when food was scarce. Yet, why does he feel the same? He notes that even before they emigrated, his family always made certain he had enough to eat – giving him food before they would themselves eat. At age 9, he arrived in the United States where there was always enough food. Although this question is never completely answered, Fishman does come to understand more about how his grandparents – particularly his grandfather – influenced his life.

Fishman's family may have left the Soviet Union because of their religion, but they had little to no connection to Judaism before or after their emigration: "We, like most Soviet people, genuinely regarded religion as a mindless cult. The activists on both sides of the Iron Curtain who fought so hard for our release were impelled by the injustice of the discrimination people like us endured no matter how much we tried to blend in. But we weren't emigrating for the freedom to worship. Ours was a 'salami immigration,'

as people called it – all we wanted was the freedom to make money." That means Fishman's parents don't understand why he wants to be a writer, rather than a doctor, lawyer or some other financially secure profession. The arts are not something to which most of this population aspires.

After writing about his family's move to the U.S., the memoir ignores most of Fishman's early life – jumping from 1988 to 2005 and beyond. This section mostly focuses on Fishman's relationship to his grandfather, which is not an easy one. The author is torn between spending time with him and staying as far from his influence as possible. However, Fishman does increase his visits after his grandfather has a new non-Jewish, Ukrainian home aid, Oksana. Oksana's cooking sends Fishman on a search to feel more comfortable in his own skin – particularly after he falls into a severe depression. He even travels with Oksana to her home in Ukraine, in addition to working in a restaurant kitchen and on a farm. All this leads him to a better understanding of himself, which includes his learning to cook some of the Russian/Ukrainian recipes for himself. What Fishman finally discovers is that "you don't have to go all Russian or all American. You can pick and choose."

It's not always easy to follow Fishman's thoughts and decisions, although that may be because he doesn't always seem to completely understand exactly what occurred himself. Or, perhaps, real life is more difficult to write about than fiction. His memoir also includes recipes mentioned in the course of the memoir. (Readers should note that many of them are *not* kosher.) While enjoyable on the whole, "Savage Feast" left me hungry to know more.

While Fishman came to the U.S. in 1988, Oksana, the narrator of Kuznetsova's novel, arrived in America in

1992 when she was 7. Oksana's behavior is problematic throughout her life: she always seems to be misbehaving, even when she's trying not to do anything wrong. Her family's move to the U.S. is difficult. Her non-Jewish father is always thinking about the good parts of his life in Kiev while her Jewish mother ignores him because, as Oksana notes, "everything had been easier for him in Kiev than it was for her." Her father's mother lives with them and rooms with Oksana, a situation that creates its own problems.

Oksana is not particularly fond of her parents: she believes they keep trying to have more children because they want to replace her. In the end, she has only one sibling: a younger brother of whom she is fond. Readers won't blame her parents for some of their exasperation, for example, when she calls 911 and claims her grandmother is trying to kill her. Her mother's expressions after moments like this are quite funny: "Dearest God that I don't believe in," she said. "Tell me what I have done to deserve this child? Did I commit murder in a past life I don't believe in? Genocide? Was I Stalin? Did I smother a litter of puppies?"

The chapters skip over large periods of Oksana's life, which means that sometimes important events are mentioned only after they occurred. What is clear is that Oksana never feels completely comfortable in her own skin. Whether this is caused completely by her move to the U.S. is questionable since it also seems part of her basic nature. Even as she matures, Oksana makes unwise decisions. At one point, her grandmother tells her why she has so many problems in life: "You expect life to be this incredible romp, and then you get crushed when the slightest thing goes wrong. Life will throw you things See "Russian" on page 7

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY: The name of the limited liability company is: GR Mayer Realty, LLC (the "Company"). The date of filing of the Articles of Organization of the Company with the Secretary of State was April 25, 2019. The county in which the principal place of business of the Company shall be located is Broome County. The Secretary of State has been designated as agent of the Company upon whom process against it may be served. The Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the Company, to Hinman, Howard & Kattell, LLP, Attn: Christopher L. Roma, 80 Exchange Street, Suite 700, Binghamton, NY 13901. The purpose of the business of the Company is any lawful business purpose.

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY: The name of the limited liability company is: Evelyn Mayer Properties, LLC (the "Company"). The date of filing of the Articles of Organization of the Company with the Secretary of State was April 25, 2019. The county in which the principal place of business of the Company shall be located is Broome County. The Secretary of State has been designated as agent of the Company upon whom process against it may be served. The Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the Company, to Hinman, Howard & Kattell, LLP, Attn: Christopher L. Roma, 80 Exchange Street, Suite 700, Binghamton, NY 13901. The purpose of the business of the Company is any lawful business purpose.

