

THE REPORTER

Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton

March 2-8, 2018
Volume XLVII, Number 9

BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK

Community Passover seder at TC on March 30

Temple Concord will continue its tradition of offering a Passover seder for the community. This year it will be on the first night of Passover, Friday, March 30, at 6 pm, at Temple Concord, 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton.

Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell will lead the seder rituals. The kosher-style Passover meal will be catered by Phantom Chef Catering chef Michelle Bank McIlroy. Traditional seder foods will be served, as well as Passover desserts,

kosher wine and other beverages.

Paid reservations are due by Friday, March 16. Contact the Temple Concord office at 723-7355 or Templeconcord@stny.rr.com to make reservations. The cost will be \$36 per person, \$15 for children younger than 13, or free for children 2 and younger.

For financial assistance to attend the seder, contact Goldman-Wartell at 723-7355, or Jewish Family Service or the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton at 724-2332.

TI/TC Adult Ed. to hold brunch on March 11

The Temple Israel/Temple Concord Adult Education Group will hold a brunch program on Sunday, March 11, at 10 am, at Temple Israel, 4737 Deerfield Pl., Vestal. Blake McCabe, a Ph.D. student in anthropology at Binghamton University, will speak on "Jewish Identity in Law and the Film 'The Other Son.'"

McCabe holds a master's degree in anthropology from Binghamton. She is an alumna of Hillel Academy and currently teaches at Temple Israel's Hebrew School. For her graduate research in anthropology, McCabe has looked at cases of contested Jewish identity in Israel and the Diaspora, and how it is portrayed in film. McCabe will speak about her research, including an exploration about how Jewish identity contrasts between religious law, government law and individual beliefs.



Blake McCabe

"The quintessential questions of 'who is Jewish?' and 'what does it mean to be Jewish?' are still two of the most salient questions among the global Jewish community," said organizers of the brunch. "We will see how Jewishness is portrayed in the film 'The Other Son' and through a House of Lords court case in the United Kingdom. The film was shown at the International Jewish Film Festival in Binghamton

in 2014 and portrays the complexities of Jewish identity in religious law and Israeli social policy. It addresses the impacts the resulting contradictions can have on an individual's identity and even civil rights both in Israel and Diaspora."

The cost of the brunch is \$5 per person. To make a reservation, contact the Temple Israel office at titammy@stny.twcbc.com or 723-7461.

BD March 10 luncheon talk on "Growing Up in Binghamton"

On Saturday, March 10, Florence (Flo) Balin will be Beth David's luncheon series speaker. She is in the process of writing a book about Jewish life in Binghamton, and her talk will include material from that project. Born and raised in Binghamton, she will share her experiences of what Binghamton and the Jewish community were like when she was growing up.

"It is exciting to find a nonagenarian with such a clear and vivid recall of the details of daily life in Binghamton," organizers say. "Flo is a dynamic speaker with lots of surprising information to share."

Born in Binghamton to immigrant parents, Balin remembers her grandfather's bakery, located on Exchange Street behind the Sons of Israel synagogue, the precursor to today's Temple Israel. She will relate the role her maternal grandfather, Jacob Weisman, played in making the Little



Florence (Flo) Balin
(Photo by Dora E. Polachek)

Shul on Carroll Street come into existence. "My grandfather was the Little Shul's first president," Balin says, "and Rabbi Moses Margolis was its rabbi. It is an even greater pleasure for me to be able to share my memories at Beth David since the Little Shul eventually became Beth David on Riverside Drive."

One of three children, Balin attended local schools. "I always loved music and performing,"

Balin says, "and I've been doing that since I was 7 years old." Balin recalls WBNF, Binghamton's only radio station at the time, and her singing songs on the weekly children's program. Her involvement in the JCC began when she was in high school. "On Saturday nights, the Arlington Hotel was quite the social scene," Balin recalls, "with the high school's Jewish sororities and fraternities holding their dances there." See "BD" on page 3

JCC to present "Cabaret" in March

"Willkommen! Bienvenue! Welcome!" The Jewish Community Center will present the Jan DeAngelo and Company production of "Cabaret" by John Kander, Fred Ebb and Joe Masteroff on Thursday, March 8, and Saturday, March 10, at 7:30 pm, and Sunday, March 11, at 3 pm. (No performance will be held on Friday, March 9.) The event is a fund-raiser for the JCC, which is located at 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal.

All seating will be at cabaret style tables and tickets are \$15 for general admission. For reserved seating, the cost for one table of eight is \$200 or one table of six is \$150. Drinks and refreshments will be available for purchase.

"Cabaret," the Tony-winning musical about "following your heart while the world loses its way," directed by Jan DeAngelo and choreographed by Katie Barlow, takes audiences into the seedy nightlife of the Kit Kat Klub on the eve of Hitler's rise to power in Weimar Germany. Based on Christopher Isherwood's "Berlin Stories," "Cabaret" follows the interlocking stories of a cabaret singer, a writer from America



Shannon DeAngelo will star as Sally Bowles in "Cabaret" at the JCC. (Photo provided by Studio 271 Productions)

and the citizens of Berlin as they are caught up in the "swirling maelstrom" of a changing society.

Led by the "enigmatic and dazzling" emcee (Joshua Wallenstein), "Cabaret" has been said to be "an intoxicating theatrical experience," featuring classics of the musical stage such as "Don't Tell Mama," "Maybe This Time" and "Cabaret."

The plot features the "Toast of Mayfield" Sally Bowles (Shannon DeAngelo), who falls for a struggling novelist from America, Clifford Bradshaw (Shannon Towns). They carry out their love affair at a boarding house run by

Fraulein Schneider (Kate Murray), who also rents rooms to the proprietor of a fruit market, Herr Schultz (Joe Bardales), and a lady of loose morals, Fraulein Kost (Julia Adams). The atmosphere in Berlin and the show changes from exciting to ominous as Clifford's friend Herr Ludwig (Ciano Briga) turns out to be an up and coming member of the Nazi party and Herr Schultz suffers as a victim of an antisemitic hate crime.

For tickets or information, call 724-2417 or visit the JCC front desk.

JFS seeks Passover funds for needy

With people beginning to prepare for Passover, which begins on Friday, March 30, Jewish Family Service is asking the local community to do a mitzvah by contributing funds to help the needy.

"Your kindness and generosity will enable 12 Jewish families who are struggling financially to purchase Passover foods required to celebrate a seder and to help them carry on the Jewish traditions that are so important to us all," said Roz Antoun, director of Jewish Family Service.

Checks should be made out and sent to Jewish Family Service, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850 with "JFS Passover donation" noted in the memo line. Donations must be received no later than Wednesday, March 21, so that Jewish Family Service will have time to process and distribute the funds.

"In these difficult economic times, the community's generosity will surely brighten the celebration of Passover for the recipients and remind those families that they are being remembered," said Antoun.

Corruption allegations may steer Israel toward elections

By Mati Tuchfeld
(Israel Hayom/Exclusive to JNS via JNS) – As both ongoing and newly launched

ANALYSIS

investigations involving Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu continue to agitate the political sphere, it is becoming increasingly likely that he will announce early elections, and that his government will not complete a full four-year term, according to those in Israeli political circles.

The coalition partners, particularly Habayit Hayehudi leader Naftali Bennett and Kulanu leader Moshe Kahlon, have made it clear that the investigations, including the recent development of former Ministry of Communications Director-General Shlomo Filber – one of the prime minis-

ter's closest associates – turning state's witness in Case 4000, will not change anything. (See brief related to Case 4000 on page 12.)

Case 4000 centers on the potentially illicit dealings and conflict of interest involving Israeli telecom corporation Bezeq and the Walla news website, which Bezeq owns. The police allege that Bezeq's controlling shareholder Shaul Elovitch ensured positive coverage of the Netanyahu family by Walla in exchange for the prime minister promoting government regulations worth hundreds of millions of dollars to the company.

Case 4000 comes on the heels of three other corruption cases involving the prime See "Israel" on page 7

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Opinion

Here's why we report on the Jewish victims of general tragedies

By Andrew Silow-Carroll

(JTA) – In the many years between my first job at JTA and returning as its editor in 2016, I would joke about a headline it published in 1999: “Two Turkish Jews killed in quake.” Perhaps you’ll remember that 17,000 people died in the Turkish earthquake that year. That headline seemed to represent all that was strange and wrong about a narrowly ethnic news service. If they hadn’t identified those two Jewish victims, would the Jewish news service have covered the quake at all – unless to report that “Giant quake narrowly misses Israel”?

Of course, now I am in charge, and we do our version of “Two Turkish Jews” all the time. Following the recent massacre of 17 students and staff at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL, our reporters hit the phones, reporting on the victims and survivors who happened to be Jews. We wrote about the two first-year girls who were remembered as sweet and easy-going. The hero teacher who spent his summers at a Jewish camp and died while making sure the last of his students was safe inside a classroom. We wrote about one of those students, a Jewish boy who recalled being the last kid to make it inside before that same teacher was hit and fell bleeding in the doorway.

This practice of identifying the Jewish victims of a greater disaster makes a lot of people uncomfortable, including some of my colleagues. They worry it signals that tragedies only matter to the degree to which they involve a Jew. That it erodes empathy in a diverse world by suggesting that the only thing that matters is tribe. That it makes us look small, in more ways than one.

I share those misgivings, but also can defend our search for the Jewish angles to any general story. First, it is not only the Jews who look for a sectarian connection to any

major news event. Maybe we do this more publicly and consistently than other groups, but I doubt it. (Broadway composer Dave Yazbek has a song that asks, “Is it good for baseball, is it good for the Jews?” – it neatly sums up the American Jewish experience in 11 words.) Every local newspaper and television station makes news decisions based on their definition of hometown news. If a plane crashes in Indiana, then it’s news in Chicago if a local person is among the dead. When 230,000 people died in the 2004 Asian tsunami, the BBC took note of the 149 Brits among them.

In a sense, I view JTA as a hometown news service, and define the residents of that town not by geography but by their connections to and interest in all things Jewish.

Sometimes this localism lapses into chauvinism – like network Olympics coverage that lasers in on American athletes and ignores the compelling stories of all the other competitors. Or *reductio ad absurdum* – like the article I found in an old Billboard magazine pondering the impact of the civil rights movement on pinball machine profits.

But if handled sensitively, localism can also tap into basic human instinct in order to foster a wider appreciation for humankind.

That’s the point of perhaps the best-known saying of the first century C.E. sage Hillel: “If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?”

Rabbi Yitz Greenberg suggests that Hillel’s first clause – “If I am not for myself, who will be for me?” – is one of Judaism’s greatest teachings.

“Repair of the whole world starts with my country, my city, my neighborhood first,” writes Greenberg. “Self-interest is legitimate. People work harder and produce more in an economy built on private property. Loved ones or

family first is the natural, more human way to operate.”

But Hillel didn’t stop there. Instead he adds, “If I am only for myself, what am I?” Greenberg explains that concern for family and heritage “should grow and extend to the rest of the world,” and gives a trenchant political example: “If policy concern stops right at the border, then it becomes the isolationist, regressive ‘America First’ of Charles Lindbergh – a political grouping that turned a blind eye to tyranny and refused to hear the cry of the downtrodden.”

It’s natural to give first thought to those closest to us: family, friends, neighbors, coreligionists. It is also our business model. There are plenty of news outlets that will give a general accounting of any major event. Specialty media like ours supplement these reports by giving a narrow view of the same event with an eye toward the particular interests of particular readers.

But it is dangerous and inhuman if that focus stops there – if we are only for ourselves. I would hope that in identifying Jewish victims we don’t foster parochialism. I hope instead that by bringing a story home, we remind readers not just of the Jewish players but also of the Jewish obligations to a wider world – expanding what the sociologist and Holocaust scholar Helen Fein calls our “universe of obligation.” Maybe you can’t relate at first to those thousands of Turks who died in an earthquake. But you can relate to the Jewish victim, and from there find it easier to expand your universe of obligation to include the non-Jews alongside whom they died or suffered.

“Traditionally, our sense of involvement with the fate of others has been in inverse proportion to the distance separating us and them,” writes Jonathan Sacks, the former chief rabbi of Great Britain.

The goal of much of our reporting is to close that distance. *Andrew Silow-Carroll is the editor-in-chief of JTA.*

My kids live in Israel – should I follow them?

By Susan Hornstein

(Kveller via JTA) – I have three children. Three healthy, wonderful, grown-up children. I have a wonderful husband. And I have a father, a brother and sister-in-law, and other friends and relatives whom I love. Sounds good, no? It is good. It’s very good.

Yet I often say that I live between a rock and a hard place. Here’s why.

My husband and I live in New Jersey, where we settled when we married 28 years ago and raised our children. We raised them with a love of family, a love of God and Torah, a love of humankind and a love of Israel. All three

have embraced those loves and express them in their own individual ways.

