

Federation to hold security training on March 27

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton will hold the security training “Navigating Conflict: The Power of De-Escalation” led by Mark Henderson, regional security advisor, Rochester, for the Secure Community Network, on Thursday, March 27, at 6:30 pm, at the Jewish Community Center, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal. It is designed for all members of the community. To register

for the program, visit www.jfgb.org.

“Navigating Conflict: The Power of De-Escalation” offers a 60- to 75-minute foundational overview of de-escalation techniques. Its goal is to provide a basic understanding of, and introduction to, the skills and techniques to defuse or reduce tension, hostility and/or conflict in situations. It will focus on helping attendees understand the definition of de-escalation, common escalation triggers and the de-

escalation process, while also offering information on communication skills and how to handle aggression. It will show how to identify the initial indicators of escalating behaviors, both verbal and non-verbal; demonstrate de-escalation best practices using the “Behavioral Change Stairwell”; offer techniques for managing personal emotions in challenging situations to maintain composure and clear thinking; and how cultural and mental health sensitivity can

help de-escalation efforts.

“I am so grateful the Binghamton Jewish community has access to a security professional with expansive knowledge,” said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. “Mark Henderson is an insightful speaker. The information he brings to our community is practical, relevant and could save your life or the life of someone you know. Please join us for this important training.”

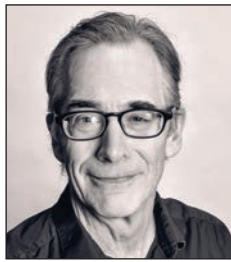
TC-TI adult ed. program to feature skits

The Adult Education Committee of Temple Concord and Temple Israel will hold a program and brunch on Sunday, March 9, at Temple Concord, 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton. The brunch will begin at 10 am and will be followed by the performance of four skits taken from the collection called “Oy!”

The entire community is welcome to attend. There is a suggested donation of between \$5-20 per person. For more information and to RSVP, contact



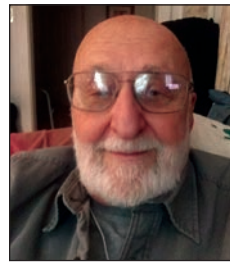
Krista Guidici
(Photo by Stephanie Willett, Beyond The Stage Photography)



Larry Guidici
(Photo by Stephanie Willett, Beyond The Stage Photography)



Gary Hansen (Photo by Stefanie Willette, Beyond the Stage Photography)



Ted Major (Photo courtesy of Ted Major)



Deborah Williams
(Photo by Gil Williams)

“Deborah Williams has put together a talented cast – with each actor playing several characters,” said organizers of the event. “The settings include the Garden of Eden, a laboratory, a courtroom and a passionate couple’s living room. We think you’ll enjoy not only the laugh-out-loud humor, but the poignancy of these little scenes, performed by our area’s skilled actors, including Ted Major, Krista and Larry Guidici, Gary Hansen and Deborah Williams.”

Temple Israel at 607-723-7461 or office@templeisraelvestal.org, or Temple Concord

at 607-723-7355 by Thursday, March 6, so that enough food can be prepared.

and Larry Guidici, Gary Hansen and Deborah Williams.”

Jewish Film Fest to hold in-person showing of “Kidnapped” on March 30

By Reporter staff

The Binghamton Jewish Film Fest will hold an in-person showing of the film “Kidnapped: The Abduction of Edgardo Mortara” on Sunday, March 30, at 2 pm, at the Jewish Community Center, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal. There is a suggested donation of \$5. The film is in Italian with subtitles. Dora Polachek, Ph.D., associate professor of romance languages and literatures at Binghamton University, will moderate a discussion of the film. Registration for the film and discussion is suggested, but walk-ins are welcome; visit www.jfgb.org/film-fest to register. The film fest is

co-sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton and the Ithaca Area United Jewish Community.

“Kidnapped” is based on the real-life story of Edgardo Mortara, a young Jewish boy living in Bologna, Italy, who in 1858, after being secretly baptized, was forcibly taken from his family to be raised as a Christian. His parents’ struggle to free their son became part of a larger political battle that pitted the papacy against forces of democracy and Italian unification.

On “Fresh Air,” John Powers said, “What gives the movie its timely res-



Paolo Pierobon and Enea Sala in “Kidnapped.” (Photo courtesy of Cohen Media Group)

onance is not merely its depiction of antisemitism, but what it shows about the dangerous politics of religious belief. Although religion officially deals in timeless universal truths, “Kidnapped” reminds us that these timeless universals are always bound up with historical questions of power. And where there’s power, there will be abuse.” *The Wall Street Journal* called the film “a sensitive and beautifully realized drama.” “Kidnapped” has received 19 awards and 16 nominations. They include awards for best film, best screenplay, best actor, best director, best actress and best supporting actor.

Spotlight

Mayer uses music to build community

By Rabbi Rachel Esserman

Zach Mayer will be Temple Israel’s Artist in Residence from Friday-Sunday, March 14-16. For information about programs and services, see the article on page 5.

Can music change the world? Multi-talented Zach Mayer seems to think so. Mayer – who is a singer, composer, teacher, pianist and saxophonist – puts these talents to use when he leads musical programs for Jewish organizations and synagogues. In fact, he sees music as a way to create community and bring people together, something he thinks is especially important in today’s world.

“During these times of divisiveness across the Jewish world, we need moments of sharing of our collective tradition that

will bring us together,” he said in an e-mail interview. “My workshops are inclusive and my concerts are participatory – everyone is invited to join in joyous song. My work is successful when I create even a moment of bringing peace – *hava’at shalom* – in service of *tikkun olam*, repairing the world.”

He also believes that music can have an effect on the greater world. “Music is my tool for building community,” Mayer said. “I am challenging myself to apply this tool toward some of the world’s biggest problems such as climate change and the closing of our country’s borders to immigrants. My effort might be small, but it has led me to begin bringing my saxophone to protests and marches in Boston, joining a brigade

of Boston’s finest horn-wielding musician activists, providing joyous energy for the others at the march. I do not like it when protests are solely shouting and chanting, which to me feels desensitizing and off-putting. When there is music at a protest, it feels as though the human element has been put back in. As [the late] Pete Seeger said, ‘Get people to sing together and they’ll act together, too.’”

Music also plays a great role in his Jewish practice. “Music is deeply connected to my Judaism,” he noted. “I am the Jewish music director, prayer leader and music teacher at Kahal B’raira, a humanistic synagogue in Boston. I lead High Holiday services for over 300 people, direct the choir and am

involved with the Hebrew school. In the last few years, I have developed a musical *tish* program for various synagogues and have hosted *davening* in my home. I draw on the ancient and beautiful *nigunim* taught to me by my stepfather, Rabbi Sruli Dresdner, as well as the *chazzanut* passed down to me by my great-grandfather, Rabbi Mordecai Weintraub, my great-uncle Cantor David Weintraub (may their memories be for a blessing), and my grandfather Cantor Sol Weintraub. Their legacy and encouragement has led me to write my own *nigunim*, which all have an echo of my past.”

Mayer added, “As a multi instrumentalist, singer and composer, I combine my See “Music” on page 5

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Opinion

From the Desk of the Federation Executive Director

With gratitude

SHELLEY HUBAL

With their arms around each other on a late summer Saturday night, about 500 Jewish campers gathered in the dark woods; the only light was the glow of *Havdalah* candles. Their resplendent joy as they sang, danced and hugged was palpable.

My son is a participant in the vocational program at Camp Ramah New England and, as a parent, you can log in and see photos from camp and the occasional video. The video of the *Havdalah* service was so beautiful it moved me to tears. It also took me back to my own summer camp

experiences: celebrating Shabbat with my friends and feeling as if nothing existed, but that moment in time and place, and the love that was all around.

Still thinking of the Ramah video, I reached out to Rabbi Micah Friedman months later and asked him if he would help me to plan a special community *Havdalah*. After all, don't we all need a little unfettered joy? It turns out that Temple Israel was already planning an Artist in Residence Weekend with musician and cantor Zach Mayer. Zach uses the power of harmony and traditional Jewish melodies, or

nigunim, to bring people together.

So, it seems *bashert* that the Jewish Federation will sponsor the *Havdalah* service of the Artist in Residence Weekend at Temple Israel. The entire community is welcome to attend any of the weekend's special events. I hope you will join us as we raise our voices in harmony and celebration. If you are seeking joy and kinship, you will not be disappointed.

For more information on participating in any of the four events that Zach will lead the weekend of March 14-16, see the article on page 5 or visit www.templeisraelvestal.org.

One Perspective from Israel

A fight breaks out in shul... – part 2

JEREMY M. STAIMAN

This article originally appeared in the Times of Israel and is being reprinted with permission.

Part one of this column can be found on page 2 of the February 7 issue of The Reporter.

Following our return from the cemetery visit, my siblings and I headed to the *shul* across the street for *Mincha*. My older brother, Kal, removed himself from the possibility of leading the *davening* by attending an earlier minyan. My younger brother Maish and I had both led our respective *shuls* that morning, and, after going back and forth a bit, I finally approached the front of the *shul*.

Only to find that someone was already standing there. A young man, not from our *shul*, was there, clearly intending to lead. On my mother's *yahrzeit*.

Deep breaths, in and out, in and out. (OK, I'm exaggerating the drama here, but I have to make the story worth your wait!)

"Are you an *aveil* (mourner)?" I gently inquired. "Yes, I'm in *shloshim* (the first 30 days of mourning)." That's when the fight broke out. But there are fights, and there are fights.

Some fights are ugly. And some fights are downright

beautiful. Like this one.

"What takes precedence, a *yahrzeit* or *shloshim*?" we all pondered. One brother-in-law said that a *yahrzeit* comes first. Another brother-in-law thought the *shloshim* gets the nod.

"I can just go next door and lead the minyan there," offered the young man.

"Don't be silly," we replied. "You're here already."

As the clock continued to tick away, the debate raged, in the spirit of the two polite gentlemen in the autopsy room: See "*Shul*" on page 9

In My Own Words

Religious principles for politics

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Principle: "A fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of belief or behavior or for a chain of reasoning." – Oxford English Language Dictionary

What is a columnist to do when there are too many things about which to write? Plus, many commentators who know more about each subject have already done an excellent job explaining the actions of the current presidential administration and why we should oppose them. But I wondered, why do so many of the actions of the Trump administration go against the grain for me? What

I realized is that they not only don't follow the Jewish principles in which I firmly believe, but far too often remind me of actions that have been taken against Jews over the centuries. Remembering these principles gives me the courage to work for the betterment of our country, not just for individual special groups. Below I mention three of the most important ones, but my Jewish opposition to the current administration is not limited to them.

And God said, "Let us create man *b'tselem Elohim* (in our image)." – Genesis 1:26

That means everyone regardless of their ethnicity, skin

color, religion, sexuality, religion and intellectual abilities. That biblical text does not include a hierarchy of human beings, but rather clearly notes all of us are created in the Divine image. Rabbinic commentary suggests that God created one human being so that no one could say their ancestor was greater than anyone else's. The Mishnah includes a list of different genders that are recognized as having been formed by God. You don't have to believe in God, though, to understand that all humans should be treated with the same care. That includes those who are different from us.