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Notice of Formation of On Point AG, LLC. Arts. Of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 5/6/2019. Office Location: Broome Co. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom service of process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: Damien Cornwell, 122 State Street, Binghamton, NY 13901. Purpose: any lawful activities.

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Notice of Qualification of BNY Enterprises LLC. Authority filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 04/24/19. Office location: Broome County. LLC formed in Delaware (DE) on 03/06/19. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: c/o Unisearch, Inc., 99 Washington Ave Ste 805A, Albany, NY 12210-2822, also the registered agent upon whom process may be served. Address to be maintained in DE: c/o UNISEARCH, INC., 28 Old Rudnick Ln., Dover, DE 19904. Arts of Org. filed with the DE Secy. of State, John G. Townsend Bldg., 401 Federal St., - Ste. 4, Dover, DE 19901. Purpose: any lawful activities.

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Notice of Formation of Grace Valentine Services LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 01/09/19. Office location: Broome County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: Ralph W.V. Sedore, 136 N. Jensen Rd., Vestal, NY 13850. Purpose: any lawful activities.



To place your legal notice, contact Bonnie at 724-2360, ext. 244 or bonnie@thereporter.org

Notice of Formation of Binghamton Blonde LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 05/08/19. Office location: Broome County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: 145 Kay Rd., Endicott, NY 13760. Purpose: any lawful activities.

Notice of Formation of PWC Estate, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 05/13/19. Office location: Broome County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: 450 Plaza Dr., Vestal, NY 13850. Purpose: any lawful activities.

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY UNDER NEW YORK LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY LAW

- The name of the limited liability company ("LLC") is KW Fitness Vestal, LLC.
- The date of filing of the Articles of Organization with the Secretary of State is May 22, 2019.
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- The Secretary of State of the State of New York is hereby designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. The post office address to which the Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the LLC served upon him or her is: 3032 Vestal Road, Vestal, NY 13850.
- The character or purpose of the business of the LLC is any purpose allowed by law.

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY: The name of the limited liability company is: Binghamton Northside Development Group, LLC (the "Company"). The date of filing of the Articles of Organization of the Company with the Secretary of State was May 24, 2019. The county in which the principal place of business of the Company shall be located is Broome County. The Secretary of State has been designated as agent of the Company upon whom process against it may be served. The Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the Company, to Attn: Robert J. Pornbeck,

132 Prospect Avenue, Binghamton, NY 13901. The purpose of the business of the Company is any lawful business purpose.

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY: The name of the limited liability company is: 252 Chenango Street Management, LLC (the "Company"). The date of filing of the Articles of Organization of the Company with the Secretary of State was May 24, 2019. The county in which the principal place of business of the Company shall be located is Broome County. The Secretary of State has been designated as agent of the Company upon whom process against it may be served. The Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the Company, to Attn: Robert J. Pornbeck, 132 Prospect Avenue, Binghamton, NY 13901. The purpose of the business of the Company is any lawful business purpose.

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY: The name of the limited liability company is: Huron Logistics, LLC (the "Company"). The date of filing of the Articles of Organization of the Company with the Secretary of State was May 21, 2019. The county in which the principal place of business of the Company shall be located is Broome County. The Secretary of State has been designated as agent of the Company upon whom process against it may be served. The Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the Company, to Hinman, Howard & Kattell, LLP, Attn: James W. Orband, 80 Exchange Street, Suite 700, Binghamton, NY 13901. The purpose of the business of the Company is any lawful business purpose.

Notice of Formation of Bloom Tax Partners LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 05/17/19. Office location: Broome County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: 31 Lewis St., Ste. 401, Binghamton, NY 13901. Purpose: any lawful activities.

Lumina EC, LLC. Art. of Org. filed with SSNY 5/20/19. Office location: Broome Cty. SSNY desig. agent for process & shall mail to 115 Henry St #3305. Binghamton, NY 13902. Purpose: any lawful activity.

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Saperstein sermon contest at Cornell challenged students to address the economic issues of today

Over several weeks beginning in early February, 35 Cornell University students presented their original sermons at the ninth annual Cornell Student Topical Sermon Contest. Participants were asked to address an economic theme this year to honor Uri Meir Possen, the late professor who chaired the Department of Economics in the College of Arts and Sciences and served 14 years as the Advisor to Young Israel and the Center for Jewish Living.

Undergraduate and graduate students across the university were encouraged to center their original sermon themes around individual responsibility, fairness, social justice, ethics, economics, political commitment and ancient wisdom's advice for today's issues. Sermons pointed to the macroeconomic issues of today encompassing what political decisions and actions are needed to reshape the economy to create a more just society for everyone.

