

THE REPORTER

Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton

June 14-27, 2024
Volume LIII, Number 12

BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK

JCC Annual Meeting to be held on June 20

The Jewish Community Center will host its Annual Meeting on Thursday, June 20, from 6:45-9 pm. All JCC members, friends and supporters are welcome to attend. The

event is free to the community. Anyone planning on attending is requested to call the JCC office to make a reservation at 607-724-2417.

The evening will begin with a dessert

buffet prepared by chef Victor Torres from 6:45-7:30 pm. From 7:30-8:30 pm, there will be a series of awards presentations honoring those individuals who went above

and beyond in their service and dedication to the JCC this past year. The event will conclude with the installation of the 2024-25 JCC Board of Directors.

Federation, Hillel Academy to hold Shabbat in the Park on June 28

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Broome County, in conjunction with the PJ Library, and Hillel Academy of Broome County will hold a Shabbat in the Park event on Friday, June 28, at 10:30

am, at Arnold Park, Andrews Road, Vestal.

The event is open to all families with young children. It will include Shabbat refreshments, music and storytelling. The children will also have the opportunity to use the park's play-

ground. RSVPs can be made by visiting www.jfjb.org/ or e-mailing director@jfjb.org.

"Shabbat in the Park will give families a chance to get together for some relaxed, laid-back pre-Shabbat fun," said Shelley

Hubal, executive director of the Federation. "Summer is the best time to gather, relax and make new friends. We hope young families of all ages will come out and share in the sweetness of Shabbat."

TI to hold Installation Celebration weekend honoring Rabbi Micah Friedman

Temple Israel will honor Rabbi Micah Friedman with an installation weekend of celebration and community from Friday-Sunday, June 28-30. The events will blend worship, scholarship and festivities. The featured guest will be one of Friedman's teachers, Rabbi Shoshana (Shani) Rosenbaum, co-director of the Beit Midrash of Hebrew College, the Boston-based graduate school training that seeks to inspire Jewish leaders through deep and pluralistic Jewish learning. June marks the end of Friedman's first year in the Temple Israel pulpit.

The weekend will begin with evening services on June 28 at 7:30 pm, which will be followed by an *oneg*. On June 29, services will begin at 9:30 am, followed by a *kiddush*, and conclude with song and

Torah learning with Friedman and Rosenbaum. The celebration will continue with an installation program and luncheon on June 30 at noon. Tickets to the installation program and luncheon are available at \$36 per person. There is no charge for the Friday and Saturday programs. To make a reservation and receive a ticket, contact the Temple Israel office at 607-723-7461 by Tuesday, June 18. Seating is limited.

"Rabbi Friedman has demonstrated a wonderful blend of serious, yet accessible, scholarship, spiritual service leadership and empathetic support and counseling to TI members and to the community at-large, and we are delighted to honor him with this installation ceremony," said Arthur Siegel, Temple Israel president.

"The entire community is welcome to attend these festive events at Temple Israel," said event organizer Rhonda Levine.

"The three-day celebration offers something for everyone," added Co-chairwoman Bonnie Brown.

Concurrent with the installation, Temple Israel will be replacing 1970s-vintage High Holiday prayer books with the recently published "Machzor Lev Shalem." Dedication bookplates are available for donations at various levels of sponsorship, some of which also include free installation luncheon tickets.

"'Machzor Lev Shalem' is a beautifully designed tool for Jewish prayer that will certainly deepen the experience of everyone who participates in our *Yamim Noraim* (High

Holy Day) services," said Friedman. "Like the 'Siddur Lev Shalem,' which Temple Israel uses for our weekly services, each page of the new *machzor* features modern translations, explanations and thought-provoking commentaries, as well as accessible transliterations."

Those interested in participating in the *machzor* fund-raiser should contact the temple office for details. One can participate in the fund-raiser even if not able to attend the luncheon; all fund-raiser proceeds will benefit Temple Israel.

Temple Israel acknowledges a grant from The Community Foundation for South Central New York – The David and Virginia Eisenberg Fund, which helped to underwrite the installation program.

Reporter wins two Rockower awards

By Reporter staff

The Reporter won two 2024 American Jewish Press Club Simon Rockower Awards for Excellence in Jewish Journalism. Bill Simons took first place in Excellence in Writing about Food and Wine for his two-part series "Immersive research in Jewish deli culture." Arieh Ullmann took second place for Excellence in Writing about Jewish Heritage and Jewish Peoplehood in Europe for his "Soccer memories of Zurich."