We should remember how a hierarchy of human worth has affected Jews in the past and during present times. Jews have frequently been treated as something less than human. We've been called everything from vermin to criminals. We've been treated as if we were cursed by God. We've been expelled from almost every European nation over the centuries and were refused refuge in most North and South American countries when trying to escape Nazi Germany. We are, therefore, called to see the image of the Divine in everyone, even if we don't like them.

"You shall not wrong nor oppress a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Exodus 22:20 and in 35 other verses in the Torah)

It's one thing to have immigration laws. It's something far different to round up everyone who looks like an immigrant (recently taken to mean anyone who is not a white Anglo-Saxon) and treat them as criminals. I know an American citizen who has a Latino last name and Latino facial features who has been treated as a criminal over the years because of his name and looks. Jews have also been thought of as criminals, sometimes for some real crimes, but more often for imaginary ones – everything from poisoning wells used by Christians to needing the blood of a Christian child to make matzah to controlling the world. In fact, there have been many Jewish criminals See "*Principles*" on page 3

Letters

Federal government cuts alarming

To the Editor:

The federal government has taken a radical approach to downsize the number of federal employees. Many years ago, the objective was to "starve the beast." Today, the alleged objective is to eliminate waste, fraud and abuse. The inspectors general are assigned that responsibility, but nevertheless, the administration has terminated more than 20 IGs. The most recent was the IG at the Agency of International Development, who warned that the shutdown of the agency threatened the timely distribution of food aid to starving individuals. Soon thereafter, he received a notice of termination.

In another agency, key FBI agents have been placed on leave and the Justice Department requested a list of agents and justice officials who investigated the violent attack on the capital on January 6, 2021.

The administration is attempting to abolish AID, the Department of Education, the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau, FEMA and curb or limit the impact of the

Environmental Protection Agency.

Approximately 60,000 federal employees have been terminated or forced to resign in the past three weeks. These actions are at the very least vindictive and ugly, and, at its worst, reflect a constitutional crisis. The loss of one's livelihood is a traumatic experience and an individual should not be terminated without due process or just cause.

Unfortunately, what is taking place in Washington reminds me of an old infamous alarm. I am confident most of you will recognize it: "First they came for the Communists and I did not speak out because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the Socialists and I did not speak out because I was not a Socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak for me." – Pastor Martin Niemoller, 1946

Ben Kasper



Jewish Federation
of Greater Binghamton

Shelley Hubal, Executive Director

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

ADS

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www.thereporter.org

Judaic Studies Department to offer lecture “Addressing the Palestine Question” on March 17

The Judaic Studies Department will sponsor a lecture by Professor Geoffrey Levin of Emory University called “Addressing the Palestine Question: Binghamton Professor Don Peretz vs. the American Jewish Leadership” on Monday, March 17, at 4:30 pm, at Binghamton University in the Fine Arts Building Room 258. The lecture is free and open to the public.

Levin is the author of the recent book “Israel and American Jewish Dissent: 1948-1978” (Yale University Press, 2023) in which Professor Don Peretz, who taught

at Binghamton University from 1966-92, figures prominently. In his book, Levin focuses on the American Jews who, in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, were involved in consideration of the Palestine question, and who wanted the Jewish community to seriously address issues like the Palestinian refugee question, Arab minority rights in Israel, and Israel’s post-1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Peretz was considered one of the most prominent of these American Jews. Levin will explore the reasons for the activism of Peretz and other American Jews who

were critical of Israeli policy, and the reasons why their efforts to influence the American Jewish community met with little success.

*The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to Nancy Dorfman on the death of her mother,
Ruth Dorfman*

BD Shabbat Luncheon on March 8 to feature Professor Lior Libman

Beth David Synagogue’s next Shabbat Luncheon will be held on Saturday, March 8. Binghamton University’s Judaic Studies faculty member Lior Libman will speak about “The Kibbutz Passover Haggadah.” The community is invited to attend. Morning services will begin at 9:30 am, with the luncheon and program following the conclusion of services. The luncheon is free and open to the public.

“We will be ushering in *Pesach* in April,” organizers say, “and Professor Libman’s research is both timely and fascinating!”

Investigating Passover haggadahs from the 15th century to the 1960s, Libman found that approximately a fifth of those printed were those of *kibbutzim* and their affiliated youth movements. What were the distinctive features of the *kibbutz* haggadah? How was the story of the Exodus and salvation imagined and interpreted by Socialist-Zionist settlers? What role did Hebrew literature and contemporary events play in modifying the traditional Jewish text? “I look forward to exploring these questions with Beth David attendees,” Libman says, “as we examine together several examples from different periods.”

Libman is associate professor of Israel studies and the director of the Center for Israel Studies at Binghamton University’s Judaic Studies Department, which she joined in 2016. She earned her undergraduate and advanced degrees at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. A literary scholar



Lior Libman (Photo courtesy of Lior Libman)

and cultural historian specializing in Modern Hebrew, and Israeli literatures and cultural studies, Libman is a member of the Executive Committee of the European Association of Israel Studies, and co-directs the Literature and Culture Section of its annual conferences.

At Binghamton University, she teaches courses that include an “Introduction to Israeli Literature,” “The Israeli Palestinian Conflict in Literature” and “The Kibbutz in Israeli Culture.” Her research interests and publications include articles on the imagery and political imagination of the *kibbutz*. Her book, “State of Shock: The Kibbutz in Israel from Avant-Garde to Fetish, 1948-1955,” was published in November by

the University of Pennsylvania Press.

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. Since the monthly series’ continuation depends on the generosity of contributors, Beth David welcomes and appreciates donations to the Luncheon Fund. 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.

BD Sisterhood to host pre-Passover workshop on March 26

Beth David Sisterhood will hold its annual Community Passover Workshop on Wednesday, March 26, at 7 pm, in the Beth David social hall. The workshop is open to everyone in the Jewish community, men and women, whether or not they are affiliated with Beth David Sisterhood or Beth David Synagogue.

Rabbi Zev Silber, the spiritual leader of Beth David Synagogue, will update attendees on changes to products that were previously acceptable for Passover use, and alert them to new kosher for Passover items available this year. Copies of the OU Passover issue should be available for distribution.

Silber will also attempt to answer questions anyone may have concerning Passover and Passover preparations. It would be appreciated if questions that might require research be submitted to him in advance at rabbisilber@stny.rr.com.

Attendees will also have an opportunity to share favorite Passover recipes, tips, shortcuts and other useful information that may make cleaning or cooking easier this year. The evening will conclude with Silber speaking about a Passover related topic of interest.

“Remember, we collect food for CHOW at every meet-

ing, so start cleaning out your pantry early and bring your *chametzdik* donations to our meeting,” said organizers of the workshop.

Principles... Continued from page 2

in the American past, but we objected to having all Jews being painted with the same brush and we should not do the same to others.

As a reminder, the United States changed its immigration laws before World War II because too many people believed Jews were criminals. Think of how many Jewish lives might have been saved from the Holocaust if U.S. doors had been open to them. Think of the many lives we can now save if we offer sanctuary to those refugees in danger of death if they are returned home.

“That which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow.” – Hillel the Elder

Do you want the government to control your healthcare, to decide what treatments you can have based on someone else’s religious or social beliefs, rather than on scientific knowledge? Do you want someone telling you what books you can read or what music you can listen to? On the reverse side of this: do you want the government to protect you from harmful chemicals in our air and food? Do you want your children and grandchildren to have clean air to breathe and food that is safe to eat? Do you believe that every government official is only interested in the common good and therefore would never break a law? Do you really believe there is no need for an active press to protect us from the greedy and careless?

I can’t imagine most of us want someone to control every aspect of our lives, to limit not only what we can read, but the kind of medical care we can have – that is if people will even be able to afford medical care. Don’t assume that these rules won’t affect you. Do not assume that you are safe. As Jews, we know that’s rarely true since we make such a convenient scapegoat. And don’t think it can’t happen here when we have a vice president who is applauding far-right European parties. No one will be safe.

Tea and Talk

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

Upcoming dates are:

- ◆ March 14
- ◆ March 27
- ◆ April 9
- ◆ April 24

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

DEADLINES
The following are deadlines for all articles and photos for upcoming issues of the biweekly REPORTER.

ISSUE	DEADLINE
March 14-27	March 5
March 28-April 10	March 19
April 11-24	April 2
April 25-May 8	April 16

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

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Off the Shelf

Families, friends and more

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

“Jackpot Summer”

Elyssa Friedland specializes in stories about dysfunctional families. What is different about her approach is that readers find themselves liking her characters, even when they are acting badly, because, no matter how much they squabble, they truly care for each other. That was true for two of her previous novels that were reviewed in this paper – “The Floating Feldmans” (www.thereporter.org/features/off-the-shelf-a-wedding-and-vacation-by-rabbi-rachel-esserman-342457) and “Last Summer at the Golden Hotel” (www.thereporter.org/book-reviews/off-the-shelf-summer-novels) – and of her latest work, “Jackpot Summer” (Berkley), which focuses on the four Jacobson children.

Gathering at the family beach house after unveiling their mother’s gravestone, these adult children are distressed to learn their father is selling the property and moving to Florida. They already miss their mother, who was always present in their lives, giving advice and offering suggestions. Now it feels like they are also losing their father. Their distress is complicated by problems in their personal lives: Matthew, the eldest, hates his job as a corporate lawyer. Laura, the next eldest, is not only facing empty nest syndrome as her second child heads to college, but marital difficulties. Sophie teaches art to grade school children, leaving her little time for her own artistic endeavors. Noah, the baby, has never settled into a regular job, doing tech work while living in his parents’ beach house, where at least he doesn’t have to pay rent.

When the Jacobson’s gather to pack up the beach house, Noah and his sisters purchase a Powerball ticket, which to their surprise wins. But that leaves them with a dilemma: do they share the money with the already rich Matthew who emphatically did not want to buy a ticket. In addition to causing divisions between the siblings, the win changes their lives in ways they didn’t expect, and not always for the best. Will this once close-knit family be able to survive not only the loss of their mother, but the problems that riches can bring?

Although the Jacobsons are a dysfunctional family, readers will root for them to overcome their difficulties. Yes, they are a mess before and after the lottery win, but they are also genuinely good people. Watching them grow and learn made “Jackpot Summer” a pleasure to read.

“Swimming with Ghosts”

For many people, friends play as important a role in their lives as do families. That’s true of two of the main characters in “Swimming With Ghosts” by Michelle Brafman (Keylight Books/Turner Publishing). In 2012, Gillian Cloud and Kristy Weinstein seem to have the perfect friendship. They bonded over their connection to the River Run swim club where two of their children are involved in the swim team that meets there. Yet, when the unexpected occurs, each woman finds herself revisiting parts of her past that she thought would remain buried.