Contestants were required to draw upon selected passages from the Hebrew Bible, which speaks extensively about economic systems and their consequences. Students were asked to identify and incorporate into their sermon at least one relevant passage that may include Genesis, Leviticus and the Prophets, and apply them to contemporary social justice and economic issues, and then deliver their 12-18 minute sermons in Anabel Taylor Hall throughout the semester.

Participating students, faculty and guests were invited to attend the ninth annual Harold I. Saperstein '31 Cornell Student Topical Sermon Contest Annual Gala, held in Warren Hall at Cornell University on March 17, where the winner was announced. Marc Moller '61, '63 J.D., and Alex Bores '13 served as the Masters of Ceremonies for the gala event.

Elizabeth Latham '20 from Pennsylvania delivered her winning sermon calling for kindness throughout the world with her oration, "Feed and You Will Be Fed." During the gala event, more than 120 students, faculty and guests heard Latham deliver her sermon. In her sermon, Latham – who majors in philosophy and religious studies – asked: "How do we build a just society? What economic decisions can we make today to reshape our world? The first answer is that we need to build good infrastructure, a safety net to catch those who have fallen," she said. "Our second answer is, we need to live a life of compassion. When we come across the needy, those who are asking for our help, it is each of our individual responsibilities to stop and help. Live our lives with open hands."



Elizabeth Latham delivered her sermon.

Vijayen "VJ" Satish '19 from Tennessee received second place honors with his sermon, "E Pluribus Unum: A Vision for America." Nicholas Heisler '19 from New York rounded out the top three with his sermon, "Living Life with Open Hands."

Captain Thomas J. Walcott, chaplain of the Coast Guard, opened the gala event with "a thoughtful reflection." In support of the Sermon Contest theme, John Steele Gordon, an economic author and historian, shared a "thought-provoking" historical context of the growing national debt. Delivering the keynote address was David Wilcox, retired director of the Division of Research and Statistics at

the Federal Reserve Board from October 2011 through December 2018. Within his message, he posed the need for U.S. colleges and universities to examine and deal with the lack of diversity within undergraduate and graduate economics programs' student enrollment.

The Saperstein topical sermon contest was initiated by Norman Turkish '56, M.B.A. '60, to give Cornell's Jewish community a venue to appreciate the links between the See "Sermon" on page 7

SUMMER CAMPS

Summer camps awarded accessibility grants

By JNS staff

(JNS) – Sixteen Jewish camps across North America were to be the first recipients in April of a grant to increase accessibility for campers and staff with disabilities through the Yashar Initiative.

The Hebrew word *yashar* translates to both "level" and "integrity," and, like its namesake, the Yashar Initiative is intended to improve accessibility for campers and staff with disabilities on multiple levels by providing funds for capital improvements, professional development, staff training, research and evaluation.

The \$12 million Yashar Initiative, a program of Foundation for Jewish Camp, funded by the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, will enable Jewish day and overnight camps to better welcome all members of the community. It was designed to address the needs of individuals with autism spectrum disorder, as well as people with intellectual, developmental, physical and sensory disabilities.

"Since its founding, the Weinberg Foundation has provided nearly 80 grants, totaling approximately \$6 million, to both Jewish and non-Jewish camps to improve accessibility for campers and staff with disabilities," said Paula B. Pretlow, trustee for the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation. "This initiative is especially critical because it benefits not only the camps that receive direct funding, but also advances the field regarding inclusion models and training for staff."

Each camp will receive money for capital improvements, as well as a program grant totaling \$2.5 million for the first round of the initiative. The camps anticipate finishing their improvements by the summer of 2020. In keeping with the goals of the initiative to promote a greater culture of inclusion, each grant recipient has committed to increasing their total campers with disabilities to at least five percent of the total camper population.

The Yashar Initiative will accept grant applications again this fall, as well as in the fall of 2020.

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NoraG@binghamtonjcc.org

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Naso, Numbers 4:21-7:89

Unclean versus dirty

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR, THE REPORTER GROUP

When reading this week's portion, several verses in chapter five made me wish we could add new words to our English vocabulary. In verses one-five, God tells Moses which people – male and female – must be removed from the camp if they have the following conditions: they are lepers, have other bodily secretions/discharges or have come into contact with the dead. The reason for this? Because God will not dwell in the camp if these people are present. The verses in question use the Hebrew word *tamei*, which is usually translated as unclean. Among the English synonyms for unclean are dirty, filthy, foul and grimy. The English definition focuses on dirt, but that's not the exact meaning of the Hebrew.

