

Federation to hold “Be Aware” security training

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton will hold a Secure Community Network’s “Be Aware” security training session on Thursday, August 6, beginning at 6:30 pm, at the Jewish Community Center. The training will be led by Mark Henderson, regional security advisor, Rochester, for the

Secure Community Network. The training is for the entire Binghamton community and details can be shared with anyone who may be interested in attending. Registration is required for this training. To register, visit www.jfgeb.org or e-mail director@jfgeb.org; the deadline to register is Tuesday, August 4. Henderson plans to include information

that is specific for the greater Binghamton community, such as what Secure Community Network is tracking locally and episodes of concern that have happened recently in the local community. Additionally, attendees will practice some “hands on” skills, such as using a chair to lock a door.

“We hope everyone will join us for this

essential training and hands-on learning event,” said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. “The Safety and Security committee is urging community members to not be complacent when it comes to safety. Committing to ongoing learning and reassessment is fundamental to creating a safe community.”

Super Sunday to kick off Federation’s Campaign 2027

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton will hold its annual Super Sunday phonathon on Sunday, August 23, at the Jewish Community Center, starting at 10 am. Follow-up calls will be made through September.

“We are grateful for community members who pledge early. It truly reduces the burden for our Campaign volunteers,” said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. “August 23 will be the beginning of our phone campaign for community members who have yet to pledge.” (For ways to make a pledge, see the Campaign ad on page 8.)

The theme of this year’s Campaign is “Your Jewish Community – Embracing our future together.”

“We really want this year’s Campaign to be about creating one Jewish community, under one umbrella, that is united and welcoming. That is how we came up with the Campaign theme. We look forward to connecting with our donors and having a successful Campaign,” said Campaign Chairwoman Jodi Sampey.

This year’s Campaign has a goal of \$300,000 to support community organizations, including Jewish Family Service, the JCC, *The Reporter*, Hillel

Your Jewish Community
Embracing our future together



Academy, Hillel at Binghamton University, the community *mikvah* at Beth David Synagogue, Jewish Federations of North America, the Jewish Film Fest and PJ Library, as well as communitywide security initiatives. Campaign dollars also support community programming such as Holocaust remembrance, antisemitism

education, security trainings and more.

“Your support helps to keep the Binghamton Jewish community vibrant and connected,” Hubal noted. She thanked donors for their generous support during Campaign 2026 and gave her outlook for Campaign 2027.

“Due to cuts in federal spending, there is a greater burden on not-for-profit organizations,” she added. “We understand this means our donors are being spread thin. When you support the Federation, you are giving to a multitude of local Jewish organizations and helping our neighbors in need. We thank everyone for their enduring support.”

Community organizations to receive grants from Federation endowment

By Reporter staff

At the June 17 Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton’s annual meeting, the Board of Directors considered a recommendation of its Endowment Committee and voted to give grants to Beth David Synagogue, Temple Concord, Temple Israel, Chabad Center, Hillel Academy, the Jewish Community Center and *The Reporter* to assist them in meeting their budgets. *The Reporter* will receive \$10,000, while the other organizations will each receive \$25,000.

“The Federation’s mission is, in part, to support local Jewish organizations,” said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. “I want to extend my gratitude to the Endowment Committee and the Federation board for their generosity. It will have a meaningful impact on our local organizations.”

“The motion came about when the Endowment Committee of the Jewish Federation was meeting to reinvest funds that were coming due from a series of investment bonds,” noted Dr. Mark Walker, Federation vice president and Endowment Committee member. “The idea to invest those funds in our community, at this time, was based on the knowledge that our local organizations are struggling, and coincides with a strong stock market and therefore a strong endowment fund balance.

“All of the recipient organizations have expressed their gratitude for the extra help. I believe the investment back into our community will touch every member of that community,” Walker continued. “As we begin the new Jewish

Federation Campaign we are hopeful the each of us will generously give so that we can sustain our Federation and keep our Jewish community strong, successful and vibrant for future generations.”

“We are extremely grateful to the Federation Endowment Committee and the Executive Board for their allotment of these gifts to area synagogues and organizations. Speaking for Chabad, I can say that between our expansion – we have grown exponentially over the last five years – and inflation, this gift is profoundly appreciated. The cohesion of our Jewish community has always been a defining feature of Binghamton; it is not a gift we take for granted,” commented Rabbi Aaron Slonim. “Never has it been more urgent for us to pour our resources into bolstering our Jewish youth through community, education and inspiration. This is a wonderful investment on the part of the Federation that will reap great dividends.”

“I am so very grateful for the Federation Board of Directors and its Endowment Committee’s support for *The Reporter*,” said Diana Sochor, *Reporter* executive editor. “This generous gift will enable us to continue providing the community with a one-stop place to discover what is happening in Jewish Binghamton, Ithaca and the surrounding communities, along with the book reviews, sports columns and more that our readers enjoy.”

“We are deeply grateful to the Jewish Federation for its generous support and partnership,” said Sheryl Brumer, JCC executive director. “Your commitment

to strengthening our Jewish community makes our work possible, and allows us to serve those who rely on our programs and services. Thank you for investing in our mission and helping us make a meaningful difference.”

“As the only Jewish day school serving the greater Binghamton area, we are so grateful to the Federation for this generous grant, an investment in the future of our Jewish community,” the Hillel Academy Board of Trustees stated. “It shows that in our small community, when one organization prospers, we all prosper. Thank you to all the community members and donors, past and present, who made this possible!”

“We here at Temple Concord are tre-

mendously moved by the Federation’s generous grant to us and to our sister congregations in the area,” said Rabbi Leah Moser. “It is a concrete sign, if one were needed, of the bonds of solidarity and mutual support which bind this Jewish community together to a degree that is remarkable in this day and age.”

“I am so pleased that the Federation is able to support our community’s organizations and that these grants will help them move forward,” said Suzanne Holwitt, president of the Federation. “The community’s support of our Campaign has been so valuable; we hope that this will continue as we strive to have a vibrant Jewish community in Broome County.”

Inter-Sisterhood held



The annual Inter-Sisterhood event was held at Temple Concord on June 14. Among those attending were (seated, l-r): Rabbi Leah Moser, Shelly Drazen, Cathy Velenchick, Phyllis Kellenberger, Julie Piaker, Chaim Joy and Rabbi Moshe Shmaryahu. See page 3 for more photos. (Photo by Stacey Silber)

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Opinion

From the Desk of the Federation Executive Director

With gratitude

SHELLEY HUBAL

If you are fortunate, someone comes into your life who inspires you to become a better version of yourself. For me, that person was Marilyn Bell—a friend, teacher and colleague. Marilyn and I worked together for eight years running the Federation Annual Campaign. Campaign work can be slow, frustrating and overwhelming, but none of that ever seemed to bother her. She always showed up with a cheerful outlook and a readiness to roll up her sleeves and get the work done. Marilyn taught me to consider other perspectives and remain persistent, qualities that have never come easily to

me in Campaign work. She was wonderful at analyzing problems and expected the same careful consideration from me. In short, she made me a smarter and stronger person, director and fundraiser. If I was hesitant to call a particular donor, she reminded me that we were not asking for ourselves, but for the good of the community. She understood that deeply and lived it in everything she did to strengthen the Binghamton Jewish community that she loved. Once, I recall telling Marilyn about the simple plans my husband and I had for the summer – quiet dinners, long hikes and evenings kayaking in Whitney Point. With a

glint in her eye and a gentle smile, she simply said, in the most heartfelt way, “Oh, how lovely.” In another personal moment, Marilyn patiently listened as I shared the frustrations I was feeling with my daughter. She gently reassured me that love and patience would help heal our relationship in time. Her words brought comfort to me then, and I have carried them with me ever since. I am deeply grateful for the time I had with Marilyn. She was smart, classy, full of chutzpah and blessed with a heart of gold. Thank you, Marilyn, for being both a friend and a teacher. I will miss you.