Gillian’s demons rear their heads when her husband loses his job and becomes coach of the swim team. The team has been a major part of her life since she was young, connected to her relationship with her abusive father, an abuse she’s never really faced. Kristy also faces demons from her childhood. Although she converted and married into a Jewish family, she doesn’t feel like she really belongs. When she unexpectedly learns the identity of her father, something her late mother never revealed, it completely upsets her life. It also revives her addiction to love, which she thought was under control. What then occurs threatens both her marriage and her friendship with Gillian.

What makes “Swimming With Ghosts” work is that its characters are working to create good lives and relationships, even if they, at first, fail in the attempt. The author does an excellent job making each character believable and sympathetic, even when they don’t behave appropriately. Sections of the novel will leave readers feeling that a train wreck is coming, but knowing there is no way to stop it. Yet, it was impossible to look away, or, in this case, to stop turning pages to discover what would happen.

“The Council of Wise Women”

Enjoy Yiddish humor? Fond of the wise citizens of

Chelm whose actions make people laugh? Then you’ll enjoy Izzy Abrahamson’s latest Chelm work “The Council of Wise Women” (Light Publications). This is the second book of his that I’ve read and it was as much fun as the first one. (To read *The Reporter’s* review of “The Village Twins,” visit www.thereporter.org/book-reviews/celebrating-jewish-literature-the-prague-ghetto-and-chelm.)

“The Council of Wise Women” also opens with the birth of twins, but this time, they are a boy and a girl. However, the birth of Rachel and Isaac Cohen is the beginning of the end of their parents’ marriage. When her husband Benjamin wants her to pretend that Isaac was born first, Sarah begins to resent him. Benjamin, however, has no idea that his favoring his son and barely thinking about his daughter has any effect on their relationship. But the secret (well, a secret from the men) Council of Wise Women that Sarah becomes a member of is what really changes her life. Although the village school is only attended by boys, Rachel is far smarter than her brother and wants to learn. By careful, and some not so careful, machinations, the women of the village arrange for Rachel to attend school. That means life in the village is forever changed.

What makes “The Council of Wise Women” fun is not so much the plot, but the interaction of its many characters. These include Mrs. Chaipul who not only runs the village restaurant, but serves as its doctor and midwife. Even the men worry about crossing her, which means she has a great deal of power. There is also Oma Levitsky, who knows almost everything about everyone and makes “The Soup,” which has the magical power to heal people. Numerous male characters run through the novel’s pages, many for comic effect. Also comic are the footnotes that explain the Yiddish words, but which also contain commentary on the actions of the characters. This is one of the rare novels whose glossary is worth reading, even if you know the meaning of the Yiddish and Hebrew terms. While parts of the plot will strike readers as completely unbelievable, that’s part of the fun. After all, this is a novel about Chelm, whose men once tried to capture the moon in a well.



Off the Shelf

Sages and stories

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

The Talmud and other ancient Jewish writings contain *halachic* (legal) discussions and *aggadah* (stories) about the lives of the ancient rabbis. While most schools emphasize the works’ *halachic* aspects, the rabbinic tales can offer lessons for contemporary readers, if one carefully interprets the text. Moshe Sokol, dean of the Lander College for Men at the Touro College and University System, analyzed eight of these stories in his “The Snake at the Mouth of the Cave.” (To see *The Reporter’s* review, visit www.thereporter.org/miscellaneous-features/jewish-sages-and-jewish-wisdom?entry=388939.) He returns to *aggadah* in his new book “A Mysterious Guest for Dinner: Exploring Talmudic Narratives” (Maggid Books) where he offers commentary on 10 more stories.

Sokol makes it clear that he is interested in what the writer of the text is trying to teach; he does not believe the stories offer an understanding of the lives and thoughts of the particular rabbis featured. He writes, “It is presumptuous for someone living in twenty-first century New York to make any claims about some of the greatest religious figures in Jewish history... who lived in such different times and places.” His focus is strictly

on the text, although he does offer background about the time and place the particular stories take place. Although contemporary readers may feel that Sokol sometimes reads too much into a story, his careful analyses offer intriguing food for thought.

One example of a story that offers a lesson for contemporary times can be found in the chapter “Moral Decision-Making During a Time of Crisis: R. Yehuda HaNasi Struggles with the Mitzva of *Tzedaka*.” The tale, which is found in Bava Batra 8a in the Babylonian Talmud, tells of how Rabbi Yehuda, who was both wealthy and a leader of his community, opened his storehouses in order to provide food for the needy during a famine. However, he only gave supplies to those who were rabbinic scholars or rabbinic students. After someone who claims not to be a scholar forces his way into the storehouse, the interloper challenges Rabbi Yehudah and succeeds in being given supplies. Although Rabbi Yehuda at first regrets giving that food away, he changes his mind and later allows anyone to enter and receive food.

To explain why Rabbi Yehuda did not originally open his storehouse to everyone, Sokol offers an excellent discussion of the division between rabbinic scholars at that time and the ordinary people they referred to as *amei ha’artetz* (literally people of the earth, but used to mean ignoramuses). The two groups disliked each other: the rabbis thought the *amei ha’artetz* didn’t properly follow the laws as outlined by the rabbis. The *amei ha’artetz* thought the rabbis were “supercilious, clan-nish, and arrogant.” What is interesting is that the man who challenged Rabbi Yehuda is also a rabbi, although he pretends not to be. Rabbi Yehuda’s change of heart occurs when he learns this because he understands his challenger is following a rabbinic principle: the belief that people should not receive material benefit from engaging in Torah learning, which is supposed to be studied for its own sake.

Sokol notes that this dilemma forced Rabbi Yehuda to confront the difference between his convictions and his emotions. The author writes, “Perhaps the best way to read this is as a struggle between moral emotions and moral principles. For example, some people give charity because they are moved by feelings of compassion for the impoverished. Others give charity because they are committed to the principle that those blessed with resources must share them with those in need. Of course, motives for giving charity can be mixed, and some might give both because they feel overwhelmed by compassion and also because they feel it is the right

thing to do. However, the difference between these two kinds of moral behavior should be clear, for sometimes moral emotions conflict with moral principles.” It is this conflict that Rabbi Yehuda faces until his final decision to open his storehouse to everyone. Sokol notes that the story does not completely settle the question about which type of moral behavior is best, but that struggle is the reason the story still resonates with readers.

“Rav Yannai and the Mysterious Guest,” which can be found in Leviticus Rabba 9:3, offers another lesson for contemporary times. Rav Yannai met a well-dressed man and invited him to dine with him at his house. While they are eating, Rav Yannai quizzes his guest about his Jewish knowledge, discovers the man is actually unlearned and insults him by calling him a dog. The guest objects, grabbing Rav Yannai by his coat and then lecturing him to prove that he, too, is worthy of respect. Sokol uses this story to discuss how all humans wear masks, so that the only one who truly knows a person’s heart is God. The tale warns us against stereotyping someone by the clothes they wear and how they speak (whether it’s their accent or lack of grammar). Sokol also cleverly points out how the story also reminds readers of the generations that preceded Sinai, noting that all descendants of Adam and Eve are worthy of respect.

Two of the chapters – “R. Hanina ben Dosa, His Wife, and the Smoke-Filled Kitchen” and “R. Shimon ben Halaftha, His Wife, and the Miraculous Jewel from Heaven” – discuss the rewards people receive in this world versus the World to Come. Both rabbis are poor in this world, but have expectations that the World to Come will reward them for their studies and actions. Both men are offered part of that reward in this world, but, with the help of their wives, realize that reward is best postponed until after they die. Sokol shows the different ways the characters approach their dilemmas and offers some fascinating commentary about exactly who is Rabbi Shimon’s employer.

Readers need not agree with every interpretation that Sokol offers to enjoy “A Mysterious Guest for Dinner,” since one of the joys of text study is the discussion. Sokol certainly offers a great deal to discuss and debate, making this a perfect work for those who enjoy text study. It could also be used in a class or study group. For those unfamiliar with *aggadah*, it offers an excellent introduction since Sokol’s explanations are easy enough for beginners to follow, while complex enough for those familiar with the stories to feel enlightened.

Want to stay in the know?



Send your e-mail address to treporter@aol.com (with “e-mail blast” in the subject line) to stay up-to-date on the latest news between

The Reporter’s bimonthly issues! We promise not to share it with anyone and we won’t send you junk, just good stuff!

THE
REPORTER

TI to hold Artist in Residence Weekend, March 14-16

Temple Israel will hold an Artist in Residence Weekend featuring musician Zach Mayer on Friday-Sunday, March 14-16. All four programs will be held at Temple Israel, 4737 Deerfield Place, Vestal. The entire community is invited to attend. The events are free. For more information or to register, contact Temple Israel at 607-723-7461 or office@templeisraelvestal.org, or visit the temple's website at <https://templeisraelvestal.org>.

On Friday, March 14, at 4:30 pm, there will be a Purim celebration that will include music, dancing and a *megillah* reading. Those attending are encouraged to wear costumes. A musical *Kabbalat* Shabbat and light meal will follow.

On Saturday, March 15, at 10:15 am, Mayer will lead a musical *tefillah* program

in the Temple Israel chapel for children and their families. It will include songs, storytelling and games geared for children of all ages. The morning will culminate in a *hakafah*, where the children will march with their parents to the main service, while singing and dancing alongside the community. A *kiddush* will follow services.

On Saturday, March 15, at 7:30 pm, Shabbat will conclude with Mayer leading *Havdalah*, which will be followed by a participatory concert event co-sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton. "The inspirational concert will include Mayer's original melodies, *nigunim*,



Zach Mayer (Photo by Nomi Willis)

Jewish songs and Hebrew chants designed to uplift, delight and heal," said organizers of the event. Community musicians wishing to play their instruments in accompaniment with Mayer are encouraged to reach out to Temple Israel for more information on how to obtain sheet music. Light refreshments will be served.

On Sunday, March 16, at 11 am, the weekend will conclude with a workshop exploring the art of harmony and the spiritual power of song. Participants will learn two melodies, a traditional *nigun* and one of Mayer's original compositions, while discovering which elements are rooted in

tradition and which are new. Light refreshments will be served.

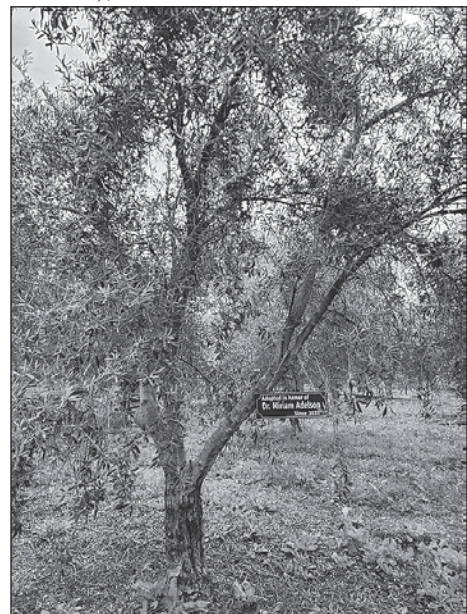
"Mayer is a well-known musician who is part of a wave of new Jewish musical artists, composers and facilitators of communal song who intertwine love for traditional Jewish music with a contemporary style," said organizers. "He is known for his unique ability to bring people together through the power of *nigunim*, spiritual wordless melodies rooted in the Jewish tradition. Mayer channels his family lineage of the four generations of cantors before him as he helps communities find their own joyous voices in songs."

