

THE REPORTER

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Opinion

From the Desk of the Federation Executive Director

With gratitude

SHELLEY HUBAL

One-hundred-ninety-eight days. If, God forbid, the hostages are not freed by the first night of Passover, it will mark 198 days since their torture and captivity began. The hostages include young men and women with their whole lives in front of them, a baby, innocent children, grandparents, mothers, fathers, Jewish people, Arabs and Asians.

How can we say “*dayeinu*” when there are innocent people held by Hamas? How do we hold onto our faith when our hearts are broken for the loss of so many lives, both in Israel and Gaza? How do we maintain

what makes us compassionate human beings when so much is breaking us apart? I wish I had good answers to these questions. What I do know is that resilience is woven into the fabric of the Jewish people, and telling the story of Passover is just one of the ways that helps us to remember our strength.

Jonathan Polin and Rachel Goldberg, parents of Hersh Goldberg-Polin, who was taken hostage into Gaza on October 7, wrote the following in the introduction to a special haggadah created to honor the hostages: “When thinking back to last Passover, to our last Seder, it is unfathomable

to imagine that we would be where we are now; as a family, as a nation, or as a people. But Hope is Mandatory. That is what it is to be part of the Jewish nation. We are a people who will never give up. We will keep going until we are free, all of us, in body and soul.”

Whether it is having an empty chair at your seder table, wearing the number “198” on your chest or reciting a special *Mi Sheberach*, I hope you will all find the strength to make this Passover especially meaningful. With a small glimmer of hope and a heavy heart, I will be praying for a miracle so that next year we will all be free. *Chag sameach*.

One Perspective from Israel

I get it now

JEREMY STAIMAN

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

To longtime Binghamtonians, the name Staiman will bring back memories. My father’s articles, appearing as the indelible Shin Sin, graced the pages of *The Reporter* for close to 50 years. While I can’t pretend to fill his literary shoes, it’s an incredible honor for me to “come back home” and have some of my writings published here. I hope you enjoy!

As a child growing up in the peaceful and charming upstate New York community of Binghamton, we had some unusual features in our house. One of them was a long horizontal opening in the wall between our kitchen and our breakfast room. You know how it is in the restaurants, when the cook puts down a finished plate to be delivered to

the dining room, and rings the bell to let the waiter know that the dish is ready? Kinda like that.

But without the bell.

We called it, in a most utilitarian way, the “pass-through.” Unlike the cold, commercial stainless steel versions, this was nicely integrated into the warm decor of our home.

I don’t know what age I was at the time. Perhaps I was 8 years old, but I could have been 7, or maybe 11 or 12. My mother had placed small glasses of juice on the pass-through to accompany our breakfast. One day it would be orange juice, the next it would be prune juice. In a world that has, to my knowledge, moved on from any serious prune juice consumption, I still have a warm spot in my heart for it.

So there I was in the breakfast room, my 8-year-old-or-maybe-12-year-old self talking to my mother in the

kitchen through the pass-through. I don’t recall the topic of the conversation, but I remember my mother including three words: “the six million.”

Immediately, reflexively, her eyes filled with tears.

I didn’t get it. When I said those same words, my eyes remained dry. Was there something wrong with me, that my mother felt such deep, primal pain and I felt nothing?

There was so much I didn’t know at the time.

I just didn’t know.

I didn’t know that the men and women in our *shul*, who spoke English with their heavy Hungarian, German and Polish accents, had scarcely two decades prior been victims of some of the worst atrocities in human history.

I just didn’t know.

I didn’t know what it was like for the generation of Jews

See “Now” on page 12

In My Own Words

Happiness, according to Adam Gopnik

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Years ago, I developed my own definition of happiness. The reason behind defining the term was that, at that time, many people were talking about their search for happiness, as if happiness were some object they could find if they only looked hard enough. For me, happiness is the byproduct of our actions. That includes our interactions with other people. It doesn’t have to be something major. Some of the most happiest, contented times in my life occurred during quiet moments, whether sitting with friends, walking in nature, listening to music or reading a wonderful book.

My personal thoughts about happiness were why I was interested to learn about Adam Gopnik’s “All That Happiness Is: Some Words on What Matters” (Liveright Publication Corporation) and agreed to see a review copy. His work is a short (62 pages) essay in book form that seeks to challenge how we look at our lives. Gopnik, who is Jewish, focuses on the difference between achievement, which he calls a “completion of the task imposed from outside,” and an accomplishment, which he sees as “the end point of an engulfing activity one engages in for its own sake.” For Gopnik, contemporary society demands we focus on achievements, which, in the long run, are not satisfying because once finished, they demand that we quickly move on to the next achievement, something that continues with

no end in sight. Happiness, on the other hand, comes from a sense of accomplishment – the things we work hard to do even if we will never make money from them or are even very good at them. The sense of satisfaction we get from the process is its own reward and, according to Gopnik, the key to happiness.

Gopnik’s and my ideas overlap a bit, but his essay also shows how working hard on something that is not directly connected to our finances – whether it’s learning to play an instrument, dance or box – plays a larger role in our personal lives and society. He writes of scientists who feel a sense of satisfaction from playing the violin or painting that is as large as what they receive from their achievements, which may be rewarded with money or awards. Yet, what they learn from their accomplishments may make it possible for them to increase the number of their achievements. As for the social role played by our accomplishments, Gopnik believes that “we become better citizens when we become musicians, because musicians play in bands and magicians can only work in clubs. A tuba player is of necessity a citizen of the orchestra. Mutual pleasure teaches us mutual reliance.” He even includes playing a sport or rooting for a sports team as a way to make larger connections.

While I’m not sure I completely agree with Gopnik (to be honest, I rarely completely agree with anyone), his discussion of achievement and accomplishment is something that made me think about my own life. Once I began writing for *The Reporter*, I stopped writing short stories and poetry. The draft of my third attempt at a novel was never finished. Was the act of writing something, anything, enough to give me a sense of accomplishment, or did writing turn into an

achievement? Is what was once a pleasure now only work? I know that’s not true: my favorite part of this job is writing, but I don’t feel compelled to write anything once the work day ends. I still enjoy writing a sermon or a speech (for example, my annual Temple Concord Sisterhood book review), but, unless I’m doing something for a specific event, I don’t write for sheer pleasure anymore – meaning writing even if I know no one will read it.

The question becomes whether there are other things that can bring us happiness, including activities where achievement and accomplishment overlap. Take Torah study on Saturday morning: I am not there as a paid professional, but I enjoy when I lead the study and when I’m just a participant. Yet, in some ways, I am always a professional since I’m a rabbi. I’ve had wonderful moments of contentment at my chaplaincy work, which is paid work, but no one would call those moments achievements. I admit that making a connection with someone new or helping someone with a problem gives me great satisfaction. Is that the same as happiness? Sometimes yes and sometimes no. There is so much else on which that feeling depends.

Gopnik’s work spoke to me because it made me analyze my own life. It helps that I like periodically challenging myself: there is almost always something new to learn. I also think that Gopnik is right to suggest that people should focus on what makes them happy, rather than on achievements they don’t find particularly meaningful. Yet, my ultimate take from his book is that finding true happiness in life comes from each person finding the balance between achievements and accomplishments that works for them.

About the cover

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Jewish Federation
of Greater Binghamton

Shelley Hubal, Executive Director

607-724-2332 ~ www.jfgeb.org

The Reporter Editorial Committee

Rebecca Goldstein Kahn, chairwoman

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HOW TO REACH THE REPORTER

Mail ~ The Reporter, 500 Clubhouse Rd. Vestal, NY 13850

E-mail ~ TRReporter@aol.com

Phone ~ 607-724-2360 or 800-779-7896

Extension#/Department ~ 1. Advertising 2. Business Office

3. Art Department 4. Circulation 6. Editorial/News



BINGHAMTON, NY

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LETTERS

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

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The Reporter does not necessarily endorse any advertised products and services. In addition, the paper is not responsible for the kashruth of any advertiser’s product or establishment.

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Executive Editor Rabbi Rachel Esserman

Layout Editor Diana Sochor

Advertising Kathy Brown

Bookkeeper Kathy Brown

Production Associate Julie Weber

Columnist Bill Simons

Proofreaders

Barbara Bank, Fran Ferentinos,

Rebecca Goldstein Kahn, Merri Pell-Preus,

Ilene Pinsker, Heidi Thirer



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Federation Hillel at BU to hold Yom Hashoah commemoration

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton and Hillel at Binghamton will hold a Yom Hashoah commemoration on Thursday, May 2, at 6:30 pm, at Temple Israel, 4737 Deerfield Pl., Vestal. The event is co-sponsored by Beth David Synagogue, Temple Israel and Temple Concord. It will begin with readings of psalms and poems at the outdoor Temple Israel Holocaust memorial. The event will then continue inside with testimony from survivor Samuel (Shmuel) Rind. Registration is not required, but encouraged, and can be made at www.jfgb.org/ or by contacting the Federation office at director@jfgb.org or 607-724-2332.

Rind was born in 1937 in a small town in Poland. His family moved to a camp in Pechora, Poland, after World War II began. When he was 6, the family moved

to Rachney, a small labor camp in Ukraine, where his father disappeared. The family then escaped to a ghetto in Zhmerinka, a Ukrainian city, where they lived with relatives. By hiding, they managed to escape being killed by Nazis leaving the area as the war was ending. After first returning to Poland, Rind's family moved to Bolivia in 1947 where he became an optician. Several years after attending a training program in the U.S., Rind moved to this country permanently in 1967. His mother was able to join him in the U.S. in 1992, where she lived until 2005. He currently lives in Rochester.

"We are honored to host Holocaust survivor Sam Rind for this year's Yom Hashoah program," said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. "It is more important than ever for us all to bear witness to the testimony of survivors, ensuring that we will 'never forget.'"

Valerie and Leonard Preston to be honored

Beth David's Annual Dinner to be held on May 19

Beth David Synagogue's Annual Dinner will take place on Sunday, May 19, at 3 pm, at Beth David Synagogue. Valerie and Leonard Preston will receive the Jack and Mary Ferber Award. This year's catered event will begin with a cocktail and hors d'oeuvres hour, followed by a sit-down dinner. The cost per person is \$60, with sponsorships available. Invitations will be sent out shortly, with a Wednesday, May 1, RSVP appreciated. Those wanting further information can contact the synagogue at 607-722-1793 or bethdavid@stny.rr.com.



Valerie and Leonard Preston (Photo courtesy of the Prestons)

The Prestons were born in the Soviet Union in Saint Petersburg, where they were trained and worked as engineers. Leonard was a company's chief engineer and Valerie was a senior communications engineer. From their early years, they were both made aware that they were Jewish and were encouraged to be proud of their heritage. Openly practicing Judaism in Russia was dangerous. Valerie noted that "Josef Stalin, who was responsible for the deaths of countless Jews, ironically died on Purim in 1953."

Valerie's mother, who was also an engineer, told Valerie how she had responded to a coworker who said he had been insulted by a man who said that he looked Jewish. "Don't worry," her Mom answered, "no Jew would want someone who looks like you!" See "Dinner" on page 16

"Longtime members of Beth David Synagogue," organizers said, "the Prestons have earned the love and respect of all of us - they are wonderful beyond words, and we are looking forward to celebrating them at this major *shul* event!"

Information for Federation calendar due May 31

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton is collecting information for its 2023-24 calendar. Dates for meetings, events and communitywide celebrations are due by Friday, May 31, and should be e-mailed to Executive Director Shelley Hubal at director@jfgb.org. The Federation will collate the dates and make certain there are no conflicts.

"Sima Auerbach, former Federation director, started coordinating the community calendar many years ago," said Hubal. "We are a small, but active community. It is

important to make sure there are no conflicts so we can all enjoy the wonderful things our community has to offer us."

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

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

Larry Hagedorn

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to Ben Kasper on the death of his brother,

Herschel Kasper

DEADLINES

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

ISSUE	DEADLINE
May 3-16	April 19 (early)
May 17-30	May 8
May 31-June 13	May 22
June 14-27	June 5

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

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May you have a joyous Pesach, with hopes of freedom for all.

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HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE

THE PONIES ARE HOME THIS WEEKEND!

