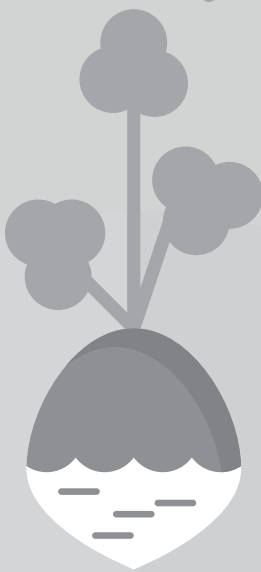
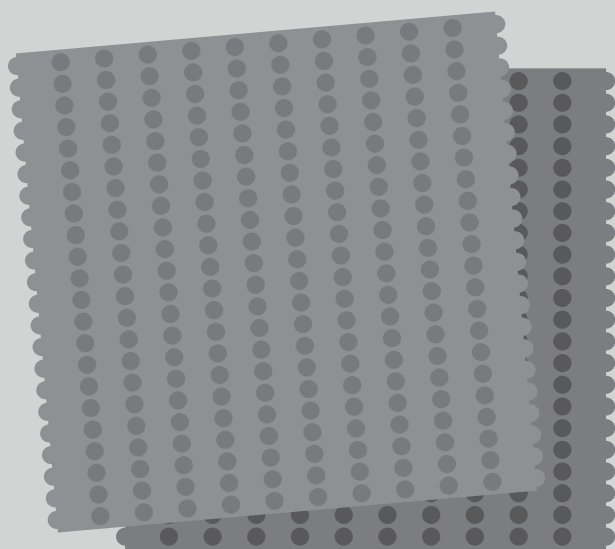


# THE REPORTER

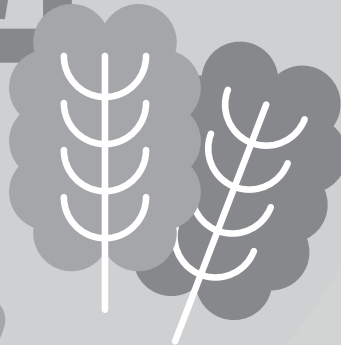
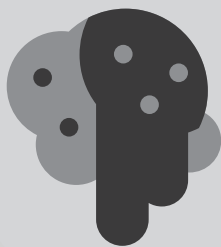
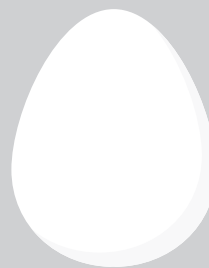
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Volume XLVII, Number 13



פסח



From our families  
to yours,  
have a happy and  
healthy Passover!

## Opinion

## Why Passover is about a lot more than good food

By Rabbi Joshua Ratner

(My Jewish Learning via JTA) – What is the essence of Passover? On the one hand, it seems obvious: Passover is about gathering together with loved ones to recall, through sumptuous home rituals, the Exodus from Egypt. We gather round our seder tables and quickly become engulfed in the warmth of family and friends, the culinary delights of a delicious meal, and the comforting, vaguely familiar words and songs we recite year after year.

Passover is, indeed, a beautiful opportunity for rejoicing and celebrating. But it also can be much more.

When looking closely at the Passover haggadah, we can see that the rabbis who crafted it did not choose to make Passover a holiday solely focused on celebrating the past. Like the Fourth of July (or Hanukkah), Passover could have been a day to recall passively our independence from an oppressive regime as a historical remembrance; to commemorate the past and salute our Founding Fathers (or Maccabees). Instead, Moses (as Founding Father of the Israelites) is largely shut out of the story – he appears but once.

While remembrance of the Exodus – from the enslavement of the Israelites to the Ten Plagues to the crossing of the Red Sea – forms a major portion of the content of the “*maggid*” (retelling) section of the haggadah, that re-

membrance is but a means to a larger end. The end of the *maggid* section reveals why. It says:

“In each and every generation people must regard themselves as though they personally left Egypt, as it says, ‘Tell your child on that very day: ‘This is what God did for me when I left Egypt.’ The Holy One of Blessing did not redeem only our ancestors, but God even redeemed us with them, as it says, ‘God brought us out of there in order to bring us to and gave us the land that God swore to our ancestors.’”

The seder specifically and Passover more broadly are about remembering God’s deliverance of the Israelites not as a one-time, historical event, but as something that is perpetually happening in the present. Redemption from slavery to freedom is intended to be an experience that we, too, can and should have during our seders. But why?

I believe that the seder is a literary means of experiential education. The haggadah wants each of us to recall that we were once estranged, disenfranchised and marginalized, so that each of us will cultivate a sense of empathy for the estranged, the disenfranchised and the marginalized in our society today. We honor our past by acting in our present.

So as we get ready for Passover, cleansing our houses of *chametz*, preparing our haggadah selections and invite

lists, may we also take action to cleanse our society of poverty, bigotry and hatred.

There has been an explosion of new and creative social justice-themed haggadahs and seder inserts created in recent years by Jewish organizations. Last year alone, there were new additions about global justice (American Jewish World Service), LGBTQ rights (Keshet), hunger and military families (Mazon), wealth inequality (RRC), racial justice (RAC), mass incarceration (T’ruah) and refugees (Repair the World/HIAS), to name but a few. So please consider using any of these, tweet at #ActOnPassover or make use of other resources that speak to you and help you concretize our ongoing mandate to seek out freedom and redemption for all of God’s children.

And may each of you be blessed with a happy, fulfilling and meaningful Passover. *Chag sameach* (happy holiday)!

Rabbi Joshua Ratner is the rabbi of Congregation Kol Ami in Cheshire, CT. He also worked as an attorney for five years prior to entering rabbinical school.

This piece originally appeared on *Rabbis Without Borders*, a forum for exploring contemporary issues in the Jewish world and beyond. Written by rabbis of different denominations, viewpoints and parts of the country, *Rabbis Without Borders* is a project of Clal-The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership.

## From a Passover of alienation to a Passover of empathy

By Rabbi Hanan Schlesinger

(My Jewish Learning via JTA) – One of the most oft-repeated themes of the Torah is that we must remember that we were slaves and strangers in the Land of Egypt, and that God redeemed us with an outstretched hand. Both the experience of slavery and the experience of redemption are meant to radiate one central and fundamental call to action that the Torah comes back to again and again:

Slavery and strangerhood: Love the stranger and care for him, provide for him and show him empathy. Feel his pain and act to alleviate it, deal kindly with him, for you yourself know what it means to be a stranger and a slave.

Redemption: Walk in the footsteps of God, who redeemed us from Egypt, and redeem the slave and the downtrodden. Provide for them as God provided for us. Just as God’s mercies are upon all His creatures, so ought our mercies to be upon all His creatures.

The world is divided into us and them. That is the way that it has to be. In order to experience the security and the love of the family, the clan, the nation, there have to be those who are not part of our inner concentric circles.

At the same time, however, one of the most central directives of the Torah is that this division must never be so stark as to alienate the us from the them. Our love and concern must radiate out beyond the us toward the them. Our sense of us must empower our people to reach out to them.

We recall and relive our experience in Egypt on the holiday of Passover, the centerpiece of the Jewish year and the focal point of the process of handing down the tradition to the next generation. And the focal point of Passover is the seder night with its haggadah text. The haggadah tells us: “In every generation one must see himself as if he personally went out of Egypt.” We spend the whole night bringing alive the events of slavery and redemption.

Toward what end? What is the takeaway? Clearly the answer ought to be to develop within us the historical memory that will constantly remind us and inspire us to love the stranger and redeem him from his suffering.

Yet this message is completely missing from the haggadah. It certainly harps on our misery in Egypt, but instead of using that experience to nurture empathy for those who suffer, it sees in it a paradigm for the panorama Jewish

history, reminding us “in every generation they rise against us to annihilate us, and the Holy One Blessed be He saves us from them.”

The reason for this lacuna – at least one of the reasons – may be that during the 1,000-plus years during which the haggadah text developed, we Jews were the slaves and the strangers, and the dominant cultures were antagonistic to our way of life and often to our very existence. We were the other and little love was lost on us. Our forefathers were too busy surviving to find room in our hearts and in our texts to teach ourselves about love of the stranger and empathy for his suffering. The larger message of Passover was postponed for the distant future.

That future may have arrived. Reality today is different, in Israel and to a large degree in many parts of America, from that which our forefathers knew. We are no longer the other that we used to be, and there are other peoples, cultures and ethnic groups that have taken our place. In Israel we are the dominant culture and in America we are part of the mainstream.

See “Empathy” on page 10

## In My Own Words

## Purim and Passover

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

I missed one of my favorite parts of Purim this year: wearing a costume to the Purim dinner, service and spiel. That’s because I was so sick that there was no way I could make it to the synagogue. Sometimes I wear my costume the next day to work, but, for a variety of reasons, that wasn’t possible this year. The one piece of good news is that I already have my costume for next year and, no, I’m not telling you what it is.

I did more preparation for Purim this year than normal so that made up for part of what I missed. Several weeks before the holiday, the Torah study at my synagogue focused on a specific part of the Purim story: looking at the disagreement between Mordecai and Haman. The *midrashic* stories offered were fascinating, even when I disagreed with their interpretations of the text. I also read “Megillat Esther Mesorat HaRav,” which features commentary on the Book of Esther based on the teachings of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik. The varying opinions offered in the book and Torah study worked to give me a fresh look at the megillah. During my chaplaincy work,

it is also a pleasure to share parts of the holiday with individuals I see. (As a side note, the individuals and the staff really like hamentashen.)

The funniest thing I read on Purim was a Facebook post that asked the question, “Why do women drink on Purim? The answer: Because there are only four weeks until Passover.” I can appreciate that reaction, although it’s not one I share. Yes, as I write this, I still need to do my Passover shopping, but, since we eat a lot of fresh vegetables and fruits, it’s not that difficult. It’s been years since we hosted our own seder so that makes the period between the holidays easier. I do have some preparation for the seder I lead for a group of friends who live about a half hour from this community, but that’s taking place after the holiday this year. We use the Reconstructionist haggadah, so reviewing that text is a pleasure.

Yet, no matter how much preparation I do, the actual arrival of Passover always comes as a surprise. That’s a good thing: each year, the holiday is fresh and new in a different way. This is partly because nothing resembles

the seders I remember from childhood, the ones at my aunt’s house in Scranton. A friend recently suggested that whatever we experienced as children feels like the real and only way to experience a holiday. That’s true: even when we held seders at my parents’ home after my aunt died, they never felt quite the same.

Marge Piercy wrote in her book about celebrating Passover that we should add something new to our seders each year. I think that’s an excellent idea. It could be a new reading or poem, a different approach to a section or additional commentary: the idea is to do something to keep the seder from feeling routine and to help us remember the true meaning of the holiday.

And what meaning is that? To paraphrase the moral of a children’s story about Passover: we were once slaves in Egypt and are now free. But the world is still not perfect and it’s our job to make it better. So, while family, food and ritual are wonderful ways to observe this holiday, it’s important to remember that we are not truly free until everyone is free.



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

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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.

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# Hillel at Binghamton to hold Yom Hashoah ceremony on April 11

Hillel at Binghamton will hold a Yom Hashoah ceremony on Wednesday, April 11, at 7 pm, in the Mandela Room in the University Union building on the Binghamton University campus. The theme of this year's ceremony is "Our Legacy" and the speaker will be Emily Wanderer Cohen, a second generation survivor who wrote about transgenerational trauma in her book "From Generation to Generation: Healing Intergenerational Trauma Through Storytelling." The book, which has a five star rating on Goodreads, has been called part memoir/part self-discovery; it seeks to illustrate the Holocaust's impact on current and future generations.

In addition to the event, the group Binghamton 3G, Third Generation Descendants of Holocaust Survivors, has started an initiative called the Shoah Legacy Project. The project is collecting stories from second and third generation descendants of Holocaust survivors. The group is looking for stories from community members, as well as BU students. Those interested in participating can fill out the Google form at [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfEPuy\\_HrutrWHdfpfNobibuCl0b-NNnVE6F9NAOaFhmvsAkA/v](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfEPuy_HrutrWHdfpfNobibuCl0b-NNnVE6F9NAOaFhmvsAkA/v) or visit the Binghamton 3G Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/bing3g/](http://www.facebook.com/bing3g/) for the link.