While some who are impure might also be physically dirty, that's not true of all of them. Biblically speaking, there is a spiritual aspect to having a perfect body as seen

by the verses forbidding Kohens (priests) who are not physically perfect from serving in the Tabernacle. What is interesting is that it's not only abnormal secretions that make someone impure, but normal ones, such as sperm and menstrual fluids. As for lepers, biblical leprosy is a curable skin condition since lepers were able to return to the camp once the condition went away. One can remain perfectly clean when burying the dead, but something about the dead bodies themselves makes those who come into any type of contact with them impure.

So, being unclean is not the same as being dirty. The biblical text doesn't say why, though, these specific conditions are a problem. Later writings connect skin diseases and other medical problems to moral faults in order to explain why people suffer. However, that doesn't seem true biblically. For example, consider the commandment

to bury the dead: the Torah requires burial even for those who have sinned. The person following that command will become *tamei*. That means that being *tamei* should not be equated with sin; after all, during the course of their life almost everyone will be *tamei* at some point.

So how should *tamei* be translated? It's not clear if there is an English word or phrase that truly translates the concept. That's partly because we don't know exactly what the word meant in biblical times. Careful reading of the text shows biblical society had not come to terms with the human body in all its messiness. Blood, male and female discharges (normal or abnormal), and skin diseases were seen as problematic. When we read the text today, we need to take that into consideration and not be prejudiced against those who once would have been seen as *tamei*.

Congregational Notes

Temple Israel

Orientation: Conservative
 Rabbi: Geoffrey Brown
 Address: 4737 Deerfield Pl., Vestal, NY 13850
 Phone: 723-7461 and 231-3746
 Office hours: Mon.-Thurs. 8:30 am-4 pm; Fri. 8 am-3 pm
 E-mail: titammy@stny.twcbb.com
 Website: www.templeisraelvestal.org
 Service Schedule: Tuesday, 5:30 pm; Friday, 5:30 pm; Saturday, 9:30 am

On Friday, June 14, beginning at 7 pm, there will be a Kabbalat Shabbat honoring women with music and a dessert table, followed by services at 8:15 pm.

On Saturday, June 15, at 9:30 am, Shabbat services will be led by Rabbi Geoffrey Brown. The Torah portion will be Numbers 4:21-7:89. The haftarah will be Judges 13:2-25. Alan Piaker and Barbara Zelter will sponsor the kiddush.

On Monday, June 17, at 7:30 pm, there will be a Ritual Committee meeting.

On Saturday, June 29, at 9:30 am, there will be the bar mitzvah of Ari Green.

On Sunday, June 30, at 4 pm, there will be Mussar class with Rabbi Geoffrey Brown.

Penn-York Jewish Community

President-Treasurer-Secretary: Harvey Chernosky, 570-265-3869

B'nai B'rith: William H. Seigel Lodge

Purpose: To promote Jewish identity through religious, cultural, educational and social activities in the Southern Tier of New York and the Northern Tier of Pennsylvania, including Waverly, NY; Sayre, Athens and Towanda, PA, and surrounding communities.

Rohr Chabad Center

Affiliation: Chabad-Lubavitch
 Rabbi: Aaron Slonim
 E-mail: aslonim@binghamton.edu
 Address: 420 Murray Hill Rd., Vestal, NY 13850
 Phone: 797-0015, Fax: 797-0095
 Website: www.Chabadofbinghamton.com
 Chabad on the West Side
 Rabbi: Zalman Chein
 E-mail: zchein@JewishBU.com
 Address: 27 Bennet Ave., Binghamton, NY 13905
 Phone: 722-3252

Regular service times: Daily 7:30 am, Friday evening 6 pm, Shabbat morning 9:30 am, Maariv and Havdalah one hour after candle-lighting time, Sundays 9:30 am.

Linking Hearts for youngsters with special needs: This program connects Jewish special-needs children and teenagers, ages 5-14, who have mental, physical and/or functional disabilities, with student volunteers who will visit participating youngsters weekly in their homes.

To join the mailing list, for up-to-date information on adult education offerings or to arrange for a private tutorial, for details concerning the Judaica shop and resource center, or for assistance through the Piaker Free Loan Society or Raff Maasim Tovim Foundation, call Chabad's office at 797-0015.

