

THE REPORTER

Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton

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BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK

Federation Campaign 2023 continues

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton announced that Campaign 2023 is still in progress. "It's never too late to make a pledge," said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. "Some people prefer to give at a certain time of year or in conjunction with their required minimum distribution or RMD. We are grateful for gifts of any kind."

Hubal stressed the Federation's purpose and programming as the reason people should donate. "Federation strives to make Binghamton a better place to live, learn and raise a family," she said. "When you contribute, you are supporting the following programming: Jewish Film Fest, Tea and Talk, the communitywide Yom Hashoah program, College of Jewish Studies, PJ Library and much more. Additionally, in the coming year,



we are planning a special celebration to commemorate Israel's 75th anniversary and more L'Dor V'Dor Next Generation events for young Jewish adults."

The allocation process for local organizations has already taken place and the Federation is looking to raise enough funds to cover the allocations. "In November of 2022, the Federation board approved a package of allocations that totals more than \$323,000 to be distributed in 2023," she said. "Our Jewish community relies on these funds to stay afloat. Currently we have raised \$202,000. It's simple: if

we do not raise the funds we need, we will have to use our reserves and make cuts in the coming years. If you care about the Jewish Community Center, *The Reporter*, Jewish Family Service, Jewish learning, the future of our Jewish youth and so much more, then now is the time to contribute. Every dollar counts. Every dollar will have an impact."

Hubal believes that the recent rise in antisemitism makes donations to the Federation even more important because new funds raised will be matched by a LiveSecure grant from Jewish Federations of North

America. "In the past year, we've run three programs that taught about how to better protect ourselves and our organizations," Hubal noted. "We've also organized a Security Committee to help with that effort. The matching grant from JFNA will enable our community to support future security needs. Your increased gift to the Campaign or separate gift to our LiveSecure fund will ensure a safer tomorrow for everyone."

There are several ways to make a pledge or pay a pledge. "You can fill out the form on page 5," said Hubal, "or visit our website at www.jfgeb.org. You can give a donation or make a pledge that can be paid anytime during the year."

To learn more about the programming the Federation organized or supported during 2022, visit www.jfgeb.org and click on the box "Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton 2022: Year in Review."

Film Fest to show "Tel Aviv on Fire"

By Reporter staff

The Binghamton Jewish Film Fest will hold a virtual showing of the Israeli comedy "Tel Aviv on Fire" in March. The film is in Hebrew with English subtitles. The showing is sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton in conjunction with the Ithaca Area United Jewish Community. Registration is required prior to Thursday, March 9, which is when the link will be sent out. Dora E. Polachek, an associate professor of Romance languages and literatures, will lead a virtual discussion on Sunday, March 12, at 5:30 pm. Registration is free, but donations are welcome. To register, visit www.jfgeb.org.

"Tel Aviv on Fire" tells the story of Salam, a 30-year-old Palestinian living

in Jerusalem, who works as an intern at a Palestinian soap opera, "Tel Aviv on Fire," which is produced in Ramallah. When Salam passes through an Israeli checkpoint every day, he meets Assi, the commander of the checkpoint, whose wife is a fan of the show. Assi gives Salam ideas for the show, which help Salam get a promotion to screenwriter. But when Assi and the show's financial backers have different ideas about how the show should end, Salam must come up with an idea to save his career.

"After we screened this film, I knew right away that I wanted to share this little gem with others," said Stephen Lisman, a member of the Film Fest Committee. "It comprises an array of elements that tickled my funny bone, while also stirring my anger,



Assi (Yaniv Biton) and Salam (Kais Nashif) in "Tel Aviv on Fire." (Photo courtesy of Cohen Media Group)

a sometimes wild, but clever combination of political satire, absurdity, quirky characters, drama, breakdowns of stereotypes... all in the context of the tension of the daily lives

of Israelis and Palestinians."

On *Datebook*: San Francisco Chronicle, David Lewis called the film "a delightfully satiric take on the Israeli-Palestinian quagmire, [that] revolves around a third-rate soap opera and a border checkpoint where creativity—and helpings of hummus—trump ethnic conflict. It's a well-acted movie with both a funny bone and a sense of humanity." Jordan Mintzer noted in *The Hollywood Reporter* that "this modest little charmer presents a lighter side of the long and ongoing crisis." On www.indiewire.com, David Ehrlich wrote, "'Tel Aviv on Fire' spins a pleasant yarn about someone who's trying to tell a credible story of an ongoing conflict without picking sides, only to find himself stuck between propaganda and naïvete."

TBE Ithaca to hold lecture on "French Collaboration in the Holocaust" on Feb. 22

Temple Beth-El of Ithaca will hold the lecture "French Collaboration in the Holocaust: The Story in Film and Fiction" with Dr. Daniel Schwarz on Wednesday, February 22, at 7:30 pm. The program will

be available live at the synagogue, 402 N. Tioga St., Ithaca, or virtually via Zoom. The event is free and open to the public. To view the synagogue's in-person guidelines, visit www.tbeithaca.org/in-person-guidelines.

html. To receive the Zoom link for the program, e-mail secretary@tbeithaca.org.

"Films and fiction, in the form of narratives about the Holocaust, have helped overcome the dominant and incorrect his-

tory of the 1940-1944 Occupation years," said organizers of the event. "Schwarz will explore the roles of both documentary and imaginative films in exposing the active collaboration of the Vichy government with the Nazis in the deportation and murder of the Jews living in France. He will address important existential and ethical issues that involve the persecution of Jews and the politics of memory, namely how this genocide could happen in France, why it was suppressed and repressed, and what cultural events changed the dominant narrative and corrected historical amnesia." Among the films he will discuss are Louis Malle's "Lacombe, Lucien" and "Au Revoir Les Enfants"; François Truffaut's "The Last Metro"; Alain Resnais' "Night and Fog"; and Marcel Ophüls' "The Sorrow and the Pity," as well as the 72-episode television series "A French Village."

Schwarz is Frederic J. Whiton Professor of English and Stephen H. Weiss Presidential Fellow at Cornell University, where he has taught for 55 years. He has lectured in the U.S. and internationally, including See "Ithaca" on page 8

Chabad's Women's League to offer local and national shalach manot service

Women's League for Chabad is currently accepting orders for its annual *shalach manot* service. Binghamton residents can send packages of food and holiday greetings to local friends and acquaintances on Purim day, which will be celebrated this year on Tuesday, March 7. "It's Purim made easy," says Ilene Pinsker, project chairwoman. "It's a stress-free, very reasonably priced way to fulfill the mitzvah of *mishloach manot*, sending gifts of food on Purim, and a wonderful way to show your friendship and care. We do all the work for you and your friends get fabulous packages from you!" Anyone who has not received an

information packet and order form, or is seeking additional details, should call the Chabad Center at 797-0015.

For individuals who want to say "Happy Purim" to their friends outside of the community, Women's League offers Purim greeting cards that can be sent anywhere in the continental U.S. for a charge of \$4. All orders must be received no later than Tuesday, February 21, and can be made by contacting Pinsker at 729-1091. Orders can also be submitted completely online at www.Jewishbu.com/shalachmonot.