# TI/TC Adult Ed. to hold brunch on April 15

The Temple Israel/Temple Concord Adult Education group will present its next brunch program of the 2017-2018 series on Sunday, April 15, at 10 am, at Temple Israel. The program on "The Corners of Our Fields" – VINES, urban farming, the omer and other Jewish agricultural traditions – will feature Kaitlyn Sirna, community garden and youth program manager of Volunteers Improving Neighborhood Environments, along with Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell of Temple Concord and Rabbi Geoffrey Brown of Temple Israel.



Kaitlyn Sirna

Agriculture was the basis of early Jewish life, and it is addressed extensively in the Torah, Mishnah, Talmud and beyond.

"As we count the omers of grain each day from Passover to Shavuot, we welcome both spring and the construction of the new VINES community garden located on the grounds of Temple Israel," said project organizers. "It is a perfect time to take a look at the planting, the new garden and what we can infuse into our soil from Judaism. Enjoy a morning

devoted to growth and growing."

VINES is an initiative dedicated to "growing food and growing community." Its first Vestal garden, the Deerfield Place Community Garden (located at Temple Israel), is expected to break ground this spring. Sirna will present an overview of VINES and its plans for Deerfield Place.

Sirna joined the VINES team in the spring of 2017. Her knowledge of farm life comes from her family farm in northeast Ohio, where her parents are first generation farmers. Sirna has spearheaded farmers' markets, coordinated CSAs and worked in the community at Cornell Cooperative Extension. Sirna has a B.A. in English from DePaul University, and is pursuing a master's degree in sustainable communities at Binghamton University, focusing on the role culture plays in food and food accessibility.

The cost of the brunch is \$5 per person. Call or e-mail the Temple Israel office at 723-7461 or [titammy@stny.twcbc.com](mailto:titammy@stny.twcbc.com) to make reservations by Tuesday, April 10.

# New JLI course "What Is? Rethinking Everything We Know about Our Universe"

"What Is? Rethinking Everything We Know about Our Universe" – is the title of the new six-session course from the Rohr Jewish Learning Institute to debut in April.

"Imagine," says Rivkah Slonim, course instructor, "that we were able to rethink everything we know about the universe, the laws of nature, our own consciousness – even the very idea of existence and reality. Imagine the new insights we would gain and the fresh perspective with which we would embark on the journey of life each morning. What Is? does exactly that!"

Drawing on the wisdom of Chasidic teaching, the most basic building blocks of existence are re-examined from the bottom up, revolutionizing our understanding of life, reality and our place in the world.

The course will tackle questions like: Is the world real? What is time? Where does our sense of self come from? Why does evil exist? If God already knows what we will

do tomorrow, is our "freedom of choice" nothing more than an illusion? Does the word "God" actually mean something, or is it just a way of referring to whatever it is that we cannot explain?

"This JLI course invites participants to live more deeply, by deepening their thinking, insight and awareness of the fundamentals of life and of our universe," asserts Slonim.

"Our goal is to invite participants to seek out a deeper understanding of our world," explained Rabbi Zalman Abraham, of JLI's Brooklyn headquarters. "By doing so, See "JLI" on page 6

## About the cover

This year's Passover cover was designed by Jenn DePersis, production coordinator of *The Reporter*.



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Off the Shelf

# Soviet immigrants with a side of humor

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Conflicting desires: that describes the feelings of Soviet Jewish immigrants torn between the demands of their families and the American way of life. Those who came to the country as children were influenced by the culture of both nations and many of them vacillate between following their Russian heritage or accepting the values of American culture. This is true of the main characters in two recent novels: "The Chateau" by Paul Goldberg (Picador) and "The Matrimonial Flirtations of Emma Kaulfield" by Anna Fishbeyn (Arcade Publishing). Humor and drama compete in both works, showing the joys and absurdities of Soviet American life.

"The Chateau" is a satirical romp through Florida's Gold Coast that's reminiscent of Carl Hiaasen's Florida novels at their strangest. Although Melsor Yakovlevich Katzenelenbogen is not the main character, he deserves a place among the great comic creations of American fiction. However, his estranged son, William (Bill) M. Katzenelenbogen, might not agree – at least at first. Bill is having a difficult time: not only is he severely depressed at the thought of Donald Trump's upcoming inauguration, he's been fired from his long-term reporting job at *The Washington Post* and has less than \$1,300 to his name. To restart his career, Bill decides to write a tell-all book about the death of his college roommate, a plastic surgeon known as the "Butt God of Miami Beach," who fell to his death in mysterious circumstances. However, there's one problem. Bill doesn't

have enough money to cover his expenses, meaning that he must ask Melsor if he can stay in his Florida apartment. Because the two men haven't spoken since Melsor stood trial for defrauding the government, Bill realizes the visit might prove difficult.

As with Goldberg's previous novel, the wonderful "The Yid," the plot heads in a completely different direction than readers might first expect. That's because Melsor is involved in the politics of his condominium and nothing – legal or illegal – is going to stop him from getting a seat on the board. Bill is expected to help and finds himself caught between his American desire to behave in a legal and moral manner and his increasing understanding of the dramatic Russian actions of his father. At one point, Bill ponders the differences between Americans and Russians: "A Westerner is a creature of reason, a Russian a creature of faith. A Westerner rationally accepts contradictions. A Russian lets his soul do what it craves: worship. A Westerner studies Marx, critiques him. A Russian genuflects." The longer Bill stays in Florida, the more his Russian soul gains ascendance.

Although Bill is the main character, Melsor steals the stage whenever he appears. Even to his son, he's larger than life. At one time, Bill greatly admired his father: Melsor had been a poet and a refusenik – the voice of those seeking to leave the USSR. Unfortunately, America was less kind to him: the government job he expected never appeared. After

he taught courses at a variety of colleges, but was never hired permanently, disaster struck his family: Melsor's wife became ill and the medical expenses left him in debt. His very clever way of ridding himself of that debt was, unfortunately, illegal. This action left the father and son at odds, particularly after his father stood trial. Bill realizes that he and his father "ended up on opposite sides of the law, and – perhaps more importantly – on opposite sides of the boundary between the world of real things and the territory the elder [Melsor] called home." It's his willingness to create his own reality, though, that makes Melsor charming and dangerous at the same time.

The plot of "The Chateau" travels in bizarre, but extremely funny, directions. The condo meeting near the end of the novel is one of the funniest things I've ever read and the identity of the perpetrator of several disasters is pure genius. The author's explanation of why Soviet Jews voted for Trump is wonderful, although Trump fans will definitely not appreciate these comments, especially the comparison to Stalin. Everyone else will find "The Chateau" a comic delight.

While "The Chateau" takes place during contemporary times, "The Matrimonial Flirtations of Emma Kaulfield" looks at Russian American Jewish life during the 1990s. The novel's narrator, 20-something Emma Kaulfield, is torn between following her family's dreams of financial success. See "Humor" on page 6

## LEGAL NOTICE

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

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

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1. The name of the limited liability company ("LLC") is Badland Outfitters, LLC.
2. The date of filing of the Articles of Organization with the Secretary of State is February 15, 2018.
3. The County within the State of New York in which the principal office of the LLC is located is Broome.
4. The Secretary of State of the State of New York is hereby designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. The post office address to which the Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the LLC served upon him or her is: 54 Spicebush Lane, Tuxedo Park, NY 10987.
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### NOTICE UNDER NEW YORK LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY LAW SECTION 206

Notice is given of the formation of Get Air Vestal, LLC) (the "Company") for the transaction of business in the State of New York and elsewhere.

1. The name of the limited liability company is Get Air Vestal, LLC.
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4. The Secretary of State is designated as the agent of the Company upon whom process against the Company

may be served. The Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process served against the Company to the Company to the LLC, c/o United States Corporation Agents, Inc., 7014 13th Ave, Ste 202, Brooklyn, NY 11228.

5. The registered agent of the Company upon whom and at which process against the Company can be served is United States Corporation Agents, Inc. 7014 13th Ave, Ste 202, Brooklyn, NY 11228.
6. The purpose of the Company is to engage in any lawful act which limited liability companies may be organized under the New York LLC.

Notice of Formation of Ballyhack38 LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 02/20/18. Office location: Broome County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: 320 N. Jensen Rd., Vestal, NY 13850. Purpose: any lawful activities.

**NOTICE OF FORMATION OF LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY:** The name of the limited liability company is: JP Defense Holdings LLC (the "Company"). The date of filing of the Articles of Organization of the Company with the Secretary of State was February 26, 2018. The county in which the principal place of business of the Company shall be located is Broome County. The Secretary of State has been designated as agent of the Company upon whom process against it may be served. The Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the Company, to Hinman, Howard & Kattell, LLP, Attn: Ryan M. Mead, 80 Exchange Street, Suite 700, Binghamton, NY 13901. The purpose of the business of the Company is any lawful business purpose.

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

#### UP IN THE AIR, LLC

Articles of Organization were filed with the NY State Dept. of State,

To place a legal notice, contact Bonnie Rozen at 724-2360, ext. 244 or [bonnie@thereporter.org](mailto:bonnie@thereporter.org)



Division of Corporations and State Records on February 12, 2018. Office and principal business location: PO Box 102, Binghamton, Broome County, New York. Secy. of State designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served and shall mail process to: PO Box 102, Binghamton, New York 13903, principal business address of the LLC, Purpose: any lawful activity.

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

#### BEALBE, LLC

Articles of Organization were filed with the NY State Dept. of State, Division of Corporations and State Records on February 23, 2018. Office and principal business location: 812 Oak Hill Road, City of Binghamton, Broome County, New York. Secy. of State designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served and shall mail process to: 812 Oak Hill Road, Binghamton, NY 13901, principal business address of the LLC, Purpose: any lawful activity.

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

1. The name of the limited liability company ("LLC") is IMMORTAL BEAUTY LLC.
2. The date of filing of the Articles of Organization with the Secretary of State is March 13, 2018.
3. The County within the State of New York in which the principal office of the LLC is located is Broome.
4. The Secretary of State of the State of New York is hereby designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. The post office address to which the Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the LLC served upon him or her is: 1504 Pine Street, Endicott, NY 13760.
5. The character or purpose of the business of the LLC is any purpose allowed by law.

Notice of Formation of K-4 Vestal, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 03/06/18. Office location: Broome County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: 300 Plaza Dr., Vestal, NY 13850. Purpose: any lawful activities.

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

**NOTICE OF FORMATION OF LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY:** The name of the limited liability company is: THE ELEPHANT'S DEN, LLC (the "Company"). The date of filing of the Articles of Organization of the Company with the Secretary of State was November 14, 2017. The county in which the principal place of business of the Company shall be located is Broome County. The Secretary of State has been designated as agent of the Company upon whom process against it may be served. The Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the Company, to the Company, 658 Riverside Drive, Johnson City, NY 13790. The purpose of the business of the Company is any lawful business purpose.

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

1. The name of the limited liability company ("LLC") is Franco Buy and Sell, LLC.
2. The date of filing of the Articles of Organization with the Secretary of State is March 21, 2018.
3. The County within the State of New York in which the principal office of the LLC is located is Broome.
4. The Secretary of State of the State of New York is hereby designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. The post office address to which the Secretary of State shall mail a copy of any process against the LLC served upon him or her is: 49 Concord Road, Shirley, NY 11967.
5. The character or purpose of the business of the LLC is any purpose allowed by law.

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# Chabad to hold community seder on March 30

Last minute reservations are being accepted by Chabad Center for the seder it is hosting for the general community on Friday, March 30. Holiday services will begin at 7 pm and be followed by the seder; festivities will be held at the Chabad Center, 420 Murray Hill Rd., Vestal.

The seder will include all of the traditional observances, a full course dinner, handmade *shmurah* matzah and mys-

tical insights. The haggadah will be read with participation from all present in both Hebrew and English, and the many customs and traditions of the seder will be explained. No prior knowledge or level of observance is required of those wishing to attend. There is no charge for the seder, but a minimum donation of \$18 per person is requested and may be sent to the Chabad Center prior to or after the holiday.