The Artist in Residence Weekend is made possible thanks to a gift from The Community Foundation for South Central New York - The David and Virginia Eisenberg Fund.

Adopting olive trees in Israel

By Etgar Lefkovits

(JNS) – MOSHAV HAYOGEV, Israel – The row upon row of pristine olive trees that line the green farmland in this northern Israeli village stretch as far as the eye can see. Olive trees flourish at the agricultural village at Hayogev (meaning "farmer" in Hebrew), located a few miles west of Afula



An olive tree named in honor of Dr. Miriam Adelson. (Photo courtesy/My Tree in Israel Archive Photo)

and near the biblical site of Megiddo. But it is the personal connections to hundreds of people around the world that make the grove a sight to see.

There is a tree named for U.S. President Donald Trump; one for Mike Huckabee, former governor of Arkansas and current U.S. ambassador-designate to Israel; and another for Dr. Miriam Adelson, the Israeli-American philanthropist, physician and Trump mega-donor.

But it's not all VIPs. Most trees are named for individuals from North America or synagogues such as Temple Judea of Palm Beach, FL. One is in memory of Sgt. Reef Harush, 20, an Israeli soldier killed in the war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

Indeed, the trees here have all been "adopted" by individuals through an Israeli company called My Tree in Israel, which sends them a yearly shipment of olive oil produced from their tree. The initiative offers people around the world a direct connection to the land of Israel and the Israeli farmers who work it.

"We are connecting supporters of Israel – Jews and Christians alike – to Israel through a very personal and unique way," said Kobi Assaf, founder and director of My Tree in Israel.

He started the company six years ago with the double goals of assisting Israeli

farmers and spreading their goods abroad. A friend of the Huckabees who heard about the venture connected the former governor, who visited the agricultural community during a trip to Israel in 2022 and not only got a tree but invited the heads of the Israeli organization on his TV program.

To date, the company has some 1,500 clients, about 60 percent of whom are from the North American Jewish community and 40 percent from the evangelical Christian community. Many of those who have adopted trees visit them while they are in See "Trees" on page 11

Wedding and engagement photos wanted

The Reporter is looking for photos of couples who became engaged or married in 2024 for the annual Wedding, Prom and Party Guide issue (coming March 14).

Please e-mail these photos with the names of all those in the photo (including maiden names), date of wedding and photographer. Please do so by Tuesday, March 4. Photos can be e-mailed, in TIF or JPG format, to TReporter@aol.com; please note in the subject line that a wedding/engagement photo for The Reporter is attached and include the necessary information in the message.



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Chabad's Women's League offers *shalach manot* service

The Women's League for Chabad is currently accepting orders for its annual *shalach manot* service in which Binghamton residents can send packages of food and holiday greetings to local friends and acquaintances on Purim, which will be celebrated this year on Friday, March 14. Anyone who has not

received a complete information packet and order form, or who is seeking additional details, should call the Chabad Center at 607-797-0015.

"It's Purim made easy," says Ilene Pisker, project chairwoman. "It's a stress-free, very reasonably priced way to fulfill the mitzvah of *mishloach manot*, sending gifts

of food on Purim, and a wonderful way to show your friendship and care. We do all the work for you and your friends get fabulous packages from you!"

For individuals who want to say Happy Purim to their friends outside of the community, the Women's League offers Purim greeting cards that can be sent anywhere in

the continental U.S.A. for a charge of \$4. All orders must be received no later than Monday, March 3.

The Women's League is also in need of volunteers to assist in assembling the packages and in their delivery on Purim day. Anyone able to help with the project should contact the Chabad office.



RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

When I was growing up, I don't remember us giving or receiving *mishloach manot* for Purim. The literal meaning of Hebrew is sending portions, which is interpreted as sending food to friends, family and neighbors. The *halachic* (legal) requirement is to send at least two food items to one person. Additional giving is encouraged. While the custom probably began as a way to make sure the poor had enough food for a joyous celebration, the poor are also required to give at least one gift. In contemporary times, some groups use *mishloach manot* as a way of raising funds for their organization; it's a win-win because people can have someone else do the shopping and deliver the gift

for them, while still fulfilling the *mitzvah*.

Most *mishloach manot* packages I've seen in the past were relatively simple, featuring such items as hamentashen, chips, a small bottle of grape juice, a box of tea and candy. This year, I was curious about what types of *mishloach manot* could be found online. Why? Because I love looking at all of the food gift basket catalogues that hit my mailbox in December and figured there must be similar items available for Purim. I was right. The first site that I visited offered Purim treats that cost almost \$2,000. The reason they were so expensive is that the food offered was served on a food cart or table. (Yes, those were included in the

price). The choices featured bottles of wine (well, many people do drink on Purim), a lot of chocolate and a selection of Viennese pastries. Fortunately, those that came with tables/carts were only available for pick-up, not shipping, and I didn't feel like making a trip to Brooklyn. (To be honest, those were way too pricey for me.)

Another site also offered wine, but most of its baskets featured snack foods, like nuts, dried fruit, candy and cookies. A third site offered similar baskets, although some of those included babka. The most fun one offered Purim jelly beans. For some strange reason, that just tickled my fancy, probably because I don't think of Purim and

jelly beans as going together. Then again, there is no reason that jelly beans can't be a Purim treat.

However, while looking at these sites, I wondered if we'd wandered too far from the original reason for *mishloach manot*: providing enough food for those who don't have the means to enjoy a joyous holiday celebration. Fun foods make a great treat, but, if you don't have enough for dinner, they aren't really helpful. While sending chocolate, wine and other goodies are fine for those who have enough, we should also consider making certain that those in need have enough food, not only for the holiday, but every day.

Grains and veggies speak to Purim culinary tradition

By Ethel G. Hofman

(JNS) – This should be a fun-filled, over-the-top Purim this year; after all, it's exactly five years since the coronavirus turned our world upside-down. This year, the holiday begins on the evening of Friday, March 14 (the 14th day of the Hebrew month of Adar), and continues throughout the following day. For those who observe it, the fast of Esther takes place from dawn to dusk on Purim eve.

The celebration is linked to the survival of Jews in the Persian Empire in the fifth century B.C.E. when they were marked to be put to death in one day. They were saved, somewhat hesitantly at first, by Esther, a young Jewish woman who eventually put her fears aside to stand out among ... well, women. The story told in the book of Esther, read from the Scroll of Esther (Megillat Esther), is that in the face of destruction, violence and the Haman the Agagite's dastardly plot, Jews not only survived but thrived. In glorious victory, they went from possible extermination to preservation.

And today, they go *l'dor v'dor* – "from generation to generation."

On this holiday, almost anything goes. It's like a carnival, Fastnacht (Carnival of Basel) in Switzerland, April Fool's Day and the Philadelphia Mummers all rolled into one. Kids and adults alike dress up; you'll see Queen Esther (a favorite with little girls), King Ahasuerus, Mordechai and even the evil Haman. Purim is the only Jewish festival where it's actually encouraged to get so drunk that you can't tell the difference between "cursed be Haman" and "blessed be Mordecai." This stems from a quotation in the Talmud attributed to Rava, a fourth-century rabbi. I prefer to think it means "devil may care" tipsy, not rip-roaring drunk.

In Israel, the holiday goes way beyond religious roots. Celebrations begin the day before. Dress up and go to work. In the streets, zombies, clowns, courtesans and bare-chested young men draped in fake fur jostle through the crowds. Pre-COVID, in the

Machane Yehuda open-air market in Jerusalem, I saw kilted Scots dancing on top of cars, music blaring (a nod to the large Jewish immigration from Scotland to Jerusalem). Young and old, everyone has a ball!

Queen Esther is said to have eaten a vegetarian diet in order to keep kosher while living in King Ahasuerus's palace. For Purim Seudah, the holiday feast, it's traditional to serve dishes that incorporate pulses (crops harvested solely as dry grains) such as peas, beans and nuts. Dining at Dvash, a Mediterranean restaurant in Boca Raton, FL, I was inspired to recreate a spectacular hummus dish topped with cubes of roasted eggplant. It's very easy and certainly better (and cheaper) than the store-bought kind. The eggy, vegetable tagine I tasted in Tunisia is similar to a frittata and baked in a round dish. In fact, tagine comes from the Greek tagame, meaning "frying pan."

Queen Esther's Lentil Stew is what I call a forgiving recipe. A bit more or less still works well. Just season with cumin and oregano to taste, and substitute canned beans for cooked lentils. Lentils are a good plant-based source of protein, carbohydrates and fiber. Kids will have fun making Haman's Flea cookies, my "go-to" simple shortbread sprinkled with poppy seeds. For the hamentashen filling, be adventurous. Combine any crushed cereal with a nut butter such as Nutella. As for Rocky Poppy Buns, these are way fluffier and tastier than Hagrid's variety served to Harry Potter.

Chag Purim sameach!

Homemade Hummus (Pareve)

Makes 1½-1¾ cups

Cook's tips:

◆ Tahini is a Middle Eastern condiment – a smooth mixture of toasted, ground, hulled sesame seeds. Stir well before serving, as it tends to separate.

◆ Use fresh lemon juice, not bottled. One large lemon yields about 3 tablespoons of juice.

◆ Lemons at room temperature yield more juice.



Hummus and fried eggplant. (Photo courtesy of Dvash Mediterranean restaurant in Boca Raton, FL)

◆ Drain canned chickpeas, but hold back 3 tablespoons to add to the mixture.

1 (15-oz.) can of chickpeas, drained (see tips)

¼ cup tahini

2 to 3 Tbsp. liquid from chickpeas

3 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice

½ tsp. bottled minced garlic or to taste

¼ cup of extra-virgin olive oil (divided)

1½ tsp. cumin

Paprika or snipped parsley to sprinkle

In a food processor, place chickpeas, tahini, 2 tablespoons chickpea liquid, lemon juice, garlic, 2 tablespoons olive oil and cumin. Pulse and process to a smooth paste.

To make a creamier mixture, add the remaining chickpea liquid and process.

To serve: Spoon into a shallow dish, sprinkle with paprika or parsley, and drizzle with olive oil.

Serving suggestion: Top with Crisp Roasted Eggplant Cubes.

Crisp Roasted Eggplant Cubes (Pareve)

Makes 4 cups

Cook's tips: Eggplant may be sliced or cubed. Do not freeze; frozen eggplant breaks down and becomes mushy.

1 medium eggplant, ends trimmed and cut into 1-inch cubes

3 Tbsp. olive oil

½ tsp. kosher salt

½ tsp. fresh ground pepper

Preheat oven to 425°F. Spray a baking sheet with nonstick baking spray.

Add the cubed eggplant. Toss with olive oil, salt and pepper.

Spread on a baking sheet in one layer. Roast in a preheated oven, on the center rack, for 25 to 30 minutes. Toss after 15 minutes.