"The mitzvah of *shalach manot* is very important and is fulfilled by sending a

package with at least two different types of food to at least on friend on Purim day," explained Rivkah Slonim. "Often people want to send *mishloach manot* to many, many people or at least wish them a happy holiday and make sure they know they are thought of. These cards work perfectly for that purpose and they support a great cause at the same time!"

For the project, the Women's League is in need of volunteers to assist in assembling the packages and in their delivery on Purim day. Anyone who wishes to help with the project should call Pinsker or the Chabad office.

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On the
silver
screen

Third *yahrzeit*: remembrance of Izzy

BILL SIMONS

Time is inexorable, even the human markings of eternity. Izzy Demsky, age 103, died on Shevat 10 (February 5), 2020. This is his third *yahrzeit*, a time for remembrance of Izzy.

Born into a poor Russian Jewish immigrant family in Amsterdam, NY, Izzy thought of himself as "The Ragman's Son," the title of his autobiography. Coming of age in Amsterdam, Izzy encountered antisemitism, deprivation and gang assault, which, in turn, fueled aspiration and anger. Much of the anger came from his relationship with his father, Harry. That anger ignited a ferocious drive in Izzy. Under his adopted name, Kirk Douglas, Izzy would acquire fame as an actor, producer, antagonist of the Blacklist, proponent of Israel, author and philanthropist. Remembrance of Izzy inevitably elicits reflections on Harry.

In Izzy's memoir, his father is a powerful, violent, brutish, abusive, alcoholic man, emotionally inaccessible to his six daughters, son and wife Bryna. Blocked from employment in Amsterdam's rug factories by antisemitism, Harry earned meager wages buying and selling rags and other second-hand goods from his horse-drawn wagon. Even much of that money was squandered in saloons before reaching home, a dwelling reliant on horse manure for insulation. Eventually, Bryna threw Harry out of the house and divorced him. Yet Izzy craved the approval and attention that his father continued to withhold.

To understand Izzy, I look for Harry, who, as Herschel Denielovitch, left Russia at the turn of the last century. On Sunday morning, October 16, 2022, Bob Cudmore, whose decades of newspaper columns, radio broadcasts and, more recently, podcasts attest to his status as Amsterdam's pre-eminent historian, generously met with me. Bob's

grandfather, an Eagle Street neighbor of the Demskys, knew Harry well. Due to his strength, celebrated barroom brawls and wagon trade, Harry was once better known in Amsterdam than Izzy. Bob introduced me to John and Linda Naple, retired educators, who graciously accompanied me to Harry's grave.

The Congregation Sons of Israel Cemetery, small but well kept, is tucked away in the village of Cranesville. John and Linda commented on the headstones of several people they knew. Harry's grave was found, and John quietly said, "Hello, Harry." We placed stones on Harry's grave, noting the Hebrew engraving and birth/death dates (1884-1954). Due to family discord, Harry is the only Demsky buried in the cemetery. Nonetheless, the inscription on Harry's gravestone calls him "Beloved Husband and Father." John's family lived across from the Demskys on Eagle Street. As a small boy, John knew Harry.

John never saw Harry in the bars, but the Harry that he knew from the street was friendly to neighborhood kids. He would shout out, "Rags, rags," as his wagon came down the street. Harry would over-tip kids for bringing him rags, and four little girls stole rags from the wagon and then sold them back to an unsuspecting Harry.

Harry's death did not end Izzy's struggle to come to terms with his father as evidenced by his autobiography and several of his films. Professionally, Izzy morphed into superstar Kirk Douglas, but, in the twilight of his acting career, dug deep into the father-son relationship. In 2000, Douglas was the special guest star in the television series "Touched by an Angel," appearing in an episode titled "Bar Mitzvah." See "Izzy" on page 7



Bill Simons stood by the gravestone of Harry Demsky, the father of Kirk Douglas. (Photo by John Naple)

Opinion

In My Own Words

A guaranteed day off

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Remember the Blue Laws? For readers who are too young to remember, the Blue Laws meant that businesses and stores were required to be closed on Sundays. In their strictest form, many leisure activities were also forbidden and alcohol was not allowed to be served in the few places

that were open. This created problems for Jewish merchants who would have preferred to close their stores on Saturday for Shabbat and be open on Sunday. As time passed, the laws changed, and many stores and some businesses are now open seven days a week.

The fact that some businesses require workers to be available seven days a week has not only created problems for the Jewish population, but the Christian one. That's why the Jewish community – particularly the Orthodox community – is carefully watching an evangelical Christian mail carrier's employment discrimination suit against the United States Postal Service, a case the U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to hear.

Gerald Groff, an evangelical Christian, had asked the USPS not to assign him to a Sunday shift because it is against his religious practice to work on Sundays. In the past, that might not have been a problem, but since the Postal Service began delivering packages for Amazon, it now has regular Sunday delivery for packages only.

While employers are required to make accommodations for an employee's religious practice by Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, they are only required to make "reasonable" accommodations, ones that don't create "undue hardship" for them and other employees. Groff is asking the court to reconsider the 1977 court ruling *Trans World Airlines v. Hardison*, which limited what employers are required to do.

I'm not a lawyer so the specific legal implications are beyond me, but I find this interesting from a personal and sociological perspective. For example, 100 years ago, a practicing Christian would have had little problem not working on Sundays. No one would have expected him to – and it might have been illegal if he did. During that time period, it was illegal for people in New York state to play football, golf, hunt or attend the circus on Sundays.

In fact, there are still some restrictions when liquor can be sold on Sundays.

For those of us who either prefer not to work on Shabbat and holidays, or who believe it's required by God for us not to do so, what occupation we choose may be based on whether we'll be able to take those days off. While it's relatively easy to find businesses that only require attendance Mondays-Fridays (or which allow employees to perform additional work on Sunday, not Saturday), it's more difficult to take all the *chagim* (holidays) off. Just think of juggling work and the days off needed for Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot and Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah. Then in the spring, there's Passover (with either two or four days of *chagim* depending on your practice) and one or two days for Shavuot. For many people, taking that time off might mean they'll have no remaining vacation time.

I'm extremely grateful to be working for a Jewish organization that requires us to take that time off. But not everyone can work for a Jewish organization or business. The days I do my chaplaincy work sometimes get juggled to avoid the holidays. Unlike the rest of *The Reporter* staff, who love when all the fall holidays occur on weekdays, I prefer it when they fall on a weekend.

It will be interesting to see how the court balances the needs of religious individuals with the requirements on a business to treat all its employees fairly. What is reasonable for one business might not be reasonable for another. Plus, there have to be limits to what religious freedom means, specifically if a person wants to impose their religious practice on others: one clear example is someone offering a prayer to Jesus before a meeting, a practice unfair to Jewish workers. But it should be possible for people to be able to observe their Sabbaths. And maybe we don't need Sunday delivery of packages – unless it's done by someone who would rather work on Sunday than Saturday.

Addendum

The Reporter received the following photo after its *b'nai mitzvah* issue went to press.