"We will be serving a full course, traditional holiday dinner, but I do urge participants to have a bit to eat earlier in the evening to tide them over the ceremonial, opening portion of the seder, which precedes dinner," added Rivky Slonim.

For more information and reservations, write [aslouim@Jewishbu.com](mailto:aslouim@Jewishbu.com) or call the Chabad Center at 797-0015.

# Ithaca Area United Jewish Community to present talk by Holocaust survivor on April 12

On Thursday, April 12, at 7 pm, the Ithaca community will hear a first-hand account of the Holocaust from a woman who survived it. Lea Malek, of Rochester, NY, will be the featured speaker at the annual Holocaust Memorial Day lecture to be held at Temple Beth-El, 402 N. Tioga St., Ithaca.

Malek was 5 years old when her family was taken from their home in Hungary to board a train to Auschwitz. Along the way, the train suddenly stopped and was split. A large land owner needed some slave laborers and the people in Malek's car were sent to work the farm instead of to Auschwitz. Malek would not have survived if that hadn't happened. Her train was part of the failed "Blood for Goods" deal, where Adolf Eichmann put 20,000 Jews "on ice" for future

trading by sending them to work camps in Austria instead of to Auschwitz. Only three Jewish children – Malek, her sister and one other girl – survived to return to their hometown in Hungary.

The event is free and open to the public. A reception will follow the presentation. In past years, people of all ages and backgrounds have attended. The presentation is appropriate for ages 10 and above. School and Scout groups are welcome.

There are a number of Holocaust survivors and their descendants living in the Ithaca area. At the commemoration, several of them will be honored in a candle-lighting ceremony. The Ithaca Chil-



Lea Malek

dren's and Youth Choir will also perform.

The event is sponsored by the Ithaca Area United Jewish Community, a non-profit organization that supports Jewish communities locally and around the world. The IAUGC website can be found at [www.iaujc.org](http://www.iaujc.org).

Funding has been provided by the Jacob and Jeannette Geldwert Holocaust Memorial Lecture Fund of IAUGC, Tompkins Trust Company, Wegmans, Area Congregations Together, Temple Beth-El and Congregation Tikken v'Or.

For further information, contact Marjorie Hoffman at 257-9924 or [Marjorie@twcny.rr.com](mailto:Marjorie@twcny.rr.com).

# U.S. broadcast premiere of "GI Jews: Jewish Americans in World War II" on April 11 on PBS

"GI Jews: Jewish Americans in World War II" is a feature-length documentary spotlighting the little-known story of the more than 550,000 Jewish Americans who served their country in all branches of the military during World War II. Filmmaker Lisa Ades ("American Experience: Miss America") brings the struggles of these brave men and women to life through first-hand experiences "that reveal their fight against fascism, as well as their more personal war to liberate loved ones in Europe. After years of battle, these pioneering servicemen and women emerged transformed: more profoundly American, more deeply Jewish, and determined to continue the fight for equality and tolerance at home," according to PBS. "GI Jews: Jewish Americans in World War II" will premiere nationwide on Wednesday, April 11, at 10 pm, on PBS (check local listings) in honor of Holocaust Remembrance Day (April 12). The film will be available to stream the following day on [pbs.org](http://pbs.org) and PBS apps.

"GI Jews" features more than 25 original interviews with veterans who speak about the impact of their wartime experiences: Mel Brooks, who served in the Army; Henry Kissinger, a refugee from Nazi Germany who was drafted into the Army; Carl Reiner, the son of Jewish immigrants, who traveled throughout the Pacific theater with the Special Services Entertainment Unit; the late Bea Cohen, who was a member of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps in England; and Max Fuchs, who served in the 1st Infantry Division and was the cantor at a Jewish service in Aachen, Germany, broadcast by NBC in 1944.

"While Jewish Americans' relationship to the Holocaust has been covered extensively, the extraordinary experiences of these servicemen and women bring the well-known saga of World War II to life in a new way and with a uniquely Jewish perspective," said Ades.

In addition to battling the enemy, Jewish Americans often fought a second, more private battle against antisemitism within the ranks. "They sought to observe their religion far from home while enduring slurs and even violence from their fellow servicemen, and often felt forced to prove their courage and patriotism," a PBS statement noted. "Fighting together in the trenches, at sea, in the air and in war offices, American servicemen and women forged deep friendships across religious lines, and learned to set aside their differences for the greater good. In the aftermath of the Holocaust, America's Jewish community was now the largest in the world, and by the end of World War II, the United States had begun to embrace its Jewish citizens as

true Americans. With their new responsibility as international leaders, many Jews became passionate about postwar culture and politics, fighting for justice and social change."

"We're honored to bring these incredible tales of bravery and perseverance to a national audience as part of WNET's longstanding commitment to spotlighting veterans' stories of service," said Lesley Norman, WNET executive producer.



This little guy is turning 65 on March 31st! Happy Birthday to my BIG brother!  
Love, Rachel

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# “Faces: Holocaust” exhibit on display at the Gallery at 5 Riverside Drive

The Gallery at Five Riverside Drive, Binghamton, is holding the exhibit “Faces: Holocaust” through the end of April. The artists are from SUNY Broome, who are drawing faces of marginalized and overlooked people for the exhibition series “Faces.” The exhibit at the gallery is the second in the series. The exhibit is open daily from 10 am-7 pm.

## JLI . . . . .Continued from page 3

we hope to give people the tools to experience a richer, deeper and more meaningful perspective on life.”

Like all JLI programs, this course is designed to appeal to people at all levels of knowledge, including those without any prior experience or background in Jewish learning. All JLI courses are open to the public, and attendees need not be affiliated with a particular synagogue, temple or other house of worship.

The course will be offered at two times each week, Mondays at 7 pm beginning on April 23 and Wednesdays at 9:30 am beginning on April 25.

The cost for the course, which will be taught at the Chabad Center, is \$79 for individuals or \$120 for couples (this includes the text book). Interested participants can register by calling Chabad at 797-0015, e-mailing rslonim@Jewishbu.com, or visiting www.myJLI.com.

JLI, the adult education branch of Chabad-Lubavitch, offers programs in more than 800 locations in the United States and in numerous foreign countries, including Argentina, Australia, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, Panama, Russia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, Uruguay and Venezuela. More than 400,000 students have attended JLI classes since the organization was founded in 1998.

The classical realist life-size portrait drawings were created by Associate Professor Patricia Evans’ beginning drawing students. The portraits represent survivors and non-survivors of the Holocaust rendered in charcoal, pencil and mixed media. The original photos and personal stories of each person shown have been researched and are on display.

Mary Louise Perot, curator of the gallery, said, “I want to thank Professor Evans for suggesting this exhibit when I contacted her to have SUNY Broome students’ work on



display at the Gallery. The purpose of her suggesting this exhibit to her students was to teach them not only drawing, but to study and to care about persons in history who suffered through terrible times and to remember them and honor them and their courage. When you see the portraits, I think that you will agree Professor Evans and her students achieved their goals in this regard.”



Above and at left: The exhibit “Faces: Holocaust” is now on display at The Gallery at 5 Riverside Drive, Binghamton. The artists are SUNY Broome students and the portraits represent survivors and non-survivors of the Holocaust rendered in charcoal, pencil and mixed media.

## Humor . . . . .Continued from page 4

and her own artistic desires. When she changes her name from Elena Kabelmacher, her parents accept this because they believe it will be easier for her to get into college. That doesn’t mean that they applaud her attempts at independence. Although both her mother and grandmother fill her with tales of the horrible ways men behave, including betraying their wives, both women expect her to marry, which means marry someone Jewish, preferably someone who is also Russian.

Even though Emma pays lip service to being an independent American, she still finds it difficult to follow her dreams. For example, she studies to be an actuary even though she has no skill in mathematics and receives horrible grades. What she wants to do is paint, something her parents see as unacceptable because they don’t believe art can be anything but a hobby. Emma can’t escape the guilt she feels when not following her parents’ wishes because they left their homeland to make certain their children had better lives. To defy their wishes is to betray them.

Emma also finds herself torn between her desire for two very different men: the Russian Jewish Alex, to whom she becomes engaged to please her parents and Eddie, a white, Protestant American, who believes in her art and encourages her to live the life she wants. At first, Emma can’t imagine disappointing her parents, which keeps her engaged to Alex, even as she carries on a torrid affair with Eddie. Things get even more complicated after she meets Eddie’s parents, particularly his mother, who is no happier with the match than Emma’s family. It takes more than 400 pages for Emma to finally decide what to do with her life.

“The Matrimonial Flirtations of Emma Kaulfield” also discusses the difference between Americans and Russians: “For immigrants did not think the way Americans did: that one’s life was a culmination of what one *actually* did, that it was bound by some unspoken honor code to be *truthful* and *accurate* about every event in one’s life, and that a resume, while it certainly could be polished, could not be fundamentally changed. For an immigrant’s life was a kaleidoscope of dreams, a reality so thoroughly interspersed with the surreal and fantastical that one’s experiences, foibles, and even memories could easily be smudged, if not entirely written over, in one’s struggle to catch that elusive American prize: success!” Emma finds herself trapped in this world of dreams since her parents have unrealistic ideas about what she should do with her life. Even if she didn’t want to be an artist, Emma is completely unsuited to the career they plan for her.

The problem with “The Matrimonial Flirtations of Emma Kaulfield” is that while parts are very funny, the

flamboyant prose starts to grate. While it’s true this style suits Emma’s personality, her sense of drama about everything is tiring. It also detracts from the more serious sections. Details of the antisemitism Emma faced and the stories her grandmother tells about life under Stalin quickly change the novel’s direction from comedy to tragedy. Unfortunately, these sections aren’t as moving or effective as they could be because they are quickly absorbed into Emma’s concern with matters of lesser importance. So, although I enjoyed parts of the novel, particularly the opening sections, I grew tired of Emma’s histrionics. Readers with greater patience and tolerance may find her dramatics less irritating.

What is interesting about both “The Chateau” and “The Matrimonial Flirtations of Emma Kaulfield” are the authors’ notes about the changing relationship between American and Soviet Jews. In “The Chateau,” Bill talks about the divide between the Americans who live in the condo and the Russians, even though they are all Jews: “the [native American Jews] seem to be roughly the same age as the Russians. They spring from the same *shtetlekh*, have the same ancestors, snooze at the same synagogues. They can easily be each other’s first cousins, but if that is the case, they are cousins separated by history, cousins who hate each other’s guts, squabbling over inheritance, holding eternal grudges.” These same Jews who fought to free Soviet Jews “would happily display a big neon-lit ‘Take Them Back’ in front of” the condominium.

In “The Matrimonial Flirtations of Emma Kaulfield,” Emma’s father also suggests how things have changed since the American protests to help Jews leave the Soviet Union: “The American Orthodox Jews hate us because we’re not religious. The American secular Jews hate us because we’ve managed, despite our jarring accents, to make more money than them.” However, it’s not only Jews that have a problem with those from the USSR. He believes the same is true of American Gentiles who “see us as relics of the Cold War, whom they still fear, and to be sure view us as inferior to themselves because we are not only Jewish, but immigrants polluting their evolved nativism.” These differing viewpoints leave the next generation in a bind. Do they remain part of the Russian world, accepting its ideas and morals, or do they become fully American and reject their heritage? If there is a way to combine the two successfully, it’s not shown in either of these novels. As for their parents, although they are happy when their children succeed, this very success leaves them wary that their children’s connections to the Russian community will disappear.

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# Tenth annual Literacy Day event at the JCC on April 12

The Jewish Community Center will hold its 10<sup>th</sup> annual Preschool Literacy Day event on Thursday, April 12, from 5:30-7:30 pm. It is a free event aimed at preschoolers and their parents, and the entire community is welcome and encouraged to attend.

This year's theme is the children's book "The Rainbow Fish," by author and illustrator Marcus Pfister. In addition to "The Rainbow

Fish," several of Pfister's other works will be featured in an "immersive experience" for young children, with themes such as under the sea, forest and dinosaurs, created through collaborations with several local organizations: WSKG, Roberson Museum and Science Center, The Discovery Center and the Vestal Public Library. The event is also made possible in part by a donation from

the Judith and Edwin Cohen Foundation. It will also feature Johnny Only, a local children's DJ, and Finch Hollow Nature Center.