"We are so pleased that both writers won awards," said Rabbi Rachel Esserman, executive editor of the newspaper. "This is the first time Bill has won an award outside of a sport category, which just shows how versatile a writer he is. Arieh taught me something new about Jewish life in Switzerland, while doing an excellent job balancing history and his personal experiences. *Yasher koach* to both. We look forward to publishing more of their work."

In his articles, Simons noted (a bit tongue in cheek) that he was looking forward to doing "immersive" research at New York City's Jewish delis, allowing him not only write about those restaurants, but sample food from five different ones. (His articles can be found at www.thereporter.com.)

www.thereporter.com/miscellaneous-features/on-the-jewish-food-scene-immersive-research-in-jewish-deli-culture-part-1?entry=439444 and www.thereporter.com/miscellaneous-features/on-the-jewish-food-scene-immersive-research-in-jewish-deli-culture-pt-2?entry=440466.)

"Given the formidable national competition, I am honored to receive a Simon Rockower Award," Simon said. "At a time when local journalism faces difficult challenges and fair treatment of matters vital to Jews is often lacking, it is a privilege to be part of a Reporter team committed to quality Jewish journalism. Thanks to our executive editor, Rabbi Rachel Esserman, for encouraging me to find significance in diverse areas of Jewish life, including what and how we eat. And appreciation is due Layout Editor Diana Sochor for investing care in the physical presentation of my columns."

Ullmann wrote his article after traveling to Zurich for a family celebration. While there, he viewed a museum exhibit about the soccer league in which he once played. The Rockower judges wrote that his article offered "interesting personal insights and informative storytelling about the Jewish community in Zurich."

Ullmann noted, "It was fun to go down memory lane and share it with members of our community." (To read his article,

visit www.thereporter.com/miscellaneous-features/spotlight-soccer-memories-of-zurich?entry=439442.)

TC Sisterhood Shabbat held



Temple Concord's Sisterhood Shabbat took place on May 31. Shown are the new officers who were installed for the 2024-25 year.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Sisterhood events

BD Sisterhood to learn about homeschooling; TC Sisterhood Shabbat speaker and brunch.

.....Page 3

Book Club at TC

The Morning Book Club at TC announces its book list for its 21st reading season, 2024-25.

.....Page 5

Federation Annual Report

The Jewish Federation's Annual Report gives an overview of the past year's events and more.

..... Pages 6-8

Special Sections

Book Reviews..... 4

Safe Driving 4-5

Dine Out..... 9

Classifieds 12

Opinion

Holocaust remembrance: "Go live for us"

By Bill Simons

It is Sunday, May 5 – 27 Nisan 5784 on the Hebrew calendar – and I am at Temple Emanu-El, located at 1 East 65th St., on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, to observe Yom Hashoah. One of the largest synagogues in the world, the main sanctuary of this venerable Reform temple can accommodate 2,500 people and, by 4 pm on this day, the seats are largely filled. Temple Emanu-El is the host venue for the Annual Gathering of Remembrance sponsored by The Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust. I come in reverent solidarity with fellow Jews. At a time of rising global and American antisemitism, bomb threats are made against several New

York City synagogues on this very weekend and anti-Israel chants continue to emanate from nearby Manhattan college campuses.

My role as a union delegate to a New York State United Teachers convention prompted my presence in New York City, but I attended Temple Emanu-El as witness to Yom Hashoah and as a journalist. Jeff Simmons – the very able managing director of Anat Gerstein – handled communications for the event, and he graciously escorted me to seating directly behind program speakers and Holocaust survivors. Subsequently, Jeff sent me photos of the speakers and a video recording, accessible at www.youtube.com/watch?v=EjnQDC6zuBY&t=3887s, of the 141-minute

program. The Gathering of Remembrance included remarks by several speakers, the testament of Holocaust survivors, the lighting of six candles, prayer and music by Cantor Joseph Malovany and HaZamir: The International Jewish Teen Choir that pierced the soul.