Mazel Tov to the 2022 B'nai Mitzvah



Clover Weitsman
October 22, 2022

Parents: Adam and Kim Weitsman
Grandparents: Fred and Sandra Weitsman
(Photo by Danielle Bozek/D Vibe Photography)

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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.

DEADLINE

Regular weekly deadline is noon, Wednesday, for the following week's newspaper.

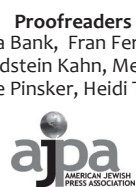
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www.thereporter.org

TBE Ithaca to hold annual "Evening of Jewish Storytelling" virtually

Temple Beth-El of Ithaca will hold its 24th annual "Evening of Jewish Storytelling, Poetry and Music" virtually on Sunday, February 26, at 5:30 pm. Register by Sunday, February 26, at 3 pm, at <https://tinyurl.com/5n8pftm>. For more information or to sign up to do a presentation, contact the temple at 273-5775 or visit www.tbeithaca.org.

"The annual 'Evening of Jewish Storytelling, Poetry and Music' is a celebration of life, community and the arts," said organizers of the event. "We're celebrating 24 years of original stories, traditional tales, jokes, folk and contemporary poetry, and dynamic live music from around the world."

Organizers added, "This event has become extremely popular over the years, drawing participants together for an intimate and cozy evening; a real reminder of times past. Although we are not able to be physically together this year, we will create an opportunity to enjoy the warmth of our community and richness of our heritage. With a virtual presentation, people who live in other locales can easily attend. There will be a mix of original poetry, personal stories and Yiddish songs. Presenters represent a cross section of our community. The event is family-friendly."

Hillel Academy announces journal honorees and dinner date

Hillel Academy of Broome County announced that it will honor Hillel alumni Mark and Inessa Yonaty for the N. Theodore Sommer Community Service Award and Rochel Chein for the A.M. Pierson Award. A dinner celebrating them will take place on Thursday, June 8. Specific details about the dinner will appear in future issue of *The Reporter*.



Rochel Chein



Inessa and Mark Yonaty

community awareness," said organizers of the event. "Rochel has been with Hillel Academy since 2009 as a parent, volunteer, librarian, Judaic educator and so much more. We thank them all for their endless dedication toward making our community thrive, and imparting their wisdom and experience on us all."

Chein noted, "Hillel has been a beautiful experience."

"We look forward to thanking these outstanding residents for their exemplary leadership and well-being in the Binghamton/Broome County community through their efforts in increasing commerce, benevolence and com-

BD luncheon on Feb. 11 to feature Bill Simons

On February 11, Beth David Synagogue's second-Saturday-of-the-month Luncheon Speaker Series will feature Professor Bill Simons. Morning services begin at 9:30 am, with the talk and luncheon following; all are open to the community. A featured columnist for *The Reporter* since 2020, Simons will present on "Jews, Dodgers and Brooklyn: Before the Diaspora."

Simons will focus on "the unique connection" that existed between Brooklyn's large Jewish community and the Dodgers baseball team before its departure for Los

Angeles. In addition to offering information about a specific time and place in American history, Simons promises that See "Simons" on page 5

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to the family of
Seymour "Sy" Klionsky

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

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to **Mark Zapotocky** on the death of his mother,
Alexandra "Sonnie" Zapotocky

DEADLINES

The following are deadlines for all articles and photos for upcoming *REPORTER* issues.

ISSUE	DEADLINE
February 24-March 9	February 15
March 10-23	March 1
March 24-April 6	March 15
April 7-20	March 29

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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Tea and Talk

Chabad of Binghamton, with co-sponsorship from the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, holds Tea and Talk programs, a monthly hour-long gathering for local Jewish seniors who are looking for "a meaningful conversation," from 11 am-noon, in Chabad's atrium lounge.

Upcoming dates are:

- ◆ February 16
- ◆ March 2
- ◆ March 16
- ◆ March 30
- ◆ April 20

To RSVP and for more information, visit www.JewishBU.com/Tea or call 797-0015.

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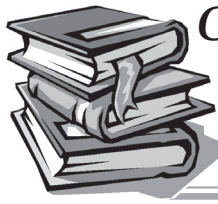
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8th Annual Mac & Cheese Fest Thursday, February 16, 2023 at 6-8pm	Northern Lights Saturday, April 29, 2023 at 7:30pm
May the Fourth Be With You Thursday, May 4, 2023 at 7:30pm	

For more information on our concert season, visit www.binghamtonphilharmonic.org/events or scan the QR code.



Off the Shelf

Messianic believers in Second Temple times

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Messiah: the noun is connected to the Hebrew verb that means to anoint a person or object with oil. However, the connotations of the term have changed over time. In the early sections of the Bible, it usually referred to a man who was anointed with oil by another person before taking the position of priest or king. However, by Second Temple times, some Jewish groups believed a savior would be anointed by God to help the Jewish people overthrow their Roman oppressors, restoring the independent kingdom of Judah. A subsection of those believed that the person would be a descendant from the line of King David. However, others rejected the idea of a human rescuer, claiming that God alone would be the one to save Israel. Two groups – the Pharisees and the Jewish followers of Jesus – believed in the messianic idea while a group known as the Sadducees rejected it. The Sadducees, who were members of the priestly class, saw a clear and firm difference between humans and the Divine, and the messianic idea muddled the two. These interpretations are just some of the fascinating discussions offered in Israel Knohl's "The Messiah Confrontation: Pharisees versus Sadducees and the Death of Jesus" (The Jewish Publication Society), which not only looks at these differing ideas, but the one that ultimately cost Jesus his life.

Knohl studies the development of the messianic idea from the writings of the prophet Isaiah through the Bar Kokhba rebellion. He notes the differences between the prophets of the northern Kingdom of Israel, who were not fond of human kings and saw God as their savior, and the prophets of the southern Kingdom of Judah, who did not reject the ideas of kingship. Knohl believes it was Isaiah who first suggested a savior would come from the line of David and wrote of a mysterious person he called a suffering servant. Knohl notes that "commentators and scholars wonder whether [the suffering messiah] was an actual person from the past (Moses or one of the kings of

Judah) or future (a Messiah or Jesus, as is professed in the New Testament), or whether he is a collective figure, representing the people of Israel or the righteous among the people of Israel." Regardless of what was the original intent of the prophet, his idea has been used to support many differing messianic ideas.

While the author's discussion of the history of the two Israelite kingdoms was interesting and well done, the heart of the book is its focus on the differences between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and how those differences affected Jesus. Knohl does an excellent job showing how these two groups developed their ideas, although he does note that no writing of the Sadducees has survived and they seem to have disappeared after the destruction of the Second Temple.

The Sadducees were the rich, elite group that usually had a good relationship with their Roman rulers. They did not believe in the resurrection of the dead or angels – but were very strict regarding the purity laws. Part of their rejection of a messiah was that they believed in a strict division between heaven and earth: no creature could be part of both worlds. The Pharisees, on the other hand, were a more popular group that believed in what is now known as the Oral Law of the Torah. People followed them because their rituals and prayers expressed the idea that God would save Israel in its time of need. Their ideas included a belief in reward and punishment, an afterlife and a messiah who would come from the house of King David.