Our oldest daughter, who is 25, lives a few hours away and teaches at a Jewish day school. She is known as a tough and loving teacher, a loyal friend and an integral part of her community. We see her every few months. She is far away, but not too far.

Our second daughter lives in Jerusalem. At 19, she moved to Israel and joined the Israel Defense Forces. Other caring adults – relatives, friends and members of a support network for foreigners serving in the Israeli army – parented her in our absence. Now 22, she has finished

her army service and is in college, spending Shabbat with friends, working in a bookstore and living her dream.

Our third child, a son, lives in Israel as well. At 19, he also made *aliyah* recently and will enter the IDF in the spring. He, too, has caring adults in his life, some of those same relatives and friends, and his yeshiva community who have their eyes on him.

When I was their age, I was sure that I would spend the bulk of my life in Israel. But I didn’t. I found life, love and employment here in the U.S. – and then I stayed. In fact, the topic of living in Israel barely came up again, as **See “Follow” on page 9**

In My Own Words

No easy answers

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

I tried to protect myself by only reading newspaper reports, but one morning a few days after the February 14 school shooting in Florida, I turned on the news and saw not only a parent talking about the loss of her daughter, but two sisters who’d sent poignant text messages to each other during the shooting – wondering if they would ever see each other again. The reports made me cry, a reasonable reaction to a horrific event. It pushed past all the statistics I’ve read recently about how violence is decreasing in the United States and how school shootings account for only a small percentage of teenage deaths.

In the aftermath, many voices – contradictory voices – have been heard. It’s the ready availability of guns that is the problem. It’s cuts in mental health services that play a major role. Some people are starting to talk about the alienation and disaffection from which some teenage boys suffer, since few girls have fired assault rifles at their

classmates. There is no one clear answer, but that doesn’t mean that we shouldn’t start looking at these suggestions and more to find any answer.

What makes me pause is that these types of shootings did not occur when I was in junior high or high school. There was the shooting at Kent State, but that event was of an entirely different nature. Even if these weapons had been readily available, I can’t imagine this happening because most students would not have considered it an option. So another question needs to be asked: Are there other factors in contemporary life – factors we may not be considering – that also play a role?

The one thing I do know is that no one should have to go to school – or work – and worry about a mass killing taking place. This reminds me of two Jewish principles that apply to what needs to be done:

1) We don’t have to complete the task, but neither can

we cease from it. We may not have all the answers, but we need to work on the problem *now*. We can’t pass the buck to someone else; we are required to deal with this. It’s time for action *on all fronts* in order to stop the shootings.

2) If we save one life, it is as if we have saved the world. If we can do something, anything, we may not only save the lives of those who would have been killed, but prevent someone from contemplating this type of action in the first place. There are wasted lives on too many sides and it’s our job to stop this from happening again.

It’s too late for thoughts and prayers; action is what’s needed. We need to prove to our nation’s students that their lives matter. We need to provide help for those with mental illness. We need to prevent guns from reaching the hands of those who will use them to harm others. And we need to figure out what has gone so wrong with our society that anyone can think a mass shooting is an acceptable option.



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THE REPORTER
Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton
BINGHAMTON, NY

OPINIONS

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

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“The Reporter” (USPS 096-280) is published weekly for \$36 per year by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, 500 Clubhouse Road, Vestal, NY 13850-3734. Periodicals Postage Paid at Vestal, NY and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Reporter, 500 Clubhouse Road, Vestal, NY 13850-3734 or reach us by e-mail at TREPORTER@AOL.COM.

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Why “Black Panther” might also be a milestone in black-Jewish relations

By Gabe Friedman

(JTA) – If you have checked in on the pop culture zeitgeist the past few weeks, you know that the film “Black Panther” is breaking box office records and Hollywood assumptions about race. The well-received Marvel flick was written and directed by African-Americans (co-written by Ryan Coogler and Joe Robert Cole, and directed by Coogler) and features a mostly African-American cast anchored by Chadwick Boseman in the title role as a black superhero.

But some fans might not realize that the original Black Panther character was actually created by two white Jews. The superhero was the brainchild of writer Stan Lee (born Stanley Lieber) and artist Jack Kirby (born Jacob Kurtzberg), who already were veterans of the comic book industry when they started working together at Marvel at the dawn of the 1960s. The first comic book series they produced in tandem was the Fantastic Four in 1961, but they would go on to create a slew of superhero characters, from the Hulk to Iron Man to the X-Men.

Lee and Kirby’s Black Panther character debuted in July 1966, in a Fantastic Four comic strip. He would get his own series later in the ‘70s.) The leader of the fictional African country of Wakanda was the first black superhero featured in a mainstream comic book. In addition to having supernatural physical abilities (granted in part by a heart-shaped herb he eats), the Black Panther is a scientist with a degree from Oxford University. In the Marvel universe, Wakanda, which resisted Western colonization, is also the most technologically advanced nation on earth – a concept meant to shatter stereotypes about Africa.

Besides being a pop culture milestone, the Black Panther’s debut came at a crucial juncture in black-Jewish relations. The years after World War II and up to about 1966 (yes, that exact year, as explained below) have been referred to as a “golden age” in the relationship between the two groups. American Jews, who empathized with blacks as they themselves struggled to fit into white American society before and after the war, participated in the civil rights movement to an outsized extent, and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. often praised them for their activism.

Jews “demonstrated their commitment to the principle of tolerance and brotherhood not only in the form of sizable contributions, but in many other tangible ways, and often at great personal sacrifice,” King said in 1965.

However, relations strained over time, as Jews found their way into the upper echelons of America while blacks



Posters for “Black Panther” filled Edwards Houston Marq’e Stadium 23 and IMAX at a screening of the blockbuster film for the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Houston on February 15. (Photo by Bob Levey/Getty Images for IMAX)

remained stifled in comparison, even after the passage of multiple civil rights bills in the ‘60s. In October 1966, Huey Newton and Bobby Seale formed the Black Panther Party (which did not take its name from the character), and kick-started the Black Power movement, which scrutinized the ways that any whites – Jews included – interacted with blacks.

The aftermath of Israel’s victory in the 1967 Six-Day War subtly added to the groups’ separation. After Israel repelled attacks from many of its Middle Eastern neighbors, it took control of the Arabs living in the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula and territory known as the West Bank. It was a turning point in the way that many groups – including blacks, who sympathized with other groups they considered oppressed – viewed Israel and in turn some American Jews. In their eyes, Israel became another unjust colonial regime. Jews felt betrayed, as did blacks when some major Jewish groups began to oppose affirmative action.

So perhaps “Black Panther” represents an opportunity for healing. The film’s creators and a number of black writers have been praising Lee and Kirby for reaching out to non-white audiences and imagining an empowered African culture free from colonialism. Coogler called them “amazing” in a recent interview. Reginald Hudlin, who more than a decade ago wrote a Black Panther TV series, called the duo’s character “perfect.” Stephen Bush, writing in the New Statesman, called them “genius.”

As for Lee, who is now 95, he has been rooting for the “Black Panther” film for a while. “Congratulations @marvelstudios, #RyanCoogler, and the entire cast & crew on the soaring success of Black Panther! What

a thrill it is to be able to witness all the records this dynamic, thoughtful movie is smashing,” he tweeted.

So perhaps it’s time to celebrate the message of reconciliation that “Black Panther” represents, just like Kirby – who passed away in 1994 – might have done. In an interview with *The Hollywood Reporter*, Kirby’s family compared him to Bernie Sanders, saying that he would have been delighted to see the character empower such a wide audience.

“A black superhero with both amazing mental as well as physical powers, from a technologically advanced society in Africa, sends as strong a message now as it did over 50 years ago. Today, my grandfather’s message will reach tens of millions of people of all races and nationalities, a concept my grandfather could never have conceived of,” Kirby’s granddaughter Jillian Kirby

said in a separate interview cited by THR.

OF NOTE

Morell

Eitan and Varda Morell announce the marriage of their son, Dov Morell, to Na’ama Rosenhok on August 25, 2017. They reside in Yishuv Talmon, Israel. Dov is the grandson of Shmuel Morell and the late Audrey Morell, formerly of Binghamton.



Na’ama and Dov Morell

Morell

Eitan and Varda Morell announce the marriage of their son, Eliezer Morell, to Moriyah Fox on January 10. They reside in Sha’alvim, Israel. Eliezer is the grandson of Shmuel Morell and the late Audrey Morell, formerly of Binghamton.



Moriyah and Eliezer Morell

BD. Continued from page 1

At that time the Jewish Community Center also had a theatrical performance group and Balin danced and acted in a number of its productions. In her 20s, her involvement with the Jewish community included being the vocalist in a band at the JCC, which also performed at movie houses and veterans’ hospitals. More recently, she has performed in Temple Concord’s skits and in dramatic readings for its Sisterhood.

“I was always interested in taking on challenges so I could continue learning more and more,” Balin says. “As a result, I held a large variety of jobs that enabled me to

increase my knowledge base in many areas.” In the 1960s, her skills in business led to her starting a business school that she ran for eight years.

“It is a pleasure to listen to Flo relate her many experiences growing up in Binghamton,” organizers say. “Anyone who has wondered what it was like to grow up in Binghamton during the Depression, what the community was like then and later, and what kinds of Jewish activities were available for its youth, will definitely want to be there for this very special Beth David luncheon.”

Beth David’s luncheon speaker series takes place the second Saturday of the month, after Shabbat morning services, and is open to the community. There is no charge for the luncheon, but Beth David welcomes donations to the Luncheon Fund in order to keep the program going, since its continuation depends on the generosity of contributors. Donations 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.

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Wedding and engagement photos wanted

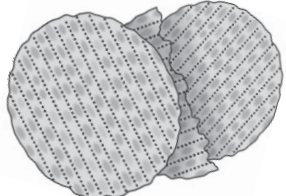
The Reporter is looking for photos of couples who became engaged or married in 2017 for the annual Wedding, Prom and Party Guide issue (coming March 16).

Please mail or drop off these photos with identification – not written on the photos but on a separate piece of paper – including the names of all those in the photo, date and place of the prom. Please do so by Tuesday, March 6. Photos can be dropped off Monday-Thursday 8:30 am-5 pm; and Friday 8:30 am-4 pm. They can also 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. Or they can be mailed to The Reporter, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850.



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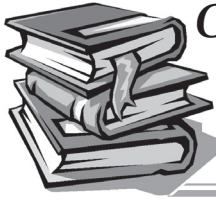


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Off the Shelf

Divorce, religion and romance

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

In listings of stressful life events, divorce is considered one of the most difficult; some psychologists say only the death of a loved one ranks higher. Tova Mirvis and Ilana Kurshan discovered this in their personal lives, although they also learned that life does continue and can take unexpected – even joyous – turns. However, the two women had very different marital experiences before their divorces. In “The Book of Separation: A Memoir” (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt), novelist Mirvis writes about leaving not only her marriage of more than 15 years, but the world of Modern Orthodoxy. Kurshan, on the other hand, was married less than a year before her marriage ended, but she’d left behind her family and friends in the U.S. to follow her husband to Israel. In “If All the Seas Were Ink: A Memoir” (St. Martin’s Press), Kurshan, the daughter of a Conservative rabbi, shows how *daf yomi* (the study of a page of Talmud daily) helped her through difficult times and increased her

personal connection to Judaism.

Mirvis’ decision to leave her marriage was not an easy one. Born to a Modern Orthodox family in Memphis and now living in Massachusetts, she was well aware that leaving her husband and no longer defining herself as religious might mean not only losing her friends, but custody of her children. Mirvis notes that her decision was not taken rashly. She had long chafed at Orthodox practice, but as a good girl, tried to hide her feelings, even when she was attending day school: “I said nothing because to outwardly challenge a teacher would have been worse than not doing your homework or talking out of turn. I sunk lower in my seat and focused on the hem of my skirt. *Be good*, said this teacher. *Be good*, the community said. *Be good*, my name [Tova] reminded me... I knew without needing to be told that an indispensable part of being good was a willingness to hide what you really thought.”

At one point, she saw marriage as the answer to all of life’s questions and challenges. Mirvis tried desperately to follow the correct path: “I had followed the rules, had done what was expected of me – gone to Israel, then to college and had fallen in love with someone like myself. I’d ventured outside, but hadn’t let it change who I was. At the end of the wedding, as our guests started to leave, we set off into the promised land of married life. I was in love with him. I was in love with the story.” Mirvis forced herself to accept that story, but after three children, cracks began to emerge. The first time, though, that she admitted that she could no longer stay in the community was after taking part in a conference about Orthodoxy and the arts. She realized that she could no longer live inside the box of Modern Orthodoxy: “That moment, standing in front of this room of rabbis, was the last time I ever considered See “Romance” on page 5

LEGAL NOTICE

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

- The name of the limited liability company (“LLC”) is El Pulpo Mexican Restaurant and Grill, LLC.
- The date of filing of the Articles of Organization with the Secretary of State is January 16, 2018.
- The County within the State of New York in which the principal office of the LLC is located is Broome.
- The Secretary of State of the State of New York is hereby designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. The post office address to which the Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the LLC served upon him or her is: 30 Fenton Avenue, Binghamton, NY 13901.
- The character or purpose of the business of the LLC is any purpose allowed by law.