The event consists of numerous activities for preschool-aged children. In addition to the live entertainment from Johnny Only, there will be different stations set up with hands-on activities focusing on literacy, art, science and sensory play, all based on the

works of Pfister. "The goal of events such as Literacy Day is to bring books to life and get children excited about reading," says Marlene Schwartz-Patrick, director of the JCC's Early Childhood Center and organizer of Literacy Day.

For more information about Literacy Day, the Early Childhood Center or the JCC, contact the JCC office at 724-2417.

## April 10 BD luncheon talk on "Max Eisenstein and the Mystery of the Saint Benedict Painting"

By Dora E. Polachek

On Saturday, April 14, Beth David's luncheon speaker series presenter will be Dr. Diane Butler, director of the Binghamton University Art Museum. She will speak about the latest research and discoveries about a painting that had belonged to Max Eisenstein. Eisenstein, a successful Viennese businessman, fled Austria in 1938 and settled in Binghamton. The large oil painting, by the Milanese Baroque painter Carlo Francesco Nuvolone (1609-1702), depicts Saint Benedict with two cherubs. In 1982, Norbert Eisenstein, son of Max Eisenstein, donated the painting to the Art Museum. On March 15, the Art Museum opened an exhibit focusing on this single object from its permanent collection. On Thursday, May 3, there will be a symposium at the Art Museum on the painting, the effect of World War II on the Eisenstein family and Max Eisenstein's connection to the painting and others in his collection.

Two years ago at Beth David, professor of art history Karen-ed is Barzman gave a talk about the preliminary research she had done on this painting. She wondered why, organizers say, the painting had been cut into six pieces and then later reassembled. Since then, besides the biography of Eisenstein, various avenues of inquiry have been pursued by a team of professors and consultants. In addition to Barzman, they include Binghamton University's Neil Christian Pages, associate professor of German and comparative literature, and Jonathan Karp, associate professor of history and Judaic studies. The team also includes Joseph Tanski, professor of chemistry from Vassar College, and Susan Blakney, conservator from West Lake Conservators.

"We have sought to understand this painting as an object that generates mul-



Dr. Diane Butler

iple narratives," says Butler. "These include information about the artist, the creation of the painting, its iconography and the state of the painting at the moment BU received it. They also include the donor's family story and their migration from Vienna to the United States in 1938, the possible significance of Italian Baroque painting for Eisenstein; Max's restitution claims after the end of World War II; and the painting's restoration, which was undertaken by the museum. Of course, question marks still remain, but in the past two years, our team's research has uncovered some remarkable discoveries that I look forward to sharing with everyone."

Butler is in her sixth year as director of the Binghamton University Art Museum. She earned her Ph.D. in art history from Cornell University. She has worked at three

academic museums before coming to Binghamton University - Cornell University, Colgate University and Vassar College.

"We are absolutely delighted to have Diane bring us up to date on Max Eisenstein and this mysterious painting that was in his possession," organizers say. "She has done remarkable work in initiating multidisciplinary collaborations (such as this one) with faculty and students, and in helping people with different interests and backgrounds connect with art. She is a gifted speaker who has spearheaded exciting exhibits such as this one, and is making the Binghamton University Art Museum a highlight in our community."

Beth David's luncheon speaker series takes place the second Saturday of the month after Shabbat morning services and is open to the community. There is no charge for the luncheon, but Beth David welcomes donations to the Luncheon Fund in order to keep the program going, since its continuation depends on the generosity of contributors. Donations can be made in honor of or in memory of someone or to mark a special occasion. Those wishing an acknowledgment to be sent to the person being honored or to the family of someone being remembered can indicate that, along with the necessary information. Donations can be sent to Beth David Synagogue, 39 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905, Attention: Luncheon Fund.

## Tova Mirvis to read at BU on April 16

Tova Mirvis will read from her memoir "The Book of Separation" and talk about the process of writing it on Monday, April 16, at 7 pm, on the Binghamton University campus (room to be announced). She will also discuss her novels. The reading and lecture is open to the public and made possible by the generosity of the Judaic Studies Department and the Charles and Rae Grabel Memorial Fund for Judaic Studies.



Tova Mirvis (Photo by Nina Subin)

Organizers called "The Book of Separation" a "marvelous, brave book that is not your everyday, garden-variety account of a life. This is Mirvis' story of separating herself from the only world she had ever known - her story of leaving not only the Orthodox Jewish world in which she had been brought up, but also her marriage. In an essay on the website Literary Hub, Mirvis wrote that she found the challenge

of writing the memoir terrifying. She noted that every time she sat to write, she felt 'vulnerable at every turn' and was fearful of being exposed. She also fought an internal battle between allowed and forbidden, appropriate and inappropriate, and nice and not nice."

Organizers said, "Mirvis noted that with the novels she wrote, she could create worlds

and hide her thoughts and feelings in the lives and voices of invented characters, sneak in her truths. But the memoir demanded freedom, fluidity, the honesty to name what she was scared to face and afraid to voice."

For more information, contact the Judaic Studies Department at 777-3070 or mdragojl@binghamton.edu.

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# TC to hold Sisterhood elections on April 11

Temple Concord Sisterhood elections will be held on Wednesday, April 11, at 7 pm, at the temple, 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton. All Temple Concord Sisterhood members are encouraged to attend and vote. Elections will be followed by a night of mahjong.

The Nominating Committee will present a slate of officers including Helene Philips, president; Sandy Gutman, treasurer; Janet Hayman, financial secretary; Marty Eisenstadt, recording secretary; Hayman, corresponding secretary; Babs Putzel-Bischoff, nominating committee chairwoman; and directors Deb Williams 2017-2019, Putzel-Bischoff 2018-2020 and Marsha Luks 2018-2020. Vice presidents will be administration TBD, Ways and Means Deb Daniels and Education Lani Dunthorn.

Under administration will be Putzel-Bischoff and Lauren Epstein, publicity; Sylvia Diamond, Eisenstadt, Barb Dickman (paperwork) and Genevieve Ado-Mai, Friday night *onegs*; Sue High, Carol Herz and Phyllis Kellenberger, membership/retention; Hollie Levine and Cathy Eckert, Sisterhood Sabbath; Ani Loew, Intersisterhood; Hay-

man, house; Putzel-Bischoff, chairwoman; Dickman, Gayle Klein, Luks and Tracy Putzel-Bischoff, Rosh Hashanah Kiddush; and Jean Hecht, scholar-in-residence *oneg*.

Under ways and means will be Williams, Vicki Niman and Barbara Thomas, Whale of a Sale team; Pam Burgman and Hayman, rummage; Daniels, High and Allison Epstein, donor co-chairwomen; Herz and High, Judaica Shop; and Philips and Marilyn Strosberg, co-chairwomen of Holiday Artisan Marketplace, plus Allison Epstein, Roz Antoun (bake sale) and Luks (bake sale).

Under education will be Thomas, cradle roll; Amanda Donahue, High Holiday child care; Rachel Coker, (Jeff Heilveil), Lisa Blackwell and Shari Klotzkin, religious school parties; Dunthorn, Kellenberger and Lisa McCarthy, adult education/programming; Arlene Krassin, Linda Lisman, Eckert, Allison Epstein, Sandy Foreman, Dunthorn, Loew, Ado-Mai and Jodi Sampey, hospitality; and Herz, Foreman and Coker, women's seder.

Nominating committee members are Dunthorn, Hayman and Philips. Hecht will be in charge of Sisterhood funds.

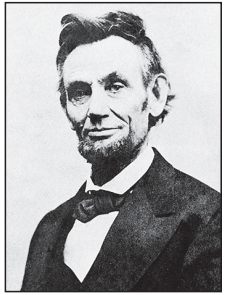
# Nine things you didn't know about Passover

By MJL Staff

(My Jewish Learning via JTA) – Here are nine things that many likely wouldn't know about the Festival of Freedom:

1. In Gibraltar, there's dust in the charoset. The traditional charoset is a sweet Passover paste whose texture is meant as a reminder of the mortar the enslaved Jews used to build in ancient Egypt. The name itself is related to the Hebrew word for clay. In Ashkenazi tradition, it is traditionally made from crushed nuts, apples and sweet red wine, while Sephardic Jews use figs or dates. But the tiny Jewish community of this small British territory at the tip of the Iberian Peninsula takes the brick symbolism to another level, using the dust of actual bricks in their recipe.
2. Abraham Lincoln died during Passover. The 16<sup>th</sup> American president was shot at Ford's Theatre on a Friday, April 14, 1865, which coincided with the fourth night of Passover. The next morning, Jews who wouldn't normally have attended services on the holiday were so moved by Lincoln's passing they made their way to synagogues,

where the normally celebratory Passover services were instead marked by acts of mourning and the singing of Yom Kippur hymns. American Jews were so affected by the president's death that Congregation Shearith Israel in New York recited the prayer for the dead – usually said only for Jews – on Lincoln's behalf.



Abraham Lincoln was assassinated during Passover in April 1865. (Photo by Wikimedia Commons)

3. Arizona is a hub for matzah wheat.

Chasidic Jews from Brooklyn have been increasingly sourcing wheat for their Passover matzah from farmers in Arizona. Excessive moisture in wheat kernels can result in fermentation, rendering the harvest unsuitable for Passover use. But rain is scarce in Arizona, which allows for a stricter See "Nine" on page 12

## TC religious school Shabbat service held on March 17



Temple Concord religious school students were ready to lead the Shabbat morning service on March 17.



Temple Concord religious school students led the Shabbat morning service.

# PASSOVER GREETINGS

כוס מרים

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Passover Greetings from The Robi Family

# A tour guide uncovers Passover secrets in the Met Museum's Egyptian wing

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK (JTA) – I have roamed the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Egyptian wing many times, marveling at sarcophagi, statues of Horus and Ra, and portraits of young men on ancient panels who gaze back at visitors, looking shockingly familiar and contemporary. But on a Sunday just before Passover, I viewed the artifacts as I'd never before seen them: through the lens of the Exodus story, which we retell each year through reading the haggadah.

Nachliel Selavan, a Jewish educator and self-taught museum guide whose specialty is looking at Jewish texts and history through ancient artifacts, guided a group of about 20 through the Egypt section, pausing at statues, carvings and the Book of the Dead scroll. Before setting off, he distributed source sheets with canonical Jewish texts in Hebrew and English. For more than two hours, Selavan connected items and ideas mentioned in the texts with the artifacts on view.

Selavan had us look at a passage from Deuteronomy in which Moses details what will befall the Israelites if they don't live up to their end of the covenant with God.

We looked through cases at the Met displaying little replicas of Egyptian life discovered in the tombs of embalmed rulers, intended to accompany the deceased on their journeys to the afterlife. In the Bible, the Israelites are told they will be flattened by insufferable ailments and curses, and that the Lord will "will bring you back in boats to Egypt," so undesirable they can't even sell themselves back into slavery. Selavan pointed inside one of the ancient dioramas to show what those boats would have looked like.

"The Jewish people and Tanach do not exist in a vacuum," Selavan, using a term meaning the Hebrew Bible, said after the tour. "Understanding the context for the text is key to our identity. Artifacts help us realize that 'oh wow, these were real people.' What was daily life like for regular Philistines or regular Israelites? What were they seeing as they traded and mingled with another culture? When you see material culture like this, it makes it real."

Selavan brought us to several examples of reliefs carved with the names of the Egyptian ruler, or paro/pharaoh, noting how important names were to them. In Hebrew, he noted, the Book of Exodus is known as Shemot, or names, which begins with the names of the sons of the patriarch Jacob, who went with their own families down to Egypt with their father.

"It was very interesting to see actual artifacts, representations of words we see in the Torah," said Lori Leifer, 37, a Yiddish singer and computer database programmer who describes herself as Conservadox. She heard about



Nachliel Selavan giving a tour at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. (Photo by Debra Nussbaum Cohen)

the tour through Chulent, a WhatsApp group for Jews who have left Orthodox communities. Everyone else on the tour appeared to be Orthodox, including several *haredim*.

The Exodus tour is one of five Jewish tours Selavan offers at the Met through his company, Torah Intermedia. Another focuses on artifacts from the time of the Maccabee revolt and oriented toward Hanukkah. More Passover-themed tours are planned for the festival's intermediate days.