Eggplant is ready when it's nicely browned and soft when pierced with a sharp knife.

Serve hot or warm on a bed of hummus.

Potato, Pepper and Parsley Tagine (Pareve)

Serves 6-8

Cook's tips:

◆ Do not add butter or milk to mashed potatoes for a *pareve* dish.

◆ Use white or brown bread. Pulse bread in a food processor to make breadcrumbs.

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

1 medium onion, thinly sliced

1 red bell pepper, trimmed, seeded and coarsely chopped

1 cup (packed) snipped fresh parsley

2 cups mashed potatoes

1 cup soft coarse white breadcrumbs

6 large eggs, beaten

1 tsp. bottled minced garlic

¼ tsp. dried pepper flakes

¼ tsp. salt

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Spray a deep 8- or 9-inch round baking dish or 9-inch square baking dish with nonstick baking spray.

Heat the oil over medium heat in a medium skillet. Add the onion and red pepper.

Sauté for 3 to 4 minutes until the onion is softened. Stir in the parsley. Set aside

In a bowl, combine the potatoes, breadcrumbs, eggs, garlic, pepper flakes and salt. Add the onion mixture and stir gently. Transfer to the prepared baking dish.

Bake in preheated oven for 35 to 45 minutes, or until golden brown and the center is firm to the touch. Serve warm, cold or at room temperature.

Queen Esther's Fruited Lentil Stew (Pareve)

Serves 8-10

Cook's tips:

◆ Any combination of canned beans or corn (not creamed corn) may be used.

◆ One cup of dry lentils yields 3 cups when cooked.

◆ Substitute Bloody Mary mix or vegetable juice for tomato juice.

◆ For a hearty soup, add more tomato juice to desired consistency.

◆ Steamed, ready-to-eat lentils are available in some supermarkets.

3 Tbsp. vegetable oil

1 large onion, halved and sliced

2 cups frozen mixed vegetables

1 can (15.5 ounces) of white beans, undrained

3 cups cooked green or brown lentils*

1 cup pitted dry apricots, halved

2½ cups tomato juice

See "Purim" on page 8



Queen Esther's Fruited Lentil Stew. (Photo by Ethel G. Hofman)

We Remember You 2025

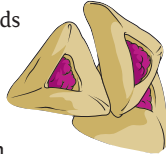
JFS Accepting Purim Donations



Jewish Family Service will once again be collecting funds to fulfill the Purim mitzvah of *matanot l'evyonim* (gifts for the poor). These donations will be distributed to more than 16 local Jewish families who are experiencing extreme financial difficulties. In order to assure a timely distribution of these gifts, please be sure your contribution reaches our offices by March 14, 2025.

Thank you for your support for your neighbors in need.

Please mail or bring your donation to Jewish Family Service, 500 Clubhouse Road, Vestal, NY 13850. Contact Merryl Wallach, JFS Director, at 607-724-2332, ext. 339, with any questions.





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Jews in Sports

Super Bowl kibitzers

BILL SIMONS

The Super Bowl has become a national holiday. On February 11, Super Bowl LIX attracted nearly 128 million viewers. Another 65,719 fans paid big money to watch the game in person at New Orleans' Caesars Superdome. President Donald Trump and musical phenom Taylor Swift headed the in-person celebrity list. Even non-fans attended home and formal Super Bowl parties.

Yet, highly anticipated commercials turned out to be strangely bland. Rapper Kendrick Lamar's halftime performance proved more controversial than entertaining. And the expected close game between the Philadelphia Eagles' gigantic line and quarterback Patrick Mahomes' Kansas City Chiefs, seeking a three-peat, turned out to be a blowout. Ahead 24-0 at halftime, the Eagles won 40-22.

Although there were no Jewish players on field this year, media, history, fans and management ensured a Jewish presence. Pre-Super Bowl, quarterback Sid Luckman led the Chicago Bears to a 73-0 rout of the Washington Redskins in the 1940 NFL championship. History records the four consecutive appearances of Buffalo Bills Coach Marv Levy; New England Patriots receiver Julian Edelman was Super Bowl LIII MVP.

Through commercials, Patriots owner Robert Kraft called out bigotry, and Billy Crystal returned to Katz's Delicatessen to riff interfaith romance. Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro was there to collect on a bet with Missouri Governor Mike Kehoe. General Manager Howie Roseman built Philadelphia's championship team and owner Jeff Lurie funded the assets needed by the Eagles.

From our hilltop home in Central New York, my wife Nancy indulged me by warming up frozen pizza as we watched the game. In Greater Boston, our cheerleader granddaughter Hannah and her younger brother Dan, who harbors quarterback dreams and wants Madden NFL 25 for his birthday, rooted for the Eagles, while munching wings with their parents: their siblings Lily, Isaac and Eva showed little interest in the gridiron. My sister Jo Ann took satisfaction in the outcome of the game: "All true New England Patriots fans, and I count myself among them, were rooting for the Philadelphia Eagles. Not for our great love for them, but to preserve our beloved Patriots in the record books."

Checking in with several Jewish friends and readers concerning their level of interest in Super Bowl LIX, brought forth varied responses, several conveying little enthusiasm. Retired editor and sportswriter Sam Pollak, who covered Super Bowls III and V, reported, "Now... the only football fan in my household, I watched the game by myself and did crosswords. As for the non-competitive game, it was like watching a lion eat." Ron Feldstein, formerly director of the student union at SUNY Oneonta, retorted, "The best part of the annual Super Bowl is that its conclusion marks the beginning of the baseball season." Emeritus physician Rich Cohen found it dull, while conjuring up nostalgia for games past: "My current lack of interest was not always the case... I remember the heartbreak of KC defeating my Vikings also in New Orleans in 1970. The halftime show was a re-enactment of the Battle of New Orleans. Bodies all over the place!!"

The game also elicited a memory from my cousin Robert Benson: "It was Super Bowl Sunday, 1976. My first wife and I... stop for breakfast in Marietta, GA. As the waitress approached our table, she looks around to make sure she can't be heard, leans into us, and asks in a deep Southern whispered drawl, 'Excuse me, are ya'll Jewish?' I answer softly that yes, we are Jewish. The waitress looks around the restaurant again to check that no one can overhear, and then she leans further into us and... whispers, 'Me, too!'"

Barney Horowitz, adult education chairman at Con-

gregation B'nai Sholom in Albany, confided, "I did... watch three quarters of the Eagles' beatdown on Sunday night at my friend's house - the highlight being getting to eat the delicious baked wings he made." In Philadelphia, Reconstructionist rabbi and scholar Rebecca Alpert battled COVID, although she was happy the Eagles won. New York City social studies teacher David Lonborg pointed to political intrusion: "We went to the annual Super Bowl party at my brother-in-law's house... a pretty lackluster game with a rather disappointing halftime show and certainly not the most creative commercials. Plus, our illustrious commander-in-chief found a way to make it all about him."

Nor did former SUNY Oneonta Psychology Chairman Steve Gilbert prioritize the game: "I turned on the game at the exact instant of the first kickoff, thereby avoiding endless hours of hysterical hype. At the end of the first half, I declared the game over and turned it off." Physical

educator Susan Poretz literally found the game a snoozer: "I think I saw maybe five or so minutes of it before promptly falling asleep."

Other Jewish respondents found more engagement with the Super Bowl. Still a prolific author in his 90s, Larry Ruttman proclaimed the Eagles' victory significant: "Patrick Mahomes is a great player... But when the spirit is aroused in a team by all saying they will lose to the talent, marvelous things happen, like the lesser team winning big over the talent, proving yet again the power of the human spirit." Adam Cohen, media coordinator and broadcaster for baseball's Tri-City Valley Cats, also deemed the Eagles' triumph notable: "It was exciting and historic to see the Eagles take down the Chiefs. Not only did they prevent the first ever three-peat in the NFL, but their win impacted the legacy of Mahomes."

See "Super" on page 9

Purim..... Continued from page 6

- 2 Tbsp. honey
- 1 rounded tsp. of bottled chopped garlic
- 3 tsp. cumin
- 1½ tsp. dried oregano
- Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Heat the oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the onion. Cook until the onion is beginning to brown, about 4 to 5 minutes.

Add all the remaining ingredients. Bring to a simmer. Cover and cook for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add more tomato juice if the mixture is too thick. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

*To cook 1 cup of lentils: Rinse in a wire sieve and remove any debris. Place in a large pot with 3 cups of cold water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer. Cover and cook for 20 to 30 minutes until tender, not mushy. Drain well and use as needed.

Note: Cooked lentils may be stored for 3 to 4 days in a tightly lidded container in the fridge. Use a large pot, as lentils tend to double or triple in size.

Haman's Flea Cookies (Dairy)

Makes 20-24 cookies

Cook's tips:

Store in an airtight container at room temperature for 2 to 3 days.

An electric hand mixer may be used for almost anything. No need for a countertop mixer.



Haman's Flea Cookies. (Photo by Ethel G. Hofman)

- 2 sticks (1 cup) butter, softened
 - ½ cup sugar
 - 2 cups all-purpose flour
 - 2 to 3 Tbsp. poppy seeds
- Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a large cookie sheet with nonstick baking spray.

In a medium bowl, cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy, 1 to 2 minutes.

Add the flour, ½ cup at a time, beating well between each addition. Turn onto a lightly floured board.

Roll into a log, about 10 inches long. Cut half-inch-thick slices. Place on prepared cookie sheet. Sprinkle with poppy seeds.

Bake for 25 minutes or until golden brown at the edges. Cool for 10 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.

Quick Crunchy Hamantashen (Dairy)

Makes 6 hamantashen

Cook's tips:

- ◆ In a hurry? A prepared 10-inch pie crust works just fine.
- ◆ Use the rim of a glass to cut pastry rounds.
- ◆ Spread any leftover pastry thinly with jam, sprinkle with cinnamon and roll up as for a jelly roll.

For the filling:

- 1 Tbsp. crushed cereal

- 1 Tbsp. Nutella or nut butter

For a simple short-crust pastry:

- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 stick (½ cup) salted butter, chilled and cut into 8 slices
- 5 to 6 Tbsp. of ice water

Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a cookie sheet with nonstick cooking spray.

Prepare filling: Mix the cereal and Nutella till combined. Set aside.

Prepare pastry: Place flour and butter into a food processor. Pulse until the mixture is about the size of baby peas. While pulsing, slowly drizzle water into the mixture until it begins to come together in clumps. If needed, add another tablespoon of water. Turn onto a floured board. Knead into a ball. Roll out to ¼-inch thick.

To assemble: Cut out pastry rounds using a 3-inch cookie cutter. Place a rounded teaspoon filling in the center of each round. Brush edges with water and bring edges together to form three corners.

Bake in preheated oven for 15 to 20 minutes until the edges are golden brown.

Rocky Poppy Buns (Dairy)

Makes 12 buns

Cook's tips:

Keep thin latex gloves on hand for items like rubbing butter into flour. When done, just peel and discard.

Substitute raisins or candied citrus peel for currants.