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

- The name of the limited liability company (“LLC”) is Crew4, LLC.
- The date of filing of the Articles of Organization with the Secretary of State is January 19, 2018.
- The County within the State of New York in which the principal office of the LLC is located is Broome.
- The Secretary of State of the State of New York is hereby designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. The post office address to which the Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the LLC served upon him or her is: 870 Conklin Road, Binghamton, NY 13903.
- The character or purpose of the business of the LLC is any purpose allowed by law.

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY: The name of the limited liability company is: The Venue at Beagell Farms, LLC (the “Company”). The date of filing of the Articles of Organization of the Company with the Secretary of State was January 19, 2018. The county in which the principal place of business of the Company shall be located is Broome County. The Secretary of State has been designated as agent of the Company upon whom process against it may be served. The Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the Company, to Hinman, Howard & Kattell, LLP, Attn: Ryan M. Mead, 80 Exchange Street, Suite 700, Binghamton, NY 13901. The purpose of the business of the Company is any lawful business

purpose.

Notice of Formation of Kidz Kingdom LLC

Arts. Of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 12/1/2017. Business location: Broome County. Princ. Office of LLC: 1241 Front St, Unit 2, Binghamton NY 13905. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to the LLC at the addr. of princ. office. Purpose: any lawful activity.

Notice of Formation of Hypnosis for Healing, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 01/16/18. Office location: Broome County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: 418 West Chenango Rd., Castle Creek, NY 13744. Purpose: any lawful activities.

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

- The name of the limited liability company (“LLC”) is Leadership Solutions Advisers LLC.
- The date of filing of the Articles of Organization with the Secretary of State is January 24, 2018.
- The County within the State of New York in which the principal office of the LLC is located is Broome.
- The Secretary of State of the State of New York is hereby designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. The post office address to which the Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the LLC served upon him or her is: 1873 State Route 7, Harpursville, NY 13787.
- The character or purpose of the business of the LLC is any purpose allowed by law.

Notice of Formation of Aponi Aerial Services, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 01/24/18. Office location: Broome County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: 1704 Campus Dr., Vestal, NY 13850. Purpose: any lawful activities.

Notice of Formation of Stickle & Sons, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 01/24/18. Office location: Broome County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: 1350 Millburn Dr., Conklin, NY 13748. Purpose: any lawful activities.

Notice of Formation of Ta Realty Properties, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 01/24/18. Office location: Broome County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against

it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: 83 Endicott Ave., Johnson City, NY 13790. Purpose: any lawful activities.

NOTICE UNDER NEW YORK LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY LAW SECTION 206

Notice is given of the formation of Abell Productions, LLC (the “Company”) for the transaction of business in the State of New York and elsewhere.

- The name of the limited liability company is Abell Productions, LLC.
- The Articles of Organization were filed with the Secretary of State on 01/22/2018.
- The county in which the office of the Company is to be located is Broome County N.Y.- principal business location 824 Shale Dr., Endicott NY 13760.
- The Secretary of State is designated as the agent of the Company upon whom process against the Company may be served. The Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process served against the Company to the Company at 824 Shale Dr. Endicott NY 13760.
- The registered agent of the Company upon whom and at which process against the Company can be served is 824 Shale Dr. Endicott NY 13760.
- The purpose of the Company is to engage in any lawful act which limited liability companies may be organized under the New York LLC.

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY UNDER NEW YORK PROFESSIONAL SERVICE LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY LAW (“LLCL”)

- The name of the professional service limited liability company (“LLC”) is WILBUR D. DAHLGREN, PLLC.
- The date of filing of the Articles of Organization with the Secretary of State is January 30, 2018.
- The County within the State of New York in which the principal office of the professional service LLC is to be located is Broome County.
- The Secretary of State of the State of New York is hereby designated as agent of the professional service LLC upon whom process against it may be served. The post office address to which the Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against

the professional service LLC served upon him is: 99 Corporate Drive, Binghamton, NY 13904.

- The character or purpose of the business of the professional service LLC is any purpose allowed by law.

Under Section 1203 of the Limited Liability Company Law

Notice of Formation of Bandel Properties, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 01/31/18. Office location: Broome County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: P.O. Box 435, Harpursville, NY 13787. Purpose: any lawful activities.

Notice of Formation of Newbsanity, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 01/31/18. Office location: Broome County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: 782 Dunham Hill Rd., Binghamton, NY 13905. Purpose: any lawful activities.

Notice of Formation of Four Corners Assessment and Counseling, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 01/31/18. Office location: Broome County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: 231 Main St., Vestal, NY 13850. Purpose: any lawful activities.

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF Dapper Rascal Studio LLC Arts. of Org. filed with SSNY ON 04/14/2017. Office: Broome County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to Eva Duarte 8 Highland Avenue Binghamton, NY 13905. LLC at 60 Court St, Binghamton, NY 13905. Purpose: any lawful activity.

Notice of Formation of Amogh, LLC. Articles of Organization filed with Secretary of State of New York (SSNY) on January 18, 2018. Office location: Broome County. SSNY has been designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail a copy of any process against the LLC served upon him or her to: 1012 Siena Lane, Vestal, NY 13850. Purpose: To engage in any lawful act or activity within the purposes for which limited liability companies may be organized pursuant to Limited Liability Company Law of the State of New York.

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

- The name of the limited liability company (“LLC”) is Badland Outfitters, LLC.
- The date of filing of the Articles of Organization with the Secretary of State is February 15, 2018.

- The County within the State of New York in which the principal office of the LLC is located is Broome.

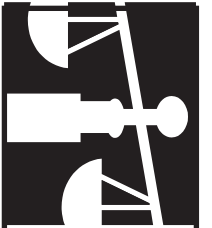
- The Secretary of State of the State of New York is hereby designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. The post office address to which the Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the LLC served upon him or her is: 54 Spicebush Lane, Tuxedo Park, NY 10987.

- The character or purpose of the business of the LLC is any purpose allowed by law.

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY: The name of the limited liability company is: Plateia Properties, LLC (the “Company”). The date of filing of the Articles of Organization of the Company with the Secretary of State was February 20, 2018. The county in which the principal place of business of the Company shall be located is Broome County. The Secretary of State has been designated as agent of the Company upon whom process against it may be served. The Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the Company, to Hinman, Howard & Kattell, LLP, Attn: Ryan M. Mead, 80 Exchange Street, Suite 700, Binghamton, NY 13901. The purpose of the business of the Company is any lawful business purpose.

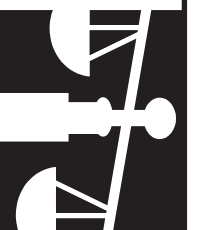
NOTICE OF FORMATION OF LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY: The name of the limited liability company is: New Leaf Cider Co. LLC (the “Company”). The date of filing of the Articles of Organization of the Company with the Secretary of State was February 20, 2018. The county in which the principal place of business of the Company shall be located is Broome County. The Secretary of State has been designated as agent of the Company upon whom process against it may be served. The Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the Company, to Hinman, Howard & Kattell, LLP, Attn: Ryan M. Mead, 80 Exchange Street, Suite 700, Binghamton, NY 13901. The purpose of the business of the Company is any lawful business purpose.

NOTICE OF FORMATION OF LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY: The name of the limited liability company is: K&K Real Property LLC (the “Company”). The date of filing of the Articles of Organization of the Company with the Secretary of State was February 20, 2018. The county in which the principal place of business of the Company shall be located is Broome County. The Secretary of State has been designated as agent of the Company upon whom process against it may be served. The Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the Company, to Hinman, Howard & Kattell, LLP, Attn: Ryan M. Mead, 80 Exchange Street, Suite 700, Binghamton, NY 13901. The purpose of the business of the Company is any lawful business purpose.



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THE REPORTER



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Jews from all over Russia win trips to Paris – by studying Judaism

By Cnaan Liphshiz

MOSCOW (JTA) – Growing up in a working-class family in Russia’s Far East, Sergei Aryeh Zolotov knew the French Riviera only from what he’d seen in James Bond movies. A student in his 20s from the city of Khabarovsk, 4,000 miles east of Moscow, Zolotov had neither the means to travel to the sunny beaches of southern France nor to obtain the visa that Russian citizens need to enter the European Union.

Luckily for Zolotov, he didn’t need to worry about any of that. All he had to do to visit the beaches of Cote d’Azur was to show up for a few months of weekly Judaism classes at his local synagogue, thanks to Russia’s Eurostars program for young Jews from the former Soviet Union.

Launched in 2012 by the country’s branch of the Chabad Chasidic movement, the program takes hundreds of Jewish men and women aged 18-28 on fully subsidized trips each spring to Europe. The Eurostars trip features a visit to the former Nazi death camp of Auschwitz in Poland along with different destinations every year. But to earn a free ticket, participants must attend 85 percent of a yearlong program studying Torah and Jewish traditions.

Coming from Khabarovsk – a landlocked and icy place situated 800 miles northeast of the North Korean capital of Pyongyang – “I never thought I’d get to go on a Mediterranean cruise,” Zolotov told JTA recently in Moscow,



Participants in the Eurostars trip to France in 2015 at the Louvre Museum in Paris. (Photo courtesy of Yachad)

where he moved last year to work as an economist. Zolotov attended the 2017 trip. “Frankly, I signed up because a friend told me it’s a classy cruise with guys and girls for free,” he said.

But Zolotov said the utilitarian approach changed as he connected to Rabbi Yaakov Snetkov and his “small, but warm,” community. The connection “changed me

forever, more than any cruise ever could,” he said. Following the trip, Zolotov had a belated circumcision.

For eight months in 2016, Zolotov joined a handful of other Eurostars participants in Khabarovsk who studied the weekly Torah portion on Sundays. Last May, they and groups like theirs from more than 40 cities across the former Soviet Union gathered in Moscow for a weeklong trip costing many millions of dollars that was paid for in donations to Chabad of Russia.

With visas pre-arranged for them by the Chabad-affiliated Federation of Jewish Communities of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the approximately 1,000 participants boarded two chartered airplanes to Barcelona, Spain. They toured the sites connected to that city’s Jewish heritage. Traveling in 20 buses, they boarded a Grandi Navi Veloci cruise ship to Italy and Monaco, giving the latter’s tiny Jewish community the largest Jewish event in its history. Then they flew from Nice to visit Auschwitz before returning to Russia.

Matchmaking is part of the Eurostars raison d’être, according to Rabbi Mendy Wilansky, head of the Yahad special programs platform, which is responsible for Eurostars within the Federation of Jewish Communities. The cruise featured speed dating evenings, he said. “In a huge country like Russia with massive assimilation, of course it’s an opportunity for *shidduch*,” he said.

Among those seizing the opportunity were Yosef and Sarah Vasilyev, participants on the 2015 Eurostars trip. Yosef, a Jew from the Siberian city of Tyumen, became engaged to Sarah from the nearby city of Chelyabinsk just days after returning from France. Their wedding in See “Russia” on page 8

Romance. Continued from page 4

myself inside... *No*, their limits weren’t ones I was willing to accept, and *no*, I didn’t want to teach my children to heed these lines, and *no*, it wasn’t just about writing freely, it was about living honestly and freely, and *no*, I couldn’t tuck away this feeling, and *no*, I was no longer willing to follow without believing, and *no*, I was no longer willing to pretend in order to belong.”

However, leaving her marriage was easier than leaving behind her religion because it had served as the cornerstone of her life. At her religious divorce, Mirvis realized that she now faced the world without a road map for how to behave. Until that time, the religious world – the only world that existed for her – gave her the answers: “Every decision I’d made up to this point had been stacked on top of these [religious] truths. But once the foundation began to shake, everything else did as well. One by one the pieces began to fall.” Mirvis now has to decide what her religious practice will or won’t be without rabbinic input. She juggles holidays and home observances as her children travel between her new home and that of her husband. Deciding what to do on a childless Friday night becomes a challenge. An even greater challenge begins when she starts dating a Jewish man who is completely secular. How Mirvis balances all the different aspects of her life is a major part of the story she tells.

While Mirvis had difficulty with the strictures of Orthodox Judaism, Kurshan does not feel the same about her Conservative practice. Even ancient rabbis’ comments about women and *mitzvot* don’t interfere with her love of talmudic text because she feels the rules don’t apply to her: “It soon became clear to me that by the Talmud’s standards, I am a man rather than a woman – if ‘man’ is defined as an independent, self-sufficient adult, whereas ‘woman’ is a dependent generally living in either her father’s or her husband’s home. In some ways this was a relief because I could regard the Talmud’s gender stereotypes as historical curiosities rather than infuriating provocations. The Talmud did not offend me because I was defying its classifications through my engagement with the text.”