Temple Brith Sholom

Affiliation: Unaffiliated
 Address: P.O. Box 572, 117 Madison St., Cortland, NY 13045
 Phone: 607-756-7181
 President: Bruce Fein, bfein@twcny.rr.com
 Service leaders: Lay leadership
 Shabbat services: Either Friday evening at 7:30 pm or Saturday at 10 am from Rosh Hashanah to Shavuot. Holiday services are also held. Check the weekly e-mail for upcoming services. Contact the president to get on the e-mail list.
 Religious School: Students are educated on an individual basis. Temple Brith Sholom is a small equalitarian congregation serving the greater Cortland community. Congregants span the gamut of observance and services are largely dependent on the service leader. The Friday night siddur is "Likrat Shabbat," while the Saturday morning siddur is "Gates of Prayer." The community extends a warm welcome to the Jewish student population of SUNY Cortland, as well as the residents of local adult residences.

Temple Concord

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism
 Rabbi: Barbara Goldman-Wartell
 Address: 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905
 Office hours: Tues.-Fri., 10 am-2 pm
 Phone: 723-7355
 Fax: 723-0785
 Office e-mail: TempleConcordbinghamton@gmail.com
 Website: www.templeconcord.com
 Regular service times: Friday, 8 pm; Saturday, 10:35 am, when religious school is in session.

Hebrew school: Hebrew school meets at 5:15 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the school year unless otherwise noted.

On Friday, June 14, at 8 pm, Shabbat evening services will be led by Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell.

On Saturday, June 15, at 9:15 am, there will be Torah study.

On Tuesday, June 18, at 7 pm, the Temple Concord Evening Book Club will meet.

On Friday, June 21, at 8 pm, there will be a Pride Shabbat service led by Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell.

On Saturday, June 22, at 9:15 am, there will be Torah study.

Norwich Jewish Center

Orientation: Inclusive
 Rabbi: David Regenspan
 Address: 72 South Broad St., Norwich, NY 13815
 Contact: Guilia Greenberg, 336-1523
 Purpose: To maintain a Jewish identity and meet the needs of the Jewish community in the area.
 Adult Ed.: Saturday morning study is held at 10 am. Call for more information and to confirm.

Congregation Tikun v'Or

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism
 Address: PO Box 3981, Ithaca, NY 14852; 2550 Triphammer Rd. (corner of Triphammer and Burdick Hill), Lansing, NY
 Phone: 607-256-1471
 Website: www.tikkunvor.org
 E-mail: info@tikkunvor.org
 Presidents: Lauren Korfine and Shira Reisman
 Rabbi: Brian Walt
 Religious School Director/Admin. Coordinator: Naomi Wilensky
 Services: Fridays at 7:30 pm unless otherwise noted. Intergenerational Shabbat, music services, and other special services. Call for the weekly schedule.
 Religious School: Preschool through seventh-grade classes meet on Sunday mornings. Sixth-grade Hebrew and seventh-grade b'nai mitzvah classes meet on Wednesday afternoons.
 Adult Ed: Mini courses throughout the year. Adult Hebrew offered regularly. Call the office for details.

Kol Haverim

Affiliation: Society for Humanistic Judaism
 Address: P.O. Box 4972, Ithaca, NY 14852-4972
 Phone: 607-277-3345
 E-mail: info@kolhaverim.net
 Website: www.kolhaverim.net
 Chairwoman: Abby Cohn
 Kol Haverim: The Finger Lakes Community for Humanistic Judaism, is an Ithaca-based organization that brings people together to explore and celebrate Jewish identity, history, culture and ethics within a secular, humanistic framework. KH is part of an international movement for Secular Humanistic Judaism and is affiliated with the Society for Humanistic Judaism, a national association with over 30 member communities and congregations around the country. Established in the spring of 1999, it offers celebrations of Jewish holidays, monthly Shabbat pot-lucks, adult education, a twice-monthly Cultural School for children, and a bar and bat mitzvah program.
 KH welcomes all individuals and families, including those from mixed religious backgrounds, who wish to strengthen the Jewish experience in their lives and provide their children with a Jewish identity and experience.

Friday, June 14, light candles before..... 8:22 pm
 Saturday, June 15, Shabbat ends 9:23 pm
 Friday, June 21, light candles before..... 8:25 pm
 Saturday, June 22, Shabbat ends 9:25 pm

Beth David Synagogue

Affiliation: Orthodox Union
 Rabbi: Zev Silber
 Address: 39 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905
 Phone: 722-1793
 Rabbi's Office: 722-7514
 Fax: 722-7121
 Office hours: Mon. closed; Tues. 10 am-1 pm; Wed. closed; Thurs. 9 am-1 pm; Fri. 10 am-1 pm
 Beth David e-mail address: bethdavid@stny.rr.com
 Rabbi's e-mail: rabbisilber@stny.rr.com
 Website: www.bethdavid.org
 Facebook: www.facebook.com/bethdavidbinghamton
 Shabbat Services:
 Shabbat, June 159 am
 Mincha after kiddush
 Weekday Services:
 Mornings:
 Sun., June 168:30 am
 Mon.-Fri., June 17-217 am
 Evenings:
 Sun.-Thurs., June 16-208:25 pm
 Classes: Rabbi Zev Silber will hold his weekly Talmud class every Tuesday evening after services.