ROOT, ROOT, ROOT

Let's Go **RUDICK!**

FOR THE HOME TEAM
APRIL 19TH - 21ST

FRIDAY, APRIL 19TH
GATES OPEN: 5:00 PM | FIRST PITCH 6:05 PM

BOOK CLUB DAY #1
McDonald's

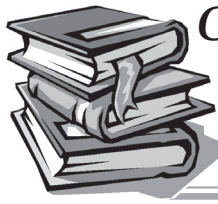
SATURDAY, APRIL 20TH
GATES OPEN: 12:00 PM | FIRST PITCH 1:05 PM

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4 TICKETS
4 HOTDOGS
4 SODAS
AND 4 POPCORN

SUNDAY, APRIL 21ST
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Off the Shelf

Books for the young at heart

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Books for tweens

◆ “Max in the House of Spies”

My original plan for this review was to group books in order by age (teen first, then tween, followed by picture books), but I couldn't wait to write about “Max in the House of Spies” by Adam Gidwitz (Dutton Children's Books) because I loved, loved, loved it! Sorry, I don't normally go all agog about a book in my reviews, but this one was so much fun and a pleasure even when the author switched tone, creating a very moving section. Oh, but it's the fun parts that stood out.

Part of the plot is very realistic: 11-year-old Max came to Great Britain as part of the Kindertransport just before World War II and is lucky enough to board with a rich Jewish family, the real life Montagu family. Max misses his parents and wants to do something – anything – to help the war effort; conveniently, a member of the extended Montagu family is a spy and Max, who is extremely clever, is tested to see if he has what it takes to become a British agent and return to Germany.

While reading how Max manages to solve the tasks the spymasters offer him was good fun, that was not my favorite part. When Max left Germany, he was accompanied by two small creatures who sit on his shoulders and comment on his actions: Berg, a kobolt (household spirit) who speaks with an old-fashioned German accent, and Stein, a dybbuk (a Jewish spirit) who sounds like a vaudevillian comedian. Of course, only Max can hear or speak to them. Sometimes they argue with each other about the best path for Max, but it's clear that Berg thinks Max should absolutely *not* become a spy.

“Max in the House of Spies” was a delight to read. You'll really enjoy the part when Max... oh, can't give that away, but it was awesome! And he also... well, don't want to spoil that, either. I do have one thing to say to the author and publisher: Ahhh, how could you end the book with an I-need-to-know-more-right-now cliffhanger? I want book two, “Max in the Land of Lies,” published right this minute! (I would have put a lot more exclamation points there, but *Reporter* style limits me to just one.) That book cannot arrive soon enough.

◆ “The Year My Life Went Down the Toilet”

Anyone who has had Crohn's disease, colitis or IBS will sympathize with 12-year-old Allison (who prefers to be called Al) in “The Year My Life Went Down the Toilet” by Jake Maia Arlow (Dial Books for Young Readers). Life is difficult enough when your mom hovers over you, checking everything you eat before and after your diagnosis. But having cramps and needing to run to the bathroom at all hours of the day and night is not a great way to have a social life. Even worse, her one real friend, Leo, has decided to join the drama club so their alone time is drastically cut. Plus, Al believes she is queer, but has not even told Leo because it all feels to be too much.

In order to not sit alone in her room when Leo is rehearsing most days of the week, Al decides to join a support

group for teens who are suffering from intestinal issues. Although she can't imagine talking to anyone about her frequent need to poop, she finds friends who not only know exactly what she is going through, but welcome her with open arms. In fact, one of them might become more than a friend if Al can open herself to a real relationship. But that's part of the problem: Al usually keeps her emotions buttoned up inside where they have a disastrous effect on her intestines. She's also not good with change: something is happening with her mom, which complicates Al's life even more. Unfortunately, she's so (understandably) absorbed in her own problems that she fails to note the problems Leo is facing.

Al's feelings about her life that year are made clear when she notes that “everything about being a human feels overwhelmingly embarrassing.” How Al comes to terms with her feelings and intestinal problems is what makes “The Year My Life Went Down the Toilet” worthwhile reading.

◆ “On All Other Nights”

The 14 steps of the Passover seder form the outline for the anthology “On All Other Nights: A Passover Celebration in 14 Stories” edited by Chris Baron, Joshua S. Levy and Naomi Milliner (Amulet Books). Each story is connected to specific part of the seder, although that connection can be tenuous at times. But the range of work is wonderful: there's contemporary and historical fiction, poetry and memoir, many told from the point of view of different communities of the Jewish world. In addition to explanations about the meaning of each step, the editors include four questions for each section readers can use to ponder their own lives. The end of the book features recipes by authors from different Jewish traditions.

All the works featured were consistently well done. My two favorites – “Chocolate Tears” by Milliner and “The Great Handwashing Machine” by Baron – are about family life and left me in tears. Laurel Synder offers a wonderful version of a rabbinic tale in “Nachshon in the Desert, Alone at the Sea.” In “Growing Up Sandwiched Between Identities,” Ruth Behar writes about being half Ashkenazic/half Sephardic, in addition to being an American of Cuban birth. Sofiya Pasternack presents a sweet and sad story about immigrant life on the Lower East Side in “The Bitter Princess.” Contemporary dilemmas are offered in three stories: “The Awful Omen” by A. J. Sass, whose main character worries about revealing to their family that they are nonbinary; “Music and Matzo” by Laura Shovan, whose narrator wants to include women's stories in the seder; and “Why I Hate Gefilte Fish” by Sarah Kapit, where a character who has autism finds it difficult to deal with all the smells and noise of the seder.”

“On All Other Nights” would make a perfect *afikomen* present, but, better yet, give it to all the tweens who come to your seder. If you like it as much as I did, you might even be tempted to give it to your hostess as a gift since adults may want to read this with – or without – their children.

Books for teens

◆ “Trajectory”

Women's contributions to achieving victory in World War II have often been overlooked. Cambria Gordon's new novel “Trajectory” (Scholastic Press) features a fictional version of the life of one of the more than 100 women who performed calculations for the U.S. Army in order to better understand how planes, bombs, etc. would act under real combat conditions. The narrator, 17-year-old Eleanor, originally hides her math skills because she believes she caused her brilliant professor father to have a stroke when she was 6 and doesn't deserve them. But when her skill is accidentally revealed to someone connected to the armed forces, she is recruited to help in the war effort. However, she can tell no one – friend or family – what she is doing.

Eleanor, who has always tried to be invisible, has difficulty at first being part of the group of women working at the University of Pennsylvania. But she's soon transferred – first to California and then Pearl Harbor – to solve a mystery that may help the U.S. win the war. However, she also faces other problems, including news about what

is happening to her relatives in Europe. The reports are distressing and she rightly fears for their lives. In the midst of these difficult emotions, Eleanor meets a pilot who, although not Jewish, is the first man to whom she's felt a mutual attraction. Yet, unless she comes to understand and reveal her true mathematical ability, she may never solve the Army's puzzle or feel comfortable in her own life.

The math in “Trajectory” quickly moved beyond my understanding, but that didn't make the action any less interesting. Although the novel dragged a bit in its middle section, it's opening was interesting and absorbing, and its concluding chapters were really exciting. Readers will root for Eleanor to both solve her math problems and to understand and truly accept who she really is.

◆ “Replay”

One frequent refrain in memoirs is how the past affects the present. “Replay: Memoir of an Uprooted Family” by Joran Mechner (First Second) shows the importance of relating stories from the past in order for the current generation to understand the history of their family. The graphic memoir offers three different stories: the first and most interesting is a record put together by the author/artist's grandfather about his life in Austria, first his service in the army during World War I and then his escape from Europe, although Mechner's father was, at first, left behind in Paris when his father moved to Cuba.

The two other sections focus on the author's life. One shows him in contemporary times, dealing with his two teenaged children and a failing second marriage. He is trying to create a new incarnation of a video game that once brought him fame and fortune. However, raising funds is now far more difficult and complicated. It would also mean moving to France, which could have a profound effect on his family life. The other section shows how he obtained his first success and the people he worked with then. Readers interested in video games will discover the difference between contemporary times and the days when all that was needed to create a game was desire and a computer.

The colors used in the graphics are different for each time period, although sometimes the action switches back and forth so quickly that it's difficult to know which time period the author is featuring. However, that works beautifully when different Passover seders – from his grandfather's time to present day – are portrayed over several pages.

The story told in “Replay” is messy because it shows real life with all its problems and dissatisfactions. Happy endings are not always possible. Perhaps the real lesson Mechner teaches is reflected during one of the seders: “In the Passover story, bread represents the familiar, comfortable life we know. The matzah reminds us that we need to be ready to walk away from it at a moment's notice.” The story of Mechner's father's and grandfather's lives proves just how true that is.

Picture books

◆ “The Tree of Life”

Hope: that is what picture books about the Holocaust try to offer children. That's true of the real life story “The Tree of Life: How a Holocaust Sapling Inspired the World” written by Elisa Boxer and illustrated by Alianna Rozentsveig (Rocky Pond Books). One such ray of hope occurred in the Terezin ghetto when a teacher, Irma Lauscher, asked someone to secretly bring a tree into the ghetto. Both risked their lives to do so, but her students faithfully care for that tree. Even as more and more people were taken from the ghetto, the students kept the tree alive. Once the war was over, the tree became a symbol of freedom and hope. Seeds from the tree were taken and planted across the world. Even as the tree grew old and died, its descendants – more than 600 trees in different parts of the world – continued to grow.

“The Tree of Life” is beautifully done and includes additional information so adults can explain what occurred to their children. Parents will need to gauge whether their child is mature enough to understand the story and how much additional information should be given about the Holocaust. But adults will also appreciate this tale, one which offers a rare sliver of light from that horrific time.

◆ “Sophie's Monster Goes to Shul”

Sophie has an imaginary monster living in her closet. Unfortunately, her monster is going through an identity crisis: he doesn't have a job now that Sophie is no longer afraid of him. This leaves him crying, “Oy, oy, oy” and worried about finding a new occupation. In “Sophie's Monster Goes to Shul” by Sandy Asher and illustrated by Alexandra Colombo (Kar-Ben Publishing), Sophie helps her monster by bringing him to religious school where the two of them have a wonderful time. Then, with the use of her imagination, Sophie finds the perfect place for him.

“Sophie's Monster Goes to Shul” is cute and a bit silly, which is perfect for the story. The resolution is clever and satisfying. Colombo's illustrations are well done and young (and older) readers will love the drawings of the not-really-scary, large, blue-green, hairy monster. An added pleasure is that Sophie loves religious school and hopefully readers will share in her delight.

Happy Passover

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Rose Shea
Director

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TC Sisterhood Donor event on May 5

The Temple Concord Sisterhood Donor event will be held on Sunday, May 5, at 3 pm, in the Kilmer Mansion. Members of S.T.A.R. (Southern Tier Actors Read) will present dramatic readings of three, funny Jewish-themed skits, mostly about Jews relationships to God and to one another.

The performance is under the direction of Deborah Williams. A variety of hors d'oeuvres and beverages will be served, according to Deb Daniels.

Those attending must have paid their Sisterhood dues for 2023-24, plus made a donation of \$25 for themselves, or a

donation of \$36 if they wish to bring a guest who isn't eligible to be a Temple Concord Sisterhood member. Those who have already paid their dues and made a donation are welcome to attend at no extra cost. Those interested in attending should RSVP to Daniels at ddaniels2@stny.rr.com

or 607-743-1427 by Thursday, May 2.

Anyone unsure if they have paid their dues or made a donor donation should contact Nancy Dorfman (ndorfma1@gmail.com) or Helene Philips (hgphilips@stny.rr.com). It is not too late to pay dues or make a donor donation.

Benny Kellman to speak at BD Sisterhood Donor

The Beth David Sisterhood will hold its annual donor meeting on Wednesday May 8, at 7 pm. The featured speaker will be Benny Kellman, who will discuss how the terror attacks on Israel by Hamas on October 7 and the resultant war in Gaza has affected the lives of Jewish and Israeli students on the Binghamton University campus.

A donation of \$25 or more is requested from those who attend the fund-raising meeting, which will be held at the home of Alan and Julie Piaker. To receive their address or make a reservation, e-mail Beth David Synagogue at Bethdavid@stny.rr.com or call 607-722-1793 and leave a message. An RSVP by Thursday, May 2, is appreciated so that organizers can be certain to provide an appropriate amount of desserts. Those who have not made reservations are still invited to attend.

Kellman has been the *maskhiach* at the

Kosher Korner at Binghamton University for five years. During that time, he has earned a master's degree and begun working on his Ph.D. in American history and modern Jewish history. He plans to write his dissertation as a comparative study of small-city Jewish communities in the 20th century United States.