After her divorce, Kurshan must choose whether to remain in Israel or return to the U.S., but it seems that rather than make a firm choice, she just continues to live her daily life – working, studying and running. The author makes it clear that she loves to keep busy. In fact, that desire to be doing something is what sometimes makes it difficult for her to pause and pray. She admits she lives in two civilizations: her quotations about life not only come from the Talmud, but the English literature she clearly also loves. Being part of a community is important to her, so much so that she supports her egalitarian minyan by being one of its regular Torah readers. Yet, the majority of her work focuses on her *daf yomi* learning, which she uses to comment on her life. For example, when reading about how the rabbis mourned both the destruction of the Temple and the sacrificial system, she notes the same was true for her about her marriage: “I, too, felt that I was mourning not just my marriage but all my romantic dreams – dreams that involved late-night roving and star-crossed love. I’m not sure if, after the destruction of the First Temple, the Jews dared hope that there might someday be a second. I only

know that in my life I harbored no such expectations.” Readers already know that Kurshan will marry and have children – something she reveals in her introduction. Learning how she arrived at that state is what propels the text.

The most interesting sections of “If All the Seas Were Ink” are Kurshan’s discussions of how the talmudic text related to her life situation. For example, when she discusses studying Talmud with a boyfriend who did not become her husband, she writes, “Although [he] and I learned Torah together, we were not learning the same Torah. It is impossible for any two people to learn the exact same Torah, because the moment someone internalizes what he or she has learned, that learning begins to assume his or her shape.” Kustan suggests that “there is some sort of chemical reaction that takes place between me and the Torah I learn. I am transformed by the Torah I study, and the Torah I study is transformed by my insights.”

What makes Kurshan’s second marriage work is that her husband accepts who she is, rather than expecting her to fulfil some type of religious template. That means she continues attending her egalitarian minyan, while he prays at an Orthodox synagogue. Just how observant he is is not noted: Kurshan keeps kosher and is *shomer* Shabbat (a strict Shabbat observer), so there doesn’t seem to be any conflict between their observance. Kurshan’s theology is not Orthodox, though. She believes “the Torah is divine. But for me this does not mean that God handed the entire Written and Oral Torah to Moses on Mount Sinai. Rather, Sinai is the human record of an encounter with God. As a human record, this document is historically contingent: it was written at a particular historical moment, and reflects the biases of its times.” She mentions how future generations adapted the text to suit their needs, but also says that belief forms the basis of her life: “Ultimately I believe in God because I cannot live my life any other way.”

Although I enjoyed both memoirs, “The Book of Separation” was the more compelling, partly due to Mirvis’ skill as a novelist, which she used to create drama and suspense. My favorite parts of “If All the Seas Were Ink” – the discussions of talmudic rabbis – actually slowed the pace of of the work. Plus, readers already know from the beginning that Kurshan will marry and have children, while Mirvis only reveals where her life now stands at the end of her book. What both works had in common is that they explore how these two very different women found ways to balance religious differences in their new relationships. This is less of a struggle for Kurshan because, in Jerusalem, she finds a community that supports the choices she and her husband make – even their decision to attend different prayer services. Mirvis had more difficulty finding a balance in her life – with her ex-husband, with the man she is dating and with the religious choices of two of her children, one of whom retains his Orthodox practice, while the other rejects those strictures and fights to break them.

Read together, these works offer a fascinating glimpse of contemporary Jewish life. What makes them stand out is their authors’ honesty – their willingness to reveal their true feelings about Judaism and Jewish practice. Their engagement with finding a truth that fits their lives – one that speaks to their hearts – makes both memoirs worth reading.

Community Calendar

The Community Calendar can be found on the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton’s website, www.jfgb.org, by clicking on “calendar.”

“Have you forgotten the date of your organization’s event? Can’t remember when the CJS lecture is? Do you want to hear what’s happening at the next Federation board meeting? Are you planning an event and want to make sure there are no conflicts? Then go to www.jfgb.org and hit ‘calendar,’” said Sima Auerbach, executive director of the Federation. “This is your Community Calendar! All the events this amazing community holds are listed – and if you do not see what you were looking for, call us at 724-2332. In a community of this size – where people belong to several organizations or synagogues – we want to make certain that people don’t miss an important event or meeting.”

Updates or additions of events for the calendar can be made by contacting the Federation through its website (click on “calendar” and then “click here to request a change to the calendar”) or by calling 724-2332.



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What made Muslim Albanians risk their lives to save Jews from the Holocaust?

By Cnaan Liphshiz

TIRANA, Albania (JTA) – Most anywhere else in Nazi-occupied Europe, an encounter with police would have likely sealed the fate of Jewish refugees like Nissim and Sarah Aladjem and their 10-year-old son, Aron. Instead, when the family was detained by police in the Muslim nation of Albania 75 years ago, it was the key to their survival. The family was fleeing Bulgaria when they were detained by five police officers working for the occupation forces. Instead of turning them over to his occupiers, as he should have done with undocumented Jewish aliens, one of the policemen helped the Aladjems find shelter with other locals.

Far from unusual in Albania, the actions of that officer in 1943 – he has not been identified – attest to the prevalence and boldness of the efforts to rescue Jewish refugees in this nation situated northeast of Greece. It is perhaps the only Nazi-occupied country that had more Jews after the Holocaust than before.

Owing partly to what locals call Besa, a local code of honor and neighborly conduct, the rescue and survival of approximately 2,000 Jews by Albanians for decades had remained largely unknown. But thanks to recent studies and films, it is taking its place as a rare ray of light during otherwise dark times.

The Aladjems' story is told in an award-winning 2012 documentary film titled "Besa: The Promise." It tells the story of Rifat Hoxha, who ran the pastry shop to which the family was taken by the police officer and arranged their shelter. The film follows the unlikely story of how, a decade ago, Hoxha's son, Rexhep, returned three Jewish prayer books to members of the Aladjem family living in Israel. During the war, his Jewish guests had given the prayer books to Hoxha for safekeeping after hiding at his house for half a year.

As with many other Jews who survived in Albania – most of them refugees from neighboring Greece, Italy, Bulgaria and Serbia – the rescue of the Aladjems was "an open secret," Rexhep Hoxha, a father of two who was born in 1950, told JTA. "Not only the police knew, but all the neighbors knew as well. There was a circle of silence. It's something connected to our culture. You don't betray your guest and you certainly don't betray your neighbor."

To accommodate the Aladjems, Hoxha, who died in 1987, shuttered his bakery in the busiest time of the year – police brought the Jews to his shop just ahead of the Eid al-Fitr holiday – and brought them to his home, Aron Aladjem recalls in the film. Then he put them up in a room occupied by his in-laws, who temporarily moved out to make room for the guests.

"My grandfather was a Muslim cleric. For him to leave his house and make room for this Jewish family, there is no tolerance more beautiful than this," Rexhep Hoxha said. Israel recognized his father posthumously in 2015 as a Righteous among the Nations – the Jewish state's honorary title for non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust.

In many cases, numerous members of rescuers' families knew of such acts and became involved, according to a 2008 essay by Yad Vashem researchers. "This included the extended family and even some close friends," the essay said. "Often the Jews were divided between relatives and friends."



L-r: Rexhep Hoxha and Fatos Qoqja in a bar in Tirana, Albania, on November 8. Qoqja is pictured with a medal that his father received for saving Jews during the Holocaust. (Photo by Cnaan Liphshiz)

Some of the Jews in hiding – and especially the 200 Albania-born Jews who survived the war – were feeling secure enough to operate small businesses during the occupation years, according to the essay. Some never bothered to go into hiding, trusting their neighbors would not denounce them and warn them ahead of inspections.

Albania currently has 75 so-called Righteous Gentiles – a small number in absolute terms, but one that, examined relatively, means that a Jew there was at least 10 times likelier to be rescued than in Lithuania, which has almost 900 righteous, or Poland, which has 6,706.

Last year, to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day (which this year falls on January 27), the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted a conference in Tirana titled "We Remember: Promoting human rights through the lens of Holocaust education and remembrance."

Traces of the hospitality aspect of the Besa code are still visible today in rural Albania, an Adriatic republic whose green and black mountains are scarred by thousands of abandoned and elaborate Cold War-era bunkers and reservoirs built by its communist dictator, Enver Hoxha (no relation to Rifat). "If I'm traveling for work and get stuck somewhere, I only need to knock on someone's door and I have a place to sleep for the night," said Petrit Zorba, a meteorologist and director of the Albania-Israel Friendship Society.

Drivers often signal to others with their lights to warn of speed traps in Tirana, a city of one million where the sound of the call to prayer from the Et'hem Bey mosque is heard several times a day across the main Skanderbeg Square.

According to Zorba, the rescue of Jews in Albania was "a matter of tradition and had very little to do with religion."



Baba Mondi, leader of the Bektashi sect of Albanian Muslims, at his office in Tirana on November 7. (Photo by Cnaan Liphshiz)

Yad Vashem has no insight into what role religion played in the rescue efforts. But Baba Mondi, the leader of the secretive Bektashi Shi'ite sect, which is headquartered in Albania, says that religion's role in the rescue was both central and indirect.

"In Albania there is a tradition of religious tolerance," Baba Mondi, wearing his traditional white-and-green robe and fez-like hat, told JTA in November. "I wouldn't mind my children marrying a Jew, a Christian, whoever. So while the rescue maybe didn't come from a religious commandment, it grew out of a religious environment where all fellow human beings are our brethren."

He gave the interview at the world center of his sect – a domed structure with 12 arches that was inaugurated in the city's eastern outskirts in 2015. Its ornate ceiling features arabesque designs and the traditional Bektashi sun symbols arranged around an elevated turret. On sunny days, its golden dome reflects and amplifies light that it catches from the snowy top of Mount Dajti overlooking Tirana. Forthcoming in speaking about the rescue of Jews, Baba Mondi declined to reveal anything of substance about the customs of his sect, which for centuries has been persecuted by other Muslims for its mystic interpretations of Islam.

In addition to Besa, the relatively benign nature of the German occupation may have also played a role in how Albanians were more willing to take in Jews than Poles, Ukrainians and others across occupied Europe. "German authorities did not aggressively seek, deport or exterminate Jews from Albania proper after occupying the country in November 1943," according to Daniel Perez, a historian who wrote about the Holocaust years in Albania in a 2013 book titled "Bringing the Dark Past to Light."

But Aron Aladjem says he witnessed a different reality. "The Germans ruled there and on every tree, every electrical pole we saw partisans hanging – many of them hanged to scare people into not hiding partisans and Jews," he recalls in the film.

The Germans, who replaced the Italians in 1943 as the occupying force in Albania, were not the only ones that Hoxha had to watch out for, according to his son. "Having a religious book, Jewish or Muslim, was not a good idea for our family, which already had a cleric, under communism," Rexhep Hoxha said. "Any connection to Jews or Israel, whom we were told was an enemy of socialism, was ill-advised."

The culture of silence under communism partly explains why the rescue of Albanian Jews has remained relatively unknown for many decades, according to the Yad Vashem researchers. The imprint of the communist era, they wrote, caused "people to fear being linked to the 'wrong' resistance group, even after the regime had been changed."

And Albanians had some "very wrong" resistance groups. Most notably, the 1st Albanian Waffen SS Division, manned by hundreds of ethnic Albanians – many of them from Bosnia and also Kosovo, which during the German and Italian occupations had been lumped together with Albania. The details of their activities are sketchy, but they are known to have rounded up Jews who belonged to the group of at least 249 Kosovar Jews who ended up at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Germany, according to Perez.

See "Albanians" on page 8

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Poland isn't the only country trying to police what can be said about the Holocaust

By Cnaan Liphshiz

(JTA)—In 2015, Ukraine's president signed a law whose critics say stifles debate on the historical record of World War II and whitewashes local perpetrators of the Holocaust.

Law 2538-1 criminalized any rhetoric insulting to the memory of anti-communist partisans. And it celebrates the legacy of such combatants — ostensibly including the ones who murdered countless Jewish and Polish citizens while collaborating with Nazi Germany.

The law generated some backlash, including an open letter by more than 70 historians who said it “contradicts the right to freedom of speech,” ignores complicity in the Holocaust and would “damage Ukraine’s national security.”

But as with similar measures in Europe’s ex-communist nations, the Ukraine law generated little opposition or even attention internationally — especially when compared to the loud objections to a similar measure in Poland that was signed into law on February 6 by the president. The law had passed both houses of parliament in recent days. The United States and Israel joined historians and Israel’s Yad Vashem Holocaust authority in decrying the bill.