One Perspective from Israel

Diamonds up the hill: part two

JEREMY M. STAIMAN

This article originally appeared in the Times of Israel and is being reprinted with permission. Our story continues: The first minyan in the *shul* took me by surprise. It was nicely populated, and those who attended were not there merely to “check the box” of having *davened*, anxiously looking at their watches or phones to get back to the pool or sauna or dining room. Rather, it was an unhurried group of men who genuinely wanted to be there. That was reinforced the following morning, when I arrived early to *shul*. I’m not known for arriving early, but when the starting time is 8 am, it’s a lot easier. I entered expecting to be the first one in attendance. But there sat a man roughly my age (gosh he looked old!), earbuds in place, teaching the Daf Yomi in Israeli-accented flawless English to someone over the phone. Others had arrived early, as well, to take their time with the morning prayers. The mood was distinctly relaxed. It was a good sign.

Meet the maintenance man

Later that day, Chana and I decided to go to the patio outside our room to read. It was a glorious day and we attempted to open the umbrella for shade. It seemed to be stuck, so I called the front desk for assistance. A few minutes later, a maintenance man arrived. Sephardim don’t have the same strong tradition of wearing *kippot* outside of *davening* and eating. In walked this religious maintenance worker. How did I know he was religious if he had a bare head? Because his *tzitzit* swung long and proud, complete with a sea-blue strand of *techelet*! Far from what I had expected in a place like this, I had found a diamond.

Meet Avishai

Avishai is an affable 44-year-old father of three, who grew up in Haifa, and now lives just south of the Lebanese border in Nahariya, Israel’s northernmost coastal city. For the last 15 years, he’s traveled to the hotel to work in the dining room. He greeted and seated us at our dinner table the first night. I’m not sure why I noticed his name tag, but I would be glad that I did.

Meet Eli

Eli is a handsome, tall 24-year-old single man from Haifa. His full beard is streaked with brown, blond and ginger, all of which does nothing to conceal his broad smile. Eli is a people person, who loves interacting with others. He’s somewhat of a renaissance man—he’s the hotel’s sommelier and gives wine workshops. Wise beyond his years, he’s a seeker of knowledge, a devotee of the study of history, and has a broad knowledge of Tanach (the Hebrew Bible) and Greek mythology. He served in the Israel Air Force, but not in a capacity he can talk about. He ran a coffee shop in the Children’s Oncology Department at Rambam Hospital.

He clearly takes care of himself, enjoys physical challenges and he stands half a head taller than Avishai. I know this because I saw them together on our second morning. At *Shacharit* (morning prayers), Avishai walked in and, to my mild surprise, donned a *kippah*. I had no idea that he was religious. He was there for a few minutes when another employee walked in. It was Eli. After a period of soul-searching on *Pesach*, Eli had decided to investigate his questions in Tanach in a more serious manner. Feeling inspired, he put on a *kippah*. Avishai, noticing that his coworker had taken this unusual step, asked him if he would like to take another, by putting on tefillin. Eli readily agreed. Avishai took his time to help Eli figure out how to put them on. They seemed to be stuck for a minute, as they realized that the shirt sleeve of Eli’s uniform could not be pulled far enough up his arm to allow him to wear the *shel yad* (the *tefillin* which goes on the upper arm). The issue was not so much the uniform, but the bulk of Eli’s well-sculpted biceps and triceps. Without embarrassment, Eli removed his shirt, revealing not only a developed physique, but also rather prominent tattoos up his arms, including representations of Julius Caesar, Pegasus and Hercules. As he stood there in his undershirt, Avishai helped him don *tefillin* and recite the *Shema*. It was the very first time in his life that the cows’-leather boxes and parchment scrolls of the *tefillin* had graced his arm and his head. And we casual minyan-goers were privileged to see it happen! Eli reported later that he felt new energy escort him throughout his day. Avishai and Eli: two more amazing diamonds.

Meet Dalal

I haven’t met Dalal, but Chana has. Her job at the hotel doesn’t sound very glamorous (at least to me). She does the manicures and pedicures in the spa. Since the goal of our trip was to pamper my wife, she went to get her nails done, something for which she normally has no patience. Dalal is a 33-year-old Druze Arab woman. For those unfamiliar, the Druze are followers of a monotheistic, Abrahamic faith. They are a distinct religion, not Muslims. They are, by and large, fiercely loyal to the state of Israel and serve in the IDF, including combat and elite units. Dalal lives nearby, and both she and her husband work in the Carmel Forest Hotel. She’s a good shmoozer, and so is my wife, so they hit it off immediately. It turns out that her husband is in *miluim* (army reserve duty) and serves in the Homefront Command, just like our older son Avi. He was due back from duty the day we left, to his job as a chef. By the time the polish dried, Chana and Dalal were fast friends and exchanged phone numbers. She refers to my wife as “*yafati*” – my

beautiful one. She told us that if her husband returned before we departed, she would have him cook us up something special. And she invited us to visit them in their village, Daliyat al Carmel, at the foot of the mountain. A new friendship. An unlikely friendship. Another diamond gathered along the way. — *Meet Shai* Another encounter in *shul*. While waiting for a minyan to gather, I sat with just one other man. I said hello and got to meet Shai, who introduced himself as the hotel’s butcher and prep cook. I replied: “*kol hakavod!*” (roughly translated as “kudos to you,” but more literally “all honor to you”). He answered that “all honor goes only to our Creator.” I told him that he is created in the image of God, so he gets to reflect that honor. Shai couldn’t wait for the quorum, as he had to get back to work, so he proceeded to *daven* on his own. When he reached *Shema*, I couldn’t help but notice that he arched his head back, planted his fingers on his eyes and prayed fervently. How long did his first line of *Shema* take? Permit me to replay for you the conversation I had in my mind: “I should take a picture of this!” “Would that be intrusive?” “Maybe, but he wouldn’t have to know.” “Still, it’s not nice.” “Maybe I’ll take the picture, and ask him afterwards if he minds.” At the end of this mental debate, I still had time to take out my phone and snap the picture. That’s how long his six-word *Shema* took. A few minutes later, he was reciting *Hallel*, singing to himself. Was this a man rushing to work and merely going through the motions? Hardly! After *Musaf* he was wrapping up and began to sing again, even shuffling in dance. I strained to hear what he might be singing at that point, until I finally recognized “Mashiach, mashiach, mashiach!” using the lively tune popularized by Mordechai Ben David. We talked for a few minutes afterward. When I asked if I could use the picture I had taken, Shai replied that if it would help inspire people, then he is happy to allow it. I knew it had been meaningful to me and I hoped it would be for others, as well. But he wasn’t finished being inspiring. “We made *Pesach* here at the hotel,” he told me. “We don’t usually open for *Pesach*. But with the war and everyone dealing with all the pressures we’ve been under recently, it was decided that, as the flagship hotel of Israel’s largest chain, we need to be there for our people. We need to open, and give them an unparalleled holiday experience. We prepared a seder for 150 people and it was like nothing you’ve ever seen!” See “Diamonds” on page 7



Jewish Federation
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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

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Federation, JCC to host Canva training on July 30

The Jewish Federation and Jewish Community Center will co-sponsor a free Canva training event on Thursday, July 30, at 6 pm, at the JCC in the meeting room. The training will be led by Rose Shapiro and Lauren Fitch. Those planning to attend should register by Wednesday, July 29, on the Federation's website,

www.jfjgb.org, or by calling the Federation office at 607-724-2332. Attendees should plan to bring their own laptops or tablets.