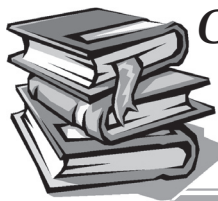
The followers of Jesus, whom Knohl sees as believing in Pharisaic ideas, expected Jesus to follow the messianic idea of a king messiah, but Jesus saw himself as a suffering servant, rather than an earthly ruler. This meant that Israel's redemption would not come through military might, but through spiritual redemption. The idea that Jesus was somehow a divine servant was considered blasphemy by

the Sadducees, who were the ones who arrested and turned Jesus over to the Romans.

Knohl believes the Pharisees were not the ones who turned on Jesus because they shared similar ideas about messiahs. He also carefully looks at how the trial of Jesus took place and shows how it follows the rules of the Sadducees (for example, a trial taking place at night, something Pharisaic law prohibited). The Pharisees did split with the followers of Jesus later when Paul declared that one need not obey the commandments (the dietary laws, Shabbat, etc.) in order to be accepted into their fellowship. As for the Romans, they believed that Jesus was fomenting a military rebellion, something shown by their ridiculing him as the King of the Jews, a title Jesus declined to deny during his trial.

Knohl notes that the hostility between Christianity and Judaism has been caused by a misunderstanding of the forces behind the trial of Jesus. The author writes, "The trial of Jesus was *not* a clash of Jewish and Christian doctrines, but a confrontation between two internal Jewish positions – of expecting a Messiah or rejecting the messianic idea – in which Jesus and the Pharisees were on the same side. The Pharisees did disagree with Jesus principally about whether Jesus himself was the Messiah – but historically, for Jews, arguing about who was or wasn't the Messiah was nothing out of the ordinary." Knohl notes that the Pharisees did not condemn others listed in Christian works of the time who also claimed to be the Messiah.

A short review cannot do justice to "The Messiah Confrontation," which gives insights into the tumultuous period when Romans ruled the Kingdom of Judah. Even if readers disagree with Knohl's ideas as presented here, his work is worth reading for the many insights it offers. It challenges readers to re-evaluate the crisis Judaism faced at the time and better helps them understand the beginnings of what would later be known as rabbinic Judaism.



Off the Shelf

Sorrows and joys in old and new countries

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

There are some novels that are so distinctive that they're difficult to describe. This was true of two recent books: "Before All the World" by Moriel Rothman-Zecher (Farrar, Straus and Giroux) and "When the Angels Left the Old Country" by Sacha Lamb (Levine Querido). The former packed a powerful punch, making it one of the most impressive books I've read recently. The latter was delightful, surprising me into laughter, while still having serious moments. One has elements of magical realism, while the other contains moments of sheer fantasy. In both, the characters began their lives in Europe, but, for different reasons, moved to the United States. And, while I loved each novel, I know that – sigh – for a variety of reasons, they won't appeal to everyone. Why the sigh? Because it's hard not to grab my friends and say, "You must read these books!"

The premise of "Before All the World" is that it's actually a novel written by one of its main characters, Gittl Khayles, and translated by another, Charles Patterson. Gittl tells not only the story of what happened to her native shtetl Zatzelsk, but how she rescued a fellow villager, the teenage Loeb, and sent him to the United States. There Loeb meets Charles, an African American radical, at what would now be called a gay bar. However, in the early part of the 20th

century, it went by no name because it was not only the Jewish community that frowned on homosexuality. The two men come together and are later joined by Gittl, who has been brought to the U.S. by a benefactor who was impressed with a poem she wrote. What they do with their lives forms the central plot of the novel.

However, it's not the details of the plot, but the work's emotional look at discrimination – against Jews, gays and Blacks – that forms its heart and soul. What makes it difficult, but amazing, to read is its prose: a mixture of English and Yiddish, featuring periodic run-on sentences that force readers to concentrate on the meaning of – and behind – the words used. Words that are normally capitalized appear in lower case and the cadence offers a Yiddish slant. For example, when describing Zatzelsk, Gittl writes, "Zatzelsk, jewish for a mound of upground carp, jewish for an endless circle, jewish for the feeling of a jew's being awaycast crust of blackbread in a vastish sea, when said jew has never seen the sea, nor would said jew ever awaycast a crust of bread into the neverseen sea unless it was smaller than an olive, what said jew had also never seen, and what this one, this particular crust of bread, was not." The novel also shows the pain of survival: Gittl and Loeb are the soul survivors of a massacre, one that Rothman-Zecher enumerates in a painful, moving and heart-breaking 46-page chapter called "The List."

So, why did I love this novel? Perhaps because the author's message – one shared by Gittl – is ultimately hopeful: the hope for a better world, because, in spite of

everything that has happened to Gittl, she does not believe "all the world is darkness." The connections and love she shares provide pockets of light. Although difficult to read and to describe, "Before All the World" took me on a wild, but ultimately wonderful, ride.

In contrast to the dark tone offered by "Before All the World," "When the Angels Left the Old Country" is a lighter work, even as it also discusses difficult topics. In this case, the way that Jews emigrating from Europe were taken advantage of in their home countries and their new one. Two of its three main characters are unusual: Uriel, an angel, and Little Ash, a demon (whose full name is Ashmeda), have been studying together for centuries in a little synagogue in a shtetl that is so small it doesn't have a name. Their study is disturbed when they learn Essie, the daughter of one of the men in the town, has gone missing after traveling to the United States. The two creatures decide to discover what happened to Essie, which ultimately means traveling to the U.S. On their way, they befriend Rose Cohen, who left her hometown heartbroken after her best friend married.

There are, of course, numerous obstacles on the way – everything from sea sickness to medical exams at Ellis Island to mob bosses and their hired goons. But while the plot is wonderful, it's the relationship between Uriel and Little Ash that offers the most fun. The two are like a comedy team, either misunderstanding what the other says or misreading their own emotions. They have opposite impulses and feelings when dealing with humans. Take, for example, Yossel, who is trying to cheat them. Uriel sees the man's "reasons for committing his crime, many of which were perfectly admirable. For instance, Yossel lived with a woman who was, according to her papers, his wife, and she and a woman identified by law as her sister had, from somewhere, acquired a parcel of children. Someone had to support those children, and at least one-third of the time, that someone was Yossel." Little Ash, on the other hand, clearly sees the bad in Yossel; he loves "dealing with rogues and cheats," because he knows how to manipulate them to do what he wants. In this case, though, both angel and demon want the same thing: to find out what happened to Essie – and Yossel may be able to tell them.

However, it's not just the supernatural characters in "When the Angels Left the Old Country" who are engaging. I loved Rose's spunk and her desire to create a new life for herself in the U.S. Even the minor characters – from the immigrants organizing strikes to the gangsters seeking to stop that action – add to the fun. While the novel also contains Yiddish, it offers a handy glossary at its end. Lovers of novels with a fantastical edge may add Uriel and Little Ash to their list of wonderful characters they'd like to read about again. They've certainly made mine.