"These two positions, both on the Binghamton University's campus, have given

Benny a rounded perspective on students' feelings and situations," said organizers of the event. "His wife, Rivka, worked for the Hillel at Binghamton office on campus, where she has counseled Jewish students who have had difficulty handling the stress of campus life during this past year.

"Members and friends of Beth David's Sisterhood are invited to show their support for the organization by attending the annual

donor meeting," organizers added. "Both Jewish and Israeli students and their Palestinian and Arab counterparts have at times felt threatened and traumatized, and have often found it difficult to have meaningful communication. We anticipate a lively discussion after Benny's speech. Please do not hesitate to attend the meeting even if you neglected to notify us in advance. We always plan a little extra food just in case!"

TC Sisterhood elections on May 1

Temple Concord Sisterhood elections for 2024-25 will be held on Wednesday, May 1, at 7 pm, in person at Temple Concord. All Sisterhood members who attend may vote.

The president will be Barbara Thomas with Past President Lani Dunthorn, Treasurer Nancy Dorfman, Financial Secretaries

Helene Philips and Robin Haas, Recording Secretary Marty Eisenstadt and Corresponding Secretary Sandy Foreman.

Directors for 2024-26 are Marsha Luks, Linda Lisman, Bernice Zelman and Babs Putzel-Bischoff, with directors for 2023-25 Philips and Deb Williams. Nominating Committee Chairwoman will be Putzel-Bischoff; she also will be publicity chairwoman and Rosh Hashanah Kiddush chairwoman. The Rosh Hashanah Kiddush committee will be Tracy Putzel-Bischoff, Barbara Dickman, Luks and Gayle Klein. See "Elections" on page 10

TC Havdalah program on April 20 to focus on "Judaism and Workers' Rights"

Temple Concord will hold the *Havdalah* program "Judaism and Workers' Rights" with Rabbi Leiah Moser on Saturday, April

20, at 7:30 pm, at the synagogue, 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton. There is no cost and the community is invited to attend.

"You may already be aware that the 19th and 20th centuries Jewish people were at the forefront of workers' struggle for better wages and safer working conditions," said organizers of the event. "But did you know that the right of workers to form labor unions is enshrined in traditional Jewish

law? The legacy of Jewish thought about fair treatment of laborers goes all the way back to the Torah and the later elaboration of the early rabbis. Join Rabbi Leiah for an exploration of the rich history of Jewish labor, from Torah and Talmud to early 20th century Yiddish strike songs!"

OF NOTE

Karp

Jonathan Karp, associate professor of Judaic studies and history at Binghamton University, gave the Harpur College Dean's Distinguished Lecture on April 16. His talk was called "'Everybody's Doin' It Now': The Peculiar Place of Jews in Early Jazz." He discussed how toward the start of the 1920s Jazz Age, a widespread misconception circulated in the popular press that the sensational new musical style then sweeping the nation was largely a "Jewish" invention. During his lecture, he explored the ethnic and racial prejudices that made possible such a misattribution, while also complicating the understanding of the real origins of America's most admired musical genre.

Karp is the author of "The Politics of

Jewish Commerce: Economic Thought and Emancipation in Europe" (Cambridge University Press, 2008) and editor or co-editor of seven volumes, including "Beyond Whiteness: Revisiting Jews in Ethnic America" (Purdue University Press, 2023); "World War I and the Jews" (Berghahn Books, 2018) with Marsha L. Rozenblit; and "The Cambridge History of Judaism in the Early Modern World" (Cambridge University Press, 2017) with Adam Sutcliffe. His work explores the roles that Jews have played in modern economic life and the images and stereotypes that have accompanied them. His forthcoming book is "Chosen Surrogates: Jews and Blacks in the Business of American Popular Music."

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Choices and consequences: Good-bye, Mrs. Maisel, wherever you are

BILL SIMONS

After 43 episodes, showrunner Amy Sherman-Palladino's groundbreaking dramedy "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel" (Amazon Prime, 2017-23) has retired, sort of. It enjoys video immortality on streaming services and may yet inspire a movie, play, novel, clothing line, signature cosmetics or chain of Jewish delis. Moreover, "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel" continues to elicit popular and intellectual commentary.

Chronicling the life and times of Midge Maisel from her 1954 marriage as a privileged, 22-year-old Jewish American princess to her 2005 epilogue as a 73-year-old entertainment icon determined to remain relevant, the program leavened robust humor – ranging from observational to madcap – with serious commentary about gender, sexism, sexuality, feminism, parenting, priorities and Jewish assimilation.

In the final season of "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel," drama took precedence. The choices open to Midge in the late 1950s and early 1960s took center stage, then flashed forward to the decades that followed tracing the consequences of past decisions. Through her courage, talent and ferocious ambition, Midge evolved from the pampered daughter of Abe and Rose Weissman, and cheated upon wife of Joel Maisel, to become a celebrated standup comic, but what price did she and those closest to her pay? That uncomfortable question pervades Midge's concluding journey in the elegiac season 5.

In a flash-forward, the final season opens in Cambridge, MA, home to Harvard University. The year is 1981. A 23-year-old woman – quirky, resentful, alternately braggadocious and insecure, recipient of a Ph.D. in the sciences – is in a therapy session. She badgers and bullies her male therapist. Claiming that only her maternal grandfather understood her, the young woman displays special anger toward her absent mother for not appreciating her. The young woman's name is Esther Maisel, the daughter of the famous Midge. The career-centric Midge spent little

time with her daughter, left parenting to Esther's grandparents, and remarked on the supposedly odd shape of the little girl's head.

Absentee parenting also tainted Midge's relationship with her son Ethan, Esther's senior by three years. As a child, Ethan came to understand that he did not possess the intellectual endowments endemic amongst men in the Weissman line and evident in his little sister. Insecurity created problems for Ethan at the private school he attended and at home where he feared sleeping in his own bed. A child psychologist might have helped Ethan, but that idea was vetoed. Episode three has a flash forward to 1984, revealing a dust-spewing helicopter landing in a cabbage field in Israel, the disruption sending anxious *kibbutz* workers scurrying.

Then, a middle-aged but still glitzy celebrity steps out of the helicopter. Midge is there to cajole Ethan, now a tall, good-looking, *kippah*-wearing rabbinical student and *kibbutzim* member, to accompany her to a United Jewish Appeal dinner honoring her philanthropic work. The emotional distance between Ethan and Midge is evident. When Midge jokes about her multiple romantic misadventures, Chava, Ethan's girlfriend and eventual wife, denounces her in Hebrew as an evil narcissist, a judgment that only hardens through the years and that Ethan does not challenge.

Midge makes the most important decision of her life while still in her mid-20s during the heyday of the 1950s feminine mystique. Discovering husband Joel Maisel having an affair with his secretary, Midge decides that she is not going to accept disrespect, subordination and standing in the shadow of a spouse. Taking the stage after her businessman husband's failed foray into standup comedy, Midge finds that she has a talent for making people laugh. Midge is a natural comic, not by telling jokes but by putting a spin on observations about her own life and the people who are part of it. And she loves the attention and applause.

Sharing laughter with an audience makes Midge happy. Neither romance nor children are going to stand in the way. Midge jilts both a Jewish doctor and the acclaimed novelist Philip Roth at the altar, moves on from comic genius and mentor Lenny Bruce during his drug-fueled descent, marries four times and has a kaleidoscope of affairs with famous men, but her true love is standup comedy. Midge is determined to make it big and she does.


Midge briefly remarries Joel. On some level, their love never ends. To stop the mob from fleecing a percentage from Midge's earnings, an arrangement that her manager Susie Myerson, a compulsive gambler with heavy debts, enters into without Midge's knowledge, Joel gives the mob a piece of his nightclub. The mob connections land Joel in prison. Intervals of cheer occasionally lighten incarceration for Joel, grown paunchy and sad in middle-aged confinement, through periodic visits by someone who cares about him, Midge.

Despite Midge's relentless pursuit of fame and adulation, there are people she loves. She neglects her children and dumps Joel, but she loves them; ditto the eccentric parents from whom she inherits an appealing weirdness. As entertainment brings Midge riches, her parents – the mother a status-conscious heiress turned professional matchmaker and the father a Columbia math professor morphed into Village Voice columnist – experience serious financial loss, and Midge gladly supports them. Midge also loves Susie, save for a long interval of anger.

Tough, profane, mannish in dress and the daughter of working-class Jews, talent manager Susie is devoted to Midge, ruthless in pushing her client's career forward and battling, on Midge's behalf, against sexist opposition to a woman doing standup comedy. Susie leverages a youthful affair with Hedy, wife of the star of "The Gordon Ford Show" – late-night must-watch TV – into Midge's See "Maisel" on page 10


PASSOVER GREETINGS

Wishing you and your family peace, health and happiness this Pesach



Marilyn Aigen

May you and your family have a joyous Pesach




Steve Gilbert & family

Happy Passover

Rob & Shari Neuberger

May you and your family have a joyous Pesach




Rabbi Zev & Judy Silber




Bob Tomanek

May you and your family have a joyous Pesach




Terri Bennett



Happy Passover from Steven, Gail, Michael, Emily and Milo Feuer of Otego, NY

Wishing you and your family peace, health and happiness this Pesach



Susan and Gerald Hubal

Wishing our friends & family a Happy Passover



Merri & Tony Linka, Alexander, Anna, Maya, Dora, Ari & Max Preus



Happy Passover!

Rhona & Richard Esserman


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Susan and Ben Kasper

Passover Blessings



Jean & Lew Hecht and family



Maria and Bob Kutz wish all their relatives and friends a Happy Passover

Passover Greetings

from Linda & Dennis Robi and Family



HAPPY PASSOVER

Ann C. Brillant

Shmurah matzah available

Chabad plans community seder, "Seders in a Box"

Passover seder

Chabad Center will hold a Passover seder open to the general community on the first night of the holiday, Monday, April 22. Festivities will begin with services at 7:30 pm, followed by the seder; the services and the seder will be held at the Chabad Center, 420 Murray Hill Rd., Vestal. For more information and seder reservations, contact Chabad at aslonim@Jewishbu.com or 607-797-0015.

The seder will include all of the traditional observances, a full-course dinner, handmade *shmurah* matzah and mystical 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. "Our seder is open to anyone who wants

to attend a traditional seder; no previous knowledge or level of observance is required," explained Rabbi Aaron Slonim, executive director of Chabad. "Be prepared to be welcomed – just as you are – as part of the family." There is no charge for the seders, but donations to help defray the cost would be appreciated and can be sent to Chabad before or after the holiday.

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

"Seder in a Box"

For those who are unable to attend and would like to celebrate the holiday with all of the traditions, Chabad will make available a "Seder in a Box." Interested parties are asked to contact Chabad at aslonim@Jewishbu.com or at 607-797-0015 to reserve their box or a box for a friend or relative as soon as possible. The "Seder in a Box" contains matzah, grape juice, a holiday dinner (for one or two) and all

of the ceremonial items necessary for a seder. A haggadah will be included as well.

The subsidized cost of the "Seder in a Box" is \$54, which includes one dinner; there is a \$25 cost for each additional meal. Reservations for attending the Seder in person or for a "Seder in a Box" will be taken until Friday, April 19.

Community members who wish to assist in this effort can help with delivery, underwrite the cost of a box or two, and/ or help with the cooking of the food and packaging of the boxes. To offer assistance, contact Chabad at 607-797-0015. Checks earmarked for this purpose may be sent to Chabad, 420 Murray Hill Rd., Vestal.

Shmurah matzah

Handmade *shmurah* matzah will be available for purchase through the Chabad House for \$19 a pound. Three matzahs can be purchased for \$10 as long as the supply lasts; interested parties are urged to place their orders as soon as possible. To order *shmurah* matzah, call the Chabad Center at 607-797-0015.

Passover online resources

By Reporter staff

◆ The Jewish Grandparents Networks offers the free "Ten-Minute Dayenu Seder," which is available for download at <https://jewishgrandparentsnetwork.org/ten-minute-dayenu-seder/>.

◆ Hadar will offer "Count the Omer with Hadar: A Moment of Midrash" on Mondays-Thursdays, May 6-June 7, from 9-9:15 pm. Four different teachers will explore different *midrash*. For more information or to register, visit [/www.hadar.org/learn/classes-events/count-omer-hadar-moment-midrash](http://www.hadar.org/learn/classes-events/count-omer-hadar-moment-midrash).