Temple Beth-El of Ithaca

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
 Rabbi: Scott L. Glass
 Address: 402 North Tioga St. (the corner of Court and Tioga streets), Ithaca, NY 14850-4292
 Phone: 273-5775
 E-mail: rabbi@tbeithaca.org and secretary@tbeithaca.org
 Website: www.tbeithaca.org
 President: Jerry Davis
 Sisterhood President: Julie Paige
 Director of Education: Rabbi Suzanne Brody
 Administrative Assistant: Jane Griffith
 Services: Friday 8 pm; Saturday 10 am, unless otherwise announced. Weekday morning minyan 7:30 am (9 am on Sundays and legal holidays).
 Religious School/Education: September-May: Classes meet on Sunday, 9 am-12:30 pm and Wednesday afternoons, 3:45-5:45 pm. The Midrashah (eighth-grade and high school) classes will meet at times designated by their respective teachers.
 Adult Ed.: Numerous weekly courses, several semester-long courses and a variety of mini-courses and lectures are offered throughout the year. Call the temple office for more details.

On Saturdays, June 22 and 29, July 13 and 27, and August 24 and 31, at 5 pm, Rabbi Scott Glass will teach a Perek in the Pardes" class studying "Pirkei Avot, The Ethics of the Fathers."

On Thursday, June 27, at 6:30 pm, the TBE Arts Committee summer movie series will kick off with "Walk on Water" (Israel, 2004, 103 minutes, English subtitles). The contemporary road movie takes its characters around Israel and later to Berlin as it examines the role the past still plays in the lives of the young people of Israel and Germany. The movie will be shown at TBE through Israeli Films, National Center for Jewish Film and Outsider Pictures. The public is invited to attend. Doors will open at 6:30 pm for refreshments and schmoozing, with the film starting at 7 pm. The cost is \$8 at the door (cash or check only). (See related article on page 1.)

Temple Beth El of Oneonta

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
 Rabbi: Molly Karp
 Address: 83 Chestnut St., Oneonta, NY 13820
 Mailing address: P.O. Box 383, Oneonta, NY 13820
 Phone: 607-432-5522
 Website: www.templebetheloneonta.org
 E-mail: TBEOneonta@gmail.com
 Regular service times: visit the temple website for days of services and times
 Religious School/Education: Religious School, for grades kindergarten through bar/bat mitzvah, meets Sunday mornings. Rabbi Karp conducts services and holds classes in Torah, beginning Hebrew and Maimonides.
 For the schedule of services, classes and events, see the website.

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

The New York Times to scrap daily political cartoons over antisemitism controversy

The international edition of The New York Times will no longer feature daily political cartoons, according to the paper's editorial-page editor, James Bennet. While Bennet says the policy change has been in the works for a year, one of the paper's leading cartoonists, Patrick Chappatte, said the decision was directly related to a public outcry against an April caricature of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as a dog wearing a Star of David collar and seemingly guiding a blind U.S. President Donald Trump, who was wearing a yarmulke.

Israeli campaign against BDS results in 30 organizations losing fund-raising accounts

Israel's Strategic Affairs Ministry released a report on June 10 revealing that a two-year ministry campaign to dry up the funds of pro-Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement organizations with ties to terrorist organizations has resulted in the closure of 30 financial accounts in Western countries. "For years, boycott promoters have disguised themselves as 'human-rights activists,' managing to raise tens of millions of euros from Western countries and citizens who thought they were contributing to causes supporting justice and equality," said Strategic Affairs Minister Gilad Erdan in a statement.

Democratic senators introduce resolution denouncing Netanyahu's West Bank annexation plan

Five Democratic senators introduced a non-binding resolution on June 6 denouncing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's campaign promise to annex parts of Judea and Samaria. Two of them, Sens. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), are running for the Democratic nomination for president next year.

Book Continued from page 3

- ◆ "Stuffed: Adventures of a Restaurant Family" by Patricia Volk (Memoir)
◆ "Spies of No Country: Secret Lives at the Birth of Israel" by Matti Friedman
The schedule of meetings from Septem-

Russian Continued from page 4

harder than you imagined, and how will you deal with them when you are afraid of a jellyfish or a dumb bird?" Yet, Oksana comes to understand she is more like her grandmother than she thought.