IsraelContinued from page 1

minister: Case 1000, which centers on gifts Netanyahu allegedly received from Hollywood producer Arnon Milchan and Australian billionaire James Packer; Case 2000, which focuses on an illicit deal Netanyahu allegedly tried to strike with *Yediot Achronot* publisher Arnon Mozes to ensure positive coverage; and Case 3000, which revolves around an alleged conflict of interest with regard to the 2016 procurement of three German submarines. Case 3000 does not implicate Netanyahu directly, but rather his attorney and cousin, David Shimron.

Bennett and Kahlon reiterated recently that they do not plan to make any decisions regarding their parties’ future in the coalition until Attorney General Avichai Mendelblit announces a decision on whether or not to indict Netanyahu.

Still, it doesn’t seem a stretch that one of the parties will succumb to public pressure and quit the coalition. This is the worst possible scenario for Netanyahu; he stands to lose control of the situation if one of Likud’s partners bolts or, alternately, threatens to topple the government unless another Likud member replaces Netanyahu as its leader.

Until now, Netanyahu has been able to stay ahead of the political game by maintaining the power to call early elections. He wielded this power at his convenience, which usually did not suit other parties, and only after a calculated and meticulous assessment of the situation. If Netanyahu is forced to call early elections, he may lose this advantage, especially the ability to control events and manage them as he wishes.

This may be the worst-case scenario, but it is also, at least for now, the most far-fetched. Likud’s coalition partners have no interest in elections at this time, each for its own reasons. What they do have in common is their respective electorates’ desire to see Netanyahu retain his position as prime minister. Therefore, exiting the coalition prematurely could backfire.

Another reason that the coalition partners are reluctant to leave the government lies with recent polls that show Likud is still going strong. The fact that the polls predict that toppling the current government and seeking re-election would still see Netanyahu lead the next government is more than enough to give the parties’ leaders pause.

In a different possible scenario, Netanyahu could decide to resign from politics. While this more drastic option is not on the table at this time, according to sources close to the prime minister, it could become a reality should Netanyahu’s legal predicament worsen.

A third possibility could see Netanyahu call early elections. The advantage of this course of action is that it will allow Netanyahu to control events, despite the inherent, calculated risk of seeking re-election, as no one really knows how such early elections will end. Winning the election will prove Netanyahu’s claim that the public has faith in his ability to govern; therefore, demanding that he step down or suspend himself pending the attorney general’s decision is irrelevant.

Seeking re-election, however, comes with a major disadvantage — namely, that it will not resolve a situation in which he may face criminal charges several months or a year into his next term. While Israeli law does not mandate prime ministers to suspend themselves or resign while facing criminal proceedings, it’s clear that an indicted premier cannot remain in office.

The fourth scenario could see Netanyahu bide his time. This seems to be his preferred course of action, as it will allow him to observe how the legal process evolves before making a decision on whether or not to call early elections.

Netanyahu does not believe Mendelblit will indict him, which is why he prefers the current status quo. But what if Netanyahu is re-elected and then indicted? This could go one of two ways: If Netanyahu faces minor charges that do not carry moral turpitude, he will probably be able to pressure Mendelblit into signing a plea bargain that would allow him to remain in office. But if he faces serious charges, such as bribery, he’ll have no choice, but to resign.

“The Ukrainian and Polish laws are similar, but in Ukraine’s case, we didn’t see anything even close” to the avalanche of condemnations that Poland received, said Eduard Dolinsky, director of the Ukrainian Jewish Committee and a longtime campaigner against Holocaust revision in Ukraine. “I wish we had; maybe this law could have been stopped in Ukraine.”

To activists like Dolinsky, the singling out of Poland reflects the ongoing politicization of the debate on Eastern Europe’s bloody World War II history. They say the conversation is distorted by geopolitical tensions involving Russia, populism, ignorance and unresolved national traumas.

There are clear similarities between the Ukrainian and Polish laws, according to Alex Ryvchin, a Kiev-born Australian-Jewish journalist and author who has written about the politics of memory in Eastern Europe.

“Both seek to use the legitimacy and force of law to enshrine an official narrative of victimhood, heroism and righteousness while criminalizing public discussion of historical truths that contradict or undermine these narratives,” he said. Yet, he noted, “The reaction to the Polish law has indeed dwarfed the response to persistent state revisionism elsewhere in Europe in spite of the fact that the rate of collaboration was generally lower in Poland than in Ukraine and Latvia.”

The Baltic nations of Lithuania and Latvia were pioneers in nationalist legislation that limits discourse about the Holocaust in their territories. Critics say these laws also shift the blame for the murder of Jews, which was done with local helpers, to Nazi Germany alone. They also seem to equate the Nazi genocide with political repression by the Soviet Union — which many in the former Soviet Union blame on Jewish communists.

In 2010, Lithuania — a country where Nazi collaborators virtually wiped out a Jewish community of 250,000 — amended its criminal code, prescribing up to two years in jail to anyone who “denies or grossly underestimates” the crime of genocide or “other crimes against humanity or war crimes committed by the USSR or Nazi Germany against Lithuanian residents.”

Similar legislation in Latvia from 2014 imposes up to five years in jail for those who deny the role of “the foreign powers that have perpetrated crimes against Latvia and the Latvian nation,” without mentioning the involvement of Latvian SS volunteers in murdering nearly all of the country’s 70,000 Jews.

The denial of local culpability during the Holocaust is



L-r: Polish President Andrzej Duda nominaed Mateusz Morawiecki to be the prime minister at the presidential palace in Warsaw on December 11. Both support the law ocriminalizing refernces to death camps as Polish. (Photo by Janek Skarzynski/AFP/Getty Images)

at the root of opposition to Poland’s law, which sets a maximum of six years in jail for “whoever accuses, publicly and against the facts, the Polish nation or the Polish state of being responsible or complicit in the Nazi crimes committed by the Third Reich” or “grossly diminishes the responsibility of the actual perpetrators.” On February 6, President Andrzej Duda said he would sign the laws (which he did later in the day), finalizing them, but also refer them for review by Poland’s highest court.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who in the past has been criticized for not calling out his country’s Eastern European allies on these issues, called the Polish legislation “baseless” and said Israel opposed it. The U.S. State Department in a

statement suggested it could have “repercussions” for bilateral relations with Poland.

Israeli Education Minister Naftali Bennett’s scheduled visit to Poland the week of February 5 was canceled after he criticized the law, which Israel’s embassy in Poland said was generating antisemitic hate speech in the media.

Back in Israel, the Polish Embassy condemned what it called ignorant remarks by Yair Lapid, an opposition leader. Citing his credentials as the son of a Holocaust survivor, Lapid said the Polish law is designed to hide how Poland was “a partner in the Holocaust.”

Jewish organizations, including the Simon Wiesenthal Center, said for their part that they understand the Polish frustration with terms like “Polish death camps,” which seem to shift the blame for Nazi war crimes to Poland — one of the few Nazi-occupied countries where the Nazis did not allow any measure of self-rule or integrate locals into the genocide. And the term is especially offensive in Poland, where the Nazis killed at least 1.9 million non-Jews in addition to at least three million Jews.

But, many Jewish groups added, the legislation in Poland ignores how many Poles betrayed or killed Jews and is therefore detrimental to the preservation of historical record and free speech.

Dolinsky in Ukraine isn’t a fan of the Polish legislation, either. “But I don’t quite understand why it and only it provoked such a strong reaction,” he added. “We needed that strong reaction two years ago in Ukraine. This fight needs to apply to all these cases. For the pressure to be effective, it shouldn’t be selective.”

Dolinsky believes that Ukraine — which, unlike Poland, shares a border with Russia — is getting a free pass from the West because it is subjected to hostility from Russia under President Vladimir Putin.

See “Poland” on page 11

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Deciphering the past

Eighth-century clay seal with "signature of prophet Isaiah"

By JNS staff

(JNS) – A historic archaeological discovery near Jerusalem’s Temple Mount may be proof of the life of the biblical prophet Isaiah, according to an article in the Biblical Archaeology Review. A broken, eighth-century B.C.E. clay seal impression, or bulla, appears to be inscribed with the words “Belonging to Isaiah,” as well as a partial word containing letters of the word “prophet.”

“We appear to have discovered a seal impression, which may have belonged to the prophet Isaiah, in a scientific, archaeological excavation,” said Eilat Mazar, Ph.D., a Hebrew University archeologist, whose team uncovered the



A broken, eighth-century B.C.E. clay seal found at the Temple Mount’s southern wall Ophel excavation appears to be inscribed with the words “Belonging to Isaiah.” (Photo by Eilat Mazar via JNS)

find at the Temple Mount’s southern wall Ophel excavation.

In addition to the words on the bulla, a grazing doe is impressed on the seal, which is “a motif of blessing and protection found in Judah, particularly in Jerusalem,” according to the article.

Isaiah ministered to the Jewish people during the reigns of Judean Kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, and prophesied that “out of Zion shall come forth Torah, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

The Isaiah bulla was found just 10 feet from where Mazar’s team found a groundbreaking, intact bulla bearing the inscription “of King Hezekiah of Judah” in 2015. Hezekiah, the 12th king of the Kingdom of Judah, ruled between 727 B.C.E. and 698 B.C.E.

“The names of King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah are mentioned in one breath 14 of the 29 times the name of Isaiah is recalled [in the Bible] (2 Kings 19-20; Isaiah 37-39),” said Mazar. “No other figure was closer to King Hezekiah than the prophet Isaiah.”

Mailbox Shorts

Yiddish Book Center adult program

“Yiddish Women Writers Reclaimed” will be the next Yiddish Book Center’s weekend programs for adult learners. The three-day program will take place at the Center in Amherst, MA, from May 4-6. The program, led by Professor Anita Norich of the University of Michigan, will bring to light the talents of Yiddish women writers and show how they claimed a place for themselves as modern Jewish writers. The three-day program will include four lectures, a film screening, a tour of the Yiddish Book Center’s collections and exhibits, kosher meals and conversation.

Among the writers to be discussed are Kadya Molodovsky, an award-winning poet, teacher and editor; Anna Margolin, a member of the Yiddish literati in New York; and Celia Dropkin, best known for her depictions of love, eroticism and death. In her lectures, Norich will discuss the ways in which aspects of modern culture informed the writing of these women, and in her opening lecture, “Breaking Silences,” she’ll talk about how these writers wrote about the urge to speak, to be heard and to refuse others’ expectations of them.

Pre-registration is required and space is limited. To learn more and to register, visit yiddishbookcenter.org/women-writers.

“Jews in Space” exhibit

The exhibit “Jews in Space: Members of the Tribe in Orbit” is open at Center for Jewish History in New York. Featuring an array of rare artifacts, from 18th-century Hebrew astronomy texts to a collection of Judaica that went into orbit on the space shuttle, the exhibit explores the age-old Jewish quest to understand the heavens. Spanning several hundred years, it features material from YIVO’s and the Partners’ collections that includes rare 18th- and 19th-century rabbinic tomes on astronomy in Hebrew and German; Judaica taken into space aboard the space shuttle by astronaut Dr. Jeffrey Hoffman; Yiddish, English, Polish and Russian works of science fiction; rare science fiction periodicals; and other ephemera from literature and popular culture.

For more information, visit www.cjh.org/jewsinspace/ or contact the Center at programs@cjh.org or 212-294-8301.

Online book club

The website, The Whole Megillah, <https://thewholemegillah.wordpress.com>, announced that it has formed The Whole Megillah Book Club. Membership is free. Every two months, the blog will announce the name of a book being read. Discussion will take place on the blog’s Facebook page: www.facebook.com/thewholemegillah/. For more information, contact the writer of the blog at barbarakrasner@att.net.

Albanians.Continued from page 6

But according to some historians, many Jews who were rounded up by Albanian collaborators were transferred to minimum-security camps in Albania proper, where the vast majority were kept alive in defiance of Germany’s orders and policy on Jews.

Due to these complications and communist-era censorship, the first written account of the rescue story was published relatively late, in 1992, after the fall of communism. One of the first stories to emerge in documented form was of Beqir Qoqja, a Muslim tailor who in 1943 took in his friend, a Jew by the name of Avram Eliasaf Gani from the city of Vlore, after the Germans had arrested Gani’s brother.

Qoqja, who was recognized as a Righteous Among the Nations in 1992 and died in 2005, hosted Gani at great risk at his Tirana home, where Qoqja was living with his wife, Naile, and at least one daughter, according to Qoqja’s son Fatos. “A Jewish filmmaker once told me that if he were asked to risk his own child’s life to save another man’s, he wouldn’t do it,” said Fatos, 67, who has two children. “But I’d do exactly as my father had done. It’s Besa.”

The early 1990s were also the time when European societies became aware of the dark side of the Albanian code of honor: the slaying of men, including innocents, in blood feuds and honor killings that are dictated by the code of Kanun. They have cost thousands of lives and sent many thousands into exile as asylum seekers.