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Pre-Order your Dozen for \$15 or 1/2 dozen for \$10
each order will come with an assortment of flavors:
Fun Fetti (Chocolate), Apricot and Raspberry

Pre-order by: Friday, February 24th

Pick up order: Sunday, March 5th 1:00-3:30 pm

(during our Community Purim Carnival) or Monday 3/6 9:00am-5:00pm

Follow this link to pre-order & pay (or scan code):

Google form link: <https://forms.gle/gHdriW6bmqoTeJg9>



607-724-2417 JCCOFFICE@BINGHAMTONJCC.ORG 500 CLUBHOUSE RD., VESTAL, NY 13850
WWW.BINGHAMTONJCC.ORG

Proceeds raised from this event are going to support our Kids Connection Youth Program.
All cookies are made in our Kosher kitchen and are dairy.

JCC PURIM CARNIVAL 2023

SUNDAY, MARCH 5, 2023
1:00-3:30PM

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ADMISSION: \$5 PER CHILD / \$1 PER ADULT / \$20 MAX PER FAMILY





JCC * 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850 * 607.724.2417
www.binghamtonjcc.org



JCC to celebrate Purim with carnival and by selling hamantashen

Annual Purim Carnival on March 5

The Jewish Community Center of Binghamton will host its annual Purim Carnival on Sunday, March 5, from 1-3:30 pm. The cost is \$5 per child, \$1 per adult, with a \$20 maximum per family. The entire community is welcome and encouraged to attend. All proceeds will benefit the JCC Youth Department.

There will be a number of activities geared towards children, including carnival games, inflatable play areas, arts and crafts, and face painting. All games earn children points that can be traded in at the prize table.

Light snacks will be available for purchase during the event.

"On Purim, children dress up and celebrate by giving gifts and *tzedakah* (charity)," said organizers of the event. "Everyone, young and old, are encouraged to come dressed as their favorite Purim character or in any costume of their choice. The JCC Kids Connection staff, who run the event, love to create different themed costumes each year."

For more information about the Purim Carnival, JCC Youth Programming, or the JCC, contact the JCC office at 724-2417.

Hamantashen cookie sale

The JCC will hold a hamantashen

fund-raiser to support the Youth Department and its programs. Each order is \$15/dozen and will include an assortment of fun fetti (chocolate), peach and raspberry. Staff volunteers, coordinated by Harry Cohen, will prepare the traditional cookies.

Pre-orders are due by Friday, February 24, for pick-up at the JCC during the Purim Carnival on Sunday, March 5, or at the JCC on Monday, March 6, from 9 am-5 pm. Pre-order and prepayment can be made at <https://forms.gle/ghdriWi6bmqoTeJg9>. Other ways to prepay are by calling 724-2417 with a credit card or stopping at the JCC office.

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

National Library of Israel receives genealogical history of Ireland's Jews

The National Library of Israel announced that it has received a 22-volume genealogical history of Ireland's Jewish community. According to NLI, this set of records benefits anyone with Irish-Jewish ancestry who is seeking to learn about their family lineage. "The history of the Jews in Ireland goes back to the expulsion from Spain and Portugal, when a permanent settlement of Sephardic was established in the late 15th century," NLI said in a statement. "There was an increase in Jewish immigration to Ireland during the late 19th and early 20th centuries from Eastern Europe. The community has always been small – with a high point of 5,500 persons in 1891 – but is well established. ...According to the 2016 Irish census," NLI continued, "there were 2,557 Jews in Ireland, a 28.9 percent increase over the previous 2011 census, and more than half (1,539) living in Dublin." NLI owns one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of Judaica in the world. The volumes were gifted to the library by their author and compiler, Stuart Rosenblatt, president of the Irish Jewish Genealogical Society. While recording his own family tree, Rosenblatt uncovered information on the entire Irish-Jewish community. The records span more than 70,000 individual names, with many lineages going back 300 years. The oldest stretch as far back as 1555 (when most Irish Jews were of Spanish-Sephardic heritage). Today, most Irish-Jewish ancestry hails from Eastern European Ashkenazi Jews from Lithuania and neighboring nations who arrived in the 1870s. Visit www.jns.org/living-encyclopedia-stuart-rosenblatt-donates-irish-jewish-family-records-to-national-library-of-israel/ to read the JNS interview with Stuart Rosenblatt.

Simons

the story is filled with humor and verve. "A special relationship connected the Dodgers and Brooklyn Jews," Simons pointed out. "Arguably, no baseball team ever forged a closer relationship with Jewish fans than did the Dodgers during their Brooklyn years, where they were drilled deep into the social fabric. The Dodgers provided Brooklyn's soundtrack. In her Brooklyn youth, retired SUNY historian Judy Wishnia remembers that you could walk by open windows, go into stores and take cabs without missing any of Red Barber's Dodgers radio broadcasts!"



Bill Simons (Photo courtesy of Bill Simons)

up, I developed my interest in baseball," Simons said, "by watching games coached by my dad, Shep. His stories about his superhero, Hank Greenberg, made me appreciate the important symbolic role sport holds for Jewish Americans."

Simons is the co-director of the Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American History, an annual academic conference on the national pastime co-sponsored by the National Baseball

Hall of Fame and SUNY Oneonta. He has served as editor and contributor to 12 baseball anthologies published by McFarland Press. His articles, reviews and essays have appeared in many journals and books, and include "Addressing Antisemitism and Racism in Statuary and Text: A Pedagogical Approach," *Israel Journal of Israel Foreign Affairs*, "Jackie Robinson and the American Mind: Media Images of the Reintegration of Baseball," "From Jack Johnson to LeBron James: Sports, Media, and the Color Line," "Greenberg at the Bat: A Twenty-first Century Jewish Moonlight Graham," "Baseball and American Culture: A Seminar" and "Baseball in the Classroom: Essays on Teaching the National Pastime." In 2021, he received the American Jewish Press Association First Place Award for Excellence in Writing About Sports.

"As a longtime speaker for the New York

Council for the Humanities," organizers said, "Professor Simons has delivered invited lectures in more colleges, libraries, museums and community groups than we can count. We are honored to have him add Beth David Synagogue to that list, and are certain that the program will be a highlight of our luncheon series!"

Since the no-charge monthly series' continuation depends on the generosity of contributors, Beth David welcomes and appreciates donations to the Luncheon Fund to keep the program going. Donations as well as sponsorships can be made in honor of or in memory of someone, or to mark a special occasion. Those wishing an acknowledgment to be sent to the person being honored, or to the family of someone being remembered, can indicate that, along with the necessary information. Donations can be sent to Beth David Synagogue, 39 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905, Attention: Luncheon Fund.

Continued from page 3

Wedding and engagement photos wanted

The Reporter is looking for photos of couples who became engaged or married in 2022 for the annual Wedding, Prom and Party Guide issue (coming March 10).

Please e-mail these photos with the names of all those in the photo (including maiden names), date of wedding and photographer. Please do so by Tuesday, February 28. Photos can be e-mailed, in TIF or JPG format, to TReporter@aol.com; please note in the subject line that a wedding/engagement photo for The Reporter is attached and include the necessary information in the message.