"Would you like to learn to make flyers, social media posts and more? Canva is an online design tool that has both free and premium versions. Learn about

all the things you can do with this wonderful tool," said organizers.

"If you are planning an event, and want to learn how to make flyers and posts to maximize your publicity, this is the training for you," said Shelley Hubal, Jewish Federation executive director.

Holocaust memorial service to be held on Sept. 20

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton will hold a memorial service at the Holocaust Memorial Monument in the Temple Israel Cemetery on Sunday, September 20, at 10:30 am. The service will be led by area rabbis. The monument was one of the first memorial stones in the United States to acknowledge the Holocaust.

"We are pleased to be able to hold this important event again this year," said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. "We not only remember those who lost their lives in the Holocaust, but honor those who developed, created and sustained this important community memorial."

The monument was the project of the Get Together Club, which was a social and philanthropic group formed in 1948 by 13



The Holocaust Memorial in the Temple Israel Cemetery

German-speaking Jewish women. The women were the wives of cattle dealers who had resettled in the Southern Tier after fleeing Nazism. The decision to raise a memorial stone occurred after a member's husband wished he had a place to say *Kaddish* for his parents, who, since they had died in the Holocaust, had no grave he could visit. The club raised the necessary funds for the stone. The names of more than 250 individuals who died in the Holocaust and had no grave were placed in a copper box, which was buried at the foot of the monument. The inscription on the stone says, "Victims of Racial Persecution who lost Their Lives in Europe During the Years 1933-1945. They Will Never Be Forgotten."

The first ceremony took place on Sunday, November 9, 1952, and continued for 20

Information sought for Federation calendar

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton is collecting information for its 2026-27 community calendar. Dates for meetings, events and communitywide celebrations should be e-mailed to Executive Director Shelley Hubal at director@jfjgb.org as soon as they are set. The Federation will collate the dates and make certain there are no conflicts.

"We are a small, but active, community," said Hubal. "It is important to make sure there are no conflicts, so we can all enjoy the wonderful things our community has to

offer us. Also, I greatly appreciate when people send me their changes and additions during the year, so we can keep the calendar as accurate as possible."

The calendar can be found on the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton's website at www.jfjgb.org/community-calendar. "The calendar is a quick and easy way to see what is happening in the community," Hubal added. "It includes everything from lectures to board meetings. You might be surprised to see just how active our local organizations are."

Inter-Sisterhood held

Inter-Sisterhood was held at Temple Concord on June 14. Beth David Synagogue, Temple Concord and Temple Israel Sisterhood members and others gathered together for an afternoon of schmoozing, lunch and entertainment by Greg Neff, local singer and guitarist.

"We also had a very successful raffle with donations from lots of local businesses and entertainment venues, as well as some beautiful baskets donated by several Sisterhood members," said organizers. "Thanks so much to all donors."



Greg Neff entertained the crowd at Inter-Sisterhood.



Above, l-r: Linda VonEsch; Ruth Shapiro and Eileen Miller. Below: The raffle table. (Photos by Stacey Silber)



The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to the family of

Marilyn Bell

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to **Dr. Alan Lerman** on the death of his father,

Abram Lerman

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to the family of

Inge Levie

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to **David and Davi-Linda Katzin Friedman** on the death of their daughter,

Ann-Isabel Friedman

DEADLINES

The following are deadlines for all articles and photos for upcoming printed issues of the monthly REPORTER.

ISSUE	DEADLINE
September	August 12
October	September 9
November	October 7
December	November 11

All deadlines for the year can be found at www.thereportergroup.org/contact-us/faqs under "Q: What Are the Deadlines for the Paper?"

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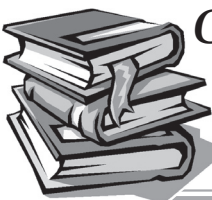
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Off the Shelf

Finding a spiritual balance

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Alicia Jo Rabins grew up in a secular Jewish home, but, even as a young child, felt that something was missing from her life, that there was something different that she needed to make life feel complete. As she notes in her memoir “When We’re Born We Forget Everything” (Schocken Books), she first found that part of that missing element in music and then in Orthodox Judaism, before realizing that the best way to live her life was to find a balance between the sacred and secular. Or, more accurately, to see the sacred that exists in the secular and sacred worlds. Her work not only tells the story of her spiritual search, but offers chapters that contain her thoughts on biblical stories she found particularly meaningful.

Rabins writes that there are two ways to look at her spiritual journey: one focuses on her identity as a “white American girl growing up in a late twentieth-century secular suburbia, sensing mystery” in her everyday world and how she left suburbia “to search for meaning.” The other sees her as “a Jewish girl born in the Diaspora, in the Hebrew year 5737 [1977]” who discovers the religion her ancestors passed down through the ages, returning “to the faint flame [of that tradition] burning inside her.” Readers may feel both of these description are accurate since Rabins left and then returned to the secular world, while taking the flame of her Orthodox practice and using it to find the sacred in other parts of her life.

Her search began in high school with the use of drugs, including LSD, to uncover the mystery she felt existed in the world. She notes, “I was a disciple and LSD was my monastery, my teacher, and my instruction. It was a hidden door, a mystery rabbit hole, an ascetic practice to be hidden from my parents and, of course, my two younger sisters.” What may strike readers as unusual is that she, then, claims she experienced the same sense of mystery when studying Jewish text. That study began when she left Maryland for college in New York City. That was the first time she saw Orthodox Jews on a regular basis, not

that she recognized the Jewish girls who lived in her dorm as such. It was their practice of waiting for someone else to open the automatic sliding doors on Saturdays so they wouldn’t use electricity that first drew Rabins’ attention. The mystery so intrigued Rabins that she became interested in learning more. When she begins studying Talmud at a Wednesday Night Learning, she is fascinated by the texts, so much so that she decides to spend a year after college studying in a yeshiva in Israel.

However, there are complications that she realized might create difficulties with her acceptance in the Orthodox community. Rabins knew that she had to keep her two college worlds separate, in part because she identifies as bisexual and was in a relationship with Zoe, a fellow student. Rabins also feels close to her *chavruta* (study partner) Shira, although their time together is spent only in study or celebrating holidays. The author sees what she learned from them as two different types of study: “With Shira I apprenticed in the school of the mind; with Zoe, in the school of body and heart.” Once Rabins decides to study at an Orthodox school in Israel and practice Orthodox Judaism, she knows that her relationship with Zoe must end and quietly leaves that form of study behind, at least for the time being.

At first, Rabins loves the rules and strictures of Judaism. It is only later that she seeks what she considers a more balanced path. What changed was that Rabins realized that holiness could be found in more places than she expected, even with the secular roommates she shared a house with in Amherst: “I began to realize that the holiness I found in Jerusalem was here too – was everywhere, pulsing through everything. It just required a gentle alertness to notice it, like a radio turned to the precise frequency, a clear signal.” That didn’t mean she deserted her Jewish practice, but found a way to take what she thought was the best of her Orthodox practice and combine it with other experiences she found sacred.