Rocky Poppy Buns. (Photo by Ethel G. Hofman)

- 1¾ cups all-purpose flour
- 6 Tbsp. butter, softened
- 3½ tsp. baking powder
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1½ Tbsp. poppy seeds
- ½ cup currants
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- About ¾ cup milk
- Sugar to sprinkle
- ¾ tsp. orange or vanilla extract (optional)

Preheat oven to 425°F. Spray a large cookie sheet with nonstick cooking spray.

In a bowl, rub the butter into the flour to resemble coarse bread crumbs. Add the baking powder, sugar, poppy seed and currants. Stir to mix.

Make a well in the center. Stir in the egg, orange or vanilla extract and enough milk to make a soft sticky dough.

Drop by rounded tablespoons onto the prepared cookie sheet, 1-inch apart. Sprinkle lightly with sugar.

Bake in a preheated oven for 15 to 20 minutes until golden brown.

Ethel G. Hofman is a syndicated American Jewish food and travel columnist, author and culinary consultant.

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THE REPORTER
Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton

Jewish online resources

By Reporter staff

A variety of Jewish groups are offering educational and recreational online resources. Below is a sampling of those. *The Reporter* will publish additional listings as they become available.

◆ The Yiddish Book Center will hold the virtual talk about “The Chief Rabbi’s Funeral,” with Scott D. Seligman, on Thursday, March 27, at 7 pm. Seligman will talk about his book that discusses what became known as “the single largest antisemitic incident in American history.” For more information or to register, visit www.yiddishbookcenter.org/events/upcoming-public-programs/chief-rabbis-funeral-scott-d-seligman.

◆ Birthright Israel Onward is offering two “Storytellers Fellowships” for those looking to share their stories about their trips to Israel. The Storytellers Impact Incubator will be “a first-of-its-kind 10-day journey through Israel,” while the Reichman Fellowship is a four-week fellowship. Applications will be accepted until Tuesday, April 1. For more information or to apply, visit <https://birthrightisraelonward.com/our-programs/storytellers/>.

◆ The American Jewish University will hold the virtual four-session class “Rabbinic Roots of the Passover Seder” on Tuesdays, March 11-April 1, at 3 pm. The cost to attend is \$145. The class will “explore the rabbinic roots of the Passover seder through tradition and Jewish text.” For more information or to register, visit <https://open.aju.edu/event/rabbinic-roots-of-the-passover-seder/>.

◆ Roundtable will hold the virtual course “Reading Blanche Bendahan’s ‘Mazaltob’” on Wednesdays, March 5 and 12, from 10-11 am. The cost to attend is \$88. Yaëlle Azagury and Frances Malino will discuss “Mazaltob,” which was published in 1930 and is considered a forerunner of modern Sephardi literature. For more information or to register, visit <https://roundtable.org/live-courses/literature/reading-blanche-bendahans-mazaltob>.

◆ Siegal Lifelong Learning will offer several virtual lectures. The cost to attend each lecture is \$10. They include “Justice, Justice You Shall Pursue: One Jew’s Wanderings as a Tribal Judge in Alaska” on Thursday March 27, from 7-8:30 pm (<https://case.edu/lifelonglearning/lectures/justice-justice->

[ruins-glory-new-findings-old-city-jerusalem-remote](https://case.edu/lifelonglearning/lectures/ruins-glory-new-findings-old-city-jerusalem-remote)); “From Ruins to Glory: New Findings from the Old City of Jerusalem” on Monday May 5, from 1:30-3 pm (<https://case.edu/lifelonglearning/lectures/ruins-glory-new-findings-old-city-jerusalem-remote>); “David, Goliath, and the Mystery of the Weaver’s Beam” on Monday, May 12, from 1:30-3 pm (<https://case.edu/lifelonglearning/lectures/david-goliath-and-mystery-weavers-beam-remote>); “The Tabernacle in the Desert, the Cult Place in Shiloh and Solomon’s Temple” on Monday May 19, from 10:30 am-noon (<https://case.edu/lifelonglearning/lectures/tabernacle-desert-cult-place-shiloh-and-solomons-temple-remote>); and “Jewish Amsterdam: Then and Now” on Thursday, June 12, from 1:30-3 pm (<https://case.edu/lifelonglearning/lectures/jewish-amsterdam-then-and-now-remote>).

◆ The American Jewish University will hold the virtual talk “Abraham’s Legacy: Faith, Doubt, and the Birth of Judaism” on Tuesday, March 11, at 3 pm. Anthony Julius will discuss his new book “Abraham: The First Jew.” For more information or to register, visit <https://open.aju.edu/event/abrahams-legacy-faith-doubt-and-the-birth-of-judaism-2>.

◆ Roundtable will hold the virtual class “Golda Meir and the State of Israel,” with Trudy Gold, on Thursdays, March 20 and 27, from 10:30-11:45 am. The cost to attend is \$70. The class will look at Golda Meir, considered one of the 20th century’s most influential politicians. For more information or to register, visit <https://roundtable.org/live-courses/history/golda-meir-and-the-state-of-israel-with-trudy-gold>.

◆ Keshet offers the free report “Threads of Identity: LGBTQ+ Jews of Color in the Fabric of Jewish Life” at www.keshetonline.org/threads-of-identity. It explores “the unique experiences, challenges, and resilience of LGBTQ+ Jews of Color in Jewish spaces.”

◆ The American Jewish University will hold the virtual talk “Matchmaker, Matchmaker: Aleeza Ben Shalom’s Guide to Lasting Love” on Tuesday, March 18, at 3 pm. Aleeza Ben Shalom will discuss her new book “Matchmaker, Matchmaker,” which offers a “paradigm-shifting approach to modern dating.” For more information or to register, visit <https://open.aju.edu/event/matchmaker-matchmaker-aleeza-ben-shaloms-guide-to-lasting-love>.

◆ The Academy of Jewish Religion is offering a free download titled “An Upside-Down World: Esther and Antisemitism” at <https://ajr.edu/forms/an-upside-down-world-esther-and-antisemitism/>. The supplement is said to “provide a forum for pursuing these questions [about antisemitism] whether in preparation for the holiday or during our celebrations.”

◆ ALEPH will hold the virtual course “Diving Deeply into the Golem of Prague,” led by Maggid Jim Brulé, on Tuesdays, April 22 and 29, and May 6, at 7 pm. The cost to attend is \$54. The course will explore the legend of the Golem of Prague and seek to “uncover lessons on creation, power, and responsibility, gaining insights that resonate with modern life.” For more information or to register, visit <https://aleph.org/civcrm/event/register/?reset=1&id=585>.

◆ Roundtable will hold the virtual program “The Everyday Life of Jews in the Ancient World” on Thursdays, May 8-22, from noon-1 pm. The cost to attend is \$132. The class will look at the life of Jews in the ancient world, who lived at the intersection of empires of Mesopotamia, Persia, Greece and Rome. For more information or to register, visit <https://roundtable.org/live-courses/history/the-everyday-life-of-jews-in-the-ancient-world>.

◆ Hadassah Magazine will hold the virtual “Magazine Discussion: A Conversation With Dara Horn” on Thursday, March 20, at 7 pm. Hadassah Magazine Executive Editor Lisa Hostein will interview three-time See “Online” on page 11

Super Continued from page 8

Attorney David Wendel wanted a different result: “I was rooting for a KC three-peat. From the days of Bednarik/Gifford, throwing snowballs at Santa Claus, the Fumble, the ‘Miracle in the Meadowlands II’ . . . and the ‘Big Dom’ incident a few years ago, not to mention the violent Eagles fans . . . they are the football team I will always root against.” Jeff Katz, Community Foundation of Otsego County (NY) executive director, savored the ambience more than the outcome: “I’ve watched every Super Bowl since the Jets!

Our routine is pretty simple – lots of snacks! For a few years, we hosted a party for the Rotary Exchange students. It was a perfect ‘American’ experience.”

I think Jeff, who named his youngest son Joseph William after Namath and did a stint as the mayor of every American’s hometown, Cooperstown, NY, is right. For Jews and their fellow fans, the Super Bowl, animated by glorious excess and collisions, has become the quintessential American experience.

Shul Continued from page 2

“You first!” “Oh no, I couldn’t possibly. *You* go first!” “No, no, no. I insist. After you!” Although I’m not one who usually hears voices from Above, my mother’s voice reached me, as clear as day reproving me, and I relayed what she said to the crowd: “You’re arguing over who gets to *daven* for my *yahrzeit*? Don’t be ridiculous! Step aside and let this fine gentleman *daven* for his father!”

In more or less the same fashion, my siblings heard her voice, as well, and backed me up. Regardless of the established protocol, she would never have wanted us to squabble over her honor, or pre-empt the feelings of another mourner for the sake of our own.

So as the dust quickly settled from our unconventional kerfuffle, and as we each licked our sweet battle wounds, the young man stepped up and began the *Ashrei* prayer. ***

Now you know the story. Consider it a lesson about fighting in *shul*. The kind of fighting which might come from taking Polite Pills. The exalted sort of fighting which happens when you put others first.

The type of fighting that my mother – or any mother – would love. ***

That’s the end of the story and the end of the blog. It really is. So you can stop reading now. But that doesn’t mean I’m going to stop writing.

Because right after our minyan, another very sweet moment occurred. It’s not part of the fight story (though it involves the same characters), or at least not an integral part. It’s more of a postscript. Or a supplement. Or an afterword. But if you’re still here reading, I will give you a bit more background. So here goes. ***

In U.S.-English, we use the expression “it dawned on me.” I never really thought about this phrase before, but I presume it means that, like dawn, the sun is rising and shedding light on something, which had been dark in the past.

In Hebrew, the equivalent expression is something that translates literally as “the token fell.” It harkens back to the days when payphones were fueled by round tokens, which could only be purchased at

the post office. As the caller’s time on the phone went by, the ersatz coins would drop one by one. When the last one fell, the conversation was cut off. If you were making an international call, you would have to be ready with a pocketful of *asimonim* and continually feed the metal box to make sure that the discussion could continue.

How this expression, “the token fell,” means that you came to a realization, I’m not exactly sure, but it’s a colorful metaphor. It probably derives from its U.K.-English counterpart: “The penny dropped.”

In any case, as it relates to our story, as soon as the young man began the *Mincha* service, the *asimon* fell. The penny dropped. It dawned on me. I realized who he was.

His grandmother is a member of our *shul* and I was at the funeral of his father a mere two weeks prior. In fact, at that burial I bumped into my nephew Naftali, who is a *rosh kollel* (head of a rabbinical academy) in Jerusalem, and son-in-law of my sister Cathy and brother-in-law Steve, who were right there with us at *Mincha*. When I asked Naftali why he had come to the funeral, he explained to me that one of the sons of the deceased was a member of his *Kollel*.

It was the same fellow who was now standing before us, leading *Mincha*.

The “combatant” on the other side of our faux feud had, in reality, a strong connection to a member of our family. Following the *tefillah*, I brought him over and introduced him around. He was pleasantly shocked to meet the in-laws and aunts and uncles of his *rosh kollel*, and was gushing with praise about the warm and nurturing tenor that our Naftali brings to their group of scholars.