Oksana is not always a particularly likeable character, although she is an interesting one. The question becomes whether she can find peace and connection without

Sermon Continued from page 5

teachings of their tradition and the tenets of social justice. The contest is in honor of Saperstein, a rabbi of the reform Temple Emanu-El and activist in Lynbrook, NY, whose sermons on social justice and civil rights raised awareness on antisemitism and American civil rights issues for some 50 years.

ber-June will be announced at a later date. All Book Club events are free and open to the public; it is not necessary to have read the book to attend and participate in the discussion. Refreshments will be available.

making decisions she will come to regret. Since her desire to write mirrors that of the author, readers can only hope Oksana has the same success.

* To see The Reporter's reviews of Fishman's novels, visit www.thereporter-group.org/Article.aspx?aID=3650 and http://thereportergroup.org/Article.aspx?aID=4429.)

who served as the director and chief legal counsel at the Union for Reform Judaism's Religious Action Center for more than 30 years and is the ambassador-at-large for International Religious Freedom. David offered remarks at the gala event highlighting the impact of his father's decades of sermons.

Jewish Community Center ECC Shabbat



L-r: Rabbi Benny Kelman and Josh Hubal led the children of the Early Childhood Center in song in preparation for Shabbat on June 7.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Tel Aviv beaches found to be among most plastic-polluted

Israel was featured in a report by the World Wildlife Fund the week of June 7 as home to the third most plastic-polluted shoreline in the Mediterranean, according to a report by Ynet. The Tel Aviv coast ranked behind Turkey's Cilicia beaches and those along the coast of Barcelona, Spain. Not all Mediterranean coastal cities were included in the investigation. According to WWF, 46 pounds of plastic waste wash up every day along a single kilometer of Tel Aviv beach. Barcelona's beaches accumulate 57 pounds of plastics a day and Turkey's beaches more than 68 pounds. All in all, the amount of plastic dumped into the sea equals approximately 33,800 plastic bottles' worth every minute. Egypt was found to be the biggest plastic waste culprit in the region, followed by Turkey.

U.S. ambassador: Israel has the right to annex "some" of the West Bank

In an interview at his Jerusalem residence the week of June 7, U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman said Israel has the right to annex at least "some" of the West Bank. "Under certain circumstances," Friedman told *The New York Times* on June 8, "I think Israel has the right to retain some, but unlikely all, of the West Bank." Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged just prior to Israel's April 9 election to extend Israeli law to all West Bank Jewish communities. Friedman did not specify what the American response might look like should Israel annex West Bank land unilaterally. "We really don't have a view until we understand how much, on what terms, why does it make sense, why is it good for Israel, why is it good for the region, why does it not create more problems than it solves," he said. "These are all things that we'd want to understand, and I don't want to prejudge." Friedman said that by allowing passage of a United Nations resolution in 2016 condemning Israeli settlements as a "flagrant violation" of international law, the Obama administration gave credence to Palestinian arguments "that the entire West Bank and East Jerusalem

belong to them." With respect to the West Bank, Friedman said that "certainly Israel's entitled to retain some portion of it." According to the *Times of Israel*, the Palestinian Authority has said in response that it will consider filing a complaint at the International Criminal Court against Friedman.

Palestinians announce "popular uprising" against Trump peace plan

A "popular Palestinian uprising" against U.S. President Donald Trump's Mideast peace plan was announced on June 9 following a meeting of PLO faction representatives, Palestinian civil society organizations and private individuals in the West Bank city of el-Bireh. The protests are to coincide with the U.S.-sponsored June 25-26 "Peace to Prosperity" conference in Bahrain, where the United States is expected to reveal the first, economic stage of Trump's peace plan. According to *The Jerusalem Post*, PLO Executive Committee member Wasel Abu Yusef said the meeting was the first in a series focusing on "popular activities to confront American-Israeli schemes aimed at eliminating the rights of the Palestinian people." The Palestinians, he said, needed to organize a "struggling action to foil the 'deal of the century' [the U.S. peace plan] and its economic aspect, and voice their rejection of all American policies." According to Abu Yusef, the protests will be carried out at "friction points," namely Israeli checkpoints, rather than in inside Palestinian cities, and will be coordinated with Arab-Israeli leaders and Palestinians around the world. The other participants in the Bahrain conference are Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. Though Israel has not yet received a formal invitation, it is also expected to attend. Responses are pending from Egypt and Jordan.