That included teaching and music since the author also found spirituality in playing the violin. She began playing classical violin as a child, then learned to play bluegrass fiddle, before discovering klezmer. There were times she made money from playing, either by busking on the streets or performing with a group of musicians. At one point, after she had returned to the U.S. from Israel, it looked as if she would make her career through music, but that group took a different direction and found a new violinist. The author then found others to play with, music that allowed to infuse her playing with her vision of Judaism.

The sections offering her thoughts on the biblical text show Rabins’ often nontraditional approach to the stories. For example, when writing about the building of the *Mishkan* (the Tabernacle), she offers an interesting explanation of how the structure was as much for humans as for God: the story is “about the sanctity of creativity and craft, the meaningfulness of making, and the possibility of weaving sacredness out of the everyday. When we use our talents, skills, hands, and wise hearts to create beauty in any form, we perform a holy act. We invited God in.” The author sees the story of Potiphar’s wife as one that teaches “the powerful, destabilizing, potentially tragic, potentially liberating force of desire, longed and lust. A story about the relationship between two forms of desire: our desire for other people, and our desire for God.” Other sections also offer thought-provoking insights to the text.

“When We’re Born We Forget Everything” is different from many religious memoirs in that it doesn’t tell of someone Orthodox who leaves that world to become secular, or someone secular who enters the Orthodox world and remains there. Her book is beautifully written and offers a journey that readers might not want to take themselves, but which is intriguing to experience second hand, and which may leave readers pondering their own spiritual paths.



Jews in Sports

Hockey and basketball roundups, 2025-26

BILL SIMONS

Seasons once defined American sports. Basketball and ice hockey were long primarily winter sports associated with that lull between the end of the fall football season and the advent of baseball’s spring training. James Naismith, basketball’s creator, specifically envisioned his game for indoor gyms as a cold weather counter to endless calisthenics. And hockey was originally the province of frozen outdoor rinks and ponds, along with a few enclosed facilities. Now basketball and hockey, particularly on the professional level, have interminable seasons, overlapping with other sports. Thus, our 2025-26 Jewish basketball and hockey roundups faced a long wait in the queue.

From the game’s 1890s genesis onward, Jews have taken to basketball. In my youth, basketball had a strong Jewish hue. Syracuse Nationals forward, 6’8” Jewish Dolph Schayes was my favorite player, and circa early 1960s he was the NBA all-time career leader in points scored, rebounds and consecutive games played. But living in Greater Boston, the Celtics were my team, winning NBA championships year after year under their legendary coach Red Auerbach and broadcast by the inimitable, rapid-delivery, defiantly partisan Johnny Most. Possessed of chutzpah, Auerbach and Most were both Jewish and proud of it.

Going forward, a prominent Jewish presence continued

in professional basketball amongst commissioners (David Stern, Adam Silver), owners, executives, agents, media and fans. Coaches Red Holzman (Knicks) and Larry Brown (Pistons) won NBA championships. Hall of Famers Nancy Lieberman and Sue Bird contributed greatly to the ascent of women’s basketball. An All-American at the University of Illinois, Tal Brody made *aliyah* and elevated Israel basketball. Since the Schayes era, however, above the hoop play by Black and international athletes surged, portending a precipitous decline of Jewish players on the NBA hardwood.

A Jewish NBA superstar emerged during the 2025-26 season, Deni Avdija. Born on a *kibbutz*, the 6’8”, 228 pound, 25-year-old, Israeli, in his sixth NBA season, earned All-Star honors and led his Portland Trail Blazers into the NBA playoffs. Pacing Portland in points (24.2) and assists (6.7) per game during the regular season, the

“small” forward, noted for his turbo speed and aggressive play, also averaged 6.9 rebounds. And he did this while facing anti-Israel and antisemitic vitriol in person and online. In his most important game of the season, Avdija ensured a post-season berth for Portland, netting 41 points, 12 assists and seven rebounds against the Phoenix Suns. Avdija’s Trail Blazers fell to the San Antonio Spurs in the first round of the playoffs, but wait ‘til next year!

The 2025-26 NBA season introduced other Jewish players who merit future attention, notably two New York Nets rookies 6’11” Danny Wolf and 6’6” Ben Saraf. A shooting guard, Saraf, an Israeli, averaged 7.5 points and 3.3 assists per game. Power forward Wolf averaged 8.9 points and 4.9 rebounds a game.

With Jewish fans, famous landsman amongst them, celebrating the Knicks NBA championship, New York City See “Hockey” on page 5



On the Jewish food scene

Jewish meatloaf

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Is there such a thing as Jewish meatloaf? My first reaction to that question would have been no, at least until I had a discussion with *Reporter* Executive Editor Diana Sochor. She forwarded me a link to an article on The Nosh-er website about meatloaf (www.myjewishlearning.com/the-nosh-er/the-ultimate-jewish-meatloaf-recipe), saying that her non-Jewish grandmother, who had a number of Jewish friends, used to make it. I’d seen the article, but hadn’t given much thought to it. However, her comment made me look at the article again and I noticed something that made me reflect on my childhood.

It’s probably be more 50 years since I’ve had meatloaf, except for vegetarian versions. My mother also used to make the one featured in the article, which is different from other meatloaves because encased in the meat was a hard-boiled egg. Actually, my mother used to make two loaves: one with the hard-boiled egg and one without because I refused to eat the one with the egg. Why? I have no idea. I don’t remember ever tasting it and saying I didn’t like it. I just wouldn’t eat it.

To be fair, I wasn’t that fond of meatloaf in general. That is, until I went to college and discovered non-Jewish meatloaf. The University of Pennsylvania dining service was closed on weekends so we were responsible for our own meals. A friend and I would walk to 30th Street Station

(the train station about five large blocks away from our dorm) and have lunch at the drugstore counter. I don’t remember what she had, but I fell in love with the non-Jewish meatloaf that came with mashed potatoes and mushy peas. (Yes, as a college student I also loved mushy peas.) Not a lot of students went that far off campus for lunch or dinner, but we both loved to walk so that was an added benefit. (I would also accompany her when she wanted to visit the candy store in the station to buy the white and pink chocolate that she loved.)

By my last year of college, I was on the first of my medically restricted diets and ground beef disappeared from my diet. (It’s not that I won’t eat beef, but I won’t cook it and rarely eat it elsewhere.) What made this so interesting for Diana, though, is that she has a vague memory of eating this meatloaf once at her grandparents’ home. However, memory can be funny: When she asked her parents and brother about this, they had no memory of the meal. Her father does remember the meatloaf his mother made as being really good, so perhaps that’s what made her think she’s eaten it. Kind of funny if you think about it: the non-Jew was excited to read about the Jewish meatloaf the Jewish person could live without. Then again, who knows? Maybe I would actually like it now, that is if someone else was willing to make it for me.

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There are four levels: Bronze \$200, Silver \$400, Gold \$600 and Platinum \$1,000.

To arrange for a sponsorship or for answers to questions, contact Kathy Brown at advertising@thereportergroup.org.