"When you're able to not just learn a text, but see the stuff it's talking about, the learning goes to a whole other level," said Rabbi Ethan Tucker in an interview.

Tucker is the president and *rosh yeshiva* of Hadar, the egalitarian Torah learning center based in Manhattan. Last year, Hadar brought its 45 summer fellows to the Met for a tour with Selavan. They were studying Avodah Zara, a Talmud tractate on idol worship, and saw examples of what the Talmud discusses.

"It was great to go around with someone with knowledge of Jewish sources and material sources on display at the Met," Tucker said. "I found it to be very enriching. One of the struggles of being in a culture so focused on text is you can forget texts are talking about things in the real world. For institutions centered on the *beit midrash* [study hall], to get out into a museum raises the quality and intensity of the experience."

Selavan is one of a handful of individuals and companies that offer private Jewish tours at major art museums. David Thomas, associate coordinator of groups and visitor services at the Met, said the museum does not share the number of tours led by outside guides like Selavan.

"I'm not aware of any other tour guides who offer Jewish-themed tours, but there may be some," Thomas said. "Many synagogues, universities and other Jewish organizations also bring groups."

Selavan grew up the son of a rabbi/tour guide/archaeologist in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem's Old City, and was educated at yeshivas. He discusses references from Mishnah comfortably with a Satmar Chasid on his tour, but dresses more like a Brooklyn hipster. Asked how he identifies religiously, Selavan replied, "I'm on the Orthodox spectrum, but not sure where I fit."

Like the Met's galleries, Selavan's journey took a winding route. After yeshiva, Selavan, now 34, began teaching the Brazilian martial art capoeira around Israel. At 25, he earned an undergraduate degree at a Jerusalem teachers' college and, in 2013, came to the United States to teach.


In his second year teaching Bible at the Netivot Montessori Yeshiva in East Brunswick, NJ, he took fourth-graders to see the Met's exhibit "From Assyria to Iberia." Another visitor, overhearing him, asked if he read Aramaic and led him to the Tel Dan stele, a 2,800-year-old inscribed stone on loan from the Israel Museum. Reading what turned out to be paleo-Hebrew, Selavan was struck by the power of seeing the earliest known reference to "Beit David," the seat of the Davidic dynasty, which is his hometown. "Then people started asking me questions," Selavan said.

At the start of the 2016-17 school year, he started networking with other Orthodox yeshivas to lead tours and quickly expanded into leading adults. Last summer, he took about 20 groups through the Met, he said, and now leads synagogue and Hillel groups as well. He gave a Jewish tour of Boston's Museum of Fine Arts to members of an Orthodox synagogue in suburban Newton and is now planning to do the same with area day school groups.

Selavan lives in Crown Heights, the Brooklyn headquarters of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement, and is finishing up a long-distance master's degree program in Jewish education at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and enrolling in a Jewish history master's program at Yeshiva University.

On the Passover tour, as the group approached the Temple of Dendur, the massive sandstone shrine set in a grand sunlit interior plaza, Selavan pointed out a replica crocodile in the surrounding moat. He noted that the Hebrew term "*taneen*," found in Ezekiel and Exodus, is generally translated as "serpent," but more likely meant crocodile, as they infested the Nile. "My dream is to do things like this with museums around the world," he later told JTA. "In Spain, London, France and so on. And to live in Jerusalem."


## PASSOVER GREETINGS



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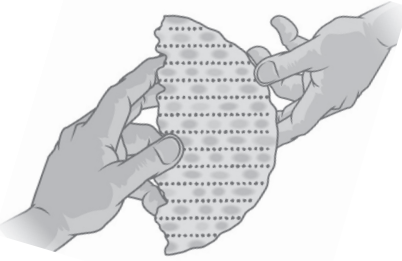


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Rita Shawn, LCSW

# A Spanish university's first-ever Passover seder is being organized by American students

By Margarita Gokun Silver

MADRID (JTA)—Every Passover, Danielle Elliott joins her parents in Chicago. She helps prepare charoset, delights in her mom's elaborate Passover decorations and enjoys spending the holiday with her family.

But this year Elliott will be recounting the story of the Jews' Exodus from Egypt several thousand miles away from home—in Spain. She is organizing the first Passover seder at the Universidad Camilo Jose Sela in Villafranca del Castillo, a town on this capital city's outskirts.

Elliott is a Fulbright scholar working as an English language assistant in the film and criminology departments of the university. She first thought of organizing a seder for her students in December when she realized how little they knew about a people who for so many centuries prior to their expulsion in 1492 were an integral part of Spain.

"It blew me away," Elliott said. She pitched the idea to administrators and the university embraced it.

After "Danielle explained what a seder is (since none of us besides Danielle have ever attended a seder and didn't know exactly what it entailed), it was approved immediately and everyone present at the meeting was very interested in contributing in whatever way they could," Amy Baxter Mertzluft, the academic adviser of the Language Lab and the Fulbright program coordinator at the university, told JTA in an e-mail.



L-r (facing camera): Fulbright scholars McCall Wells and Danielle Elliott are organizing an interfaith seder at the Universidad Camilo Jose Sela in Villafranca del Castillo, Spain. (Melissa Marazas)

By the time Elliott approached the university, she and another Fulbright scholar, McCall Wells, had been spearheading the Intercultural Club, an initiative they put together at the request of the school. "[We] are trying to establish a more international, intercultural feeling at the university," Elliott said.

"There are students from all over the



This flier is promoting an interfaith seder with a freedom and human rights theme to be held at the Universidad Camilo Jose Sela on the outskirts of Madrid. (Universidad Camilo Jose Sela)

world," Wells said, "but there isn't much of a community for them."

With the goal of creating closer connections among different cultures, Elliott and Wells have organized such activities as Write for Rights, the Amnesty International letter-writing campaign, and a cookie-decorating fund-raiser to benefit Black Lives Matter.

The next logical step for the club was an interfaith seder with a freedom and human rights theme. Elliott and Wells are calling it "Seder para la Comunidad Global: En la Búsqueda de la Libertad" (Seder for Global Community: In Search of Freedom). Elliott

modeled the concept on a similar event at her alma mater, Northwestern University, in which she participated last year.

"Two of my friends who were involved in Hillel held a Refugee Freedom seder and invited immigrant and refugee community centers," Elliott said. Armed with advice and materials from the organizers of that seder — Elliott is translating the haggadah they used into Spanish — and with the support of the university and the Reform Jewish Community of Madrid, Danielle and Wells are re-creating the experience at the Universidad Camilo Jose Sela.

The Reform Community of Madrid is Elliott's synagogue while she is in Spain. "At the beginning of my time here in Spain I felt very homesick [especially during Jewish holidays] and the [Reform] Jewish community here made me feel very at home and very welcome," Elliott said.

She wanted to share this feeling with her students. When McCall accompanied her for a Shabbat, they spoke to Yael Cobano, the congregation's president, about their plans for the seder.

"It was a wonderful project, and because I've led [many] seders and I've studied about it, I offered my help," Cobano told JTA in an e-mail.

The Reform Community has lent Elliott and Wells their seder plates, while Cobano is helping revise the Spanish translation of the haggadah and prepare the traditional seder dishes.

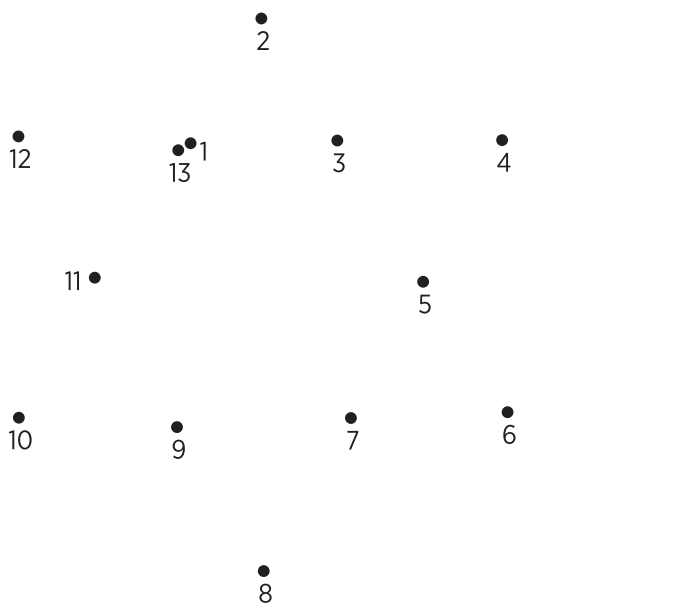
The two Fulbright scholars will conduct the seder in Spanish with some Hebrew. Elliott will lead the Jewish portions and Wells the interfaith elements.

"We are adapting the four cups of wine to include different perspectives," Elliott See "Spanish" on page 11

## Community Calendar

The Community Calendar can be found on the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton's website, [www.jfgeb.org](http://www.jfgeb.org), by clicking on "calendar." Updates or additions of events for the calendar can be made by contacting the Federation through its website (click on "calendar" and then "click here to request a change to the calendar") or by calling 724-2332.

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## Empathy . . . . . Continued from page 2

These are the conditions of life that the Torah envisioned, and not the circumstances under which our forbearers have lived for the past 2,000 years. As such, it is time for our haggadahs and our celebration of Passover, as well as our Jewish consciousness and our behavior, to reflect that change and to go back to basics.

Let the seder be our forum to proclaim and inculcate an ethic of empathy for the other emanating from two intertwined experiences: 1, Never again! Never again shall any people suffer what we suffered in Egypt. And 2, we take it upon ourselves to continually struggle to redeem the other, just as God redeemed us.

Rabbi Hanan Schlesinger lives in

Alon Shvut, Gush Etzion, and serves as the director of international relations for Roots/Judur/Shorashim, the Israeli Palestinian Local Initiative for Understanding, Nonviolence and Transformation. He also frequently travels to Dallas, where he serves as the executive director of the Jewish Studies Initiative. His website is [www.ravhanan.org](http://www.ravhanan.org).

This piece appeared originally on *Rabbis Without Borders*, a forum for exploring contemporary issues in the Jewish world and beyond. Written by rabbis of different denominations, viewpoints and parts of the country, *Rabbis Without Borders* is a project of Clal-The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership.

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# How matzah became a household item for non-Jews in the Netherlands

By Cnaan Liphshiz

ENSCHEDÉ, Netherlands (JTA) – For most matzah bakeries, Passover is their lifeline and only claim to financial viability. After the weeklong holiday, during which Jews are commanded to consume matzah to commemorate their ancestors' hurried flight out of Egypt, demand for the famously tasteless cracker drops sharply.

Except, that is, in the Netherlands.

A centuries-old and proud Jewish community here has made matzah a household product that is sold in supermarkets and consumed year-round by millions of non-Jews who swear by it as their breakfast bread of choice. That's one reason why Pieter Heijs, a co-owner of Hollandia Matzes in this eastern city, is probably the only matzah maker in the world who braces for losses, not earnings, during Passover.

Almost all the profits of his matzah bakery – the only one in Holland – comes from sales to non-Jews of a product that lacks the “kosher for Passover” certification. However, for four weeks ahead of Passover, Hollandia also produces kosher-for-Passover matzah, which “costs more to make than what we get for it,” Heijs said.

The factory, which produces about 40 million matzah crackers annually, also makes small amounts of *shmurah* matzah – a specialty variant that is even costlier because of its stringent adherence to the kosher rules. To prevent even the hint of leavening, the wheat and flour never come into contact with moisture from the time of the harvesting until the dough is kneaded and the sheets are baked.

Still, Heijs remains committed to making matzah that is kosher for Passover. “It’s a matter of tradition, and it means a great deal to me,” said Heijs, who is not Jewish. “Even if it comes at the expense of our profit margins, we will continue to produce Passover kosher matzah for as long as we can.”

The losses, however, are dwarfed by the boom in Hollandia’s sales during Easter, which often coincides with Passover. On the Christian holiday, millions of Dutch buy and eat matzah as part of a nationwide tradition that testifies to centuries of Jewish influence on the general population.

## Spanish. . .Continued from page 10

said. “One of the cups will be academic, one religious, one personal and one political, and we hope to invite students, professors, community members and other Fulbrights to speak at each of those cups in order to make it more than just about sharing a Jewish holiday.”