In the Yom Hashoah invocation, Joshua Davidson, senior rabbi at Temple Emanu-El, reflected on the open wounds of the past year – the October 7 massacre in southern Israel, the brutal ongoing confinement of Jewish hostages and the resurgent antisemitism unleashed by Hamas. "Campus cries for Jews to go back to Poland," he asserted, "are not protests against Israel's policies; they are protests against See "Holocaust" on page 9

One Perspective from Israel

Encore, encore! Leaving home to go to war... again

JEREMY STAIMAN

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

Along with thousands of others from their brigade, my sons had been back home from their service in and around Gaza for about two months. And though the war is never far from anyone's minds, many families' lives were beginning to reclaim their familiar rhythms. Mothers, who had to also serve as fathers, could turn to their partners once again to assist in the day-to-day routines of their homes. Fathers, many of whom had been sleeping in their uniforms and boots, with their rifles at their sides, could breathe once again, and not jump at the sound of a broken twig or a creaky stair.

Couples could smile, and laugh, and embrace.

But, as we know, the job is not done. Victory over Hamas has not occurred. Not yet. The government says that the goals remain intact, yet the pace of the war – from this admittedly outside, uninformed view – seems to have ground almost to a halt.

Another few terrorists killed.

Another few tunnels discovered and destroyed.

Another of our boys to be accorded a hero's burial.

But the monsters in Rafah, cruelly holding those who still remain of our brothers and sisters in captivity, have had months to fortify their positions, lay traps against our forces, and plan for battle. Rather than catching the enemy off-guard, we now face the prospect of attacking those who know very well that we are coming for them.

They are waiting for us.

No matter.

In this war, time and time again, thank God our forces have for the most part overwhelmed and outsmarted the terrorists, and found ways to render their ambushes impotent and their traps ineffective.

With God's help we will do it again.

Almost since our sons' release, rumors have circulated about their return to duty. One of these rumors had them coming back to their bases this summer. Another, maybe later. But wars are fickle things, and as many have noted, even the best plans are thrown out the window once the first shot is fired.

See "War" on page 9

In My Own Words

Miscellaneous things

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

◆ Two trials

After learning former President Donald Trump was found guilty of felony charges of falsifying business records, unlike many of my friends, I didn't rejoice in the verdict. Instead, I found it profoundly sad that a former president of our country was found guilty of a felony (in this case, 34 felonies). That doesn't mean I don't believe the jury did its job: they were tasked to be objective and consider the evidence, and it looks like they were. What does bother me

are the claims that not only was the trial not fair, but that it was politically motivated. Just because you don't like the outcome of a trial doesn't mean the verdict is not correct.

Before anyone says that I'm favoring the political party to which I belong, I will feel the same if Hunter Biden is convicted of gun charges. Just because he is the son of a president doesn't mean he should get special treatment. If he violated federal gun laws, then he deserves to go to jail. I will give him and his father, President Joe Biden, credit

for not threatening the judge and prosecutors, or claiming the trial is unfair and the charges are politically motivated.

In case people need a reminder how Judaism views justice, I quote: "You shall not commit a pervasion of justice; you shall not favor the poor and you shall not honor the great; with righteousness shall you judge your fellow." (Leviticus 19:15 from The Stone Edition of the Tanach) The rule of law applies to everyone equally.

See "Things" on page 5

Letters

Jewish identity and Israel

To the Editor:

The source of Jewish identity has long been debated. Is Jewish identity a religious, genetic or cultural one or is it something else? One interpretation suggests that our identity is like a stool with three legs. The first leg is our spiritual attachment to the state of Israel. The second leg is the trauma of the Holocaust. The third leg is the pervasive threat of antisemitism in our society.

The data suggests that, over the past generation, the sense of Jewish identity has diminished. The younger generation does not feel an emotional or spiritual connection with Israel. There was also a significant decline in antisemitism in the period roughly from 1964 to 2010. (At one point, an Orthodox Jew was a nominee for vice president on a presidential ticket.) The horror of the Holocaust has slowly eroded and many young Americans have little or no knowledge of that events that took place in concentration camps.

It may be challenging or arbitrary when our "stool"

explodes. Perhaps the test of our complacency began around 2016-17. The Charlottesville, VA, Unite the Right, protest and demonstration in August 2017 was alarming. The chant of the protesters – "Jews Will Not Replace Us" – was shocking. The assault at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, PA, in 2018 added to our concern and grief. Our assumptions about our community were undermined, if not shattered.

One general assumption was that Israel enjoyed military superiority over its neighbors and, therefore, did not face a serious threat from its neighbors. The country had also attained economic prosperity and was a leader in science and technology. Perhaps Israel was no longer dependent on support from the United States.

That assumption was shattered on October 7, 2023: Hamas attacked Israel, committing atrocities – killing around 1,200 individuals and capturing around 200 hostages. The invasion was a shock to Israeli security and the most brutal murder of Jews since the Holocaust.