Now it was our turn to *shep nachas*. ***

I like to call these moments of providential confluence “kisses from Hashem.” Those times when you do the right thing and suddenly you are faced with unexpected beauty. To be showered with these kisses on my mother’s *yahrzeit*, because we heeded her call from Above, made these kisses all the sweeter. ***

Thanks for sticking with me. Now I’m done.

For real.

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Weekly Parasha

Terumah, Exodus 25:1-30:10

It takes a village

RABBI CALEB BROMMER, TEMPLE BETH-EL, ITHACA

Parashat Terumah tells the story of the first capital campaign for a synagogue in Jewish history. Well, perhaps that's putting it a little too pithily, but it is true that in this *parasha*, Moses asks the people to give donations toward the construction of the *Mishkan*, the traveling wilderness sanctuary that will be the epicenter of God's presence on earth. In the first few *pesukim* (verses) of the *parasha*, Moses asks the people to donate gold, silver, bronze, valuable textiles and dyes, leathers, woods, oils, spices and precious stones. And the rest of the *parasha* is dedicated to an extremely detailed account of how the *Mishkan* is to be constructed – what all those beautiful and valuable donations are going to become.

One of the wonderful things that I think this *parasha* is

trying to teach us is that the *Mishkan*, the very epicenter of God's presence on earth and amidst the people, can only be constructed with contributions from the entire community. Everyone had something to contribute and we can imagine the *Mishkan* being constructed from little pieces of each individual Israelite family. It truly takes a village!

These donations to the construction of the *Mishkan* were not a statutory tax. They were given of free will: *kol ish asher yidvenu libo*, every person whose heart moved them. Thus the *Mishkan*, in addition to being a breathtaking structure filled with God's presence, was also a reminder in the midst of the Israelite camp of our shared vision and mission, and shared responsibility to bring that vision to bear. It was a demonstration of community and of shared efforts.

The word *terumah* can be translated as donation, offering or contribution. And this year, the reading of *parashat Terumah* coincides with Shabbat Shekalim. On Shabbat Shekalim, which is the Shabbat before the holiday of Purim, we read a special *maftir* (additional reading) from the Torah reminding us about a mitzvah that we perform before Purim each year: donating *machatztit ha-shekel* (half a shekel) toward the operating expenses of the *Mishkan*. Unlike the free-will donations toward the actual building of the *Mishkan*, this contribution was a mandatory half-shekel tax on the entire Israelite population. Part of the message here is that the whole entire people has a shared investment in the success of the community. Those who are not able

See "Village" on page 11

Congregational Notes

Temple Israel

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

On Fridays and Tuesdays at 5:30 pm, services will be led by Rabbi Micah Friedman via Zoom and in-person.

On Saturday, March 1, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person. The Torah portion is Exodus 25:1-27:19 and the haftarah is II Kings 12:1-17. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 6:45 pm.

On Wednesday, March 5, "The Whole Megillah" program with Rabbi Micah Friedman at 10:30 am.

On Saturday, March 8, Shacharit services will be held at 9:45 am via Zoom and in-person. The Torah portion is Exodus 27:20-30:10 and the haftarah is I Samuel 15:2-24. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 6:45 pm.

On Sunday, March 9, a Temple Israel/Temple Concord adult ed. Program will be held at 10 am. For more information, see the article on page 1.

On Wednesday, March 12, "The Whole Megillah" program with Rabbi Micah Friedman at 10:30 am.

Congregation Tikun v'Or

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism
 Address: PO Box 3981, Ithaca, NY 14852; 2550 Triphammer Rd. (corner of Triphammer and Burdick Hill), Lansing, NY
 Phone: 607-256-1471
 Website: www.tikkunvor.org, E-mail: info@tikkunvor.org

Presidents: Martha Armstrong and Mitch Grossman, presidents_22@tikkunvor.org
 Education Director/Admin. Coordinator: Naomi Wilensky
 Bnai Mitzvah Coordinator: Michael Margolin
 Services: All services currently on Zoom. E-mail info@tikkunvor.org for the times and links. Contemplative morning services every Tuesday from 8:30-9:30 am. Saturday mornings, Gan Shabbat and other special services at least once a month. Call for the weekly schedule. Jewish Learning Experiences (JLE) for second through seventh grade classes meet on Sunday mornings. Sixth and seventh grades also meet on Wednesday afternoons. Family programs for kindergarten and first grade held monthly. Adult Education: Offered regularly throughout the year. Check the website for details.

Temple Beth-El of Ithaca

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
 Rabbi: Caleb Brommer
 Rabbi Emeritus: Scott L. Glass
 Address: 402 North Tioga St. (the corner of Court and Tioga streets), Ithaca, NY 14850-4292
 Phone: 273-5775
 E-mail: president@tbeithaca.org, secretary@tbeithaca.org
 Website: www.tbeithaca.org

Presidents: Melanie Kalman and Alexis Siemon
 Sisterhood President: Gail Zussman
 Director of Education: Calle Schueler
 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 teen No'ar program meets twice per month (every other Sunday from 5-7 pm) and is designed with the flexibility to accommodate busy student schedules.

Adult Ed.: Numerous weekly courses, several semester-long courses and a variety of mini-courses and lectures are offered throughout the year. Call the temple office for more details.

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

Synagogues limit face-to-face gatherings

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

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: Tues. 10 am-1 pm; Thurs. 9 am-1 pm
 Beth David e-mail address: bethdavid@stny.rr.com
 Rabbi's e-mail: rabbisilber@stny.rr.com
 Website: www.bethdavid.org
 Facebook: www.facebook.com/bethdavidbinghamton
 Classes: Rabbi Zev Silber will hold his weekly Talmud class every Tuesday evening after services.

Rohr Chabad Center

Affiliation: Chabad-Lubavitch
 Rabbi Aaron and Rivkah Slonim, Directors
 E-mail: aslonim@binghamton.edu
 rslonim@chabadofbinghamton.com
 Address: 420 Murray Hill Rd., Vestal, NY 13850
 Phone: 607-797-0015, Fax: 607-797-0095
 Website: www.Chabadofbinghamton.com
 Rabbi Zalman and Rochel Chein, Education
 E-mail: zchein@Jewishbu.com, rchein@Jewishbu.com
 Rabbi Levi and Hadasa Slonim, Downtown and Development
 Chabad Downtown Center: 60 Henry St., Binghamton
 E-mail: lslonim@Jewishbu.com, hslonim@Jewishbu.com
 Rabbi Yisroel and Goldie Ohana, Programming
 E-mail: yohana@Jewishbu.com, gohana@Jewishbu.com
 Regular service times: Daily 7:30 am, Friday evening 6 pm, Shabbat morning 9:30 am, Maariv and Havdalah one hour after candle-lighting time, Sundays 9:30 am.
 To join the mailing list, for up-to-date information on adult education offerings or to arrange for a private tutorial, for details concerning the Judaica shop and resource center, or for assistance through the Piaker Free Loan Society or Raff Maasim Tovim Foundation, call Chabad's office at 797-0015.

Chabad will be holding pre-Shabbat virtual programs. For more information, visit www.JewishBU.com/S2020Partnership.

Temple Brith Sholom

Affiliation: Unaffiliated
 Address: P.O. Box 572, 117 Madison St., Cortland, NY 13045
 Phone: 607-756-7181
 President: Leo Searfoss
 Cemetery Committee: 315-696-5744
 Website: templebrithsholomcortland.org
 Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Temple-Brith-Sholom-114006981962930/>
 Service leaders: Lay leadership
 Shabbat services: Services are usually on the third Friday of the month and led by a variety of leaders. Check the Facebook page or weekly e-mail for upcoming services. Contact the president to get on the e-mail list.
 Religious School: Students are educated on an individual basis.

Temple Brith Sholom is a small equalitarian congregation serving the greater Cortland community. Congregants span the gamut of observance and services are largely dependent on the service leader. The Friday night siddur is "Likrat Shabbat." The community extends a warm welcome to the Jewish student population of SUNY Cortland, as well as the residents of local adult residences. The Board of Trustees meets on the second Tuesday of the month.

Services and programs are held by Zoom usually on the third Friday of the month.

Friday, February 28, light candles before..... 5:34 pm
 Shabbat ends Saturday, March 1 6:36 pm
 Friday, March 7, light candles before..... 5:43 pm
 Shabbat ends Saturday, March 8 6:44 pm
 Friday, March 14, light candles before..... 6:51 pm
 Shabbat ends Saturday, March 15 7:52 pm
 Friday, March 21, light candles before..... 6:59 pm
 Shabbat ends Saturday, March 22 8 pm

Temple Concord

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism
 Rabbi: Leah Moser
 Address: 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905
 Office hours: Tues.-Fri., 10 am-2 pm
 Phone: 607-723-7355
 Fax: 607-723-0785
 Office e-mail: TempleConcordbinghamton@gmail.com
 Website: www.templeconcord.com
 Regular service times: Fri., 7:30 pm; Sat., 10:35 am, when religious school is in session.
 Hebrew school: Hebrew school meets at 4:15 pm and 5:15 pm on Tues. and Thurs. during the school year unless otherwise noted.
 Shabbat services: Zoom link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86996998146?pwd=RIVMTHFYVIVNGFHMJLVUcvQ3JNQTO9>, meeting ID 869 9699 8146 and passcode 826330; dial-in number 646-931-3860; and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/templeconcord.
 Torah study: Zoom link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8789790994?pwd=bOMvwxDuovoaBlB4vflHoTlSyamj.1>, meeting ID: 878 9790 0994 and passcode: 743506; and dial-in number 646-931-3860.

Some services and programs are online only.
 Friday, February 28: At 7:30 pm, HIAS Shabbat service in person, on Zoom or on Facebook.

Saturday, March 1: At 9 am, Shabbat school; at 9:15 am, Torah study in person and on Zoom.

Sunday, March 2: From 10 am-2 pm, Sisterhood Rummage Sale. Shoppers are asked to use the Oak Street entrance.

Tuesday, March 4: At 10:30 am, Tuesday Morning Book Club: "The Island of Extraordinary Captives: A Painter, a Poet, an Heiress, and a Spy in a World War II British Internment Camp" by Simon Parkin (non-fiction). For more information, contact Merri Pell-Preus at 607-222-2875 or merrypell.preus@gmail.com. To join via Zoom: <https://bit.ly/3CXVd9b>, meeting ID 881 6469 4206 and passcode 653272.

Wednesday, March 5: At 6 pm, "Adult Education: Jewish Mysticism" in person and on Zoom (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87020925321?wd=pBwCpK45u-4cOyhEbx0LGvxCcOCKxA.1>, meeting ID 870 2092 5321 and passcode 778310).

See "TC" on page 11

Penn-York Jewish Community

President-Treasurer-Secretary: Harvey Chernosky, 570-265-3869
 B'nai B'rith: William H. Seigel Lodge
 Purpose: To promote Jewish identity through religious, cultural, educational and social activities in the Southern Tier of New York and the Northern Tier of Pennsylvania, including Waverly, NY; Sayre, Athens and Towanda, PA, and surrounding communities.