On Saturday, October 24, Beth David Synagogue's Shabbat Luncheon Speaker Series will feature the first guest presenter of the season: Professor Marla Segol, of Buffalo University, whose talk is titled "God as a Loving Mother in Ancient Jewish Prayer." This monthly series will begin with Shabbat services at 9:30 am, with the luncheon and program following. All community members are invited to attend. Segol's talk, part of her current book project, will draw on Jewish liturgical and exegetical texts from the second to the ninth centuries to present images of God as a moth-

er figure. "While some contemporary thinkers might imagine that the idea of inclusive prayer language and presenting God as both male and female is a recent concern, Dr. Segol will demonstrate that ancient Jews grappled with these issues, as well," said organizers of the event.

Segol, who was raised in Buffalo, received her B.A. at SUNY New Paltz before earning a doctorate in comparative literature at Rutgers University. She



*Prof. Marla Segol
(Photo by Chris Zachary)*

taught at several other institutions before returning to Buffalo in 2012. A scholar of Jewish and gender studies, Segol specializes in Jewish mysticism. Her most recent book is “Kabbalah and Sex Magic,” published by Penn State University Press in 2021. She is also the mother of two adult children and is a paddler.

“We are fortunate and delighted to have Dr. Segol bring her energy and erudition to Binghamton and Beth David,” organizers

added. "A renowned teacher and scholar, she is sure to spark a lively and enriching Shabbat program!"

Beth David Synagogue's Shabbat Luncheon Speaker Series relies on the generosity of contributors. Donations to the Luncheon Fund are appreciated and can be made in honor or memory of a loved one, or to mark a special occasion. Acknowledgments can be sent by including the necessary information. Donations can be sent to Beth David Synagogue, 39 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905, Attention: Luncheon Fund.

found temporary respite from its polarization with the chant “My mayor’s Muslim, My bagel’s Jewish.”

In college Jewish basketball, the Yeshiva University Maccabees made it to the Division III Sweet Sixteen. But the biggest Jewish collegiate basketball news involved coaches’ travail at the highest level. After notching a combined regular season/playoff record of 706 wins against 268 losses for a stellar .725 winning percentage, the voluble and controversial Bruce Pearl, a strong supporter of Israel, moved from coaching to TNT/CBS broadcasting, bequeathing the Auburn berth to his son Steven. Guiding Duke to a 35-3 regular season record and entering the NCAA tournament as a top seed, Coach Jon Heyer’s Blue Devils lost a 73-72 heartbreaker to Connecticut in the Elite Eight. And Todd Golden’s Florida Gators lost their chance to repeat as national champions, upset 72-70 by the Iowa Hawkeyes and a referee’s double-technical foul call.

A Jewish athlete gave hockey, indeed American sport, its most memorable 2025-

26 vignette. On February 22, the final game of men's hockey competition at the Milan-Cortina (Italian) Olympics entered a dramatic overtime with U.S. and Canadian teams tied 1-1. America's Jack Hughes, star center of the National Hockey League's New Jersey Devils but positioned at forward in the Olympics, endured a high stick to the mouth during a powerplay. Although he fleetingly "looked on the ice and saw... (2) teeth," that did not slow the explosive playmaker. At 1:41 into overtime, Hughes powered the puck into the Canadian net. The American hockey team had not won an Olympic championship since the iconic 1980 Miracle on Ice nor previously taken the gold medal outside its national borders. Literally draped in the American flag, a gap-toothed, exultant Hughes exclaimed, "This is all about our country right now. I love the USA." Television appearances on "Today" and "Saturday Night Live," as well as at the State of the Union, assured Hughes' status as an enduring national legend.

An American and Jewish hero, Hughes,

growing up, celebrated his bar mitzvah and observed Passover. And he is integral to the first family of American hockey. Brother Quinn, a Minnesota Wild star and recipient of the 2024 Norris Trophy as the NHL best defenseman, is also an Olympian, acing the goal that brought the U.S. victory against Sweden in the quarterfinals. The youngest Hughes brother, Luke, Jack's Devils teammate and stellar defenseman, missed much of the past season due to a shoulder injury. A Gentile, Jim Hughes, the trio's father, was a star collegiate player who subsequently held coaching and player development positions.

The four formidable Hughes men would yield center stage to Ellen Weinberg-Hughes, mother to Quinn, Jack and Luke, and wife to Jim. An International Jewish Sports Hall of Fame inductee, she affirmed feeling "so proud of my Jewish heritage." In addition to hockey, she also excelled in soccer and lacrosse. Weinberg-Hughes displayed hockey playing prowess on University of New Hampshire and U.S. women's national teams. Subse-

quently, she burnished her reputation as a hockey coach, teacher and broadcaster. As player development consultant, she shared the 2026 U.S. women's Olympic hockey team's gold medal triumph.

In contrast to basketball, Jews were relatively late comers to hockey, but their visibility in college and NHL ranks has soared in recent years, abetted by the growth of suburban rinks and travel teams. NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman is Jewish. Boston Bruin Jeremy Swayman joined the brothers Hughes on the 2026 U.S. Olympic Team and was a finalist for the Vezina Trophy, given to the NHL's top goalie. Other recent Jewish NHL players include Jakob Chychrun (Washington Capitals, defenseman), Adam Fox (New York Rangers, defenseman), Mark Friedman (Vancouver Canucks, defenseman), Jordan Harris (Boston Bruins, defenseman), Zach Hyman (Edmonton Oilers, left wing), Luke Kunin (Florida Panthers, center), and Devon Levi (Buffalo Sabres, goalie). And there are more to come!

ROSH HASHANAH 5787

Greetings

Deadline: August 13 (*September issue*)

Once again this year, **The Reporter** is inviting its readers and local organizations to extend New Year's greetings to the community by purchasing a New Year's greeting ad, which will appear in our September issue.

You may choose from the designs, messages and sizes shown here - more are available. You may also choose your own message, as long as it fits into the space of the greeting you select. (Custom designs available upon request.) The price of the small greeting is \$21 (styles B, E and F), the medium one is \$40 (style A, C and D) and the largest one (style G) is \$78.

To ensure that your greeting is published, or for more information on additional styles, sizes and designs, please contact Kathy Brown at 607-724-2360, ext. 244; or e-mail advertising@thereportergrout.org. Checks can be made payable to **The Reporter** and sent to: **The Reporter**, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850.

ROSH HASHANAH Greetings

Deadline: August 13 (*September issue*)

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 Message _____
 How you would like it signed _____

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 Card Number _____
 Expiration Date _____
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The Reporter,
 500 Clubhouse Rd.,
 Vestal, NY 13850.



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Your name(s)



Happy Rosh Hashanah!
Your Name(s)



Your Name(s)



Your Name(s)



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Your Name(s)

Style A - \$40
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Style B - \$21 • Actual Size: 1.5278" x 1.975"

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Style D - \$40
Actual Size: 3.22" x 1.975"

Style E - \$21
Actual Size: 1.5278" x 1.975"

Style F - \$21
Actual Size: 1.5278" x 1.975"

Style G - \$78 • Actual Size: 3.22" x 3.95"

Aug. 13 Deadline





Refined by praise

SARIT ANSTANDIG, JLIC CO-DIRECTOR AT BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY

What motivates us to grow and be better? How do we grow as individuals? A verse in Proverbs offers us insight. Proverbs 27:21 discusses how various things are refined and purified: “*Matzref la-keseif ve-chur le-zahav; v-ish le-fi mahalalo*”: “The refining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold, and a man according to his praise.” The beginning of the verse discusses how to purify precious metals: the refining pot is used for silver, and the furnace is used for gold. But what does this mean that a man is purified by his praise?