Recent events have fueled a surge in antisemitic incidents at Jewish institutions, as well at colleges and universities. Some, but not all the incidents, are related to the war in Gaza. There is always the "fog of war," but around 36,000 Palestinians have lost their lives and fewer than 40 hostages are still alive. There is a humanitarian disaster in Gaza.

The solution (complex, difficult and unrealistic) is to call for a cease-fire, the release of all the hostages and additional humanitarian relief. The second step would be to create a governing body, excluding Hamas, for Gaza that might include the PLO and Arab states like Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia or a U.N. peace keeping contingent. The last step would be to organize a consortium of states, led by Saudi Arabia to rebuild Gaza.

Much of this plan is contingent on the goal of creating a Palestinian state that poses no threat to Israel. We shall see in the next few months if there is a glimmer of hope this will happen.

Ben Kasper



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

THE REPORTER

Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton

BINGHAMTON, NY

OPINIONS

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

LETTERS

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

ADS

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

DEADLINE

Regular deadline is noon, Wednesday, for the following week's newspaper (see deadline dates on page 3). All articles should be e-mailed to TReporter@aol.com.

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"The Reporter" (USPS 096-280) is published bi-weekly for \$40 per year by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, 500 Clubhouse Road, Vestal, NY 13850-3734. Periodicals Postage Paid at Vestal, NY and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Reporter, 500 Clubhouse Road, Vestal, NY 13850-3734 or reach us by e-mail at TREPORTER@AOL.COM.

www.thereporter.org

TI to hold Annual Meeting on June 18

The Annual Meeting of Temple Israel for 2024 will take place on Tuesday, June 18, at 7 pm, at Temple Israel and on Zoom. All Temple Israel members in good standing are invited to attend the meeting. The agenda will include committee reports and a vote on the slate of officers and trustees. "It is important to attend to make sure that your voice is represented in governance of Temple Israel, and

that your support of our objectives and our leadership team is recognized," said Arthur Siegel, Temple Israel president.

Members are encouraged to attend the meeting in-person if possible, but participation through Zoom will also be accommodated. All are requested to submit a proxy form in advance of the meeting to simplify attendance, quorum

verification and voting. Proxy forms have been distributed to members, and copies are available in the temple office.

The Annual Meeting at 7:15 pm will be preceded by a brief special congregational meeting at 7 pm to vote on a by-law change to extend term limits for certain officers. The slate and by-law text can also be reviewed at the temple office.

BD Sisterhood June meeting to discuss homeschooling

The final meeting of Beth David Sisterhood for the 2023/24 season will be held on Wednesday, June 19, at 7 pm, at Beth David Synagogue. The meeting will be open to both men and women, whether or not they are affiliated with Beth David Sisterhood or Beth David Synagogue. The evening's speaker will be Rivka Ayelet Kellman, who will relate her personal experiences homeschooling her daughter. She will discuss various approaches to home schooling, some of which, such as "unschooling," have been called controversial, but effective.

Kellman is a Jewish educator of students of all ages and has been a homeschooling parent for five years. She has a background in curriculum design and psychology of education.

"Even though none of us are likely to be home schooling any of our children or grandchildren, it should be fasci-

nating to learn about these approaches to education which were unheard of when most of us were school age," said organizers of the event.

Donations for CHOW will be accepted at the meeting, and mitzvah cards, which are \$3 each, may be requested at any time.

Also, Stacey Silber continues to accept donations of new and used items of all types that she will attempt to sell in order to raise money for Sisterhood. Anyone with items to donate should contact Silber directly at 607-727-9738 or silbercreations@gmail.com, or notify the Beth David office.

Anyone on the Sisterhood's e-mail list should receive a flyer designed by Rabbi David Serkin as a reminder about the meeting. Anyone who wished to be added to the list should send their e-mail address to the Beth David Synagogue office at bethdavid@stny.rr.com with the request.

Former WRJ NE district president coming to TC on June 21-22

Former Women of Reform Judaism Northeast District President Robin Sobol will be at Temple Concord on Friday-Saturday, June 21-22. She will lead services

on the Friday evening, which will begin at 7:30 pm, and Torah study on Saturday morning, which will begin at 9:15 am. Then 11:30 am, there will be a Sisterhood brunch followed by Sobol leading a Sisterhood orientation. "All members of the Sisterhood board are urged to attend all the events, but especially the orientation," said incoming Sisterhood President Barbara Thomas.