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- 2) Pledges and payments (checks should be payable to "Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton") can be mailed to the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850.
- 3) Fill out the form in this ad and mail it to the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850.

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Weekly Parasha

Yitro, Exodus 18:1-20:23

We've all been there

RABBI MOSHE SHMARYAHU, HEAD OF JEWISH STUDIES, HILLEL ACADEMY OF BROOME COUNTY

The verses describing the reception of the Torah at Mount Sinai say, "And not with you alone will I make this covenant." Rather, they note, "He who is here with us, he is now standing before the Lord our God. But also, he who is not here, he is also with us today." (Deuteronomy 29:13-14) The *midrash* says, "And not with you alone, but also all the future generations to come, were there at that time, on Mount Sinai." (Midrash Tanhuma for Parshath Nitzivim)

The wondrous experience of receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai, and the supreme thought of God that the soul of Israel absorbed – including the deep insights of life that were enshrined in the hearts and bones of our ancestors at Mount Sinai – were not only enshrined in those who were at Mount Sinai, but also in all the bones and souls of the generations following until the end of days.

In this wonderful revelation, the Torah was engraved in our ancestors and engraved in our bones to this day. We "know" the Torah even before we go out into the world. It lies within our unconscious mind. Receiving the Torah every day is not just passing on a tradition. It is "remembering" in the sense of exposing and bringing to consciousness an experience and truth that are in us every day.

So, studying the Torah is remembering, revealing the unconscious knowledge that is already in us. The words of the Torah that we learn are not information that comes from the outside that we must understand, internalize and adopt. The words of the Torah that we encounter awaken in us something that we already "know" and reveal it anew to consciousness, hence the great certainty of their truth.

Is there a contemporary scientific explanation that can give

a rational meaning that the status of the giving of the Torah is engraved in our bones in a way that is passed from generation to generation, not only in a way that it is acquired through educational means and the transmission of cultural tradition?

Although Jewish thought does not need any scientific confirmation, the Torah does not need this confirmation from anyone – we "believe that the Torah of Moses is true." And yet, it is possible that the latest innovations in the theory of genetics can explain to us the aforementioned process, as well as other eternal truths that the Torah of Israel and the tradition of Israel have planted in us.

Dr. Sharon Moalem, an American scientist of Israeli origin, claims in one of his books that the new knowledge in genetics and epigenetics requires researchers to look at the

See "There" on page 8

Congregational Notes

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

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-3:30 pm; Fri., 8 am-3 pm
 E-mail: titammy@stny.twcbc.com
 Website: www.templeisraelvestal.org
 Service schedule: Tues., 5:30 pm; Fri., 5:30 pm; Sat., 9:30 am

On Fridays and Tuesdays at 5:30 pm, services will be led by Rabbi Geoffrey Brown via Zoom and in-person (masks are required).

On Saturday, February 11, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person (masks are required). The Torah portion is Exodus 18:1-20:22 and the haftarah is Isaiah 6:1-7:6 smf 9:5-6. At 6:45 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom.

On Wednesday, February 15, there will be no Torah study.

On Saturday, February 18, at 9:30 am, Shacharit services will be held via Zoom and in-person (masks are required). The Torah portion is Exodus 21:1-24:18 and the haftarah is II Kings 12:1-17. At 7 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom.

On Sunday, February 19, there will be no religious school.

The temple office will be closed Monday, February 20, for Presidents Day.

There will be a Board of Trustees meeting on Tuesday, February 21, at 7 pm, on Zoom.

On Wednesday, February 22, Torah study will be held from 4-5 pm on Zoom.

Temple Beth-El of Ithaca

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
 Rabbi: Rachel Safman
 Rabbi Emeritus: 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-safman@tbeithaca.org, secretary@tbeithaca.org
 Website: www.tbeithaca.org

Presidents: David Weiner and Linda Aigen

Sisterhood President: Gail Zussman

Director of Education: Rabbi Suzanne Brody

Services: Fri. 8 pm; Sat. 10 am, unless otherwise announced. Weekday morning minyan 7:30 am (9 am on Sun. and legal holidays).

Religious School/Education: September-May: Classes meet on Sunday, 9 am-12:30 pm and Wednesday, 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.

For upcoming services and events on Zoom, visit www.tinyurl.com/HappeningAtTBE.

Norwich Jewish Center

Orientation: Inclusive
 Rabbi: David Regenspan
 Address: 72 South Broad St., Norwich, NY 13815
 Phone: 334-2691
 E-mail: fertigj@roadrunner.com

Contact: Guilia Greenberg, 373-5087

Purpose: To maintain a Jewish identity and meet the needs of the Jewish community in the area.

Adult Ed.: Shabbat study sessions are held on designated Saturday mornings at 10 am. Call ahead, text or e-mail to confirm dates.

Synagogues limit face-to-face gatherings

For specific information regarding services (including online services), meetings and classes at any of the area synagogues, contact them by phone or e-mail.

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: 797-0015, Fax: 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.

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

Rabbi: Shifrah Tobacman, rabbishifrah@tikkunvor.org

Presidents: Sue Merkel and Laurie Willick, presidents_22@tikkunvor.org

Education Director/Administrative Coordinator: Naomi Wilensky

Bnai Mitzvah Coordinator: Michael Margolin

Services: All services currently on Zoom. E-mail info@tikkunvor.org for the times and links. Contemplative morning services every Tuesday from 8:30-9:30 am. Saturday mornings, Gan Shabbat and other special services at least once a month. Call for the weekly schedule.

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.

Website: www.tikkunvor.org

Temple Beth El of Oneonta

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

Rabbi: Amelia F. Wolf

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

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.

Friday, February 10, light candles before..... 5:11 pm

Shabbat ends Saturday, February 11 6:13 pm

Friday, February 17, light candles before..... 5:20 pm

Shabbat ends Saturday, February 18 6:22 pm

Friday, February 24, light candles before..... 5:29 pm

Shabbat ends Saturday, February 25 6:31 pm

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: Fri., 7:30 pm; Sat., 10:35 am, when religious school is in session.

Hebrew school: Hebrew school meets at 4:15 pm and 5:15 pm on Tues. and Thurs. during the school year unless otherwise noted.

Some services and programs are online only.

Friday, February 10: At 7:30 pm, Shabbat service and celebration of Tu B'Shevat. Masks are optional for those attending in person. Join via Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3hRmW2Y>, meeting ID 869 9699 8146 and passcode 826330, or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/templeconcord/.

Saturday, February 11: At 9 am, Shabbat school; 9:15 am, Torah study (join via Zoom at <http://bit.ly/3XDnVRE>, meeting ID 825 1226 2831 and passcode 743892); 10:35 am, Shabbat family service; and 7 pm, "Havdalah with a Bonus" via Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3e8mZsy>, meeting ID 833 9654 6578 and passcode 333740, or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/templeconcord/.

Friday, February 17: At 7:30 pm, Repro Shabbat service with the National Council of Jewish Women. Masks are optional for those attending in person. Join via Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3hRmW2Y>, meeting ID 869 9699 8146 and passcode 826330, or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/templeconcord/.