◆ The Blue Dove Foundation has mental health resources focusing on Passover, which can be found at https://thebluedovefoundation.org/resource_category/passover/.

New, inclusive haggadah aims to empower your seder

By Josh Hasten

(JNS) – A brand-new Passover haggadah, titled "Empowering Seder Conversations," published just in time for the holiday, is designed to promote inclusion at the seder table, making the evening more accessible for those suffering from aphasia and other neurological challenges.

Aphasia is a condition that robs a person of the ability to communicate. It can affect one's ability to speak, write, work with numbers and understand language, both verbal and written.

The haggadah was written by Efrat resident Eitan Ashman and edited by his wife Leora. In 2017, Eitan suffered a massive left-side ischemic stroke. As a result, among other setbacks, Eitan developed memory loss and aphasia.

A day after the stroke, Leora opened a Facebook page called "Koach Eitan" ("Eitan's Strength"), wanting to keep family and friends updated on Eitan's recovery.

But the page morphed from just a place to post updates into See "Haggadah" on page 15

PASSOVER GREETINGS



HAPPY PASSOVER
חג פסח שמח

Next year may we all be free!
Suzanne Holwitt and family

May you and your family have a joyous Pesach




Rabbi Barry and Jill Baron

כוס מרים

This year, may we all be free!

Happy Passover


Rebecca Kahn & Richard Birchard




We wish everyone a sweet & healthy Pesach.


Harold & Toby Kohn and Family

Wishing you and your family peace, health and happiness this Pesach

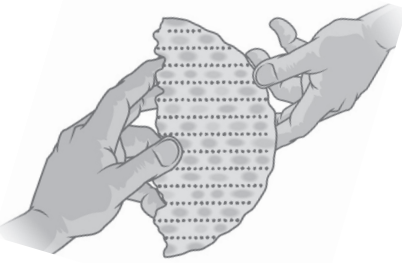


Shelley, Mark, Josh & Rae Hubal

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Rabbi Rachel Esserman



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Arieh Ullmann & Rhonda Levine

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Neil & Sima Auerbach

HAPPY PASSOVER

From the Gregor Family
Laura, Gene & Helen,
Michael & Jennifer

May the dove of peace descend on Israel.

Happy Passover

Kathy Brown,
Advertising Representative



Shabbat dinner at Binghamton University draws 2,200 participants

Published with permission from Chabad.org.

(April 9, 2024 / Binghamton, NY / Chabad of Binghamton) – A mega Shabbat dinner on Friday night served to unify the Jewish community of Binghamton University in New York with a record 2,200 students participating. The Rohr Chabad

Center for Jewish Student Life sponsored the April 5 event, saying that it was the largest gathering of students in one place for a Shabbat dinner to date.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of a communitywide Shabbat meal that began with 1,000 participants in 1994 and was led by Chabad of Binghamton Co-directors

Rabbi Aaron and Rivkah Slonim. About 4,000 Jewish students attend Binghamton, with as many as 1,500 active in programs, events and holidays at the campus Chabad during the academic year in one capacity or another.

“There’s a very special feeling in the room for those who put their whole heart and soul into making it and for those who experience what may be their once-a-year connection to Judaism,” said Goldie Ohana, the programming director of Rohr Chabad Center at Binghamton.

“It means everything to me to just spend the night together in unity,” said Michal Levine, a junior, who volunteered to help coordinate the event.

It took a collective effort to pull it all off. Some 235 student volunteers came together to organize, set up and coordinate the Shabbat dinner, which was free and open to all students, faculty and staff.

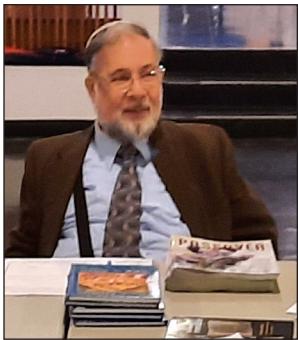
Harvey Stenger, president of the university, said the annual event “is one of the university’s great traditions and has been emulated by colleges around the world since it began 30 years ago. My thanks go out to



A mega-gathering for Shabbat also included lighting candles, as shown in this photo taken before the start of Shabbat on April 5.

Rabbi Slonim and the Rohr Chabad Center, as well as the many student volunteers who make this event possible. Many of our See “Shabbat” on page 15

BD Sisterhood held pre-Passover workshop



Rabbi Zev Silber presented his annual pre-Passover workshop to members and friends of Beth David Sisterhood on April 3. He also told those attending to appreciate the beauty of the structure of the poem “Dayenu” and to think about the implications of why certain actions could have been enough, but really were not. (Photos by Chaim Joy)



L-r: Judy Silber, Raychel Reilly, Susan Hubal and Stacey Silber listened to Rabbi Zev Silber (not shown) talk about Passover.



Cathy Velenchik, president of Beth David’s Sisterhood, presided over the April meeting.



Toby and Harold Kohn paid attention to the discussion about Passover.



Thousands of Binghamton University students celebrated Shabbat with food, song and prayers for the Israeli hostages still being held in the Gaza Strip since October 7 in a photo taken before the start of Shabbat on April 5. (Photos by S. Grossbaum/Chabad of Binghamton)

TC Religious School prepped for Passover



Students at the Temple Concord Religious School prepared for Passover by making seder plates.

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U Bosco Chocolate Syrup 22 oz

3⁹⁹



U Manischewitz Potato Pancake Mix 6 oz

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Streit's Passover Matzos 5 lb

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Hostage families hold mock seder to demand: Let our people go!

By Amelie Botbol

(JNS) – Families of Israelis still being held hostage by Hamas in the Gaza Strip gathered in Kibbutz Nir Oz’s bullet-riddled dining hall on April 11 for a mock seder to demand the return of their loved ones ahead of Passover, which commemorates the biblical Exodus from Egypt and the Jewish people’s deliverance from bondage.

The hall contained empty yellow chairs (the color associated with the campaign to free the hostages) with pictures of each of the 133 hostages still being held by the terror group, alongside empty plates and cutlery, similar to the iconic exhibit in Tel Aviv’s Hostages Square.

“Last Shabbat marked six months since they were cruelly kidnapped from their home. Six months and it feels as if they have been forgotten there. Six months where every moment of theirs could be their last moment and perhaps already has been,” said Ofri Bibas-Levy, the sister of Yarden Bibas, who was abducted during Hamas’ October 7 invasion along with his wife Shiri and their two children Ariel, 4, and Kfir, 1.

“Will they be granted the freedom so cruelly taken from them? Hasn’t the time come for the whole world to also shout for Ariel and Kfir? A shout for justice, for humanity, for an end to this nightmare. Let my family go! Let our people go!” said Bibas-Levy.

The walls of the evacuated kibbutz’s dining hall, which was torched on October 7, still radiated a rotten stench, prompting some journalists covering the event to remain by the windows.

“We are standing here at the place where I used to celebrate Passover with my father, with my family, with my whole community. So many of us are still missing,” said Noam Peri, daughter of elderly hostage Chaim Peri, who was kidnapped from Nir Oz.

“Do not talk about a ceasefire when our people are still held in tunnels. Apply pressure to make sure they are back home before Passover!” she added.

The kibbutz, located less than two miles from the Gaza border, was one of the hardest hit during the October 7 onslaught, with one in four residents being killed or kidnapped.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu confirmed early on April 14 that Hamas has rejected the latest U.S.-mediated hostages-for-ceasefire proposal.

“It has been over a week since the Cairo meeting – Hamas has rejected the outline that was tabled by the mediators,” said Netanyahu’s office.

The development “proves that [Hamas chief in Gaza Yahya] Sinwar does not want a humanitarian deal and the return of the hostages, is continuing to exploit the tension with Iran and is striving to unite the sectors and achieve a general escalation in the region,” the statement continued.

“Israel will continue to strive to realize the objectives of the war with Hamas with full force, and leave no stone unturned to return the 133 hostages from Gaza forthwith,” it concluded.

The U.S. proposal would have seen Jerusalem release 900 terrorist prisoners, including murderers, in exchange for 40 hostages, along with a partial IDF withdraw-

al from the Gaza Strip and the unrestricted return of Palestinians to the northern part of the coastal enclave.

CNN reported on April 10 that the terror group claims it is currently unable to track down 40 living female, elderly and sick captives to release in the first batch in a possible hostage release deal.

Israel has pushed for Hamas to fill out the initial release with younger male hostages, including IDF soldiers, an official in Jerusalem told CNN. Officials in Jerusalem believe that the IDF withdrawal from Khan Yunis and the flood of humanitarian aid into Gaza have hurt the chances that Hamas will agree to a hostage release deal.

Israeli-American Liat Atzili Beinin was released in November as part of a weeklong ceasefire agreement. Her husband, Aviv, a member of Nir Oz’s emergency response team, was killed on October 7 while fending off terrorists. “We are today at Kibbutz Nir Oz, my home. I will not list again the verbs describing what happened here – it is a terrifying list. Given our ordeal, it is my right to demand that anyone with a shred



Ofri Bibas-Levy spoke during a mock Passover seder for the release of the hostages in kibbutz Nir-Oz, April 11. (Photo courtesy of the Hostages and Missing Families Forum)

of morality join our call to return all the hostages without conditions,” said Beinin. “For the families of the 133 hostages, there will be no ‘holiday’ without their loved ones. Don’t miss this opportunity,” she added.

Nova music fest survivors bring child into post-Oct. 7 world

By JNS staff

(JNS) – Supernova music festival massacre survivors Astar Moshe, 35, and Shlomi Tobi, 37, just welcomed a healthy baby to the world, almost six months to the day following Hamas’s October 7 invasion of southern Israel.

“The moment came when the delivery-room ID was placed on my hand, right next to my Nova admittance band. Seeing them on my hand, side by side, I started to cry,” said Tobi.

Residents of the Haifa suburbs, the couple arranged for Moshe to give birth at the city’s Rambam Medical Center.

“We could so easily have been one of those who are no longer with us today or one of the hostages waiting to return home,” said Moshe. “Thank God for this treasure we hold in our hands.”

More than 360 people were murdered at the October 7 outdoor event near Kibbutz Re’im – nearly one-third of the 1,200 people killed by Hamas terrorists during their invasion of the northwestern Negev. Many more were wounded, and at least 40 were taken back to Gaza as hostages. There were



Supernova music festival survivors Astar Moshe, 35, and Shlomi Tobi, 37, with their newborn baby in April. (Photo courtesy of Rambam Medical Center)

widespread reports of rape and sexual abuse during the massacre.

“A party that became a defining event,” Moshe recalled.

“We didn’t understand what was happening. We thought it was a code red attack that would soon pass – the usual things. We never imagined such a massacre,” she said.

“You were such a hero, you led us away See “Child” on page 12

Passover Greetings from these Health Care Professionals

Passover Greetings from

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Elections. Continued from page 5

Whale of a Sale Co-Chairwomen will be Ani Loew and Lynn Ross, with Rummage Sale Co-Chairwomen Pam Burgman and Julie Byers. The Judaica Shop co-chairwomen are Carol Herz, Robin Hazen and Susan High. Williams will be chairwoman of Artisan Marketplace with Philips on her committee.

Sisterhood Sabbath co-chairwomen will be Susan Hurwitz, Stephanie Tarlowe and Shari Neuberger. Needed are volunteers to work on the Intersisterhood event. High Holiday Child Care chairwoman will be Amanda Donahue. Jesse Parker will

handle the Cradle Roll. Adult Education/ Programming, Donor and Women’s Seder co-chairwomen will be Deb Daniels, Phyllis Kellenberger and Roz Antoun, with Friday Night Oneg Co-Chairwomen Sylvia Diamond, Marty Eisenstadt and Barbara Dickman. Scholar-in-Residence Oneg chairwoman will be Jean Hecht.

Herz will handle membership and retention. Hospitality chairwomen will be Sandy Foreman and Marty Eisenstadt. Serving on the Nominating Committee will Antoun, Robin Haas and Foreman. Hecht will handle Sisterhood Funds.

Maisel. Continued from page 6

brief on-camera cameo appearance on the program, where Midge labors in anonymity as a writer. Once on the air, Midge subverts a nothing appearance into a full-blow, hilarious, star-is-born monologue, skewering Joel, her children and most of all herself.

Appreciation for Susie getting her airtime on “The Gordon Ford Show,” however, sours when Midge learns of Susie’s mob ties and the trajectory that ensnares Joel. The Midge-Susie sisterhood descends into years of anger and rejection, reconciliation a late comer.