Robin Sobol (Photo by Ted Sobol)

Sobol currently serves as programming and fund-raising vice president on Congregation Emeth's Sisterhood board in Albany, NY. She also has served as treasurer and president. In addition, Sobol served as WRJ Northeast District Area director, treasurer, vice president, first vice president and president.

In her various positions, she has led Shabbat services, co-facilitated Speaker's Bureau Training and spoken at Sisterhoods throughout the Northeast District. For her WRJ work, Sobol chaired the WRJ Board Nominating Committee, participated on the Executive Committee Nominating Committee and has worked on a yearlong program to onboard and train the new WRJ board members. She also chaired WRJ Board Leadership Training.

See "WRJ" on page 11

OF NOTE

Coker

Rachel Coker received the first-ever Distinguished Service Award from URMA Research Communicators during the professional society's May 2024 conference hosted by the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. The award cited her welcoming spirit, generosity in sharing knowledge and commitment to excellence in research communications.

Coker also was honored as a winner of this year's photo contest held by the Kaschak Institute for Social Justice for Women and Girls at Binghamton University. The theme related to women's voices in politics. She entered a photo taken during Hollie Levine's campaign for family court judge.

Rabineau

Shay Rabineau, Judaic studies professor at Binghamton, won the Shapiro Award for Best Book in Israel Studies for his work "Walking the Land." The award was given by the Association for Israel Studies, which is devoted to the academic and professional study of Israel. The award is given in memory of Yonathan Shapiro (1929-97), an Israeli sociologist. For an interview with Rabineau about his book, visit www.thereporter.com/miscellaneous-features/spotlight-rabineau-explores-israeli-hiking-trails-in-new-book?entry=428922.

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 date is: June 20
To RSVP or for more information, visit www.JewishBU.com/Tea or call 607-797-0015.

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Annual Meeting
Thursday, June 20,
2024

6:45 to 9:00pm

Free to the community

Dessert Buffet
Awards Presentations
Officer's Installations

RSVP please by June 12th!

500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal
(607) 724-2417

DEADLINES

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

ISSUE	DEADLINE
June 28-July 11	June 19
July 12-25	July 2 (early)
July 26-August 8	July 17
August 9-22	July 31

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

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My sincere and heartfelt thank you to all the people who sent cards, messages and donations in memory of my husband, Michael Wiesner. During this difficult time your kindness made my days more tolerable. Thank you so much.

Saba Wiesner

THEY'RE BACK

SUNDAY, JUNE 16, 2024
FIRST PITCH 1:05 PM
GATES OPEN 12:00 PM

FATHER'S DAY CELEBRATION
LUSANGEL ACUNA & RONALD ACUNA SR.
BOBBLEHEAD GIVEAWAY
1ST 1,000 FANS

ALL KIDS 12 & UNDER
OPEN TO CHILDREN AGES 8-11
SCAN QR TO CHASE TRAIT

FRIDAY, JUNE 14th
FIRST PITCH 7:05 PM
GATES OPEN 5:30 PM

CREATURES
TIOGA DOWNS
MILLER AUTO TEAM
FIREWORKS SERIES
REPLICA JERSEY GIVEAWAY
1ST 1,000 FANS

SATURDAY, JUNE 15th
FIRST PITCH 6:07 PM
GATES OPEN 5:00 PM

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SAFE DRIVING

Teen driving tips: five ways to stay sane

(NAPSI) – When your teen is officially licensed to operate a vehicle, you may feel simultaneously proud – and terrified. Following these five tips, however, can help.

1. Model Your Expectations – Your teens grew up watching you drive, learning your habits and creating their own concept of “safe driver” based on your actions. Parents of new teen drivers should follow all the rules of the road, which includes keeping smartphones out of reach or paired with hands-free systems.

2. Provide Practical Knowledge – Adults pick up all sorts of useful car knowledge over a lifetime of driving. Most teenagers don’t have any practical skills. Parents need

to provide useful knowledge, including:

- ◆ How to change a tire – Show teenagers where the spare tire is, how to access the jack and what steps they need to safely change a tire. Get outside and get your hands dirty.
- ◆ What to have on hand – This includes a spare GPS in the glove box, a first-aid kit in the backseat or trunk, snow shovel, a jerrican and blankets or warm clothing in case they become stranded.

3. Create a Contract – According to Drive It Home, one way to help improve teen driving safety is creating a “new driver” contract, signed by both the parents and the teen. Lay out specific rules and expectations, such as when the car can be used or what the consequences of breaking the law or damaging the vehicle would be. Include provisions for expanding privileges if your teens keep up their end of the contract.