IDF and P.A. security forces exchange fire in Nablus

Israeli and Palestinian Authority forces exchanged fire in the northern Samaria city of Nablus on the morning of June 11 in what the Israel Defense Forces is reporting to be a case of mistaken identification. "During operations to arrest terrorist operatives in the city of Nablus, a firefight broke out

between IDF soldiers and people who were identified by the troops as suspects. After the fact, it was determined that it was Palestinian security services personnel," the IDF said in a statement, adding that the incident would be investigated. According to P.A. media, the IDF entered Nablus without providing customary notification to the P.A. and opened fired on a security-services building, where one member of the P.A. security forces was lightly injured. No Israeli soldiers were wounded in the incident. Overnight, IDF troops arrested 18 P.A. terrorism suspects throughout Judea and Samaria.

White House invites Trump business allies to Bahrain summit

The White House has invited some of President Donald Trump's business allies to the economic summit scheduled for June 25-26 in Bahrain for the first part of the Trump administration's Mideast peace plan for the Israelis and the Palestinians. Business allies include Tom Barrack, CEO of real estate investment firm Colony Capital; Blackstone CEO Steve Schwarzman; BlackRock CEO Larry Fink; and Goldman Sachs' Dina Powell, who served in the Trump administration as senior counselor to the president for economic initiatives and U.S. deputy national security advisor for strategy, before leaving the White House in January 2018. Fink will not be in attendance due to his schedule, while Schwarzman will likely be there, separate sources told CNBC. J.P. Morgan CEO Jamie Dimon was also invited, but will be absent, a person close to the situation told CNBC. "Tom is pleased to be a participant in a well organized forum for the purpose of advancing the peace process in the Middle East," said Barrack's spokesperson, Owen Blinksilver. "He has been a lifelong advocate of economic prosperity being a foundation stone of hope for the entire region especially its exploding young and largely unemployed population." It is currently unknown if Powell will attend. A senior administration official did not deny the aforementioned to CNBC, only to say, "We will provide a list of attendees closer to the event." Blackstone, BlackRock and Goldman declined to comment to the outlet.

Palestinians outraged at secret P.A. leadership pay raise

Leaked documents revealing that members of the Palestinian Authority Cabinet gave themselves a retroactive 67 percent pay raise in 2017 have sparked outrage among their constituents, who are accusing their leaders of being corrupt and self-serving. According to the Associated Press, the large salary increase occurred in 2017, the same year that the P.A. cut salaries for 50,000 employees in Gaza by a third, arguing that the government wouldn't be able to pay salaries at all unless it made the move. The P.A. also argued that the Gaza workers were idle, given that the region was now controlled by Hamas, which employed its own loyalists. The documents confirming the pay increase – including for P.A. chief Mahmoud Abbas – were posted anonymously online and quickly went viral. One of the documents shows that monthly salaries for Cabinet members rose from \$3,000 to \$5,000 a month, while Abbas's salary was raised to \$6,000. Moreover, the raise was made retroactive to 2014, when the Cabinet took office, and was passed secretly, overriding a 2004 law that fixed salaries of ministers. Additional benefits include \$10,000 a year to rent a house in Ramallah for all ministers living outside Ramallah, and a \$10,000 bonus for all those who live in the city. The government also provided ministers a whopping 17 percent exchange rate when converting their salaries to shekels. The ministers also continued to enjoy funding for personal drivers and international travel expenses. Due to the severity of the public outcry following the revelation, the P.A. government suspended the pay raises and said the government would investigate the measure. Recent polls showed that more than 80 percent of P.A. residents consider the P.A. leadership to be corrupt.

FDA clears new ReWalk product for stroke survivors

The Food and Drug Administration has cleared a new product geared to help stroke survivors walk again. Israel-based ReWalk Robotics Ltd. announced on June 4 that its ReStore product will have a starting price in the United States of \$28,900, though leasing options will be available. The week of May 31, ReStore received the CE mark, allowing it to be sold in the European Union. ReWalk Robotics Ltd. is known for its exoskeleton that enables paraplegics to walk again. It received FDA clearance in 2014.

Google Express to ship products in packaging made by Israeli company

Google Express will start shipping products in packaging made by Israel-based manufacturer TIPA Corp Ltd., announced the latter's umbrella organization, Sustainable Suite Inc., on June 3. TIPA, founded in 2010, produces and designs compostable, plastic-like bags and packaging that decompose under humid conditions within 180 days, TIPA vice president of marketing Merav Koren told *Calcalist*. "TIPA's packaging is as durable and impermeable as traditional plastic packaging and works for a range of products, such as fresh produce, frozen goods and apparel, according to company statements," reported *Calcalist*. "Depending on the type of packaging and shape, the compostable plastic is made up of anywhere from 20-60 percent plant-based ingredients, such as non-genetically modified corn," said Koren.

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