“The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel” ends with a flash forward to a 2005 vignette of Midge as a septuagenarian. The sequence is set in Midge’s huge apartment in the

legendary Dakota – also the home of Yoko Ono – across from Central Park on the Upper West Side. Meeting with her show business staff, Midge, clearly anxious about down time, repeatedly demands a gig to fill an open date. After her handlers exit, Midge passes servants and a large empty dining table. She eats alone in the kitchen. A black and white photo of Midge and Joel on their wedding day adds to the autumnal tone as Midge transverses cavernous rooms. Lonely, Midge turns on the TV to watch “Jeopardy” and makes a phone call to Susie, now retired and a continent away. In the final fadeout, “Jeopardy” audio is foil to the kibbitzing and laughter of Susie and Midge.

Wisdom from the Passover kitchen: Getting the kids involved

By Naomi Ross

(JNS)—Folding chairs lined the hallway wall like dutiful soldiers in expectation of arriving guests. Unfamiliar, dusty boxes of pots and china were stacked high, their contents waiting to make their annual appearance on the dining room table. As a child, the anticipation during those momentous days leading up to Passover was palpable. I couldn't help but sense the urgency – something big was imminent and I wanted to be a part of it. Fortunately for me, my mother was adept at putting me to work, getting me involved in the preparations and effectively igniting a spark in her daughter to experience the excitement of the holiday.

As a parent, I've realized the mitzvah ("commandment") of educating your children about the story of the Exodus from Egypt begins earlier – not at the seder, but before, in the kitchen.

Kids learn experientially (so do adults). They need to engage all of their senses to internalize a concept or lesson. That's why we hold up the shank bone, the matzah and the bitter herbs; our seders come complete with props and visual aids.

So, how do we pass on our traditions in a way that is meaningfully relevant to the next generation? It happens first by inviting them to take part in the preparations and the cooking, fostering a feeling of being invested in the holiday experience. That is what makes Passover real for them. The door to meaningful conversations is opened there in the kitchen while peeling apples or rolling matzah balls.

Many jobs are perfect for this purpose and appropriate for a wide range of ages. Here are a few suggestions:

- ◆ **Making charoset:** As a child, I thought that making charoset was an all-day process. Peeling, coring and chopping the apples took forever. Chopping nuts in our little manual glass-jar chopper was such hard work for a little one that by the time I finished, I felt as though I were enslaved in Egypt, too! Truth be told, it was the perfect job; it kept me busy for a long time and I felt very accomplished afterward. Come seder night, I was incredibly proud to pass around the charoset I made myself. (Safety tip: For younger children for whom sharp knives are inappropriate, an old-fashioned hand-held chopper and a large chopping bowl are the way to go.)

- ◆ **Peeling hard-boiled eggs:** All kids think this is fun. I have no idea why, but they do. So teach them how and let them at it.

- ◆ **Setting the table:** There are many more things to prepare on the seder table than for a regular meal: assembling haggadahs, pillows for reclining, salt water and preparing the seder plate all take time. If your children are creative, they can create pretty folded napkins or handmade place cards. Both are fantastic craft projects for artistic kids.

- ◆ **Cooking and baking:** For older kids who are able to follow a recipe (or interested in learning), this is a great opportunity to teach your kids basic lessons in cooking and baking. I still remember being called over to help taste and season a simmering dish. And it was in my mother's kitchen that I learned how to beat egg whites into "stiff peaks" for baking Passover sponge cakes.

No matter how you enlist your children, the real secret to getting them involved is by showing your own interest and excitement. When your kids see you enjoying yourself and getting into the spirit, then they will follow suit and reflect that joy into your home.

Both recipes included here are gluten-free and Passover-friendly.

Hash Brown Cups (dairy or pareve)

Makes 10-12 cups
Prep time: 15-25 minutes
Cook time: 35-40 minutes



These are the perfect do-ahead hash browns for a brunch, and they can be filled and baked with several variations below. They're also good as an alternative to fried potato latkes (no frying mess with these) and are perfect for topping. Get creative and vary your toppings – sautéed peppers, smoked salmon, sour cream, etc.

These can be made a day ahead. Refresh uncovered in a hot oven to re-crisp the cups.

- 3 medium potatoes (about 1½ lbs.), scrubbed
- 3 Tbsp. butter or margarine, melted
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 450°F. Grease a 12-cup muffin pan liberally with cooking spray.

Bake or microwave potatoes (pierce with a fork first) until mostly cooked through, but still somewhat firm with a bite (about 45 minutes in a 350°F oven, or 5 to 6 minutes in the microwave). They should not be mushy.

Peel the skin off the potatoes. Working over a large mixing bowl, coarsely grate potatoes (a box grater is fine

for this). Toss with butter, salt and pepper.

Carefully line each muffin cup with about 3 to 4 tablespoons of the potatoes, pressing against and up the sides of each cup into an even layer.

Bake for about 20 to 25 minutes, until the potatoes are golden and the edges are crisped. Remove from the oven and allow to cool.

If making one of the variations, continue with the directions below; otherwise, use an offset spatula to carefully remove cups from pan, fill with desired toppings and serve.

Egg-in-a-Nest Variation:

- ½ cup packed grated cheddar cheese
- 1 dozen eggs

Reduce oven temperature to 425°F.

Divide the shredded cheese and place it in each hash brown cup.

Crack each egg and pour it carefully into each cup. Season with salt and pepper.

Bake for about 12 to 15 minutes or until the eggs are just set. Remove from oven.

Cool slightly; use an offset spatula to carefully remove from the pan.

Broccoli Quiche Variation:

- ½ cup packed grated cheddar cheese
- 1 cup frozen chopped broccoli, defrosted and drained
- 3 eggs
- ⅓ cup milk

Reduce oven temperature to 425°F. Divide the shredded cheese among the hash brown cups.

Place a few teaspoons of broccoli in each cup (over the cheese).

Beat eggs and milk together; season with salt and pepper. Pour slowly into each cup, being careful to not overfill.

Bake for about 15 minutes or until set. Remove from oven. Cool slightly; use an offset spatula to carefully remove cups from the pan.

Short on time? While I like to use real potatoes for the freshest taste, frozen hash browns can be used instead for a quick shortcut. Simply thaw and press them into the muffin cups.

Espresso Meringue Cookies (pareve)

Makes 18-24 cookies

Prep time: 10-15 minutes

Cook time: 1 hour, plus 1 hour cooling time

The perfect meringue is crispy on the outside, slightly chewy on the inside. For best results, use fresh, room-temperature egg whites. The proteins in old egg whites may not dry out properly in the oven. To protect the integrity of the meringue, make sure your bowl and beaters are clean

and dry. Use a star tip to pipe decoratively into mounds.

- 4 large egg whites
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 1 cup sugar
- 1½ Tbsp. instant espresso powder or instant coffee
- 1 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- Coffee beans (optional)
- Cocoa for dusting

Preheat oven to 250°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper; set aside.

In a large, clean, dry mixing bowl, beat the egg whites and salt with an electric mixer (fitted with the balloon whisk attachment) on medium speed until the whites are foamy. Increase speed to high, beating until soft peaks form.

Slowly add in the sugar, adding about 2 tablespoons at a time, beating for 15 to 30 seconds after each addition. Add the espresso and vanilla, and continue to beat until the meringue forms very stiff, pillowy, glossy peaks (the mixture should be able to hold a peak up when the beaters are raised).

Working quickly, drop the mixture by large spoonfuls onto the prepared baking sheets, spacing them 1 to 2 inches apart. Top each meringue with an optional coffee bean and dust with cocoa.

Bake for 1 hour or until the surfaces of the meringues feel dry and you can pick one off the parchment without any sticking.

Turn off the oven, prop the door open slightly with the handle of a wooden spoon and allow meringues to cool gently in the oven for 1 hour. Transfer to a serving platter.

Chef's touch: Use a star tip to pipe decoratively into mounds.

Variations and ideas:

- ◆ **Vanilla Meringue Cookies:** Omit espresso powder and replace with 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract.

- ◆ **Tie-Dye:** Transfer meringue into a piping bag. Before sealing, add a few drops of food coloring to the side of the piping bag; do not mix. Colors will spread and swirl as the meringue is piped.

- ◆ **Mini Pavlovas:** Make oversized meringue mounds, making a well in the center (with the back of a spoon). Bake for an additional 15 to 20 minutes. Fill with sweetened whipped cream and top with berries or compote.

Recipes from "The Giving Table" by Naomi Ross.



Espresso Meringue Cookies (Photo from "The Giving Table" by Naomi Ross)

Passover Greetings from these Healthcare Professionals

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Done with gefilte dogs, Manischewitz launches a new look in time for Pesach

By PJ Grisar

This story originally appeared in the Forward. To get the Forward's free e-mail newsletters delivered to your inbox, visit forward.com/newsletter-signup.

Consumers browsing the kosher aisle this Passover season may do a double take. Manischewitz, the 136-year-old kosher food titan, has a fresh look, with bold red and orange accents and cartoon families noshing on matzahs the size of a sheet of drywall.

The retro-chic packaging, which boasts slogans like “for the love of crunch” (on a matzah box) and “a real catch” (jarred gefilte fish), is part of a major rebrand for the company aimed at reaching a broader audience through a friendlier presentation. The font has been overhauled, with a serif crowning the A that recalls Hebrew writing. On certain

items, like the kosher for Pesach potato chips, Manischewitz even has a nickname, shortened to “Mani’z” or even “M’z.”

“Manischewitz is still our brand name, but call us ‘Mani’z,’” said Shani Seidman, chief marketing officer at Manischewitz. That works for those who’ve long been acquainted with the products, named for founder Rabbi Dov Behr Manischewitz, but the hope is that some new customers, exploring ethnic foods, will venture into the kosher aisle. (Levy’s Rye’s iconic ads came up in discussions – even if gefilte fish may be a tougher sell to most non-Jews.)

“We knew this brand can represent and could be a gateway to Jewish culture through food,” said Seidman.

Working with marketing company Jones Knowles Ritchie, Manischewitz launched a first peek at its new look on X (formerly Twitter) on March 25, showing a cartoon woman in checked pajamas lying on her stomach and lifting a bowl of soup to her face with a beatific smile, her nose upturned to savor the smell.

It’s a change of pace from Manischewitz’s more recent viral moments on social media, namely its “ads” for gefilte fish ice cream and hotdogs, the work of Joseph Jacobs Advertising.

Seidman said that those jokes taught them that there’s a humor the brand can capitalize on, but that, going forward, they would “continue to embrace our food in a delicious

way, as opposed to, you know, gefilte dog – is it real? Is it not?”

That embrace is embodied by a series of new characters including a gent wrapping his arms around a bowl of soup and two people holding a platter, scrambling to balance latkes that fall from the sky like manna from heaven.

“What we really were trying to do is take the stuffiness out of this brand,” said Seidman. Part of airing it out is the addition of new products, including merch like a tank top that says “Man I shvitz,” a T-shirt emblazoned with “I’m cooking my tuchus off” and a pantry staple in sprayable grape seed oil.

When it comes to food (the wine is owned by a different company), Manischewitz wants to remain in the kosher aisle, but make it a shopping destination rather than a grocery store ghetto. It is expanding from the shelf-stable section to the freezers. You can now try out frozen matzah balls and knishes, both regular and gluten-free (with the latter being kosher for Pesach.)

Gluten-free options may fit the Passover moment, but they also accommodate those with dietary restrictions year-round.

“Passover is like our Super Bowl,” Seidman said, but the brand wants “to become a 365 day-a-year brand for Shabbat, for every day, for Matzah Ball Mondays and Taco Tuesdays.”

ChildContinued from page 10

in a mad dash,” interjected Tobi.

“All I cared about was keeping the treasure in my womb, my partner and my friendships. We couldn’t look back. There was only death and terror behind us. We had to keep moving forward all the time,” said Moshe.

“There were moments when Shlomi told me, ‘Astar, you’re pregnant, come on, let’s stop, rest a bit,’” she continued. “I couldn’t agree to stop for a moment. I told him that if I stopped, I didn’t know if I could continue.”

The two ran 20 kilometers (12.4 miles) to escape Hamas terrorists, eventually arriving at Moshav Patish, where a family cared for them.

Since then, the couple has faced considerable challenges in returning to their normal routine. “After going through something like this, it’s not easy to act as though everything is fine,” said Moshe. “The feelings accompany us every moment of every day, but each one has our own defense mechanisms to rely on.”