Rashi explains that this verse is talking about the judgment of one’s character. How should we assess one’s character? By his praise, meaning by how others praise him. What is his reputation? This, for Rashi, is the fundamental question. And when one is concerned with his reputation, he will be more thoughtful about the way that he acts. When we know that others are watching and assessing us, we make better choices. This consciousness leads us to be more refined.

On the other hand, Rabbeinu Yona offers an alternative

explanation. How do we evaluate one’s true character? Not by what people say about him, but what he says about others. Who does he choose to praise and look up to? And what attributes does he praise someone for? What one looks for in others is the best way to understand someone’s true character. And by praising others and searching for the admirable qualities in others, we come to refine our thoughts and actions.

Adding on to Rabbeinu Yona, it is valuable to consider the verse’s use of a refining pot and furnace. Both of these utilize high heat to refine precious metals. This high heat can be compared to the challenge that we may face in praising others. When we are concerned with our own reputations, we do not necessarily want to admit the strengths that we see in others. We may feel inferior by singing their praises. In fact, though, Proverbs teaches us the irony that recognizing and even admiring the strengths in others actually makes us stronger. When we can transcend our own ego, we open up a door towards self-refinement.

Finally, I would like to share a third interpretation of

this verse given by Rabbi Elazar Azikri. What is the ideal way to gain insight into someone’s truest self, he asks? Not by the way that others praise him, or by how he praises others. Instead, it is how one praises God. How a person worships the Divine – that is the most accurate reflection of a person’s character. And by praising God, a person refines and purifies himself.

Deep down, we all strive to grow and refine ourselves. And we can accomplish this growth through different channels. As human beings, we live with a social consciousness about how we relate to those around us. Concern for our reputation can be a positive motivator to improve ourselves. It can encourage us to do what is right. But, when used in isolation, this approach can lead to a shallow and inauthentic growth process.

Looking more intrinsically, we can motivate ourselves by finding inspiration from others. Whom do we admire? Whom do we look toward and strive to emulate in their ways? This admiration expresses itself in our own minds

See “Praise” on page 7

Congregational Notes

Temple Israel

Orientation: Conservative
Rabbi: Micah Friedman
Address: 4737 Deerfield Pl., Vestal, NY 13850
Phone: 607-723-7461 and 607-231-3746
Office hours: Mon.-Thurs., 8:30 am-3:30 pm; Fri., 8 am-3 pm
E-mail: office@templeisraelvestal.org
Website: www.templeisraelvestal.org
Service schedule: Tues., 5:30 pm; Fri., 5:30 pm; Sat., 9:30 am – all via Zoom and in-person

On Fridays and Tuesdays at 5:30 pm, services will be led by Rabbi Micah Friedman.

On Saturday, August 1, Shabbat services will be held at 9:30 am. The Torah portion is Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25 and the haftarah is Isaiah 49:14-51:3. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 9:15 pm.

On Saturday, August 8, Shabbat services will be held at 9:30 am. The Torah portion is Deuteronomy 11:26-16:17 and the haftarah is Isaiah 54:11-55:5. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 9:15 pm.

On Saturday, August 15, Shabbat services will be held at 9:30 am. The Torah portion is Deuteronomy 16:18-21:9 and the haftarah is Isaiah 51:12-52:12. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 9 pm.

On Saturday, August 22, Shabbat services will be held at 9:30 am. The Torah portion is Deuteronomy 21:10-25:19 and the haftarah is Isaiah 54:1-10. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 8:45 pm.

On Saturday, August 29, Shabbat services will be held at 9:30 am. The Torah portion is Deuteronomy 26:1-29:8 and the haftarah is Isaiah 60:1-22. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 8:30 pm.

Upcoming events:
Tuesdays August 11, 18 and 25: “Torah and Our Times” class with Rabbi Micah Friedman at 4:30 pm.
Wednesday, August 12: Ritual Committee meeting at 10 am.
Thursdays, August 13, 20, 27 and September 3: “Gateway to the High Holidays” class from 10:30 am-noon.
Friday, August 21: Shabbat services and dinner with Rabbi Friedman beginning at 5:30 pm.

Norwich Jewish Center

Orientation: Inclusive
Address: 72 South Broad St., Norwich, NY 13815
Phone: 607-334-2691
Purpose: To maintain a Jewish identity and meet the needs of the Jewish community in the area.

Temple Brith Sholom

Affiliation: Unaffiliated
Address: P.O. Box 572, 117 Madison St., Cortland, NY 13045
Phone: 607-756-7181
President: Mark Suben
Cemetery Committee: 315-696-5744
Website: templebrithsholomcortland.org
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Temple-Brith-Sholom-114006981962930/
Service leaders: Lay leadership
Shabbat services: Services are usually on the third Friday of the month and led by a variety of leaders. Check the Facebook page or 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.” The community extends a warm welcome to the Jewish student population of SUNY Cortland, as well as the residents of local adult residences. The Board of Trustees meets on the second Tuesday of the month.
Services and programs are held by Zoom usually on the third Friday of the month.

Beth David Synagogue

Affiliation: Orthodox Union
Rabbi: Zev Silber
Assistant Rabbi: Moshe Shmaryahu
Address: 39 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905
Phone: 722-1793
Rabbi’s Office: 722-7514
Fax: 722-7121
Office hours: Tues. 10 am-1 pm; Thurs. 9 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
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: Caleb Brommer
Address: 402 North Tioga St. (the corner of Court and Tioga streets), Ithaca, NY 14850-4292
Phone: 607-273-5775
Website: www.tbethithaca.org
President: Nommi Nadich
Director of Education and Engagement: Calle Schueler
Services: Friday 6:30 pm; Saturday 9:30 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 Sundays from 9 am-noon and Wednesdays from 4-6 pm. Teen Midrasha meets Tuesdays from 6-8 pm.
Adult Ed.: Numerous weekly courses, several semester-long courses and a variety of lectures are offered throughout the year. Call the temple office, or email secretary@tbethithaca.org, for more information.

Congregation Tikkun 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: Judy Saul and Eric Maroney
Education Director: Jennie Lavine, jennie.lavine@tikkunvor.org
Administrative Coordinator: Kenny Berkowitz, kenny.berkowitz@tikkunvor.org
Bnai Mitzvah Coordinator: Michael Margolin
Services: Most Friday nights at 7:30 pm, at least one Saturday morning each month. Many services are also accessible on Zoom. Contemplative morning services every Tuesday 8:30-9:30 am, online only. Check the website, www.tikkunvor.org, for more details.
Jewish Learning Experiences (JLE) for second through seventh grade classes meet on Sunday mornings. Sixth and seventh grades also meet on Wednesday afternoons. Family programs for kindergarten and first grade held monthly.
Adult Education: Offered regularly throughout the year. Check the website for details.



Friday, July 31, light candles..... 8:05 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, August 1 9:04 pm
Friday, August 7, light candles..... 7:57 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, August 8 8:56 pm
Friday, August 14, light candles..... 7:47 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, August 15 8:46 pm
Friday, August 21, light candles..... 7:37 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, August 22 8:36 pm
Friday, August 28, light candles..... 7:25 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, August 29 8:24 pm

Temple Concord

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism
Rabbi: Leah Moser
Address: 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton NY 13905
Office hours: Tues.-Fri., 10 am-2 pm
Phone: 607-723-7355
Office e-mail: TempleConcordBinghamton@gmail.com
Website: www.TempleConcord.com
Please contact Temple Concord for Zoom links.