Despite the cruelties of the Kanun system, however, ordinary Albanians found the Nazi violence against Jews unconscionable because it targeted women and children, according to Eliezer Papo, a scholar on Balkan Jewish history at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel. “Common humanness, rolled into the Albanian patriarchal, tribal ethos, compelled these people to rescue Jews,” Papo suggested. And whereas “men killing other men is part of life in Albanian tradition, the targeting of women is an unspeakable monstrosity.”

He noted that killing dozens of men from one family to avenge the slaying of just one member of a feuding clan is not unheard of in Albania. “But those same feuding families,” Papo said, “would risk everything to rescue one another’s daughters.”

Russia.Continued from page 5

the synagogue of her hometown was a rare celebration for her graying community and featured prominently in its newsletter that month. Zolotov also came on the Eurostars program hoping to meet his “other half,” but it was the visit to Auschwitz that ended up changing his life, he said.

“It burned a hole in my soul,” Zolotov recalled. “It made me think of how we, Jews from Russia, walked and sang in Hebrew in Spain, before remembering our brothers killed in Poland,” he said, referencing the bloody history of antisemitic persecution in all three countries. “It made me feel what the Jewish tradition of survival and renewal is about.”

To Berel Lazar, a chief rabbi of Russia, the program’s success – participation has quadrupled over the past six years – is indicative of a major shift in European Jewry. It was vividly on display during the 2015 trip to France, Lazar said, when he led participants on a solidarity visit to the Hyper Cacher kosher shop in Paris, where earlier that year an Islamist killed four Jews.

“I remember a time when the Chabad emissary to France would go around kosher shops to collect nearly expired products to send them” to Russia, he told JTA. “Now we are returning to France to extend our support to that community.”

At a time of record immigration to Israel by French Jews because of France’s antisemitism problem, Lazar said, “It’s a very important sign of solidarity.”

Some Eurostars participants had a better idea than Zolotov of what to expect, including Lev Aryeh Osifov of the Siberian city of Tomsk. A graduate of the Taglit-Birthright program of subsidized trips to Israel for young adult Jews, he had been to Western Europe before coming with Eurostars. “I didn’t need Eurostars to see Europe, I can afford going on my own,” Osifov said. “But liked that feeling of togetherness.”



L-r: Sergei Aryeh Zolotov and Lev Aryeh Osipov at Moscow’s Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center on January 31. (Photo by Cnaan Liphshiz)

Unlike the Taglit-Birthright program, which participants can only attend once, Eurostars students can go up to three times.

Despite having little knowledge about Judaism, Zolotov had a “powerful connection” with Jewish texts early on in the study program, according to Wilansky, the rabbi.

Nonetheless, financial incentives are a necessity in a poor country where Jewish life had been driven to the point of near extinction amid communist repression, assimilation and mass emigration. The Eurostars program, he said, grew out of an earlier framework in which rabbis offered cash payments to Jews who agreed to take part in Jewish studies programs by Jews (or at least to those Jews who meet Chabad’s definition, which is people whose mother is Jewish according to Orthodox law or who have been converted under Orthodox auspices).

“Some rabbis were having trouble attracting people to class even with payments; other rabbis felt it tainted their congregations,” Wilansky said. “That’s how we arrived at the idea of giving a trip, though in many cases the social dynamic that forms in the study groups is its own reward.”

That was the case for Ruth Galeyeva, a participant on the 2015 trip. She hails from Orenburg, a city located 800 miles east of Moscow, near Russia’s border with Kazakhstan. Galeyeva attended Jewish education programs as a child, but as a university student “I felt suddenly that I no longer had that framework in my life,” she said. “So I joined the Eurostars program just to belong to a community again.”

And as a former design student, she also wanted to see Paris. “Everything was so beautiful there,” Galeyeva recalled. But all that beauty, she added, “seems so superficial now compared to the feeling I got just by being surrounded again by my own people.”



Rabbi Berel Lazar placed tefillin on a participant of the Eurostars trip to France in 2015. (Photo courtesy of Yachad)

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THE REPORTER
Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton

Trump administration to move U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem in May, Israel's 70th birthday

By Ron Kampeas

WASHINGTON (JTA) – The Trump administration will formally move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv in May to coincide with Israel's 70th anniversary.

"We're planning to open the new U.S. Embassy to Israel in Jerusalem in May," a State Department spokesman told JTA in an e-mail. "The Embassy opening will coincide with Israel's 70th anniversary." The spokesman did not reveal a specific date, but May 14 would mark 70 years since Israel's establishment.

The spokesman said the embassy would be located in a southern Jerusalem neighborhood on the side that Israel held before 1967, but running along the seam of what was then the border. "The embassy will initially be located in Arnona, on a compound that currently houses the consular operations of Consulate General Jerusalem," he said.

Building a new embassy will take at least three years, and the spokesman suggested that, at least for now, much of the daily operation of the embassy would remain in Tel Aviv. "At least initially,

it will consist of the ambassador and a small team," the spokesman said of the Jerusalem operation.

Trump administration officials had said previously that the embassy move would take place in 2019. President Donald Trump has heralded his December 6 recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital as one of the highlights of his administration. He earned "lengthy applause" on February 23 from the CPAC annual conservative conference in Washington, DC, when he mentioned the Jerusalem recognition.

Another source apprised of the move

provided JTA with a timeline for the move: In the first phase, starting in May, Ambassador David Friedman and some staff will begin working out of the consular section at a cost of about \$300,000 to \$500,000. In the second phase, by the end of 2019, an annex on site will be constructed for a more permanent working space for the ambassador, staff and a classified processing site. That will cost \$10 million to 15 million, and the security arrangement will cost at least \$45 million. The third phase, the site selection and construction of a new embassy, will take up to nine years.

First person

A Rust Belt synagogue "runs out of people" and gathers to bury its past

By Alanna E. Cooper

NEW CASTLE, PA (JTA) — It was a frigid 10 degrees on December 31, the last day of 2017, but some 20 people gathered at Congregation Tifereth Israel's cemetery



A hole at the cemetery was lined with cardboard boxes containing yahrzeit plaques, tallit prayer shawls and other ritual items from Hadar Israel. (Photo by Alanna E. Cooper)

in this city of 22,000 on the Ohio border. A blue tent and folding chairs had been set up for attendees, and a pit in the ground had been opened.

No hearse would be arriving at this unusual burial, which was not for a person. Still, a few attendees choked up when they greeted each other with hugs and wiped tears from their cheeks. This was a subdued sort of mourning because no friend or relative had been taken from their midst. Nor was the "death" a sudden one. Indeed, the congregation had been preparing for this day for years.

Deep below, the hole was lined with cardboard boxes containing yahrzeit plaques, tallit prayer shawls and other ritual items that cemetery caretakers had carefully lowered in a few days before.

The mourners had come to bury, in a sense, their synagogue.

Congregation Tifereth Israel was founded nearly 125 years ago. In 1894, synagogue members lived in a busy town with a suddenly booming economy. Linked first to the canal system and later to the railroad, the population of New Castle swelled at the turn of the 20th century as the town's manufacturing base grew. Tin plate and paper mills and steel and ceramic

factories brought great prosperity to the region. Ancillary businesses cropped up to support the growing population. Many of these – drug stores, department stores, furniture stores, groceries – were owned by New Castle's Jewish residents.

Bright-eyed and lively, Bruce Waldman told me that he was born in New Castle in See "Synagogue" on page 11



Congregants from Temple Hadar Israel in New Castle, PA, gathered at the local Tifereth Israel cemetery to bury ritual objects from their defunct synagogue on December 31. (Photo by Alanna E. Cooper)

Follow.....Continued from page 2

my husband, an only child, was not free to leave his parents.

But now, everything is different. My in-laws have passed away. My nest is empty. My father is still relatively healthy. And my kids span the ocean.

My kids call every Friday. During these weekly conversations, I ask them for a snippet, something I can have at the ready when people ask me, "How are the kids doing?" Something along the lines of, "She's loving her job" or "He went on a hike in the Judean hills." Something easy, so I don't have to scramble, so I don't have to sort through the feelings of worry, pride and longing every time someone wants an update.

Lately, however, no one asks for snippets. They just ask, "So when are you going?" They mean to Israel – and they don't mean a visit. They mean, "When are you moving to Israel?"

Everyone asks: Israelis, Americans, my colleagues at work, people I barely know. I know I need a snippet for this, too. But I find the question deeply troubling – hence the rock and the hard place.

I have always wanted to live in Israel – and at the same time, I've always wanted to live right here in the U.S. I want to be near all my kids. And, in the future, please God, I'll want to be near all my grandchildren. I want to be near my father and his wife, to be close when they will inevitably need me. I want to be near my family, the ones here and in Israel, and near the friends who have become like family, in both countries.

My husband and I just returned from a long trip to Israel, where we spent quality time with both kids, dear cousins and old friends. We also spent a few days looking around at communities to see where we'd feel at home. Even though that part was my idea – and I'm glad we did it – I was very nervous about this aspect of the trip because it made me confront the question of moving yet again. And there is no good answer.

I have a good job in the U.S., with a salary and health insurance. My husband

has a good job, too. We are comfortable. We might be able to get jobs in Israel; we might not. As we get a little older every year, those transitions become more difficult.

But recently, I've been thinking about Tzur Yisrael, which means "Rock of Israel" – or God. Rocks are a recurring theme in the Bible: In the book of Genesis, Jacob puts his head down on a stone and has a prophetic dream of the protective angels ascending and descending a ladder between heaven and earth. The Ten Commandments were created of stone. Rocks can be hard and uncomfortable, but like God, they are steady, reliable and persistent. Gems are made of stone. And as the book of Psalms reminds us, "The stone that was spurned by the builders turned out to be the cornerstone."

What I've realized is when I say I'm between a rock and a hard place, what I really mean is that I'm squeezed between two good things. So, for now, I will continue to live between my precious rock and my steady hard place.

Both my rock and my hard place are very good, even when they leave me a little bumped and bruised. And I need to be comfortable, living here in the middle, and I need to have confidence that the balance will sort itself out. I need to be able to answer, "We'll see," and believe it. And if I can create a space for myself between the rock and the hard place, the answers might have room to become clear.

Susan Hornstein is an Orthodox Jewish Zionist feminist living in Highland Park, NJ. She holds a doctorate in cognitive psychology and works as an information architect and website designer. She is the director of the Central Jersey Chapter of HaZamir, the International Jewish teen choir, and sings and gives divrei Torah around New Jersey.

Kveller is a community of women and parents who convene online to share, celebrate and commiserate their experiences of raising kids through a Jewish lens. Visit Kveller.com.

TEMPLE CONCORD FIRST NIGHT COMMUNITY PASSOVER SEDER



Friday, March 30 at 6pm

Temple Concord
9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY

Including a Kosher Style Passover Meal

Catered by Phantom Chef Catering (Chef Michele Bank McIlroy)

Let us know if you have special dietary needs.

We will be serving traditional Seder foods, gefilte fish, matzah ball soup, roasted chicken, and other sides, Passover desserts, fruit, kosher wine and juice.

\$36 per person

children under 13 - \$15 • children 2 and under are free

Contact Rabbi Goldman-Wartell of Temple Concord, Jewish Family Service or the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton if financial assistance is needed to attend the seder.

Return this portion with a check by March 16th in order to secure a place.

Names: _____

Number of adults _____ (\$36 each) • Number of children 3-12 _____ (\$15 each)

Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Temple Concord, 9 Riverside Drive, Binghamton, NY 13905 • 607-723-7355
www.TempleConcord.com • templeconcordbinghamton@gmail.com



Weekly Parasha

Ki Tisa, Exodus 30:11-34:35

Collecting *machatzit hashekel*

RABBI AARON SLONIM, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHABAD CENTER

Parashat Ki Tisa begins with God's command to Moses that he count the children of Israel. This exercise, God enjoins, should be carried out by Moses collecting one coin from each Jew. Moses should then count the coins and in this fashion arrive at the number of Jews in the nation.

Chronologically, this census occurred soon after the Jews sinned in the infamous incident with the golden calf. The counting was an expression of God's unequivocal love for his children, an affirmation of their unique relationship despite their severe transgression. Simultaneously, it was a form of atonement as it is written: "It is an offering to God to atone for your lives." (Exodus 30:16)

Each Jew had to donate a *machatzit hashekel*, a coin valued at half a shekel. Later in history, during the Temple

era, a *machatzit hashekel* was collected from the Jews on a yearly basis. During the month of Adar, appointees would collect these coins from each Jew in Israel. The collection was used for the purchase of animals offered as communal sacrifices. These sacrifices (offered twice daily, with additions on Shabbat, holidays and Rosh Chodesh) were offered on behalf of the entire nation to atone for their sins and to evoke God's blessing upon them.

This week's *parasha* contains the details that would inform all future collections. Of extreme interest is the repeated emphasis in the Torah on the specific monetary value of this donation. It had to be half a shekel; furthermore, everybody had to give the same amount: "the rich may not give more and the poor may not give less than

this half shekel." (Exodus 30:15)

This is greatly contrasted by other forms of donations in the Torah. The general donation toward the building of the Tabernacle was based on an individual's desire; the various sacrifices offered upon the altar by individuals were based on their financial status. Why the uniformity in the case of this particular donation?