“We try to see the glass half-full and say ‘thank you’ for being here. If we survived, then we have a role,” emphasized Tobi. “The birth of our child, it feels much bigger than it is. The meaning of a nova is born again. That’s the Nova. There is life after this terrible disaster that took so many righteous people, many of them my friends. There is life after, there is hope and there is love.”

NowContinued from page 2

who were fortunate enough to live in the United States during the nightmares of World War II. My parents were born in the U.S.A., and even most of their parents before them (going as far back as the late 1800s), and they were of age during those awful war years. My father served in the U.S. Army Air Force as a radio operator throughout the war, although he never ended up deployed overseas.

I just didn’t know what they had experienced, and how the trauma of the Holocaust invaded even their seemingly-protected American space. I didn’t know it could bring tears to one’s eyes at any given moment.

I wonder now: where were my parents when they heard the news that their brethren were being slaughtered by the millions?

Isn’t that always the question: “where were you when?”

It’s that strange quirk of human nature that we remember where we were when tragic events occur.

For my parents, it was probably “where were you when you heard about the attack on Pearl Harbor, or the revelations of the horrors of the Holocaust?”

For those a generation later, it was, “Where were you when JFK was shot?”

In the 1980s, the question of the day for my generation became, “Where were you when the Space Shuttle Challenger exploded, just a minute after liftoff?”

In the kitchen of our small Brooklyn apartment. That was later dwarfed by, “Where were you on 9/11 when the towers came down?”

In my office in Baltimore, with our staff glued around a small television set, watching the nightmare unfold real-time.

For those of today’s generation, there is a new “where were you.” There will be no forgetting where we were on Simchat Torah last year, and how we gradually became aware of the unfolding monstrosities of that day.

Five decades after I wondered about the tears brimming in my mother’s eyes, I have learned a thing or two. As we continue living through this hellish war with Hamas, and increasingly with the greater evil around the world, I see how easy it can be to cry.

I see that thinking about where we were on October 7 can make us cry.

I see that thinking about our kids in Gaza, be they our own flesh and blood or just part of the collective youth of *Am Yisrael* fighting the battle, can make us cry.

I see that thinking about the families that have been forever scarred and diminished can make us cry.

I see that just about anything, at any random time, can make us cry.

If our children and grandchildren ever catch us with tears welling up in our eyes, they will wonder about it, and we will hope that they never understand the torment from which those tears spring. But we know better. If history is any indicator, they will likely dip into that same well of salty tears, and cry about a future event which will have affected them as ours has affected us. And as our parents’ affected them.

My mother passed away several years ago, but there’s something I need her to know. So I cast my eyes heavenward, peering through the pass-through between this world and beyond, and I send her a message:

I get your tears now, Mommy.

I really do.

Jeremy Staiman and his wife Chana made aliyah from Baltimore, MD, in 2010 to Ramat Beit Shemesh. A graphic designer by trade, Jeremy is a music lover and produces music on a regular basis – one album every 40 years. He likes to spend time with his kids and grandkids slightly more often than that. His late father, Shalom Staiman, wrote the Shin Sin column for The Reporter.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

EasyJet axes all flights to Israel

British budget airline EasyJet on April 16 canceled all flights to Israel until Oct. 27, citing the security situation in the Middle East. Customers booked to fly to the Jewish state are being offered a range of options, including a full refund. EasyJet had resumed flights to Israel in March after suspending them in the wake of Hamas’ Oct. 7 invasion. Israel’s Ben-Gurion Airport reopened the morning of April 14 after being shuttered for seven hours overnight due to the Iranian missile and drone attack on the Jewish state. The unprecedented Iranian attack forced national carrier El Al to cancel more than two dozen flights and reschedule others, while some foreign airlines scrapped flights altogether on April 14.

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Jewish online resources

By Reporter staff

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

◆ Ritualwell will hold the class “Presence and Absence: Images of the Divine in Kabbalah” on Tuesdays, May 7-28 and June 4, from noon-2 pm. The cost to attend is \$250. The class “will delve into the multifaceted, dynamic Divine through the radical imagination of the Zohar.” For more information or to register, visit <https://ritualwell.org/event/presence-and-absence-images-of-the-divine-in-kabbalah/2024-05-07/>.

◆ The Hadassah-Brandeis Institute will hold several hybrid programs: “Listening to History: Memory of the Holocaust and Competing Narratives of the Israel/Palestine Crisis” on Monday, May 6, from 12:30-2 pm; and “Sandra Seltzer Silberman HBI Conversations Series Featuring Shulamit Reinharz and Barbara Vinick, Editors, ‘100 Jewish Brides: Stories from Around the World’” on Wednesday, May 22, at 7 pm. For more information or to register, visit www.brandeis.edu/hbi/events/index.html.

◆ Shtetl, Haredi Free Press, www.shtetl.org, is a new website that seeks to off “unfiltered news” for the *haredi* community and to educate the larger Jewish community about life in ultra-Orthodox communities.

◆ Ritualwell will hold the class “Judaism Through The Kaleidoscope: Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook” on Wednesdays, May 1-29 and June 5, from 1-2:30 pm. The cost to attend is \$250. Kook was “first Ashkenazi chief rabbi of pre-state Israel, a profound poet, and a giant of both mysticism and Jewish law.” For more information or to register, visit <https://ritualwell.org/event/judaism-through-the-kaleidoscope-rabbi-abraham-isaac-kook/2024-05-08/>.

◆ Tikvah is holding the online course “Zionism & Anti-Zionism: The history of two opposing ideas” with Dr. Einat Wilf, a former member of Israel’s parliament and a scholar of Zionist thought, and Zoé Tara Zeigherman, a filmmaker and former Tikvah Fellow. The five-part class will explore aspects of Zionism from its beginnings to contemporary times. For more information or to sign up for the class, visit <https://lp.tikvahfund.org/zionism>.

◆ Uri L’Tzedek will hold several programs in May, including “Faith vs. Truth’ in the Chassidic Tradition” with Rabbi Mel Gottlieb on Friday, May 24, at noon (https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_mpw0halMT-DW2cl2Adiaa3A#/registration); and “Mind Your Own Business? Balancing Communal Responsibility and Personal Autonomy” with Avi Narrow-Tilonsky on Thursday, May 30, at noon (https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_TBVOqkOQDuI3UIVaj5r8Q#/registration). The cost to attend each class is \$18.

◆ The Museum of Jewish Heritage will hold the virtual walking tour “The Jewish Community of Paris” on Wednesday, May 8, at 11 am. The cost to attend is \$25. It will look at the Jewish community there from the Middle

Ages through today. For more information or to register, visit <https://mjhnyc.org/events/tourparis/>.

◆ My Jewish Learning will hold the six-part on-demand course “Inside Jokes: Explore the Essence of Jewish Humor” with Andrew Silow-Carroll. The cost of the class is \$100. It will look at “Jewish humor with the same analytical lens applied to other Jewish texts, such as the Torah as we aim to decipher the underlying messages embedded within jokes and, perhaps, gain insights into the purpose of Jewish existence.” For more information or to register, visit <https://my-jewish-learning.teachable.com/p/inside-jokes-jewish-humor>.

◆ Americans for Ben-Gurion University will hold the virtual program “Remarkable Resilience: Leading the Way Forward” on Wednesday, May 8, at noon. Attendees will meet the BGU students and faculty who are helping rebuild the Negev after the October 11 attack. For more information or to register, visit <https://americansforbgu.org/events/rr4/>.

◆ Roundtable will hold the class “Early Twentieth-Century Jewish Women Labor Activists in New York” on Thursday, May 9, from 2-3:30 pm. The cost to attend is \$44. Dartmouth College professor of history Annelise Orleck will discuss four Jewish labor activists who organized fellow working women in New York during the early 20th century. For more information or to register, visit <https://roundtable.org/live-courses/history/early-20th-century-jewish-women-labor-activists-in-new-york>.

◆ The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research will hold the hybrid program “Yiddish and Hebrew Song in the Weimar Republic” on Tuesday May 7, at 7 pm. It will feature music by Aron M. Rothmüller, Israel Brandmann, Joel Engel, Joseph Achron, Michael Gnessin, Alexander Krein and Lazar Weiner. For more information or to register, visit www.yivo.org/Weimar-Song.

◆ The Qesher Book Club will hold three book discussions in May: “Finding Home (Hungary, 1945)” by Dean Cycon on Tuesday, May 7, at 3 pm (www.qesher.com/finding-home/); “The Marriage Box” by Corie Adjmi on Tuesday, May 14, at 3 pm (www.qesher.com/the-marriage-box/); and “Caravan of Hope: A Bukharan Woman’s Journey to Freedom” by Dahlia Abraham-Klein on Tuesday, May 21, at 3 pm (www.qesher.com/caravan-of-hope/).

◆ The Jewish Book Council will hold the virtual discussion “The Heart of the Matter: Two Rabbis Discuss Love in the Jewish Tradition” on Thursday, May 16, from 6-7 pm. Rabbi Sharon Brous and Rabbi Shai Held will discuss their new books with Stephanie Butnick, host of Tablet’s Unorthodox podcast. For more information or to register, visit www.jewishbookcouncil.org/events/the-heart-of-the-matter-two-rabbis-discuss-love-in-the-jewish-tradition.

◆ Yidstock: The Festival of New Yiddish Music, which will take place from July 11-14, will offer a virtual option this year. For more information, visit www.yiddishbookcenter.org/yidstock.

◆ Tikvah will offer six-weeks of video classes about Pirkei Avot e-mailed directly to inboxes from Passover to Shavuot. Teachers will include Dr. Dara Horn, Rabbi Dr. Jacob J. Schacter, Dr. Mijal Bitton, Rabbi Hershel Lutch, Dr. Erica Brown and Rabbi Mark Gottlieb. For more information and to register, visit <https://pirkeiavot.tikvahfund.org/>.

◆ The Yiddish Book Center will hold the book talk “Frume Halpern’s Blessed Hands” with translator Yermiyahu Ahron Taub on Thursday, May 23, from 7-8 pm. Taub, poet and translator, will discuss his newly released translation of Frume Halpern’s short story collection Blessed Hands

(Frayed Edge Press). After his talk, there will be small-group discussions facilitated by Yiddish Book Center staff. For more information or to register, visit https://support.yiddishbookcenter.org/site/Ticketing?view=Tickets&id=10801&s_src=Event&s_subsrc=blessedhands.

◆ My Jewish Learning will hold the six-part virtual class “Learn Ladino: An Intro to the Judeo-Spanish Language” with Professor Bryan Kirschen on Wednesdays, May 1-June 5, at 8 pm. The cost to attend is \$100. It will introduce participants to the basics of Ladino, and contextualize the language through Sephardic culture and history. For more information or to register, visit <https://my-jewish-learning.teachable.com/p/learn-ladino-an-intro-to-the-judeo-spanish-language>.

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

Tea and Talk

Chabad of Binghamton, with co-sponsorship from the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, holds Tea and Talk programs, a bi-weekly hour-long gathering for local Jewish seniors who are looking for “a meaningful conversation,” from 11 am-noon, in Chabad’s atrium on the second floor. The program is open to all and free of charge.

Upcoming dates are:

- ◆ May 2
- ◆ May 16

To RSVP or for more information, visit www.JewishBU.com/Tea or call 607-797-0015.

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From JNS.org

Israel aims to assuage Arab fears over response to Iran

Jerusalem has told Arab countries their security will not be placed at risk due to any IDF response to Iran’s attack on the Jewish state over the April 13 weekend, Israel’s Kan public broadcaster reported. The Israeli government reportedly conveyed the message to Egypt, Jordan and allied Gulf states, amid fears that Tehran could hold them accountable. Israel’s War Cabinet is in the process of deciding on a “painful” response to the Islamic Republic’s massive drone and missile assault overnight April 13. Employing virtually identical terminology following the Islamic Republic’s aerial attack, Arab states called for de-escalation, urged all parties to exercise “utmost restraint” and carefully avoided condemning Iran.



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Searching beyond the surface

RABBI LEVI Y. SLONIM, CO-DIRECTOR OF CHABAD DOWNTOWN AND DIR. OF DEVELOPMENT, ROHR CHABAD CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDENT LIFE AT BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY

In this week's *parasha*, we learn about the purification of those afflicted with *tzara'at*, the strange leprosy-like malady caused by speaking wrongly about others. The *parasha* tells us of different types of *tzara'at* manifestations – on a person's body, in his clothes or even in the walls of his house.