For the religious cup, Elliott and Wells are inviting representatives of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities. For the personal, they are hoping one of the university students who is a refugee will recount a personal migration story. For the political cup, a fellow Fulbright will speak about the experience of participating in Race Relations, a collective that promotes discussion and expression of race, culture and ethnicity in Spain.

“We hope the students and the teachers who partake in [the seder] will get out of it that Passover isn’t just the moment for Jews to reflect on personal freedoms and the Exodus from slavery in Egypt, but really about the right for migration and the freedom of movement,” Elliott said.

The university is offering Elliott and Wells plenty of support by taking care of the logistics, assisting with invitations and funding the seder dinner for 70 invitees. Elliott said the menu will be “as kosher as possible,” meaning they may serve just dairy and fish dishes.

But the preparation of traditional Passover foods and the seder plates is up to the two Fulbrights. With the help of Cobano, Elliott and Wells will make all of the elements for the seder plates, from the charoset to the bitter herbs. It won’t be exactly the same as back home, but Elliott is hoping it’ll be close.

A liberal nation that was home to one of Europe’s most illustrious Jewish communities before its near annihilation by the Nazis and their collaborators during the Holocaust, the Netherlands has other examples of interfaith borrowings (take the *oliebol*, a deep-fried winter snack in Holland that many trace back to the Hanukkah doughnut called *sufganiyah*).

Such carryovers were perhaps possible in the Netherlands partly because many Protestant Christians here emphasize the Hebrew Bible over the New Testament. But Heijs said “it’s because Dutch Jews were so integrated into the fabric of society.”

The matzah became a year-round household food in recent decades as supermarkets replaced smaller grocery stores, according to Jonah Freud. He published a book in 2012 about the Dutch Jewish cuisine based on her research for the Jewish Historical Museum of Amsterdam. “I think it may be connected to how matzah is perceived as healthy,” Freud said.

Heijs concurs. “Many of our clients want matzah because it’s such a pure product,” he said. “No additives, no conservatives, highly nutritious. What more can you ask of a health food?”

In an overture to the health-food crowd, one of the first moves by Heijs and his business partner, Udo Karsemeijer, who also is not Jewish, after they bought Hollandia in 2004 was to add an organic matzah product to the lineup. It includes matzahs in two sizes, a whole wheat variety and one with spice herbs. Hollandia now exports products to Scandinavia, Germany and even France, where several matzah bakeries compete for a market with 500,000 Jews.

Heijs and Karsemeijer bought the Hollandia factory from a Jewish family named Woudstra. The founding family built the factory in Enschede because it had a large Jewish community, and because of the arrival to the eastern Netherlands of thousands of Jews who fled the Nazis in nearby Germany. When the Nazis invaded in 1940, the Woudstras went into hiding and the Nazis closed down Hollandia.

Before the invasion, the Netherlands had several matzah bakeries, according to the Dutch Bakers’ Museum. Among the best known and oldest was the De Haan bakery in the fishing village of Marken, north of Amsterdam. It operated only ahead of Passover and, after the baking of the last matzah each year, De Haan employees would march to music through the village dressed in white sheets and ceremoniously extinguish the ovens.

One of the production line machines inside Hollandia,



A shopper browsed for matzah at the Amsterdam Noord branch of the Jumbo supermarket chain on March 17. (Photo by Cnaan Liphshiz)



Pieter Heijs showing one of the products of his Hollandia Matzes factory in Enschede, the Netherlands, on March 19. (Photo by Cnaan Liphshiz)

a state-of-the-art factory with 18 employees who work year-round inside a three-story building, dates back to 1924. Inside the room where it now operates, the local Jewish community briefly ran a Jewish school for the children who were expelled from the general education system under the Nazis.

The factory reopened after World War II, during which the Germans killed 75 percent of the prewar Dutch Jewish population of 100,000. The community never replenished its numbers. By then, however, matzahs had developed a non-Jewish following.

The eye-catching and instantly recognizable packaging of Hollandia matzah boxes – an orange-colored octagonal cardboard box with a camera-aperture opening – was a marketing coup cooked up by the Woudstras, Heijs said.

The matzah became even better known to the Dutch immediately after the war because the Hollandia factory received subsidies under the Marshall Plan for financial aid to rebuild war-torn Europe, according to Heijs. He said the funding was meant also as a gesture acknowledging Jewish suffering during the Holocaust.

“But it was also a practical decision: Matzah requires no eggs, no salt, no sugar – all commodities that were in very short supply immediately after the war,” Heijs said. Whatever the reason, he added, the reality was that Hollandia was “one of the first bakeries that were restored” after the war, thus entrenching its status as a household brand.

Heijs, 55, remembers enjoying Hollandia matzah as a boy ahead of and also directly after Easter. “I understand that matzah is not considered a delicacy exactly among Jews, who substitute matzah for bread for [eight days] each year,” he said. “But for us, who had it in addition to everything else, it was a treat that went very well with chocolate and butter.”

See “Matzah” on page 15

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# Five haggadahs and other Passover supplements to modernize your seder this year

By Gabe Friedman

NEW YORK (JTA) – Although Jews have celebrated Passover by reading from the haggadah in one form or another for 2,000 years, Jewish organizations and publishers strive each year to connect the holiday to modern times with fresh haggadahs, as well as supplements.

If you're looking to give your seder a distinct 2018 flavor, consider these options – they bring up topics ranging from Donald Trump to Ethiopian chickpea matzah.

### JDC Entwine toolkit

Topic: Jewish diversity

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee was sending aid to Jews in need decades before gluten-free matzah was a thing. But one of its newer initiatives, Entwine, has produced a hip and fun “global Passover toolkit” it’s dubbing “ReOrdered” (a reference to the word seder, which means “order” in Hebrew).

It’s free to order online and comes with several goodies, including a recipe book with traditional Passover recipes from around the world. Then there’s the four “Community Cards,” each highlighting an international Jewish community that the JDC has helped in the past: Ethiopia, the Soviet Union, Morocco and Sarajevo (in Bosnia and Herzegovina). Each card has a story from someone in that community, a ritual Passover food and a traditional toast. The details are said to be as delightful as they are educational: Did you know Ethiopian Jews make matzah out of chickpeas, or that Bosnian Jews turn eggs black by boiling them with coffee grounds?

The guide also includes a sheet meant to help the seder leader incorporate it all into the ritual meal, coasters and even a matzah box centerpiece with cards for the Four Questions meant to represent the supplies the JDC has sent around the world since World War I. It’s basically a historical, multicultural seder in a box – just add haggadah and food.

### The Trump Passover Haggadah: “People All The Time They Come Up To Me And Tell Me This Is The Best Haggadah They’ve Ever Read, They Do, Believe Me”

Topic: The 45<sup>th</sup> president of the United States

The Amazon description, like the title, will tell you this haggadah isn’t for diehard fans of President Donald Trump: “The book guides seder participants through a re-living of the Jewish people’s suffering under the Egyptians and celebrates their freedom from a vain, capricious, thin-skinned, small-handed, megalomaniacal, temperamentally unfit president... er, Pharaoh. If you’re an afflicted liberal Jew, with an unconservative sense of humor, and you find traditional seders as dry as matzah, try these radically irreverent political parody haggadahs this Passover.”



Even an 18<sup>th</sup>-century haggadah from Switzerland, like the one seen here, could benefit from a link to the present. (Photo by Godong/ UIG via Getty Images)

There isn’t much more information on the Amazon page, except that the haggadah is an online best-seller. Judging from author Dave Cowen’s bylines in *McSweeney’s* and *The New Yorker*, it’s probably pretty funny, too.

### HIAS Haggadah supplement

Topic: International refugees

Formerly the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, HIAS was founded in 1881 to help Russian Jewish immigrants settle into the U.S., but these days it lends a hand to all kinds of populations around the world. Its 11-page guide offers a blueprint for weaving refugee references and stories into almost every aspect of your seder, from an Ethiopian saga meant for one of the blessings over wine to a Rohingya mention in the seder plate discussion. It becomes explicitly political at the end and offers tips on how to take real-world action to help refugees.

## Nine. . . . . Continued from page 8

standard of matzah production. Rabbis from New York travel to Arizona in the days leading up to the harvest, where they inspect the grains meticulously to ensure they are cut at the precise moisture levels.

4. At the seder, Persian Jews whip each other with scallions.

Many of the Passover seder rituals are intended to re-create the sensory experience of Egyptian slavery, from the eating of bitter herbs and matzah to the dipping of greenery in saltwater, which symbolizes the tears shed by the oppressed Israelites. Some Jews from Iran and Afghanistan have the tradition of whipping each other with green onions before the singing of “Dayenu.”

5. Karaite Jews skip the wine.

Karaite Jews reject rabbinic Judaism, observing only laws detailed in the Torah. That’s why they don’t drink the traditional four cups of wine at the seder. Wine is fermented, and fermented foods are prohibited on Passover, so instead they drink fruit juice. (Mainstream Jews hold that only fermented grains are prohibited.) The Karaites also eschew other staples of the traditional seder, including the seder plate and charoset. Their maror (bitter herbs) is a mixture of lemon peel, bitter lettuce and an assortment of other herbs.

6. Israeli Jews have only one seder.

Israeli Jews observe only one Passover seder, unlike everywhere else where traditionally two seders are held, one on each of the first two nights of the holiday. Known as “yom tov sheni shel galuyot” – literally “the second festival day of the Diaspora” – the practice was begun 2,000 years ago when Jews were informed of the start of a new lunar month only after it had been confirmed by witnesses in Jerusalem. Because Jewish communities outside of Israel were often delayed in learning the news, they consequently couldn’t be sure precisely which day festivals were meant



A table set for the Passover seder and the holiday. (Photo by Rebecca Siegel/Flickr, CC BY 2.0)

to be observed. As a result, the practice of observing two seder days was instituted just to be sure.

7. You’re wrong about the orange on the seder plate.

Some progressive Jews have adopted the practice of including an orange on the seder plate as a symbol of inclusion of gays, lesbians and other groups marginalized in the Jewish community. The story goes that the practice was instituted by the feminist scholar Susannah Heschel after she was told that a woman belongs on the synagogue *bima*, or prayer podium, like an

orange belongs on a seder plate. But according to Heschel, that story is false. In that apocryphal version, she said, “a woman’s words are attributed to a man, and the affirmation of lesbians and gay men is erased. Isn’t that precisely what’s happened over the centuries to women’s ideas?”

8. “Afikomen” isn’t Hebrew.

For many seder participants, the highlight of the meal is the *afikomen* – a broken piece of matzah that the seder leader hides and the children search for; the person who finds the *afikomen* usually gets a small reward. Most scholars believe the word “*afikomen*” derives from the Greek word for dessert. Others say it refers to a kind of postmeal revelry common among the Greeks. Either theory would explain why the *afikomen* is traditionally the last thing eaten at the seder.

9. For North African Jews, after Passover comes Mimouna.

Most people are eager for a break from holiday meals when the eight-day Passover holiday concludes. But for the Jews of North Africa, the holiday’s end is the perfect time for another feast, Mimouna, marking the beginning of spring. Celebrated after nightfall on the last day of Passover, Mimouna is marked by a large spread of foods and the opening of homes to guests. The celebration is often laden with symbolism, including fish for fertility and golden rings for wealth.

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# Exploring the fabric of Israeli society through fashion

By Eliana Rudee

(JNS) – “We are not Russia, Paris or Milan. We are a young country and our story, parallel to the establishment of Israel, is the story of the growth of creativity,” says Galit Reismann, founder of TLVStyle, on the fashion industry there.

Mirroring Israel’s startup nation mentality in the face of minimal resources, Reismann maintains that with no



Moran Porat displayed her jewelry. (Photo by Eliana Rudee)

fashion houses, textile factories, governmental support and few large brands to intern for, young designers must become entrepreneurs to survive in a small and competitive industry.

She hints that challenge breeds innovation. As such, her creative tourism company conducts fashion tours of Tel Aviv and produces fashion pop-up events.

Elisha Abargel, owner of a store by the same name (Lilienblum Street 20, Tel Aviv), notes that the inaccessibility of fabrics can make it “more interesting” for the country’s fashion designers. “I was in Paris last week and needed ribbons, so I walked across the street and found exactly what I needed,” he tells JNS. “But in Israel, we don’t have the material. You can’t find everything you can wish and dream for, so we need to innovate and invent.”