The peculiarity of this injunction offers us the key to understanding the importance of unity within the Judaic tradition. The Torah teaches that when Jews seek atonement from God, or a means through which to draw from His infinite reservoir of blessings, it has to be in unison, as a community.

See "Collecting" on page 11

Congregational Notes

Beth David Synagogue

Affiliation: Orthodox Union
 Rabbi: Zev Silber
 Address: 39 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905
 Phone: 607-722-1793
 Rabbi's Office: 607-722-7514
 Fax: 607-722-7121
 Office hours: Mon. closed; Tues. 10 am-1 pm; Wed. closed; Thurs. 9 am-1 pm; Fri. 10 am-1 pm
 Beth David e-mail address: bethdavid@stny.rr.com
 Rabbi's e-mail: rabbisilber@stny.rr.com
 Website: www.bethdavid.org
 Facebook: www.facebook.com/bethdavidbinghamton
 Shabbat Services:
 Friday, March 2 5:40 pm
 Shabbat, March 3 9 am
 Mincha after the kiddush
 Maariv 7 pm
 Weekday Services:
 Mornings:
 Sun., March 4 8:30 am
 Mon.-Fri., March 5-9 7 am
 Evenings:
 Sun., March 4 5:40 pm
 Mon.-Thurs., March 5-8 7 pm
 Fri., March 9 5:45 pm
 Classes: Rabbi Zev Silber will hold his weekly Talmud class every Tuesday evening after services.

Rohr Chabad Center

Affiliation: Chabad-Lubavitch
 Rabbi: Aaron Slonim, E-mail: aslonim@binghamton.edu
 Address: 420 Murray Hill Rd., Vestal, NY 13850
 Phone: 797-0015, Fax: 797-0095
 Website: www.Chabadofbinghamton.com
 Chabad on the West Side
 Rabbi: Zalman Chein, E-mail: zchein@JewishBU.com
 Address: 27 Bennet Ave., Binghamton, NY 13905
 Phone: 722-3252
 Regular service times: Daily 7:30 am, Friday evening 6 pm, Shabbat morning 9:30 am, Maariv and Havdalah one hour after candle-lighting time, Sundays 9:30 am.
 Linking Hearts for youngsters with special needs: This program connects Jewish special-needs children and teenagers, ages 5-14, who have mental, physical and/or functional disabilities, with student volunteers who will visit participating youngsters weekly in their homes.
 To join the mailing list, for up-to-date information on adult education offerings or to arrange for a private tutorial, for details concerning the Judaica shop and resource center, or for assistance through the Piaker Free Loan Society or Raff Maasim Tovim Foundation, call Chabad's office at 797-0015.

Norwich Jewish Center

Orientation: Inclusive
 Rabbi: Dena Bodian
 Address: 72 South Broad St., Norwich, NY 13815
 Contact: Guilina Greenberg, 373-5087
 Purpose: To maintain a Jewish identity and meet the needs of the Jewish community in the area.
 Adult Ed.: Saturday morning study is held at 10 am. Call for more information and to confirm.

Congregation 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: Miranda Phillips and Shawn Murphy
 Rabbi: Brian Walt
 Religious School Director/Admin. Coordinator: Naomi Wilensky
 Services: Fridays at 7:30 pm unless otherwise noted. Family services and Tot Shabbat once a month at 6:30 pm. Call for weekly schedules.
 Religious School: Preschool through seventh-grade classes meet on Sunday mornings. Sixth-grade Hebrew and seventh-grade b'nai mitzvah classes meet on Wednesday afternoons. Adult Ed: Mini courses throughout the year. Adult Hebrew offered regularly. Call the office for details.



Temple Israel

Orientation: Conservative
 Rabbi: Geoffrey Brown
 Address: 4737 Deerfield Pl., Vestal, NY 13850
 Phone: 723-7461 and 231-3746
 Office hours: Mon.-Thurs. 8:30 am-4 pm; Fri. 8 am-3 pm.
 E-mail: titammy@stny.twcbc.com
 Website: www.templeisraelvestal.org
 Service Schedule: Tuesday, 6 pm, Friday, 5:30 pm; Saturday, 9:30 am.

On Saturday, March 3, at 9:30 am, services will be led by Rabbi Geoffrey Brown. The Torah portion will be Exodus 30:11-34:35. The haftarah will be I Kings 18:1-39. The kiddush sponsor will be Jim Schutzer.

On Tuesday, March 6, at 7 pm, there will be an Executive Board meeting.

On Thursday, March 8, at 7 pm, there will be a Ritual Committee meeting.

On Saturday, March 10, at 10 am, there will be a creative service, kids' Shabbat and pot luck lunch.

On Sunday, March 11, at 10 am, there will be an Adult Ed. program and brunch. The speaker will be Blake McCabe, who will speak on "Jewish Identity in Law and the Film 'The Other Son.'" The cost is \$5 per person. RSVP to Temple Israel if you plan to attend. (See related article on page 1.)

Penn-York Jewish Community

President and 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.

Kol Haverim

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

Temple Brith Sholom

Affiliation: Unaffiliated
 Address: P.O. Box 572, 117 Madison St., Cortland, NY 13045
 Phone: 607-756-7181
 President: Louis Wilson, louiswilson1995@yahoo.com
 Service leaders: Lay leadership
 Shabbat services: Either Friday evening at 7:30 pm or Saturday at 10 am from Rosh Hashanah to Shavuot. Holiday services are also held. Check the weekly e-mail for upcoming services. Contact the president to get on the e-mail list.
 Religious School: Students are educated on an individual basis. Temple Brith Sholom is a small equalitarian congregation serving the greater Cortland community. Congregants span the gamut of observance and services are largely dependent on the service leader. The Friday night siddur is "Likrat Shabbat," while the Saturday morning siddur is "Gates of Prayer." The community extends a warm welcome to the Jewish student population of SUNY Cortland, as well as the residents of local adult residences.

Friday, March 2, light candles 5:36 pm
 Shabbat ends Saturday, March 3 6:38 pm
 Friday, March 9, light candles 5:45 pm
 Shabbat ends Saturday, March 10 6:46 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: Friday, 8 pm; Saturday, 10:35 am, when religious school is in session.

On Friday, March 2, at 6:30 pm, there will be happy hour and at 8 pm, Shabbat services with the Loews' anniversary celebration will be led by Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell and Shari Neuberger.

On Saturday, March 3, at 9 am, there will be religious school, at 9:15 am, there will be Torah study and at 10:35 am, there will be Shabbat family services.

On Sunday, March 4, at 10 am-2 pm, there will be a Sisterhood rummage sale. Buy one pair of slacks, get one free.

On Tuesday, March 6, at 10:30 am, the Tuesday Morning Book Club will meet and at 5:15 pm, there will be religious school.

On Thursday, March 8, at 5:15 pm, there will be religious school; at 7 pm, the Mahloket Matters Program will be led by Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell.

On Friday, March 9, at 8 pm, there will be Shabbat services with a public ceremony for Jew by Choice Mairin Kirchner.

On Saturday, March 10, at 9 am, there will be religious school; at 9:15 am, there will be Torah study and at 10:35 am, there will be Shabbat family services with birthday blessings.

Temple Beth-El of Ithaca

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

On Thursdays, March 8 and 15, at 7 pm, "Origins of the Passover Seder and Haggadah" will be taught by Ross Brann in the Hecht Library.

On Saturday, March 10, Tot Shabbat will be held at 11:15 am.

On Sunday, March 11, at 7 pm, "Jews in Film: a Viewing and Discussion" will be led by Elliot Shapiro, the Knight Foundation director of the Writing in the Majors program at Cornell University. He also directs the University Courses Initiative and the Faculty Seminar in Writing Instruction.

Temple Beth El of Oneonta

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

Synagogue.....Continued from page 9

1942, and that one day he will be buried here. His plot in the Tifereth Israel cemetery is already designated. Waldman's father also was a New Castle native and is buried here. His grandfather, who was among the New Castle Jewish community founders, had emigrated from Eastern Europe via Pittsburgh, 50 miles south.

When Waldman was a boy in the 1950s, the town's population reached its peak of 48,834. At the time, the Jewish community boasted two synagogues, the Reform Temple Israel joining Tifereth Israel, with 300 to 400 active families in total.

As the economy changed in the 1960s, New Castle's population dwindled, along with so many other Rust Belt cities. By 1990, the numbers had dipped to 28,334 residents; today the number stands at about 23,000. Those looking for a more robust Jewish community for their children went elsewhere. Others simply moved away for better economic opportunities. Waldman's two sons left for college and never returned. One now lives in Sydney, Australia, and the other in New York.

Faced with shrinking numbers, the town's two Jewish congregations merged in 1997. The newly named Temple Hadar Israel operated out of the Tifereth Israel building and remained affiliated with the Conservative movement. The consolidation helped retain some vibrancy. Still, as the population continued to age and young people became scarce, it became difficult to gather a minyan, or quorum, for Shabbat services. Members began to consider the possibility of winding down synagogue operations.

"We never ran out of money," Sam Bernstine, the congregation's president said, "but we ran out of people."

About five years ago, Temple Hadar Israel members reached out to the Jewish Community Legacy Project, or JCLP, an organization that works with small, dwindling congregations to help ensure their legacies. A partnership of the Jewish Federations, the Reform and Conservative movements, and two national Jewish historical societies, the JCLP helps congregations preserve historic documents, catalog and dispose of ritual objects, create oral histories and divvy up assets. JCLP says it has worked with 50 such communities and identified 100 more that meet its criteria for assistance.

Bernstine says he cares deeply about the congregation, which helped raise him after he lost his mother to cancer when he was 9 years old. His loyalty, though, never got in the way of his pragmatism.

"Do you want a dignified end?" he asked his fellow congregants. "Or do you want the last person left to have to shut off the lights?"

Bernstine said his goal was to have the congregation face its own end in a "respectful manner," to be "in control of our own destiny." Step by step, the synagogue divested of its material assets. The congregants sold the building, with the agreement that they could rent back space from the new owners and continue to meet in the sanctuary. They donated their synagogue records, photographs and a few ritual items to the Rauh Jewish History Archives at

the Heinz History Center in Pittsburgh, the Klau Library of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and the Lawrence County Historical Society.

The *yahrzeit* plaques posed a more delicate problem because each of them has a connection to a particular person. Members who still live in New Castle claimed their family members' and efforts were made to locate relatives of those who grew up in New Castle, but were now scattered across the country. Whoever took control had to face the question of what to do with the plaques.

"I am not going to throw them out, but I don't want them hanging in my living room," one woman told me, speaking about her parents' plaques. She placed them in a box and keeps them in her basement. Alan Samuels took his parents' plaques to the cemetery and affixed them into their headstones.

Temple Hadar's nine Torah scrolls went to congregations across the world to help those struggling to get by and reinvigorate others. One went to the new Progressive congregation Beit Centrum Ki Tov in Warsaw and another was sent to a tiny community in Indonesia that recently revived its connection to the Jewish world. One went to a Houston congregation that suffered damage in the recent floods. Other recipients included a Reconstructionist congregation in Cleveland, a Reform temple in South Carolina and three summer camps. In February, the last remaining scroll will be donated to the Hillel Jewish University Center of Pittsburgh amid a weekend of festivities.

Even with the care to find a home for each ritual object, some remained orphaned. Among them were prayer books, prayer shawls, curtains for the Torah ark and many unclaimed *yahrzeit* plaques. Rather than dispose of them, a burial was planned.

On December 30, the members of Temple Hadar Israel held prayer services in their sanctuary for the last time. Every person was called to recite a blessing during the Torah reading – an honor known as *aliyah* – and people offered reflections at the final *kiddush* lunch. The following day, congregants drove through the snowy cemetery grounds to the pit that held the last of their items. Their part-time rabbi, Howard Stein of Pittsburgh, was not in attendance, as his own father had passed away the day before. I attended as part of my research into what congregations do with their material objects when they merge, downsize or shut down.

A few weeks prior, Stein told me that his plan was to conduct the ceremony like a funeral. In his absence, the event was brief, ad hoc and raw. One man read a passage about the Cairo *geniza*, a storehouse of centuries of damaged Jewish texts and ritual objects. Another man spoke about honoring the word of God in the same way that we honor a deceased person.

The ground was too cold to shovel dirt. Instead, congregants took hold of a few final items – including the prayer books that had been used for Shabbat services the day before – and together tossed them into the hole.

To close the ceremony, Eric Lidji, director of the Rauh

Jewish History Program and Archives, offered a few words of reflection on a verse from Ecclesiastes: "There is a time for scattering stones and a time for gathering stones." Although Temple Hadar Israel has disbanded, Lidji explained, its stones have been gathered in the archives and here, too, in the cemetery. "These are big things that say 'we are here' and 'we belong here,'" he said. The markers convey that "everything that happened here matters, and will continue to matter."