Some services and programs are online only. For Zoom links, contact Temple Concord.

Services, ongoing classes and evening prayers at Temple Concord:

Fridays: At 7:30 pm, Shabbat service (in person, on Zoom and on Facebook).

Saturdays: At 9:15 am, Torah study (in person and on Zoom) and at 10:30 am, Shabbat service (in person).

Wednesdays: At 5:30 pm, evening prayers (in person). At 6 pm, adult education classes (in person and on Zoom). Contact the temple office for more details.

Temple Beth El of Oneonta

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
Cantor: Josh Stein
Address: 83 Chestnut St., Oneonta, NY 13820
Mailing address: P.O. Box 383, Oneonta, NY 13820
Phone: 607-432-5522
E-mail: TBEOneonta@gmail.com
Regular service times: Contact the temple for days of services and times.
Religious School/Education: Religious School, for grades kindergarten through bar/bat mitzvah, meets Sunday mornings.
For the schedule of services, classes and events, contact the temple.

Penn-York Jewish Community

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.
For more information, contact the Penn-York Jewish Community at pennyorkjc@gmail.com.

Rohr Chabad Center

Affiliation: Chabad-Lubavitch
Rabbi Aaron and Rivkah Slonim, Directors
E-mail: aslonim@binghamton.edu
rslonim@chabadofbinghamton.com
Address: 420 Murray Hill Rd., Vestal, NY 13850
Phone: 607-797-0015, Fax: 607-797-0095
Website: www.Chabadofbinghamton.com
Rabbi Zalman and Rochel Chein, Education
E-mail: zchein@Jewishbu.com, rchein@Jewishbu.com
Rabbi Levi and Hadasa Slonim, Downtown and Development
Chabad Downtown Center: 60 Henry St., Binghamton
E-mail: lslonim@Jewishbu.com, hslonim@Jewishbu.com
Rabbi Yisroel and Goldie Ohana, Programming
E-mail: yohana@Jewishbu.com, gohana@Jewishbu.com
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.
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.
Chabad will be holding pre-Shabbat virtual programs. For more information, visit www.JewishBU.com/S2020Partnership.

At annual forum, AJC launches playbook to combat Jew-hatred

By Andrew Bernard

(JNS) – The American Jewish Committee launched a new “playbook” for combatting antisemitism at its annual global forum in Washington. The document (www.ajc.org/playbook) recommends strategies to address Jew-hatred in sectors including law enforcement, education and the private sector.

“The Jewish community and our allies have been asking for a proactive, visionary effort to not only scale the fight against antisemitism but to also address it in all its contemporary forms,” said Ted Deutch, CEO of the committee.

“AJC’s ‘Combating Antisemitism Playbook’ delivers

exactly that,” Deutch said. “From academia to social media and AI companies, AJC’s playbook gives leaders across society clear, practical ways to understand, respond to and prevent antisemitism and in doing so, help shape and support a thriving Jewish community.”

In a panel discussion on the rise of contemporary Jew-hatred and anti-Israel sentiment on June 1, Dara Horn, author of the book “People Love Dead Jews,” traced the origins of antisemitism in what is unique about Jews. “Jews spent 3,000 years not being like everyone else. Uncoolness is Judaism’s brand,” Horn said.

Horn said that it was a mistake to teach that antisemitism is a form of bigotry like discrimination against other groups when the foundation of Jew-hatred is both distinctive and unchanging.

“The lie is always the same. It’s not shapeshifting, morphing – nope. Always the same,” she said. “Jews are destroying what you value the most. The only thing that changes is what you value the most in different social circles, different eras.”

Originally published at <https://www.jns.org/news/u-s-news/at-annual-forum-ajc-launches-playbook-to-combat-jew-hatred>.

Poll: Israelis support peace with more Arab states but oppose Palestinian state

By JNS staff

(JNS) – Israelis want peace with their Arab neighbors on the Abraham Accords model, but oppose a Palestinian state or any country but Israel governing the Gaza Strip, a survey the Council for a Secure America published on July 12 shows.

The poll, conducted in Hebrew among 557 Jewish Israeli respondents on June 7-10 with a margin of error of ±4 percentage points, found overwhelming support for strong U.S.-Israeli relations, with 97 percent of respondents saying it is vital for the Jewish state. Seventy-eight percent answered that U.S. backing for Israel is critical for the latter’s future.

As for a two-state solution, 63 percent of those surveyed opposed it and 22 percent were in favor.

Israelis’ sentiments regarding the Abraham Accords remained highly favorable, with 81 percent expressing support for the historic treaties Jerusalem signed with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco in 2020-21. Seventy-eight percent said they support reaching a similar diplomatic agreement with Saudi Arabia; 72 percent replied the same regarding Lebanon and 64 percent regarding Syria.

In addition, 71 percent said that normalization of ties with Riyadh would help boost the Israeli economy. However, only 46 percent said that normalization with Beirut would lead to a similar economic outcome and 36 percent in relation to Damascus.

A plurality of 41 percent of Israelis said they were in favor of Israel governing Gaza in the coming years, fol-

lowed by 25 percent favoring an international coalition supported by Arab countries to govern the Strip. Support for the U.N., the Palestinian Authority or other Palestinian factions doing so stood below 7 percent each.

These results come on the backdrop of close to three years of war in Gaza, after the Hamas-led invasion of Israel’s south on October 7, 2023, left roughly 1,200 victims murdered and 251 more kidnapped into the Gaza Strip.

The Council for a Secure America is a U.S.-based nonprofit educational organization, aiming to strengthen U.S. national security and the importance of the U.S.-Israeli alliance.

Originally published at <https://www.jns.org/news/israel-news/israelis-support-peace-with-more-arab-states-but-oppose-palestinian-state-poll>.

A third of Israel’s elderly suffer from diabetes

By JNS staff

(JNS) – One in three Israelis ages 65 and up suffers from diabetes, according to a report the Health Ministry published on September 4. The ministry’s National Center for Disease Control reported that 696,121 diabetics aged 2 years and older were included in the national registry in 2023, 7.4 percent of the population.

Among the 35-84 age group, there has been a gradual increase in the prevalence of diabetes, according to the data, which is based on health insurance reports. However, the trend remains stable when adjusted for age, according to the ministry. Men from age 35 on up were more susceptible to diabetes than women, the report read.

Additionally, the rate of patients living in neighborhoods with a low or medium-low socioeconomic index is higher than the rate in neighborhoods with a medium-high or high socioeconomic index, across all age groups. Arab and Bedouin populations moreover suffer from higher diabetes rates than the Jewish population, according to the Health Ministry.

The lowest rates were observed in the districts in the center of the country (Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Petach Tikvah, Rehovot) and Judea and Samaria, while the highest rates of diabetes were observed in the districts of the Golan, Jezreel Valley, Hadera and Acre.

According to the International Diabetes Federation report for 2021, the age-standardized prevalence rate of diabetes in Israel was 8.5 percent – higher than the 7 percent average in European countries.

“Promoting a healthy diet, physical activity and a healthy lifestyle are the most effective tools for reducing morbidity,” the ministry quoted Dr. Moran Blaychfeld Magnazi, director of the Nutrition Division in its Public Health Division, as saying. “The Ministry of Health works in collaboration with local authorities, regional clusters, the education system, health funds, academia and other entities, with the aim of creating supportive health environments and making healthier choices accessible to the public.”