Abargel upholds that colorful fabrics are in low supply in Israel, encouraging designers to get creative with their work, developing solutions such as 3D and digital printing.

Up-and-coming designer Danit Peleg uses 3D printing to “e-mail a dress and jacket through an incredible new design tool”: a digital printer the size of a large microwave. Inspired by artwork, the city of Tel Aviv, modernization and sustainability, she tells JNS that “you can print any structure. Your imagination is the only limit.”

Likewise, Moran Porat, a jewelry designer based in Rishon Letzion, developed her style after being inspired



Designer Elisha Abargel (right) posed with Galit Reismann, wearing one of his designs. (Photo by Eliana Rudee)

by pieces that were inaccessible to her. “I couldn’t buy royal jewelry, so I made my own,” she says.

“They were right to say that necessity is the father of all great inventions,” quips Reismann. “That’s the spirit of the people in Israel. Even with a history of hard times, we continue because there is no other way. Innovation is in the DNA of our country.”

Because of shared challenges, says Reismann, Israeli designers often reflect a *kibbutz* mentality and are more willing to work together rather than fear competition. They often mentor young designers, forgoing their desire for ego and power.

“Here, people are happy to share their time without asking for something back,” Peleg says, agreeing with Reismann. “To create something new is enough to open their minds and hearts.”

Much like a melting pot for culture, Reismann defines the industry in Israel as a “slow fashion movement” where, similar to slow cooking, everything is made in small batches, by hand and with great attention to craft and detail. The recipe? It’s a mix of traditional embroidery taught by Jewish grandmothers, with the manipulation of fabrics from the Arabic, Bedouin and Ethiopian populations, merged with a contemporary style that is said to reflect the free spirit, imagination and independent thinking of those who reside in Tel Aviv.

Nir Goeta, co-owner of the shop Hannah (Lilienblum Street 19, Tel Aviv), is motivated by this mix and focuses

See “Fashion” on page 15

## North American baby boomers teach Israeli kids English

By Ben Sales

(JTA) – There’s no reason Hodaya Koskas and Barrett Brickell would know each other. Koskas, 14, is a high school student from a small city in central Israel who takes ballet classes and hopes to be a dancer. Brickell, 71, is a retired schoolteacher from Ottawa, Canada.

But they’ve been video chatting every week since September. The unlikely pairing begins by having Koskas read a one-page English description of a place in Israel – perhaps the Western Wall or a mall. Then they shift into talking about their lives.

Koskas talks about an upcoming ballet competition that, if she wins, could lead to a trip to New York City. Barrett talks about life in Canada – the snow outside his window, the particulars of the local malls. Koskas says she now understands that in Canada, people hit the malls with a bigger bag than in Israel, so they can buy more stuff.

“I feel a connection to another world,” Koskas told JTA of the conversations. “I talk about what’s done there and what’s polite there. We talked about how they shop and how we shop.”

The Israeli teen and the Canadian retiree are participants in Israel Connect, a program where older North American adults tutor Israeli kids in English once a week via video chat. For seniors like Brickell, the program is a relatively easy way to connect with Israel and help kids. For kids like Koskas, the sessions expand their vocabulary, improve their pronunciation and introduce them to North American culture (she now knows how to pronounce “read” in the past tense, for example).

“I want to find out about their personal lives,” said Brickell, who taught fifth and sixth grade for nearly 20 years, and now tutors three kids as part of Israel Connect. “I end up liking them a lot. The time I get to spend with young people is very meaningful to me, and I have a feeling that they enjoy it.”

The program began in 2011 as a side project of Sarah Gordon, a Canadian with Israeli parents who taught Hebrew in Ottawa. A former classmate of Gordon who taught English in Israel told her about some of her Arab-Israeli students who were struggling to pick up what would be their third



An Israeli high school student videoconferences with a North American baby boomer for a weekly English lesson. (Photo courtesy of Israel Connect)

language. So Gordon matched them with Canadian seniors she knew who could tutor them from afar.

Since then, Israel Connect has mushroomed. It spread to Toronto and a few areas in the United States, from New Jersey to Baltimore to Florida. It now has 400 volunteer tutors, mostly baby boomers and older, and 500 Israeli high school students from 35 schools. Gordon said baby boomers are a good fit because they wake up early and tend to have free time.

The schools are mostly on Israel’s periphery – smaller and often poorer towns that are distant from Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. The students themselves come from a range of religious, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Gordon said she has a waiting list of 100 schools that want to join and is hoping to expand her volunteer base.

“Most of our volunteers are connecting with students in towns they’ve never heard of before,” said Gordon, who now co-directs the organization full-time with her husband. “We take the ones that have the strongest need. Some of the schools we work in don’t have English teachers. We have schools where

See “Teach” on page 16

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**Happy Passover**



## Weekly Parasha

Pesach, Exodus 12:21-51

# The sweet taste of maror

RABBI ZEV SILBER, BETH DAVID SYNAGOGUE

The primary theme of Passover is the Exodus from Egypt – redemption from slavery and gaining freedom, becoming a nation that is independent and looking forward to fulfilling our special mission in our own land. We express this theme in many ways at the seder – four cups of wine, reclining, matzah, a meal fit for a king, singing and rejoicing as we praise God through the recitation of Hallel.

One thing that we do at the seder stands in stark contrast to this theme. Eating maror. We pass the bitter herbs around, note its strength and some even compete as to who can eat the most without any added sweetness of the charoset, and without drinking any water to take away the harshness of the taste. Why are we eating maror as part of the celebration of freedom?

There is another, somewhat related, part of the seder

that seems to raise the same question. The Talmud requires us, as part of the discussion of freedom to begin with something derogatory and conclude with praise. There are two opinions as to how to accomplish this. One, is that we refer to the slavery, *avadim hayinu* – we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and then to the redemption, *vayotzieinu Hashem* – God took us out of there. The other is to quote a verse from the book of Joshua that states that we (Terach, Abraham's father) started out as idol worshippers, and now God has brought us close to Him and to worship only Him.

The reason we do this is obvious. In order to fully appreciate what God has done for us, we remind ourselves of the depths to which we had sunk before.

We may want to explain maror in the same way. To appreciate the redemption we need to taste the bitterness.

However, why is it not sufficient to just describe the bitterness. We don't go and worship idols at the beginning of the seder to experience that low moral standing, nor do we recreate slavery and then march to freedom. We do not recreate the low points of our history in order to appreciate what we have now. But with maror, we are commanded to taste the bitterness, to experience the low points and the great difficulties.

Perhaps this is the true meaning and the purpose of eating the maror. Not everything in life is sweet and good. Sometimes in life, we have to taste the bitterness. We cannot avoid it and sometimes we cannot find a solution for it, or reaching a solution is very difficult and painful. After experiencing these challenges, we must be able to find meaning within it.

See "Maror" on page 15

## Congregational Notes

### Beth David Synagogue

Affiliation: Orthodox Union  
 Rabbi: Zev Silber  
 Address: 39 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905  
 Phone: 607-722-1793  
 Rabbi's Office: 607-722-7514  
 Fax: 607-722-7121  
 Office hours: Mon. closed; Tues. 10 am-1 pm; Wed. closed; Thurs. 9 am-1 pm; Fri. 10 am-1 pm  
 Beth David e-mail address: bethdavid@stny.rr.com  
 Rabbi's e-mail: rabbisilber@stny.rr.com  
 Website: www.bethdavid.org  
 Facebook: www.facebook.com/bethdavidbinghamton  
 Shabbat Services:  
 Friday, March 30 ..... 7:10 pm  
 Shabbat, March 31 ..... 9 am  
 ..... Mincha after the kiddush  
 ..... Maariv 7 pm  
 Weekday Services:  
 Mornings:  
 Sun., April 1 ..... 9 am  
 Mon.-Thurs., April 2-5 ..... 6:50 am  
 Fri., April 6 ..... 9 am  
 Evenings:  
 Sun., April 1 ..... 7:15 pm  
 Mon.-Thurs., April 2-5 ..... 7:15 pm  
 Fri., April 6 ..... 7:15 pm  
 Classes: Rabbi Zev Silber will hold his weekly Talmud class every Tuesday evening after services.

### Rohr Chabad Center

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

### Norwich Jewish Center

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

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

### Temple Concord

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

On Friday, March 30, at 6 pm, there will be a community Passover seder. Reservations are required.

On Saturday, March 31, there will be no religious school, Torah study or Shabbat family service.

On Tuesday, April 3, at 10:30 am, the Tuesday Morning Book Club will meet.

On Thursday, April 5, at 7:30 pm, there will be a last night of Passover service with a Yizkor memorial service.

On Friday, April 6, at 10:30 am, there will be a last day of Passover service with a Yizkor memorial service and potluck lunch; at 8 pm, there will be a Shabbat evening service.

On Saturday, April 7, at 9:15 am, there will be Torah study. There will be no religious school or Shabbat family service.

### 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.

### Kol Haverim

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

### Temple Brith Sholom

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

Friday, March 30, light candles ..... 7:09 pm  
 Saturday, March 31, light candles after ..... 8:10 pm  
 Sunday, April 1, yom tov ends ..... 8:11 pm  
 Thursday, April 5, light candles ..... 7:15 pm  
 Friday, April 6, light candles ..... 7:16 pm  
 Shabbat ends Saturday, April 7 ..... 8:18 pm

### Temple Israel

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

On Saturday, March 31, at 9:30 am, services will be led by Rabbi Geoffrey Brown. The Torah portion will be Exodus 12:21-51 and Numbers 28:16-25. The haftarah will be Joshua 3:5-7, 5:2-6:1 and 6:27. The kiddush sponsor will be Michael Martinez.

There will be no religious school on Sundays, April 1 and April 8.

The temple office will be closed Tuesday, April 4-Tuesday, April 10.

On Thursday, April 12, at 7 pm, there will be a Ritual Committee meeting.

On Sunday, April 15 at 10 am, there will be an Adult Ed. brunch about the VINES Community Garden Project. The cost is \$5 per person. (See article on page 3.)

### Temple Beth-El of Ithaca

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

On Friday, March 30, erev Pesach, the siyyum bechorim service will be held at 7:30 am. A study session will be conducted by Rabbi Suzanne Brody.

There will be no evening services on the first two nights of Passover (March 30 and 31).

On Saturday, March 31, Pesach day one, services will be held at 10 am.

On Sunday, April 1, Pesach day two, services will be held at 10 am.

On Thursday, April 5, erev Pesach day seven, services will be held at 7:30 pm.

On Friday, April 6, Pesach day seven, services will be held at 10 am; erev Pesach day eight services will be held at 7:30 pm.

On Saturday, April 7, Pesach day eight services will be held at 10 am and Yizkor will be recited.

### Temple Beth El of Oneonta

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

# Jewish Community Center

## JCC to offer spring break sports camps

The Jewish Community Center will be holding two basketball camps, for ages 5-13, from April 2-5. Pricing varies per camp, with member and non-member rates. All camps are co-ed and a camp t-shirt is provided. The entire community is welcome and encouraged to attend.

Little Stars is a camp aimed at children ages 5-10, perfect for those just beginning to play basketball. Little Stars will run from 9 am-12 pm and will focus on building funda-



At right: The Jewish Community Center will offer two different basketball camps over spring break, from April 2-5, for children 5-13 years of age.

mental basketball skills. There will also be competitions and gameplay. The cost is \$50 for JCC members and \$75 for outside patrons.

The 3 on 3 Tournament is a camp designed for older children with more basketball experience. The camp will run from 1-4 pm and puts the campers into teams of three for a tournament run throughout the week. There will also be skill development drills and competitions. The 3 on 3 Tournament costs \$50 for JCC members and \$100 for outside patrons.

For more information about the spring break camps, JCC sports programming or the JCC, contact the JCC office at 724-2417.

## Fashion . . . . .Continued from page 13

his work on traditional tailoring from Europe, fit to Israeli comfort and minimalism. Even his studio, set in a Bauhaus building that represents the foundational architecture of Tel Aviv, inspires his work.