As Lidji concluded, someone in the huddled group spoke up.

"Shall we say *Kaddish*?" this person asked, referring to the Mourner's Prayer.

Their prayer books were in the pit, but everyone seemed to know the words by heart. They recited the prayer together, memorializing their shared past, their last act as a congregation. Final hugs were exchanged as the group dispersed with lowered heads. They returned to their cars, driving in a procession up the snowy hill and out of the cemetery.

Alanna E. Cooper is director of Jewish lifelong learning at Case Western Reserve University and an adjunct assistant professor in its Department of Anthropology.

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JTA

Yeshiva U. men's basketball team in NCAA Division III tournament

The Yeshiva University men's basketball team has earned its first berth in the NCAA Division III basketball tournament. On Feb. 25, the Maccabees defeated Purchase College, 87-81, in Purchase, NY, to win the Skyline Conference championship and earn an automatic berth into the national tournament. "There is nothing much to say. We are champs," head coach Elliot Steinmetz said in an interview posted on the Maccabees' website. "These kids worked hard, stayed the course through everything all season, and now we are champs forever. What a moment!" Athletic director Joe Bednarsh said that people from all over the world have been following the team and its run to the championship. Yeshiva is the flagship university of Modern Orthodox Judaism. "People have been reaching out to me about this team from Thailand, South Africa, Argentina, Israel, England and more," Bednarsh said. "The Maccabees are truly the pride of the Jewish people." The bracket for the NCAA tournament was to be announced on Feb. 26. Y.U., which has a record of 18-10, will be competing in the opening round over the March 4 weekend. The Maccabees defeated the regular season conference champion, Farmingdale State, in overtime in the semifinals. Division III member institutions do not offer scholarships to their student-athletes.

Collecting.....Continued from page 10

First, unity is achieved through an understanding that each one, no matter how impressive, is only half and intrinsically needy of the other for completion. Further, there is the element of equality. Each Jew is and can be completed by any and all of the other Jews, with all superficial barriers of "wealth" and "poverty" in any sphere completely irrelevant.

Today the concept of *machatzit hashekel* finds its way into our consciousness as we continue to uphold the custom of collecting that sum once a year on the Eve of Purim. The *machatzit hashekel* of today is a reminder that in this age of differences and fragmentation we really do need – and depend upon – each other.

Poland.....Continued from page 7

In 2014, Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine amid ongoing psychological warfare against the Baltic nations, often involving the deployment of Russia's army around those countries in blunt loudspeaker diplomacy.

"There is a lot of Russophobic sentiment worldwide and it means international silence on countries with a conflict with Russia," said Joseph Koren, chairman of the Latvia Without Nazism group.

"Poland and Hungary are in a different category," agreed Dovid Katz, a scholar of Yiddish in Lithuania and longtime campaigner against Holocaust distortion there. The singling out of Poland and Hungary, he said, is "not least because the issues of the Holocaust, antisemitism and restrictions on democratic expression in these countries have never been perceived primarily through the same binary lens of pro-and anti-Putin."

Under that alleged cover of silence, in Ukraine and the Baltic countries there is a rapid lifting on taboos that had been in place for decades on the honoring of war criminals, even including SS volunteers who "enthusiastically" participated in the mass killings of Jews and Poles.

Largely ignored by the international media, Latvian President Raimonds Vejonis recently gave the final approval for a law that offers financial benefits to all World War II veterans – including SS volunteers who murdered Jews. Latvia is the only country in the world known to have an annual march by SS veterans, which takes place with the approval of authorities' on the country's national day in the center of its capital, sometimes with mainstream politicians in attendance.

Last year, the municipality of Kalush near Lviv in Ukraine decided to name a street for Dmytro Paliiv, a

commander of the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS, also known as the 1st Galician.

Ukraine's state television observed a moment of silence for the first time last year for Symon Petliura, a nationalist killed by a Jewish communist for Petliura's role in the murder of 35,000 to 50,000 Jews in a series of pogroms between 1918 and 1921, when Petliura was head of the Ukrainian People's Republic.

"There is less willingness to speak out on Ukraine in media, in the scientific community and in Western governments, so it seems," Dolinsky said.

But this alleged turning of a blind eye, he added, is a disservice. "Ukraine needs to join Europe as a civilized member of that family of nations. And for that to happen, it needs to speak honestly and openly about its history," he said.

To Ryvchin, the Australian author, the "particularly forceful reaction to the Polish law is likely because Poland is seen as the epicenter of the Holocaust," he said. The Germans built extermination camps only in Poland, according to Holocaust historian Efraim Zuroff.

"Any attempt to distort or disguise what happened in Poland is seen as a particularly egregious attack on the history of the Holocaust and the memories of the dead," Ryvchin said.

Ironically, Poland is perhaps singled out for criticism because of the country's vocal civil society and the debate it is generating over the politics of memory, Katz suggested. Even today, he said, Poland and Hungary "have robust liberal movements that themselves counter official government policy on many issues – unlike the Baltics, where dissent is often quashed using the full force of the law."

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Thursday, March 8 and
Saturday, March 10 at 7:30pm
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Sunday, March 11 at 3pm

Tickets: \$15 - general admission
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For tickets or information, call (607)724-2417

500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850
www.binghamtonjcc.org

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Annual ADL report: Antisemitism surged in 2017

The number of antisemitic incidents in the United States soared in 2017, according to the annual report by the Anti-Defamation League. There were 1986 acts classified as antisemitic in 2017, up 57 percent from 2016 at 1,267 and more than double the 2,015 total of 941. That makes 2017 the second-most antisemitic year since the ADL began tracking the incidents almost 40 years ago, and the highest-ever single-year spike. "It had been trending in the right direction for a long time," Jonathan A. Greenblatt, CEO of ADL, told *The New York Times*. "And then something changed." However, included in the figures are the 160-plus bomb threats to Jewish community centers and Jewish institutions in the early part of 2017, which were discovered to be mainly carried out by a Jewish teenager in Israel. Even without those threats, antisemitic incidents increased by 43 percent in 2017, with seven Jewish cemeteries vandalized, 19 anti-Jewish physical assaults, and 457 non-Jewish elementary and high schools experiencing antisemitic incidents, compared to 235 in 2016 and 114 in 2015. The states reporting the most antisemitic incidents were those with large Jewish populations, including New York, New Jersey and California.

Knesset OKs first reading of law to ban far-left groups from schools

The Israeli Knesset on Feb. 26 approved the first reading of a law that would enable the minister of education to ban organizations critical of the Israel Defense Forces from lecturing in government-funded schools. The law, first proposed by Israeli Education Minister Naftali Bennett (Jewish Home) and MK Shuli Moalem-Refaeli (Jewish Home) in 2016, is seen as a directed toward far-left groups such as Breaking the Silence, but gives the education minister the power to ban any groups "that work to damage the

IDF." The new bill would also include incentives to serve in the IDF or national service as part of state educational curriculum, and would prevent the entrance of entities that contradict those goals or take active part in targeting IDF soldiers for legal action. "Breaking the Silence spreads lies about the IDF, its soldiers and its commanders around the world," said Moalem-Refaeli. "This organization does not actually pretend to right wrongs. Instead, it undermines the state and the Israeli educational system's goals. We cannot allow them into schools." Founded in 2004, Breaking the Silence works to collect reports on alleged abuses of Israeli soldiers operating in the disputed territories. In a response to the legislation, the organization replied that "the only way to stop us is to end the occupation."

Family of Itamar massacre sues P.A., terrorists for \$1.15 million

Seven years after five members of the Fogel family from the Samaritan community of Itamar were stabbed to death by Palestinian terrorists who targeted them in their home, the surviving children are suing the Palestinian Authority and terrorists responsible for the attack. The lawsuit, filed in Jerusalem District Court, demands \$1.15 million in compensation, accusing the P.A. of encouraging and inciting their constituents to commit acts of violence against Jews through propaganda, and the provision of financial incentives and support to successful attackers. Additional defendants include the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. In March 2011, Ehud (Udi) Fogel, his wife, Ruth, and three of their six children – Yoav, 11; Elad, 4; and Hadas, 3 months – were slain in their home by two Palestinian cousins, Amjad Awad and Hakim Awad from the local town of Awarta. The pair fled, but were ultimately captured and received life sentences. Of the eight-member Fogel family, only three survived: Tamar, 12; Roi, 8; and Yishai 2. The attackers' families receive monthly reward payments from the P.A. "To this

day, the terrorists receive handsome salaries from the P.A., a fact that entirely defies logic and is contrary to justice," the Fogel family said in a statement.

Three Israeli Arab men indicted for plotting Temple Mount terror attack

Three Israeli Arabs were indicated for a plot to carry out an a terror attack on the Temple Mount or other religious targets, said Israel's Shin Bet security agency. The men were identified as Mohammed Masoud Jabarin and Amad Lutfi Mohammed Jabarin, both 20; the third suspect is a juvenile. All hail from the Israeli Arab city of Umm al-Fahm. They were arrested over the past two months, with their indictments filed on Feb. 26. According to the Shin Bet, the Arab cell planned to carry out a shooting attack on the Temple Mount similar to the attack on July 14, which killed two Israeli police officers. That attack was also carried out by three Israeli Arabs from Umm al-Fahm, and led to weeks of tensions between Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians. Additionally, the Shin Bet said that the cell members, who support the Islamic State, also discussed carrying out attacks on other holy sites, including synagogues and churches, or also against Israeli soldiers or police. According to the agency, "the Shin Bet considers Israelis who support the Islamic State terrorist organization as a serious threat, especially those who maintain contacts with the organization's activists and operate under the auspices of the organization in the territory of the state of Israel."

Judge, attorney purportedly discovered colluding in case against Netanyahu

A leaked text conversation between the Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court judge overseeing an investigation against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the attorney representing investigators has sent shockwaves through the country, showing that the two colluded to extend the remands of suspects in the case, even planning how the judge would react in court. An exposé on Channel 10 news on Feb. 25 revealed that Judge Ronit Poznanski-Katz, presiding over Case 4000 – in which members of the Netanyahu camp are suspected of conspiring to benefit the Bezeq telecommunications company in exchange for favorable coverage from Walla news, owned by the same person, Shaul Elovitch – corresponded with Israel Securities Authority attorney Eran Shacham-Shavit privately via WhatsApp. In their communications, Shacham-Shavit told Poznanski-Katz that he would seek an extension of remand for several Bezeq-affiliated suspects. "Look surprised," he told the judge. The attorney then went on to explain how she should conduct the remand in response to statements he would make in court, to which the judge replied: "If you continue to reveal everything to me, I will have to look really surprised." She also referenced a plan they had made previously, though did not elaborate. Israeli Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked and Chief Justice of Israel's Supreme Court Esther Hayut have filed a complaint against Poznanski-Katz, who has stepped down from the case. Shacham-Shavit has also stepped down as prosecutor. Both parties are under investigation. All of the remanded suspects are filing requests for immediate release.

Amid energy crisis, Gaza might dump raw sewage into the Mediterranean Sea

Officials in the Gaza Strip announced on Feb. 21 that if Hamas doesn't loosen its grip on fuel provisions to the towns, they will be forced to begin dumping sewage directly into the Mediterranean Sea. "The beaches of the Gaza Strip will be completely closed, and sewage will be pumped into the sea because the municipalities are unable to provide fuel" for treatment facilities, said Gaza City Municipal head Nizar Hejazi. "We announce a state of emergency in the cities and municipalities of the Gaza Strip," he added, noting that services to residents would be cut in half. The week of Feb. 16, Gaza's only power plant stopped producing electricity due to a lack of fuel and was forced to import it. Pollution from Gaza has been a decades-long concern for Israelis and other nations on the Mediterranean coast. The local waste-treatment facility, built with \$100 million of international funding, does not fully function because of Hamas' refusal to allocate electricity, as well as on the ongoing energy crisis in Gaza due to tensions between Hamas and the West Bank-based Palestinian Authority.

New justices change makeup of Israel's historically liberal Supreme Court

Two new Israeli Supreme Court justices were confirmed by Israel's judiciary committee the week of Feb. 26, changing the composition of a historically liberal judiciary body. Alex Stein, a professor at Brooklyn Law school in New York, will become Israel's first Supreme Court justice born in the former Soviet Union. And at 49, Ofer Grosskopf, a Tel Aviv District judge, is younger than most Supreme Court appointments. (Israeli Supreme Court justices serve until the age of 70.) The two new justices will replace justices Yoram Danziger and Uri Shoham, whose terms end this year. Stein is considered conservative, while Grosskopf is more liberal. The appointments made by Israeli Minister of Justice Ayelet Shaked follow the appointments of four justices in 2017, of which three were considered conservative. Most of Israel's Supreme Court justices are liberal.

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