Professor Little Keenan, director of the National Center for Disease Control, said: “There is no doubt that it is important to continue developing and implementing intervention programs to raise awareness of diabetes and its complications in the general population, and to encourage disease control among diabetic patients, with special emphasis on the Arab population and populations in low socioeconomic status.”

Keenan added that diabetes continues to pose a heavy

burden on the health of the population and the healthcare system, “especially among the elderly.”

The Israeli government allocated approximately 650 million shekels (~\$193 million) in 2022 for initiatives to promote health in Arab society through 2026, a Ministry of Health spokesperson said.

Originally published at <https://www.jns.org/israel-news/a-third-of-israels-elderly-suffer-from-diabetes>.

Diamonds...Continued from page 2

He wasn’t bragging. He practically had tears in his eyes as he told me what a privilege it was for him to be part of this holy mission.

Before he turned to go, he wished me a good month, and uttered a prayer that this would be the day we hear the *shofar* blasts heralding Mashiach. As he left the *shul* he approached the *aron kodesh* (the holy ark). He spread his arms wide and embraced the ark, burying his face in the curtain, and it felt as if I was witnessing him alone in an intimate encounter with God. The moment lasted 20-30 seconds, but this time I just sat admiring and my phone stayed in my pocket.

Shai the butcher. Shai the diamond.

Along our winding way up Mount Carmel, childhood memories resurfaced and old fears softened comfortably into nostalgia. But the real discovery was not the road or the pool, but the unexpected people who had entered our lives.

The maintenance man.

Avishai.

Eli.

Dalal.

Shai.

We traveled north for a break and came back with something else entirely.

On a journey seeking a treasure of rocks, we returned home with suitcases full of unforgettable diamonds.

Praise.Continued from page 6

and also in the praise we publicly give to others in the presence of our family and friends.

Finally, growth can happen in the way that we relate to the Divine. Do we acknowledge our Creator’s presence in our world? And when we say words of praise in our prayers, do we say them with proper intention? By refining the way that we praise God, we can refine our entire character.

As we begin a new academic year and prepare for the new Jewish year, I would like to offer us a blessing that we lead authentic lives and constantly remain on a growth trajectory. May we be motivated to refine our character through the ways that we interact both with other people and with God.



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Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton

Tel Aviv remains world's fourth-largest startup ecosystem

By James Spiro

(JNS) – For the third consecutive year, Tel Aviv has been ranked the world’s fourth most valuable startup ecosystem, with a value of \$250.3 billion, according to Startup Genome’s 2026 Global Startup Ecosystem Report (GSER). The report was unveiled the week of June 17 at the VivaTech conference in Paris and shows the Israeli city behind only Silicon Valley, New York and London.

Strong subsectors included cybersecurity, which the report called “a defining pillar of Tel Aviv’s innovation economy”; AI, big data and analytics, highlighting Apple’s acquisition of AI startup Q.AI for nearly \$2 billion; and life sciences, reinforced by research institutions, international partnerships; and sector convenings that connect startups with investors and clinicians.

Tel Aviv Mayor Ron Huldai described the city’s innovation as “part of the identity of the city and its way of life,” crediting the municipality’s continued efforts “to support, assist and be home to the leading Israeli startups driving the global industry, as well as to some of the most important and largest international companies in the world.”

Startup Genome founder and president Marc Penzel added: “What sets Tel Aviv apart globally isn’t just its ranking, but the concentrated depth of talent and innovation driving it – especially in AI and big data, cyber and life sciences. Holding the world’s fourth place year after year signals an ecosystem that has built a sustained competitive advantage in the sectors defining the evolving global economy.”

That assessment lines up closely with Israel’s own economic data. The Israel Innovation Authority’s latest State of High-Tech report found the sector grew 8.2 percent in real terms last year, with high-tech alone accounting for roughly half of Israel’s total economic growth in 2025 and contributing 1.44 percentage points of the country’s 2.9 percent GDP expansion, even as the country perseveres through wartime.

The report also cites comments from billionaire investor Bill Ackman, praising Israel’s ability to overcome challenges: “In Israel’s case, the value of its assets, particularly intellectual assets, far exceeds its liabilities. This is a country that has proven itself extraordinarily over the last two years, both militarily and technologically,” he said.

Capital markets are sending a parallel signal: a report from Fusion VC found that valuations for the most competitive pre-seed startups rose 17 percent year over year, reaching an average of \$13.5 million, as investors compete for the strongest AI and cybersecurity teams.

Government policy is moving to reinforce that private-sector momentum rather than chase it away. The



Tel Aviv on June 15. (Photo by Avshalom Sassoni/Flash90)

report highlighted how, in July 2025, the Israel Innovation Authority launched a process to establish new state-backed technological incubators, and in January 2026 announced a \$280 million national AI supercomputer initiative to provide high-performance computing infrastructure for startups and research labs.

JNS reported in June that the government has approved a national plan to cement the country’s standing as “a global AI superpower.” Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu framed the ambition as one that would match

previous success, pledging to do with AI what “Israel’s human capital” did with cyber. The plan sets a national target of 100,000 processing units and commits to a sovereign quantum computer built on Israeli-developed technology.

Startup Genome ranked Tel Aviv fifth globally for AI-native startup activity, reflecting the growing role of artificial intelligence in the city’s innovation ecosystem and showing “promising signs” of the state-level bet to become a “Systems Nation” to build the national-scale infrastructure, compute and sovereign capabilities on which startups depend.

The report draws on more than a decade of independent research and a global partnership spanning more than 65 countries. The methodology includes studying more than 5.5 million companies across 350-plus startup ecosystems, combining data from the three leading venture funding databases, and cleaning with an AI engine, machine learning techniques and a manual review.

Startup Genome has worked with 221 clients across six continents and 71 countries to help accelerate startup success and ecosystem growth.

Originally published at <https://www.jns.org/news/israel-news/tel-aviv-remains-worlds-fourth-largest-startup-ecosystem-despite-wartime-pressure>.

Israeli study: Universal rhythm guides how humans speak

By JNS Staff

(JNS) – A recent Hebrew University of Jerusalem study analyzing spontaneous speech in 48 languages found that people across the globe structure their speech into rhythmic units at a consistent pace of one every 1.6 seconds. These Intonation Units – short prosodic phrases – appear with striking regularity, pulsing through human speech at the same rhythm worldwide.

The researchers said this low-frequency rhythm is stable across cultures, ages and languages, pointing to a universal cognitive mechanism underlying human communication. The findings shed light on how the mind structures language in time and could have implications for neuroscience, language learning and speech technology.

The research, published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, analyzed more than 650 recordings in 48 languages across every continent and 27 language families. Using a novel algorithm, the team automatically

identified Intonation Units in spontaneous speech, showing that whether in English, Russian or endangered languages in remote regions, people naturally break speech into the same rhythmic chunks.

“These findings suggest that the way we pace our speech isn’t just a cultural artifact, it’s deeply rooted in human cognition and biology,” said researcher Dr. Maya Inbar. “We also show that the rhythm of intonation units is unrelated to faster rhythms in speech, such as the rhythm of syllables, and thus likely serves a different cognitive role.”

Intonation Units help listeners follow conversations, take turns speaking and absorb information, while also providing children with key cues for learning language. The low-frequency rhythm they follow mirrors brain activity patterns tied to memory, attention and volitional action, underscoring the deep link between how people speak and how they think.

Originally published at <https://www.jns.org/israel-news/israeli-study-universal-rhythm-guides-how-humans-speak>.

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