It would typically appear in stages, first on the walls of the individuals' house. If they continued in their evil ways, it would affect the utensils in their home. If they persisted, it would then affect their clothing. And finally, if they still continued through it all, it would appear on their actual skin.

While *tzara'at* was definitely "atypical," it was not a completely unnatural phenomenon. Leprosy is a disease that, unfortunately, can affect people. Even spots on clothing

or walls that are less frequent can sometimes be mistaken for mold or are caused by wear and tear. This can obviously not be compared to the miracle of Chanukah where the oil amount for one day lasted for eight days, or the open miracle that overrode nature with the splitting of the sea.

Nevertheless, Jews being "believers the children of believers" (Shabbat 97a), when they saw something irregular that looked like it had a chance of being a sign from God, they immediately assumed it might be a sign from God indeed and processed it that way.

Indeed, the Jewish way is to see the hand of God in everything that happens: the revealed good and the less revealed good. It's all from Him.

In the shadow of the recent solar eclipse and the overall

challenging times we find ourselves as a people, the *parashat Metzora* stands as a strong reminder of how we as Jews are meant to process everything that we see and hear: to remember that it is all the hands of God.

The *midrash* (Vayikra Rabbah 17,6) mentions that one of the reasons God orchestrated for *tzara'at* to appear on homes was because, in the process, those living there would need to remove the spot from the wall, revealing gold and silver and riches hidden there by previous owners of the home. This is a reminder that oftentimes what may seem to be something negative has something positive hidden behind the surface; it's only for us to keep our eyes open to the possibility of seeing the hand of God in it.

Based on the teachings of the late Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Congregational Notes

Temple Israel

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

On Fridays and Tuesdays at 5:30 pm, services will be led by Rabbi Micah Friedman via Zoom and in-person (masks are required for unvaccinated participants).

On Saturday, April 20, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person (masks are required for unvaccinated participants). The Torah portion is Leviticus 14:1-15:33 and the haftarah is Malachai 3:4-24. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 8:45 pm.

The temple office will be closed Tuesday-Wednesday, April 23-24, and Monday-Tuesday, April 29-30, for Passover.

Services for Passover will be Tuesday, April 23 (day one), and Tuesday, April 30 (day eight), at 9:30 am. There will be no 5:30 pm minyan on those days.

On Friday, April 26, Kabbalat Shabbat and Ma'ariv services will be at 7:30 pm.

On Saturday, April 27, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person (masks are required for unvaccinated participants). The Torah portion is Leviticus 12:1-13:59 and the haftarah is II Kings 4:42-5:19. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 9 pm.

On Thursday, May 6, a Yom Hashoah Commemoration and Survivor Presentation will be held from 6:30-8 pm at the temple. For information, see the article on page 3.

Norwich Jewish Center

Orientation: Inclusive
Address: 72 South Broad St., Norwich, NY 13815
Phone: 334-2691
E-mail: fertigj@roadrunner.com
Contact: Guilia Greenberg, 373-5087
Purpose: To maintain a Jewish identity and meet the needs of the Jewish community in the area.
Adult Ed.: Shabbat study sessions are held on designated Saturday mornings at 10 am. Call ahead, text or e-mail to confirm dates.

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.

Temple Brith Sholom

Affiliation: Unaffiliated
Address: P.O. Box 572, 117 Madison St., Cortland, NY 13045
Phone: 607-756-7181
President: Nick Martelli
Cemetery Committee: 315-696-5744
Website: templebrithsholomcortland.org
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Temple-Brith-Sholom-114006981962930/>
Service leaders: Lay leadership
Shabbat services: Either Friday evening at 7:30 pm or Saturday at 10 am from Rosh Hashanah to Shavuot. Holiday services are also held. Check the Facebook page or weekly e-mail for upcoming services. Contact the president to get on the e-mail list.

Religious School: Students are educated on an individual basis. Temple Brith Sholom is a small equalitarian congregation serving the greater Cortland community. Congregants span the gamut of observance and services are largely dependent on the service leader. The Friday night siddur is "Likrat Shabbat," while the Saturday morning siddur is "Gates of Prayer." The community extends a warm welcome to the Jewish student population of SUNY Cortland, as well as the residents of local adult residences.

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

Synagogues limit face-to-face gatherings

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

Beth David Synagogue

Affiliation: Orthodox Union
Rabbi: Zev Silber
Address: 39 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905
Phone: 607-722-1793, Rabbi's Office: 607-722-7514
Fax: 607-722-7121
Office hours: Tues. 10 am-1 pm; Thurs. 9 am-1 pm
Beth David e-mail address: bethdavid@stny.rr.com
Rabbi's e-mail: rabbisilber@stny.rr.com
Website: www.bethdavid.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/bethdavidbinghamton
Classes: Rabbi Zev Silber will hold his weekly Talmud class every Tuesday evening after services.

Rohr Chabad Center

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

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

Congregation Tikkun v'Or

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism
Address: PO Box 3981, Ithaca, NY 14852; 2550 Triphammer Rd. (corner of Triphammer and Burdick Hill), Lansing, NY
Phone: 607-256-1471
Website: www.tikkunvor.org, E-mail: info@tikkunvor.org
Rabbi: Shifrah Tobacman, rabbishifrah@tikkunvor.org
Presidents: Sue Merkel and Laurie Willick, presidents_22@tikkunvor.org
Education Director/Administrative Coordinator: Naomi Wilensky
Bnai Mitzvah Coordinator: Michael Margolin
Services: All services currently on Zoom. E-mail info@tikkunvor.org for the times and links. Contemplative morning services every Tuesday from 8:30-9:30 am. Saturday mornings, Gan Shabbat and other special services at least once a month. Call for the weekly schedule.
Jewish Learning Experiences (JLE) for second through seventh grade classes meet on Sunday mornings. Sixth and seventh grades also meet on Wednesday afternoons. Family programs for kindergarten and first grade held monthly.
Adult Education: Offered regularly throughout the year. Check the website for details.

Friday, April 19, light candles before 7:31 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, April 20 8:33 pm
Monday, April 22, light candles before 7:35 pm
Tuesday, April 23, light candles after 8:36 pm
Yom tov ends Wednesday, April 24 8:38 pm
Friday, April 26, light candles before 7:39 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, April 27 8:41 pm
Sunday, April 28, light candles before 7:41 pm
Monday, April 29, light candles after 8:43 pm
Yom tov ends Tuesday, April 30 8:44 pm
Friday, May 3, light candles before 7:47 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, May 4 8:49 pm

Temple Concord

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism
Rabbi: TBA
Address: 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905
Office hours: Tues.-Fri., 10 am-2 pm
Phone: 607-723-7355
Fax: 607-723-0785
Office e-mail: TempleConcordbinghamton@gmail.com
Website: www.templeconcord.com
Regular service times: Fri., 7:30 pm; Sat., 10:35 am, when religious school is in session.
Hebrew school: Hebrew school meets at 4:15 pm and 5:15 pm on Tues. and Thurs. during the school year unless otherwise noted.

Some services and programs are online only.

Friday, April 19: At 7:30 pm, Shabbat service with Rabbi Leiah Moser. Join via Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3hRmW2Y>, meeting ID 869 9699 8146 and passcode 826330, or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/templeconcord/.

Saturday, April 20: At 9 am, Religious School Passover program. At 9:15 am, Torah study in person and on Zoom (<http://bit.ly/3XDnVRE>, meeting ID 825 1226 2831 and passcode 743892). At 7:30 pm, Rabbi Leiah Moser will lead a Havdalah program called "Judaism and Workers' Rights." She will explore the history of Jewish labor, from Torah and Talmud to early 20th century Yiddish strike songs. (For more information, see the article on page 5.)

The Religious School will be on recess from April 23-27.

Friday, April 26: At 7:30 pm, Shabbat service with Allen Alt and Robin Hazan. Join via Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3hRmW2Y>, meeting ID 869 9699 8146 and passcode 826330, or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/templeconcord/.

Saturday, April 27: There is no Religious School. At 9:15 am, Torah study in person and on Zoom (<http://bit.ly/3XDnVRE>, meeting ID 825 1226 2831 and passcode 743892).

See "TC" on page 15

Temple Beth El of Oneonta

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

Temple Beth-El of Ithaca

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
Rabbi: TBA
Rabbi Emeritus: Scott L. Glass
Address: 402 North Tioga St. (the corner of Court and Tioga streets), Ithaca, NY 14850-4292
Phone: 607-273-5775
E-mail: president@tbeithaca.org, secretary@tbeithaca.org
Website: www.tbeithaca.org
Presidents: Melanie Kalman and Alexis Siemon
Sisterhood President: Gail Zussman
Director of Education: TBA
Services: Friday 8 pm; Saturday 10 am, unless otherwise announced. Weekday morning minyan 7:30 am (9 am on Sundays and legal holidays).
Religious School/Education: September-May: Classes meet on Sunday, 9 am-12:30 pm and Wednesday afternoons, 3:45-5:45 pm. The teen No'ar program meets twice per month (every other Sunday from 5-7 pm) and is designed with the flexibility to accommodate busy student schedules.
Adult Ed.: Numerous weekly courses, several semester-long courses and a variety of mini-courses and lectures are offered throughout the year. Call the temple office for more details.

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

Haggadah. Continued from page 7

a tool used by the Ashmans to educate people regarding the experience of those living with aphasia and, perhaps even more importantly, to teach the general public how to communicate with them while simultaneously promoting their inclusion in society.

Leora explained to JNS how the idea for a new inclusive haggadah came to light. "Eitan could no longer participate in the seder as he once could, and we needed to figure out a way he could become a part once again," she said.

"Two years ago we compiled the commentaries Eitan had written for the seder and put them into a short booklet for his use. So now we decided to create something bigger and provide a tool for so many others, who could no longer participate in the seder as they had and felt isolated," she added.

The haggadah isn't just for those with aphasia, but also for adults and children with dyslexia, Parkinson's, ADHD, stuttering issues and many more difficulties, she explained.

The book itself is written in simple language, with short commentaries. It also features easy to follow instruction

icons, indicating to participants when to lift the wine glass, raise the seder plate, put down the matzah and perform all the other seder night customs. The font is large and the pages are specially bound so that they don't flip automatically, causing one to lose their place.

As opposed to other haggadahs, which start by listing the items on the seder plate, this special edition begins with several pages of "seder inclusion tools," a list including a chart of "do's and don'ts" for seder participants to learn how to better include those who may find the seder daunting or overwhelming.

Contributors to the haggadah offer short and poignant commentary on the Passover story and all of the evening's customs, and include many leading Israeli rabbis, educators, community leaders, mental health experts and individuals with disabilities.

Contributor and Jewish basketball legend Tamir Goodman, founder of the Tamir Goodman Basketball Camp in

Jerusalem, told JNS, "They say Judaism is the religion of the books, but oftentimes if you have learning challenges, it's very overwhelming. ... For me personally, I'm very dyslexic, and I love Judaism and my schools [growing up] but being surrounded by books, it's like a point of pain, and it clashes and can sometimes be hurtful," he said.

"There are many people with different types of challenges, which you don't see on the outside, you only see them on the inside, whether dyslexia, dysgraphia, or any other challenge, and having a haggadah to empower those people is very very special. Thanks to this new haggadah it can be more inclusive now for everyone," he added.

One woman who attended a recent Koach Eitan event introducing the new haggadah (and who asked not to be identified) said, "My father has advanced Parkinson's, and there is a lot of overlap with the challenges of aphasia. In the last few years, he has had to give up leading the seder because of these difficulties and it has been a struggle to help him feel included. This haggadah is the game changer I didn't know existed. . . and I'm so grateful to Leora for leading me to it."

Leora shared that for those suffering from aphasia or other similar challenges, the holidays can become triggering. "Instead of wanting to prepare for the seder, Eitan pointed to the ceiling; he wanted to go upstairs, it was triggering sadness," she said. "Thanks to Rabbi Johnny Solomon, a spiritual coach who started working with Eitan two years ago, he started finding ways for Eitan getting involved, whether [it was prayers], religion, synagogue, they worked to compile the original booklet, which transformed into the new haggadah.

"And now," she said, "So many different kinds of people, like you and me, who want to be part of the seder and not have something long to read can use this tool, which is inviting, and welcoming and nice and clear. It's giving them something they aren't usually connected to because of that roadblock, and now they are included, and all those around the table are learning what those individuals are going through. . . It's truly life changing."