Saturday, February 18: No Shabbat school or family service; 9:15 am, Torah study (join via Zoom at <http://bit.ly/3XDnVRE>, meeting ID 825 1226 2831 and passcode 743892).

Tuesday, February 21: At 8 pm, general board meeting open to members of Temple Concord. For the meeting link, contact the synagogue at 723-7355 or at templeconcordaa@gmail.com.

Temple Brith Sholom

Affiliation: Unaffiliated
 Address: P.O. Box 572, 117 Madison St., Cortland, NY 13045
 Phone: 607-756-7181

President: Carol Levine, 315-696-5744

Cemetery Committee: 315-696-5744

Website: templebrithsholomcortland.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Temple-Brith-Sholom-114006981962930/>

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 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," 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.

Services and programs are held by Zoom on the first and second Fridays of the month.



L'Dor V'Dor Next Generation group attended hockey game



L-r: Harris Weiss, Jesse Parker and Kurtis Parker enjoyed the hockey game.



L-r: Gabriel Cecchini, Kurtis Parker and Jesse Parker at the L'Dor V'Dor Next Generation group event.

More than 30 young Jewish professionals attended the L'Dor V'Dor Next Generation group event on February 4. The group watched a Binghamton Bears hockey game. At right, l-r: Kurtis Parker, Harris Weiss, Jessica Prusinowski, Eris Rouse, Rose Shapiro-Rouse and Melissa Wolff attended the event.



L-r: Binghamton University students Zoe Handelman, EJ Meltzer and Shoshana Klein attended the hockey game. In the row behind them is Brian Freedman, director of Hillel at Binghamton.



Women in Business

A paid advertising section.

IzzyContinued from page 2

"Bar Mitzvah" concerns four generations of men in the Burger family – the long-since departed great-grandfather (not referenced by name), the grandfather Ross (played by Kirk Douglas), the son, Alan, and the great-grandson, Aaron. "Bar Mitzvah" contains strong autobiographical elements. Like Douglas, Ross was 83 years old at the time of the production, proud of his recovery from a major stroke (whose remnant is limited to a moderate speech impairment), physically robust despite the inroads of age and stroke, successful, headstrong and resentful of his own father. Ross, owner of a fitness center, also has his issues with his son, Alan, 50, an erudite and thoughtful philosophy professor. However, Ross is a hero to his 13-year-old grandson Aaron, who is reluctantly preparing for his bar mitzvah Torah portion. Aaron shares his grandfather's belief that religion is for weaklings, a sentiment not shared by the devout Alan.

Alan is unexpectedly diagnosed with a fast-growing, inoperable brain tumor. Alan convinces Ross to find his own father's *tallit* and phylacteries, and to don them in prayer in the hospital room. Alan requests this for Ross' sake, not his own. During his attic search for the prayer vestments, Ross asserts that he hated his father for imposing Judaism on him and later Alan. Ross looks at an actual photo of Harry Demsky with son, Izzy, during this tirade.

On the day of Aaron's scheduled ceremony, the rabbi announces that there will be no bar mitzvah given the boy's emotional devastation at the death of his father a few days before. Ross stands up, citing the importance of Jewish tradition and proclaims, "There will be a bar mitzvah today. Mine." The rabbi affirms as 70 years is the normative allotment of life, an 83-year-old is entitled to a second bar mitzvah. Ross tells Aaron that his father, Alan, was the strong one and was right about religion. Ross and Aaron go to the *bima* together. The drama ends with Ross/Kirk/Izzy reading from the Torah. In real life, Izzy at age 83 had his second bar mitzvah around the time the program was broadcast.

In the last seconds of consciousness before he died, Alan recited the *Shema*, expressing the central tenet of Judaism. Hopefully, Harry and Izzy had the opportunity to do so, as well.

Bill Simons is a professor emeritus at SUNY Oneonta where he continues to teach courses in American history. He is also the co-director of The Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture, and served as a speaker for the New York Council on the Humanities.

Kristys Imagination Photography

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 Website: www.kristysphoto.com
 Hours: By appointment only

Kristys Imagination Photography is a locally owned business in the Binghamton region providing on-location photography services for any occasion, such as weddings, portraits or other special events. Sessions are done on location by appointment only, and provide you with quality photography services in the comfort of your own home or the location of your choice.

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For more information, call 607-221-1225 or e-mail kristyphotography@gmail.com. You can also see a portfolio and more information at www.kristysphoto.com.

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Specialty: A full service veterinary hospital providing medical, surgical, dental and behavioral care for cats of all ages.
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 Phone: 754-7221
 Hours: Mon. and Fri. 8 am-5 pm, Tues. and Thurs. 12:30-8 pm, Wed. 8 am-3 pm, Sat. 9 am-1 pm

The Cat Doctor is celebrating 28 years of caring for cats and their people. Dr. Darcy Sobel and Dr. Kaitlin Pace and staff at The Cat Doctor recognize that cats are important family members and treat each individual with special attention to their age, temperament and health conditions. Preventive medicine is practiced by providing complete physical examinations, behavioral counseling, dental care, diet management and appropriate vaccinations. The hospital has advanced radiology capabilities, providing instant, superior quality, digital x-rays as well as digital dental x-rays for the detection of early tooth disease below the gumline. The hospital now offers abdominal ultrasound for early detection of organ problems. When illness does occur, thorough and caring medical and surgical treatment is tailored to each patient.

The Reporter

Specialty: Advertising
 Location: 500 Clubhouse Rd. Vestal, NY 13850
 Name: Kathy Brown
 Phone: 607-724-2360, ext. 244
 E-mail: advertising@thereportergroup.org
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Advertising was a new field for Kathy when she started two years ago, but she's discovered the pleasure of working with the clients, giving them ideas on how to promote their business using print ads. Her motto is "the client comes first" and, to prove that, she researches each client to see what they have done in the past and tries to figure out if there is a way to improve their ad-image. She also works with them to discover the ad sections that will best highlight their business.

Kathy has lived here for 40 years, moving from Long Island to meet and marry her husband. She loves the outdoors, even in the winter. She is ready to help you advertise your business in *The Reporter*, in Binghamton and Scranton, the best way she can. Call her to discuss options.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Israeli court sets new hearing over order to evacuate Khan al-Ahmar

Israel's High Court of Justice on Feb. 7 "sharply criticized" the government's request to again delay a longstanding evacuation order for the illegal Bedouin settlement of Khan al-Ahmar, and ordered the state to pay \$6,000 to the Regavim NGO. The Israeli government on Feb. 1 asked the court for a four-month extension for submitting its response to a ruling demanding the implementation of demolition orders against the village built on state-owned land. It was the ninth time the state has requested a postponement. The legal battle over the issue began in 2009, when Regavim filed its first petition against what it called "the Palestinian Authority's flagship outpost in the systematic takeover of Area C" of Judea and Samaria. The encampment is located on land belonging to the city of Ma'ale Adumim, east of Jerusalem. While the top court has rejected the residents' appeal and upheld lower courts' rulings ordering Khan al-Ahmar be evacuated, previous governments, including those led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, have asked for and received deferrals. The latest deadline for the government to present a detailed plan for the evacuation was Feb. 1. In response to the government's request, Regavim petitioned the court to issue a final

Film Fest held discussion of "Incitement"



The Binghamton Jewish Film Festival held a discussion of the film "Incitement" led by Rabbi Geoffrey Brown on February 5. Twenty households signed into the event.

order instructing the state to evacuate the encampment, noting the interim order had been pending since 2018. The court on Feb. 7 set a May 1 hearing on whether to issue a final evacuation date, and an April 2 deadline for the state to present its plan to do carry out the evacuation. Israel has invested some 80 million shekels (\$23.7 million) into a relocation site for the residents of Khan al-Ahmar near Abu Dis, where the government has prepared infrastructure, roads, electricity, water, sewage, a health clinic and school all on state land.