Reismann, too, pioneers a business that represents the intersection of the city and its character. "I feel that it brings my spirit higher doing something for my people," she says, proud that her work supports the local fashion industry and tells Israel's story.

After having them fill out a style questionnaire, visitors are taken on a customized tour of Tel Aviv, where Reismann winds through hidden alleyways and the studios of some of the 69 burgeoning designers with whom she works. "It's not just a shopping tour or a styling tour," she tells JNS. "It's good to bring a garment back home and discuss it over Friday night dinner, but even if you don't, you go home as an ambassador for Israel with an even bigger treasure—the stories of the people."

As she explains, each designer has a narrative; each has a "personality, message and passion, and is fighting

to survive. It gives clients a glimpse of life in Tel Aviv."

Although much of her clientele – primarily, American Jewish women – has been to Israel prior to her tours, Reismann gets to show them an Israel they've never seen. "You have to go off the beaten track to truly understand the rhythm of this country," she insists.

Her message is one of "the liveliness of the Israeli people, telling unique stories of their dynamic country, creating together and reshaping [their] country through the fashion industry."

It is an empowering message, especially for Reismann, whose grandmother was able to survive Auschwitz because she could tailor clothes. It is considered a message not only of exploration of the human fabric of Israel, but of the Jewish people and the evolution of their homeland.

## Matzah. . . .Continued from page 11

Karina Ahles-Frijters, who lives in Hilversum, near Amsterdam, wrote in 2016 on her parenting blog Trotsmoeders that her three children like to experiment with matzah toppings (her eldest prefers whole wheat matzah with butter and sugar-coated anise seeds, she wrote). One day a year, the Hollandia factory is open to anyone interested in making their own matzahs.

But not everyone is a fan of the matzah. "Frankly I couldn't tell you why so many Dutchmen like matzah – I don't think it's tasty at all," said Roger van Oordt, the director of the Netherlands-based Christians for Israel group, which organizes matzah-baking activities in solidarity with Israel and the Jews. "If I have to think about eating nothing, but matzah for two weeks, it makes being Christian look easy."

Although he is not Jewish, Heijs regards matzah as much more than a commodity. "After 14 years of making matzahs, of course I developed friendships and bonds with many Jewish people," said Heijs, who on Passover eve this year will attend his first seder dinner with his wife at the invitation of a Dutch Jewish community in northern Holland. "But matzah is part of the Dutch story regardless."



Nir Goeta showed one of his pieces. (Photo by Eliana Rudee)

## Maror . . . . .Continued from page 14

The difficulty of challenges is that they can sometimes lead to depression and rejection of all that is good. Or as we search for meaning, the challenge can lead us to strengthen our prayer and our commitment to Torah observance, to improve our moral and ethical behavior, to look for ways of improving the world. There is always light at the end of the tunnel. We have to bring that light into our lives, and not expect it to come to us automatically.

Our brothers in Israel have experienced many great tragedies. Jews in Europe are living in fear with the proliferation of antisemitic attacks on people and institutions. In the United States we have experienced a sharp increase in antisemitism according to a recent report from the ADL. Our general community is plagued with such extreme violence that has taken so many young, innocent lives that we fear for the safety of our schools and universities. We are tasting the bitterness of violence; we are experiencing the moral breakdown of society that shows no respect for person and property.

We eat the maror in order to remind us that we must find solutions to these challenges. May God grant us the inner

wisdom and strength to embrace all of the challenges we are faced with. May He give us the ability to fix that which can be fixed, while accepting that which cannot. May our efforts to find solutions allow us to realize that we have the potential for finding true meaning in our lives, as we transform the bitterness into sweetness.

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## JCC Friendship Club

The JCC Friendship Club met on March 21 and saw the rest of the video "A Taste of Passover." Theodore Bikel hosted the program. There were many groups and individual singers. They sang some songs such as: "Dayenu" and "Had Gad Ya." The tunes were jazzed up.

We talked about Passover and other topics. We ended up talking about our pets. The people in the office were celebrating the birthday of someone's dog. Bruce told us about his cats. Sylvia told about her daughter's dog, who looks vicious. She said that her daughter doesn't need a security system because nobody will walk in her house while she is out and the dog is there.

After the meeting was called to order, the situation with the check book was discussed. There was a charge for this month. I will look into it and change banks if it isn't rectified.

The week before Passover, we will eat out at a local restaurant. We were glad to have Sue Herzog, who returned from Florida. It was nice to have her and her mother join us again.

On Wednesday, April 11, we will meet again at the JCC at 1:30 pm. Come join us and have a nosh.

Sylvia Diamond  
President

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**NEWS IN BRIEF**

From JTA

**Israel delays deportation of African migrants to after Passover**

Israel's deportation of African migrants will be delayed until after Passover. On March 27, the Supreme Court agreed to a government request for an extension on the court's order for a brief to outline the state's deportation policy and related issues to April 9. The original deadline was March 26. The state said it needed more time to respond to the court's request for clarification of the policy and said it will submit classified documents as part of its filing, which are believed to include information on the African nation that Israel is deporting them to. The state also said it likely will grant refugee status to Sudanese migrants from the Nuba area, as well as 300 refugees from Darfur. The Supreme Court froze the deportations in mid-March in response to a petition. In January, the Israeli Cabinet approved a plan and the budget to deport thousands of migrants from Sudan and Eritrea. Prior to that, the Population and Immigration Authority notified the migrants that as of Jan. 1, they must return to their own countries or to a third nation, or be sent to jail until they are deported. According to the government plan, migrants who choose to leave by March 31 will receive a payment of \$3,500 as well as free airfare and other incentives, according to reports. They are believed to be sent to Rwanda, and possibly Uganda, according to reports, which also say that the migrants' rights have been violated in the third country. For now, deportation notices will not be issued to women, children, fathers of children, anyone recognized as a victim of slavery or human trafficking, and those who had requested asylum by the end of 2017, but have not received a response, *Haaretz* reported. There are up to 40,000 Eritreans and Sudanese living in Israel, including 5,000 children. Human rights activists in Israel and U.S. Jewish organizations have urged the Israeli government not to go ahead with the plan to force the migrants to choose between jail and deportation.

**Police: Slain Paris Holocaust survivor was targeted because she was Jewish**

Prosecutors investigating the slaying of a Holocaust survivor in Paris said the two suspects in custody targeted her because she was Jewish. The development in the investigation of the March 23 slaying of Mirelle Kanol came with the arrest of two men on March 26, *Le Figaro* reported, citing a police source. "The supposed or actual belonging of the victim to a religion was a grounds" for the attack, the source told *Le Figaro*, in addition to her being "vulnerable." One of the suspects in custody, a 29-year-old man, was a neighbor of Kanol and knew her well, *Le Figaro* reported. In addition, Kanol's son told the French news agency AFP that one of the suspects was a regular visitor of his mother whom she treated "like a son." The son said the suspect had visited her that day. The prosecutor's office reportedly has asked that the suspects remain in preventative custody. They will face possible charges of "murder related to the victim's religion, real or imagined," as well as aggravated robbery and destruction of property, AFP reported, citing judicial sources. On March 25, a spokesman for SPCJ, the official monitor and security unit of the French Jewish community, told the 7sur7 news website that a preliminary examination of the crime "does not reveal an antisemitic characteristic, but this possibility has not been discounted as police investigate further." Kanol escaped the Velodrome d'Hiver roundup of Jews by French police for their deportation to death camps and murder by the Nazis. French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, who is in Israel on an official visit, said on March 26 following a meeting in Jerusalem with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that France needs to "continue fighting against antisemitism." "I had a very moving and difficult moment when I had just concluded my visit to Yad Vashem. I heard about the outrageous murder of Mirelle Kanol - a Holocaust survivor - in Paris," Le Drian said. "We cannot yet say if the motive for the murder was antisemitism but it is reasonable to assume, it will not be surprising and,

therefore, this only strengthens the fact that this struggle has not ended, and that we will need to continue fighting against antisemitism." According to the National Bureau for Vigilance Against Anti-Semitism, or BNVCA, the octogenarian's body was set on fire the night of March 23. Her charred body also had at least 11 stab wounds. A forensic examination of the apartment showed that an arsonist started a fire in at least five distinct areas of that space, the report also said. "The barbarity of this murder sends us back to that of Sarah Halimi just one year ago," Francis Kalifat, president of the CRIF umbrella of French Jewish communities, said in a statement on March 26. CRIF was organizing a memorial march in Kanol's memory planned for March 27. Prosecutors say Halimi, a 66-year-old Jewish teacher and physician, was murdered by her Muslim neighbor in April partly in connection with her Jewish identity.

**Israel opens investigation into Facebook over Cambridge Analytica breach**

Israel's Justice Ministry has opened an investigation into Facebook amid reports of the transfer of users' data from the social media platform to the British data-mining company Cambridge Analytica. The ministry's Privacy Protection Authority said in a statement on March 22 that it will "investigate whether personal data of Israeli citizens was illegally used in a way that infringes upon their right to privacy and the provisions of the Israeli Privacy Law." Under the Israeli privacy law, personal data may only be used to the purpose for which it was given and with the consent of the individual. Cambridge Analytica, a company launched by former Trump adviser Stephen Bannon and bankrolled by the Republican donor Robert Mercer, is alleged to have improperly received data on potential voters from a researcher and app developer who had violated Facebook policy. Over the March 18 weekend, news outlets reported that the user data collected were used to influence the vote in the 2016 presidential election. The Trump campaign reportedly paid Cambridge Analytica more than \$6 million, according to federal election records. As many as 200,000 U.S. citizens live in Israel and have the right to vote in the U.S. election, *Haaretz* reported, citing iVotelsrael. Following the reports, Facebook's stock took a hit, and American and British lawmakers called on Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg to testify in front of various government committees. On March 21, Zuckerberg said in a statement that in addition to investigating other applications created before 2014, when it tightened its data-sharing policy, the company would also take steps to limit the data other apps could access and launch a tool to show users what apps have access to their data. The CEO of Cambridge Analytica claimed to an undercover reporter posing as a potential client to have used Israeli companies and former Israeli spies in its intelligence gathering. The report by a British TV station did not connect the Israeli companies with the reported Trump operation.

**Teach . . . . . Continued from page 13**

we are the English program - we do not recommend that." English is usually a key part of the school curriculum in Israel and is viewed as a gateway to cultural exposure, academic excellence and professional success. Students in Israeli high schools receive four to five hours of English education per week, and an entire section of Israel's version of the SAT is devoted to English proficiency. But Gordon said most of the students' practical knowledge of English comes from pop culture.

"They watch a lot of TV and listen to a lot of music," she said. "It's not uncommon for them to show up the first week and [as] they're talking with a retired dentist or brain surgeon, they'll say, 'Hey, what's up, dude.' And the teacher will say, 'We start with 'Hi, how are you?'"

The core of Israel Connect's curriculum is the one-page handouts on Israeli locales, which come with pictures. Volunteers will help the students read through the paragraphs and then will discuss them before pivoting to casual conversation. The only restriction Gordon gives is to avoid politics. Some of the participating schools are in West Bank settlements and Gordon stresses that the program does not take political positions and aims to serve Israeli kids regardless of where they are. Retired doctors are also told not to provide medical advice.

"They didn't choose to be born into this conflict," Gordon said of the students. "They didn't choose to go to the army in two years. We should just be empathetic to their reality."

But Gordon emphasizes that the point of the program is to rigorously teach English, not just to create informal video pen pals. Most of the students' chats happen while they're at school, under a teacher's supervision. Gordon said that out of 300 alumni of the program, all but four scored ore than 90 percent on the English comprehension section of the standardized test.

"They're more confident in reading, in their interactions talking with the volunteers," said Ofira Mor, a teacher at Koskas' high school. "They have a wider vocabulary."

But volunteers say that aside from the tutoring, they enjoy having direct exposure to life in Israel through young people's eyes. Beverly Grostern, a volunteer from Ottawa, took her first trip to Israel in decades after a year of tutoring an Israeli girl.

"It's reintroduced me to Israeli life, to their food, to their attitude," she said. "They're like your typical teenager anywhere. I ask them something, what's your favorite activity, what do you like to do, and nine out of 10 it's like, 'I like to go shopping, I like to visit my grandmother, I like my computer.'"



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