Norwich Jewish Center

Orientation: Inclusive
 Address: 72 South Broad St., Norwich, NY 13815
 Phone: 334-2691
 E-mail: fertigj@roadrunner.com
 Contact: Guilia Greenberg, 373-5087
 Purpose: To maintain a Jewish identity and meet the needs of the Jewish community in the area.
 Adult Ed.: Call ahead, text or e-mail to confirm dates.

Temple Beth El of Oneonta

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

Ritual structure from the First Temple period identified

One room's floor displayed mysterious carved V-shaped marks, the purpose of which remains unclear, the state-run archaeological body said.

Shukron believes that the uncovered 220 square meter structure was in use until the middle of the period when the kings of Judah ruled. "When we began excavating, we discovered that the site had been sealed with fill from the 8th century B.C.E., indicating it had fallen out of use during that time," said Shukron.

He added that this cessation may possibly have been part of King Hezekiah's religious reforms. According to the Bible, Hezekiah sought to centralize worship at the Temple in Jerusalem, abolishing ritual sites scattered across the kingdom.

"This unique structure uncovered in

the City of David is an exciting testimony to Jerusalem's rich past," said Israel's Minister of Heritage Amichai Eliyahu. "Such discoveries make our connection and historic roots – going back thousands of years – tangible, in Jerusalem and other sites where the Jewish culture and belief system emerged."

Moving?

Whether you're moving across town or across the country, please e-mail treporter@aol.com with "Reporter Address change" in the subject line, or call 607-724-2360, ext. 254, to let *The Reporter* know about your new address.

Trees. Continued from page 5

Israel. (Annual membership costs \$250, which includes six 750-ml/25-oz. bottles of Israeli olive oil procured by the tree and sent by FedEx every December right after the November harvest.)

"It really warms the heart to see people coming here out of nowhere from the other side of the globe," said Israeli farmer Itamar Zielas, who works in the olive grove. "It gives you a huge boost." The farmer, who served 150 days of military reserve duty fighting against Hamas in Gaza, noted that his job hadn't stopped because of the war.

While donating money to plant trees in Israel has been a quintessential landmark of the Jewish National Fund for more than a century, since before the creation of the

State of Israel, this project aims to take it to a new, personal level, one in keeping with 21st-century donors' "see what you're funding" goals.

"We've all heard about the amazing organizations that have been around forever that give you the opportunities to plant trees in Israel, but this is taking it a step further," said Yishai Gelb, deputy director of MyTree in Israel. "When was the last time you were able to visit the tree you planted in Israel?"

In the meantime, the company has also branched out to include wine and whiskey among its offerings, still sticking to the fruits of Israel even as the olive oil remains their forte. "We are creating a legacy for generations to come," said Assaf.

TC. Continued from page 10

Wednesday, March 5: At 7 pm, Sisterhood board meeting on Zoom only. Contact Carol Herz at 607-222-7144 with questions.

Friday, March 7: At 7:30 pm, Shabbat services in person, on Zoom or on Facebook.

Saturday, March 8: At 9 am, Shabbat school; and at 9:15 am, Torah study in person and on Zoom.

Sunday, March 9: At 10 am, The Temple Concord/Temple Israel Joint Adult Education Committee will hold a brunch program

at Temple Concord. For more information, see the article on page 1.

Thursday, March 13: At 6 pm, there will be a reading of the megillah and a Purimspiel, "Haman's a Heel," followed by a dinner at 7 pm. Reservations for the dinner are due by Thursday, March 6, by contacting the office at 607-723-7355 or templeconcordaa@gmail.com. The cost is \$20 per person, payable in advance or at the door.

Village. Continued from page 10

to give lavishly can still afford to contribute a little bit, a symbolic amount, toward our shared vision and purpose. Nobody is worth more or less, and everyone has something valuable to contribute.

Nowadays, we perform the mitzvah of donating *machatzit ha-shekel* a little differently. Today, we remember this commandment by giving three half-dollars (that is, \$1.50, or three half-portions of the local currency) to charity, or to a synagogue. Why three? Because in the section of the Torah that describes the half-shekel contribution, it uses the word *terumah* three times. It just goes to show that *terumah* (donations, contributions) are an opportunity, an expectation and an equalizer. Our Torah teaches us to give generously when we have the

ability, and that each person is expected to contribute a minimum amount. But it also teaches us that every person has a stake in our community and our joint venture, even those who can only afford to contribute a little bit.

My blessing for our communities is that those who are able, and whose hearts move them, feel fulfilled by contributing generously to congregations, communal organizations and charities; and that those who cannot afford to donate lots of money are nevertheless uplifted and celebrated as valued and important members of our communities. It takes a village to build the *Mishkan*, and to build the Jewish people! May we all merit to find a place in that village, and give of ourselves however we can.

Online. Continued from page 9

National Jewish Book Award Winner Dara Horn about her latest work, the Passover-set graphic novel "One Little Goat" and about the historical roots of antisemitism, the subject covered in Horn's essay collection "People Love Dead Jews," a 2021 New York Times Notable Book. For more information or to register, visit www.hadassahmagazine.org/2025/01/25/magazine-discussion-a-conversation-with-dara-horn.

◆ The Lower East Side Jewish Conservancy will hold "Jewish Harlem: A New Virtual Tour" on Sunday, March 2, from 7-9 pm. Bradley Shaw will talk about this often forgotten segment of Jewish history. For more information or to register, visit www.nyc-jewishtours.org/join-a-tour/2march2025.

◆ The American Jewish University will hold a virtual book discussion "Reviving a Yiddish Masterpiece: A Conversation on 'Sons and Daughters'" on Thursday, March 27, at 3 pm. Rose Waldman and Rabbi Bradley Artson will explore Chaim Grade's "Sons and Daughters," now available in its long-awaited English translation. For more information or to register, visit <https://open.aju.edu/event/reviving-a-yiddish-masterpiece-a-conversation-on-sons-and-daughters>.

◆ The Jewish Women's Archive will hold three virtual book talks in March: "I Made It Out of Clay" by Beth Kander on Thursday, March 13, at noon; "Songs for the Brokenhearted" by Ayelet Tsabari on Thursday, March 20, at noon; and "Kissing Girls on Shabbat" by Sara Glass on Thursday, March 27, at noon. For more information

or to register, visit <https://jwa.org/events>.

◆ Hillel International will hold "Hillel's Virtual College Prep Series: College Selection: Finding the Best Fit for Your Student" on Thursday, March 6, at noon. This is part of a series of courses "designed to help Jewish high school students and their families prepare for college and the changing campus environment." To register for the event, visit <https://hillel.jotform.com/250285960439969>.

◆ The Institute for Jewish Spirituality will hold the four-part virtual class "Mindfulness for the Climate Crisis: Resilience in a Changing World" with Rabbi Ora Nitkin-Kaner on Wednesdays, March 12-April 2, from 3-4:15 pm. The cost to attend is \$149. For more information or to register, visit www.jewishspirituality.org/get-started/mindfulness-for-the-climate-crisis-resilience-in-a-changing-world.

◆ Roundtable will hold the virtual two-part class "Reading The Diary of Anne Frank with Ruth Franklin" on Tuesdays, April 15 and 22, from 7-8:30 pm. The cost to attend is \$132. The course will look at "Franklin's recent scholarship and use the diary text to take a fresh look at how Anne Frank has been understood and misunderstood, both as a person and as an idea." For more information or to register, visit <https://roundtable.org/live-courses/literature/reading-the-diary-of-anne-frank>.

For additional resources, see previous issues of *The Reporter* on its website, www.thereporter.org/jewish-online-resources.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Israeli study shows breakthrough in treatment of cancer

By Maytal Yasur Beit-Or

(Israel Hayom via JNS) – A pioneering study conducted at Beilinson Hospital in Israel has revealed a potential breakthrough in prostate-cancer treatment that could significantly reduce the number of radiation sessions required for effective care.

The research comes as the Israel Cancer Association projects that 2,800 men will receive diagnoses of this type of cancer this year with about 530 fatalities expected. The disease remains the most prevalent cancer among Israeli men and ranks as the fifth leading cause of cancer mortality.

The groundbreaking research, led by Dr. Elisha Freedman, director of urinary system cancers and clinical radiation research at the Davidoff Center's radiotherapy institute at Beilinson Hospital, focuses on reducing radiation treatments to just two sessions for early-stage patients. In the initial phase, researchers studied 20 patients who underwent the abbreviated two-session treatment protocol. The results showed no unusual side effects, with treatment out-

comes matching those of the traditional five-session approach. Significantly, no cancer recurrence was observed during the 18-month follow-up period.

"This transition to two radiation sessions represents a significant advancement in patient care," Freedman explained. "We're seeing fewer side effects, reduced hospital visits and increased treatment capacity. This could revolutionize treatment globally. Given the psychological impact of treatment, reducing radiation sessions appears highly promising, which helped secure approval for expanded research."

The treatment particularly benefits intermediate-risk patients not requiring hormonal therapy, who comprise the majority of prostate cancer cases. The findings, published in the *International Journal of Radiation Oncology, Biology, Physics*, have led to an expanded third phase involving 502 patients, comparing outcomes between two-session and five-session treatment groups.

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THE REPORTER
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Know where to go!

A reference guide on where to go for care

Your child falls and sprains an ankle while playing at the park...

You catch a bug, and now you're running a high fever, coughing and more...

It can be tough to distinguish where to go for medical care when your symptoms feel unbearable, and your primary care provider is unavailable. Here are some key differences to help you decide.



VIRTUAL WALK-IN VISITS

- Animal or insect bites
- Coughs
- Cuts
- Diarrhea
- Dizziness
- Eye injuries
- Fever
- Headache
- Nausea or upset stomach
- Rashes
- Sinus pain
- Sore throat
- Urinary tract/ bladder infections
- Vomiting



PRIMARY CARE or WALK-IN

- Animal or insect bites
- Broken bone
- Burns
- Concussion
- Coughs
- Cuts
- Diarrhea
- Dizziness
- Eye injuries
- Fever
- Headache
- Nausea or upset stomach
- Rashes
- Sinus pain
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Urinary tract/bladder infections
- Vomiting



EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

- Asthma attack
- Broken bone (if skin is punctured)
- Burns (if severe)
- Concussion (if loss of consciousness)
- Cuts (if uncontrolled bleeding)
- Fever (for patients under 3 months old or with fever over 105°F)
- Headache (if severe)
- Seizure
- Shortness of breath (if severe)
- Vomiting blood



Stay Prepared!

Learn more on how to prepare for your Emergency Department or Walk-In visit at nyuhs.org.

What to expect in the Emergency Department

Emergency Departments are designed to assist patients experiencing life-threatening medical situations. When you come to the Emergency Department at any UHS hospital, a triage nurse will assess your condition. Although they are open 24-7, wait times vary because healthcare staff need to treat the most seriously ill and injured patients first.

What to expect at a Walk-In Center

UHS Walk-In Centers are created to provide patients with immediate care for situations that cannot wait for a scheduled doctor's appointment. This typically includes many medical problems, such as coughs, fevers, flu or ear infection.