United Hatzalah emergency response team in Turkey

United Hatzalah of Israel sent a delegation of 25 first responders and experts in search and rescue to Turkey on Feb. 7. The relief mission will assist in rescue operations and provide medical assistance following the Feb. 6 earthquakes. Vice President of Operations for United Hatzalah Dov Maisel said the charter flight will also carry 10 tons of supplies. The 7.8-magnitude earthquake on Feb. 6 and its aftershocks have killed more than 6,000 people combined in Turkey and Syria, according to the latest numbers.

Jewish Federations, JDC raise money for Turkey

The Jewish Federations of North America and American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee have launched fund-raising campaigns to provide humanitarian aid to people in Turkey after the devastating earthquakes Feb. 6. "We remain in close contact with our disaster relief partners on the ground and are mobilizing our communities to raise funds to support their life-giving work," said Julie Platt, JFNA's board chair. The state of Israel announced that it is sending aid to the region. IsraAID, which has provided relief in the aftermath of earthquakes in Haiti, Indonesia and elsewhere, said it, too, will assist.

Syria appeals to Israel for aid via Russia following earthquake

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's regime sent Israel a "near unprecedented" appeal for aid following the 7.8-magnitude earthquake that hit the country on Feb. 6. Israel received the request through Russia. The earthquake left at least 771 dead and more than 1,000 injured in Syria. In the areas under the control of Assad's regime, 371 deaths were reported. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu confirmed that Israel will help Syria, as well as Turkey. He noted that Israel helps in emergency situations across the world, and would certainly act similarly in its own region. The aid that will be transferred to Syria will be in the form of humanitarian supplies such as medicine, tents and blankets. However, unlike with Turkey, where two aid delegations will be sent, no delegation will enter Syrian territory. The IDF sent a 150-strong delegation to Turkey, including regular and reserve troops who specialize in providing emergency rescue services. The delegation, which was slated to arrive in Turkey the night of Feb. 6, is being headed by Col. (res.) Golan Vach, commander of the IDF National Rescue Unit. Earlier on Feb. 6, a small IDF team landed in Turkey to survey the hard-hit areas and devise a plan based on the situational assessment carried out on the ground. The IDF is also preparing to have its Medical Corps set up a field hospital if that is determined appropriate. The military said the forces will cooperate with their Turkish counterparts and other delegations from around the world.

Wiz to transfer funds out of Israel due to judicial overhaul

(Israel Hayom via JNS) - Israeli cybersecurity giant Wiz will be transferring its funds out of Israel due to concerns over the new government's proposed judicial reform, the company announced the week of Feb. 6. The funds will be transferred to bank accounts around the world, Wiz said in a statement. The company was among the leading Israeli tech firms that held a warning strike the week of Feb. 3 in protest against the reforms, claiming that if they were implemented Israel's standing as a tech hub could be harmed. Wiz is the third company to withdraw holdings from Israel, following in the footsteps of Papaya Global and Disruptive Technologies Venture Capital.

Ithaca Continued from page 1

delivering the Paley lectures at Hebrew University. The author of 18 books plus half of two others, he has worked in the field of Jewish studies for decades beginning with his book on "Disraeli's Fiction" (1979).

His "Imagining the Holocaust" is used in many courses. Both his book on "Endtimes?: Crises and Turmoil at The New York Times" and his "Reading Joyce's Ulysses" have Jewish studies components.

There Continued from page 6

whole issue of heredity differently. According to him, the DNA, that coil that contains the full technical specifications of every living being and every plant, is not a static factor that remains as we received it from our parents at the moment of conception; it is continuously affected by various events in our lives: traumas, nutrition, stress, and large and small changes that we undergo. And this influence, it turns out, also passes to the next generation and those after it.

who did not live in Europe during World War II and, following the findings, the researchers determined that "epigenetic inheritance, where life experience can affect the offspring's genes, can be a major component in the child's development."

A team of researchers working at the Mount Sinai Hospital in New York discovered that the children of parents who suffered under the Nazi regime have a higher risk of suffering from mental stress disorders, attributed to "exposure to the Holocaust." In the study, 22 children of 32 Holocaust survivors, who were held in the extermination camps, who experienced torture or were forced to hide during World War II, were examined. According to Prof. Rachel Yehuda, "the genetic changes in the children of the survivors can only be attributed to the exposure of the parents to the Holocaust."

This idea reminds us of what is written in Ezekiel: "And their iniquities shall be upon their bones." (Ezekiel 32:27) The midrash expands and says, "And their iniquities will be engraved in their bones."

In fact, all of Jewish history, the entire long and eventful journey of the Jewish people, is nothing more than the execution of this. What was instilled in us is only the "power" within us, the Jewish ideal.

In the study, it became clear to Prof. Yehuda and her colleagues that exposure to the Holocaust had an effect on genes, both in the parents and in the children. The results were compared to Jewish families

Our national mission is to continue to fulfill this ideal in our actual lives, to live this burden—the Mount Sinai vision—in practice.

Jewish tradition teaches us that we all stood on Mount Sinai during the giving of the Torah, that we all came out of Egypt and we were also all present at the dramatic event of the splitting of the Red Sea. If we follow the path laid out for us by epigenetics, this is also true for many other events—Hanukkah and Purim, for example—and in fact for all of Israel's history in its details. We've all been there.

Now we may be able to better understand the sage's words about the experience of the splitting of the Red Sea: "Rabbi Meir said even fetuses in the bowels of the womb opened their mouths and sang before God." And if every day we receive a Torah, then every day one must study it and develop it because everything is in the Torah, in one's own Torah.

JFS Accepting Purim Donations
Jewish Family Service will once again be collecting funds to fulfill the Purim mitzvah of matanot l'evyonim (gifts for the poor). These donations will be distributed to more than 16 local Jewish families who are experiencing extreme financial difficulties. In order to assure a timely distribution of these gifts, please be sure your contribution reaches our offices by February 28, 2023. Thank you for your support of your neighbors in need. Please mail or bring your donation to Jewish Family Service, 500 Clubhouse Road, Vestal, NY 13850. Contact Rose Shea, JFS Director, at 724-2332, ext. 339, with any questions.

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