Shabbat. Continued from page 8

students are away from home and Shabbat 2400 allows them to experience familiar comforts, and build a sense of belonging, through sharing a meal with other members of the university community."

The annual event has taken on greater significance considering the unprecedented level of antisemitism and anti-Israel sentiment on campuses throughout North America, especially since the terrorist attacks in southern Israel on October 7.

"We're in such a troubling time for the Jewish nation; it can feel very despondent," Ohana said. "With this event that we create and the atmosphere that's put out, it's about being stronger and prouder in our Jewish identity and connecting as many Jews as we can with Hashem. There's no better time to deepen our Jewish pride."

The Shabbat 2400 dinner at Binghamton has spawned similar programs on campuses across the country and around the world, and many vendors and organizations donated funds and services. It required more than 775 pounds of chicken, 360 pounds of challah, 2,200 matzah balls and 250 large bottles of grape juice, among other items. There were 240 Shabbat tables set up at the Binghamton University Events Center.

"People don't understand how they can get food for over 2,000 people," said sophomore Haley Wilenzick, one of the three head organizers of Shabbat 2400. "But it's because of all the volunteers who are helping out. The kitchen was full of singing and energy as they cooked."

A.J. Keiser, a sophomore and business major from West Orange, NJ, helped prepare food. He says he was amazed to see "the willingness of people to just step up and help in any way they can and continue to just offer their time to make sure this program runs as well as possible."

Before the onset of Shabbat, students were welcomed with video greetings from influencers: Montana Tucker, Inbar Lavi and Mayim Bialik. New York Gov. Kathy Hochul also addressed the crowd.

The services began with Jewish women coming together to welcome Shabbat with candle-lighting before the dinner, highlighted by Shabbat traditions such as kiddush and Shabbat hymns and songs.

Wilenzick said: "To finally see it come to fruition and just be surrounded by 2,200 people is really powerful."

Preparations began back in October. "It's a lot of teamwork, delegating and communication," said Levine, who

is majoring in Judaic studies with a minor in Israel studies and education. "We also come up with new creative ideas of how to publicize the event and get people really engaged."

All were invited to attend, not just Jewish students, who brought friends and acquaintances. A publicity blitz, "Matzah-Ball Mania," was held prior to the dinner. Volunteers handed out matzah-ball soup on campus and had people guess the weight of huge challahs.

The first mega-Shabbat event was held in the fall of 1994. With it, the Rohr Chabad Center for Jewish Student Life at Binghamton University started a revolution: to join as many Jewish students as possible in a celebration of Shabbat, and more broadly, Jewish identity. Originally dubbed Shabbat 1000, the program evolved into a tradition that has since been replicated on more than 150 campuses worldwide.

To this day, Binghamton maintains the record for the largest number of students gathered in one space for a Shabbat dinner. And now there's a second generation getting to experience the joy of a mega-Shabbat celebrated with thousands of friends and peers.

Among them was Levine, who was inspired to get involved by her mother, herself a Binghamton alumna who graduated in 1994. "I grew up hearing all these stories about the Jewish community and how strong it was and her relationship with Rabbi Slonim and his wife, Rivkah," she said. "To see from the small community that my mom had to how much it's grown 30 years later, I feel that it's my home."

For Keiser, the Shabbat 2400 means "achdut - being united and realizing that no matter what level of observance or religiosity, we're all Jews, and all we really want is to celebrate Shabbat together."



Students recited a prayer for the welfare of Israeli hostages still being held in the Gaza Strip before the start of Shabbat 2200 at Chabad of Binghamton on April 5.



Celebrating before the start of Shabbat on April 5.

TC. Continued from page 14

Sunday, April 28: At 7 pm, Passover service with Yizkor with Rabbi Rachel Esserman, Suzanne Holwitt and Robin Hazan.

Wednesday, May 1: At 7 pm, Temple Concord Sisterhood elections for the 2024-25 board. All members of Sisterhood may vote. (For more information, see the article on page 5.)

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To protect Jewish buildings, “look at it from the eyes of an attacker”

By Andrew Bernard

(JNS) – A 25-year veteran of the FBI, Rusty Rosenthal had a front-row seat to understanding the difference between U.S. and Israeli approaches to security during his 11 years working in the bureau’s Tel Aviv field office. “I worked with all the Israeli services – the Shin Bet, Mossad and the police – for all those years and really had an appreciation for their entire society’s culture of security, as opposed to ours sometimes, which is really a culture of freedom and privacy,” Rosenthal told JNS.

“Sometimes those are at odds with each other,” said Rosenthal, the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington’s executive director of community security since November.

In his new job, Rosenthal tries to inhabit those who would harm Jews. “When you approach a building, for better or worse, you look at it from the eyes of an attacker,” he told JNS. “You start from the outside. What are they seeing? Somebody wants to do harm. What are they observing?”

Whether doors are closed and locked is elementary. “Are they walking around and

seeing doors propped open?” he said. “Or is there one entrance, and there are ushers or greeters, so that everyone is being looked at and knows you’re there?”

Some measures that he recommends seem obvious or basic, considering how quickly the threat environment has shifted, Rosenthal admits. “A few years ago, we weren’t even thinking about these things,” he said.

The Washington Federation created Rosenthal’s role just before October 7, in response to already spiking Jew-hatred. The Federation is responsible for some 300,000 Jews and 250 institutions, including synagogues, Jewish community centers and office buildings for Jewish organizations.

“We have the entire spectrum of not only politics but religiousness, so it’s an interesting and nuanced region in that respect,” he told JNS. “You’re trying to meet the needs of a lot of different individuals.

“That’s one of the reasons why the Federation decided to go this direction, so that we can tailor our services to the community as it needs, and that means a lot of pivoting sometimes,” he added.

Though the Anti-Defamation League and other Jewish groups have recorded record spikes in Jew-hatred since October 7, Rosenthal sees the 2017 “Unite the Right” rally of alt-right and neo-Nazi extremists in Charlottesville, VA, as the marker of a shift in normalization of antisemitism.

“I always look back to Charlottesville, when white supremacists were marching brazenly and openly with Nazi paraphernalia and chanting Nazi chants and slogans,” he said. “Historically, when you see an increase in online hate, in the graffiti, in the harassment, there’s always an act of violence that comes along with it.”

“When I was overseas, we used to say, ‘If you’ve worked in one embassy, you’ve worked in one embassy,’ because every place operates differently,” Rosenthal told JNS. “Now I say the same thing when I go into synagogues.

“Should we have security? Should it be armed security? How many? Where should they be staged?” he said. “These are the conversations that we’re having and need to have with every single institution.”

The Biden administration unveiled its U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, which includes more than 200 policy proposals and hundreds of action items for the federal government and for companies,

schools and local governments, in May 2023.

Over the past decade, the U.S. Congress has dramatically increased funding for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program, which helps bolster security for synagogues, day schools and other at-risk locations.

The 2014 federal budget included just \$14 million for the program, which has grown to \$274.5 million in the 2024 spending package, though that was a 10 percent cut from 2023. Jewish groups have said that at least twice as much funding is needed to meet the community’s security needs.

Rosenthal told JNS that every Jewish institution has to consider what level of security is appropriate for the threats it might face, and with which it is comfortable.

Many Jewish leaders refer sardonically to the enormous cost of these security measures as the “antisemitism tax,” which Jewish institutions must pay to protect themselves. Rosenthal sees those costs as an unfortunate necessity. “When you think about the amount of resources being put toward security amongst the Jewish community these days, and you think about what those resources could be going to otherwise, and all these other great things that organizations like the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington do, I think that’s disappointing,” he said. “But I think it’s just part of the reality.”

Programs like the Nonprofit Security Grant Program are largely intended to fund one-time grants for physical security improvements, such as concrete barriers, reinforced doors and alarm systems. Many institutions have also hired or are considering hiring costly armed security guards.

Rosenthal told JNS that he doesn’t recommend armed security guards for every institution. He also doubts that those who buy guns will end up improving security for themselves or their communities.

“I’m very skeptical of untrained people carrying weapons,” he said. “I know for a fact that no matter how much people think they’re training with their weapons, they’re not going to be trained to the extent it’s probably necessary to handle a weapon in the type of situation that we’re foreseeing.

“There are so many other things than just going to a range and hitting a target when it’s going to matter,” he said. “A lot of things go out the window in the moment of true stress, heightened blood pressure, tunnel vision. It’s a very risky scenario.”

Seed from biblical home of Goliath sheds light on Philistine rituals

By JNS staff

(JNS) – A team of Israeli archaeologists and archaeobotanists have overseen the reconstruction of plants used in 3,000-year-old Philistine rituals at the central Israel site identified as the home of the biblical Goliath, providing a unique window into this ancient civilization. The study which follows more than a quarter century of excavations at Tell es-Safi, named as the biblical Gath of the Philistines and the home of Goliath, “challenges previous understanding of Philistine ritual practices and offers a fresh perspective on their cultural practices and the connections between Philistine culture and broader Mediterranean religious traditions,” said Professor Ehud Weiss, director of the Archaeobotany Laboratory at Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan.

Philistine culture, which flourished during the Iron Age (ca. 1200-604 B.C.E.), profoundly affected the southern Levant’s cultural history, agronomy and dietary customs. The study revealed that the Philistine religion relied on the magic and power of nature, such as running water and seasonality, aspects that influence human health and life.

“By examining the plants they used in ritual contexts, we better understand how the Philistines perceived and interacted with the world around them,” Weiss said.

The study also proposes parallels between Philistine and Aegean ceremonial practices. The discovery of loom weights (an apparatus used for fabric production) within Philistine temples, a common feature in Aegean cult locations, further strengthens the hypothesis of cultural exchange and influence between the two regions.

Dr. Suembikya Frumin, manager of the Archaeobotany Laboratory and the study’s lead researcher, noted, “One of the most significant findings is the identification of earliest known ritual uses of several Mediterranean plants, such as the lilac chaste tree (*Vitex agnus-castus*), crown



A flowering lilac chastetree (*Vitex agnus-castus*), one of several Mediterranean plants used in Philistine rituals (Photo by Sofia Frumin)

daisy (*Glebionis coronaria*), and silvery scabious (*Lomelosia argentea*). These widespread Mediterranean plants connect Philistines with cultic rituals, mythology and paraphernalia related to early Greek deities, such as Hera, Artemis, Demeter and Asclepius. In addition, plants with psychoactive and medicinal properties in the Philistine temples reveal their use for cultic activities.”

“These findings open up new avenues for research into the cultural and religious interactions between the Philistines and neighboring regions,” added study co-author Professor Aren Maeir, of Bar-Ilan University’s Department of Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology, who has directed the excavations at Tell es-Safi/Gath for more than 25 years. “We have deepened our understanding of ancient cultic practices and their significance in the broader Mediterranean world.”

Dinner. Continued from page 3

Leonard described the danger involved in learning about and practicing Judaism. “When my grandfather began to teach me Hebrew, Torah and prayers,” Leonard recalled, “my parents were so worried that we would be caught by the government that they did not allow the lessons to continue.” He has preserved his grandfather’s prayer book that is probably 150 years old. He still uses that book today. Following their marriage in Saint Petersburg, the Prestons’ son Ilya was born.

After years of waiting for permission from the Soviet government to leave Russia, the Prestons were finally able to emigrate in 1976. They moved to Omaha, NE, where they had distant relatives. There they joined a synagogue and became part of the Jewish community. Their daughter, Anna, was born in Omaha, where both Leonard and Valerie worked as engineers. “Because women engineers were such a rarity at that time,” Valerie recalled, “men from other parts of the building would walk

by and stare at me, as if I was a strange animal in a zoo!” The Prestons then moved to California, continuing their engineering careers, with Leonard as project manager at GTE and Valerie as a group leader for a consulting company.

“How did we have the good fortune of having you finally settle in Vestal?” organizers asked the Prestons. Leonard jokingly recollected that on a business trip to the Northeast, “I found myself considerably lost in a place called Vestal, NY, and the rest is history! We love the slower-paced lifestyle and the community. Our children and grandchildren are nearby, and we have lived here ever since 1991!”

“Len and Valerie have been devoted members of Beth David for longer than many of us can recall, organizers say, “and have always graciously albeit quietly pitched in at the *shul* whenever they could. It is our distinct pleasure to honor them with the 2024 Jack and Mary Ferber Memorial Award!”

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