4. Talk About Accidents – Teens need to know what they should do if an accident occurs. In all cases, even minor parking lot scrapes, teenagers must have their insurance information on hand and request the same See “Teen” on page 5

Did you know?

(NAPSA) – Asking the right questions can help you identify the right auto repair shop to properly care for one of your most valuable assets, your car, said Rich White, executive director of the non-profit Car Care Council. For a free “Car Care Guide,” visit www.carcare.org.

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When alcohol is the driver, nobody's safe! It doesn't take a large amount to do a lot of damage. Even one drink can cloud judgment and slow reflexes enough to hamper fast thinking and total control at the wheel. At holidays when many people celebrate "to the limit," steer clear of disaster. If you take a drink, don't take the driver's seat... and make it a safe and happy holiday weekend!

This Safety Message Sponsored By:

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Broome County Stop DWI
Savitch Agency
Temple Israel Riverside Cemetery Committee
Tioga County Stop DWI

Off the Shelf Family, work and life

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Sometimes knowing the plot details of a novel isn't enough to give you a true understanding of the work. For example, if a reviewer says a book includes descriptions of marital difficulties, monetary problems, betrayal and writer's block, you could be forgiven for thinking that it will be incredibly sad, leaving its readers crying and depressed. However, even though “Blank” by Zibby Owens (Little A) contains all those plot elements, it manages to be funny and engaging.

Forty-something Pippa Jones' life is not exactly falling apart. After all, she's been married for 17 years to Ethan, a former child actor who now works in the theater, and has two wonderful children. Well, her marital life is no longer really satisfying, but she figures that happens in all long-term marriages. At least, she has three wonderful college friends who are still very present in her life. She's also the author of a best-selling novel. Unfortunately, her second book is long overdue and the publisher is threatening to make her pay back her advance – money she no longer has. It's not that she didn't have a great idea for a novel: she did and was in the midst of writing it when another author published a book with the same plot. Since then, she's been unable to write anything worthwhile.

To complicate matters, the earnings from Ethan's work as a child actor aren't enough to maintain their current lifestyle and his theater work brings in almost no money. Pippa realizes she needs to come up with an idea for a new book, but doesn't know where to turn. Fortunately, inspiration strikes when her son jokingly says she should publish a blank book. Pippa jumps on the idea and manages to convince her publisher the work would not be a novelty item, but rather a satire on the nature of the publishing world. Although the CEO of her publishing company supports her idea, that may be because he's looking for something in return. Life is not made easier when social media learns about the book; postings explode – everything for support

for the idea to condemnation and threats. The question then becomes whether her book will be enough of a success to pay back her advance and allow her to write and publish a third book.

Pippa and her family are Jewish, although she doesn't consider herself particularly observant. However, she does look forward to Shabbat all week: “No matter what we were up to, how much fighting took place between us, or how busy we were, we always stopped to light candles on the kitchen island, recite the three prayers, take sips of wine or seltzer, and rip hunks of challah, shoving them into our mouths before sitting down to dinner or going our separate ways. Whoever invented the Jewish rituals (God?) was one smart cookie. Wine and bread? Twist my arm.” She has fond memories of her daughter's bat mitzvah and has just scheduled her son's bar mitzvah lessons, although that date was set when he was in third grade.

Unfortunately, I can't discuss the most fun parts of the plot because it would spoil the surprises. I will say there were many “OMG, I can't believe that's happening” moments. Just when it seems nothing worse could happen, something else awful happens. But, as strange as it sounds, those moments made me both gasp and laugh. Yes, a ton of bad things happen to poor Pippa, but Owens has such a light tone, they are funny. Plus, Pippa proves to be one of the most resilient characters I've ever read about. OK, so some part are not realistic, especially when it comes to the book world, but most readers won't care. I certainly didn't.

I initially resisted asking for a review copy of “Blank.” The reason was a combination of not being sure how much Jewish content it contained and that the blank book idea didn't sound particularly appealing. However, I am so glad I did finally request one: I had a wonderful time reading “Blank.” If you're looking for an easy, fun, quick read, this is the book for you.

Off the Shelf Lessons from a witch

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Tikva Frymer-Kensky was an amazing biblical scholar, best known for her work “Reading the Women of the Bible: A New Interpretation of Their Stories,” which won a National Jewish Book Award. She was the director of Bible studies at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College from 1988-95, before leaving for a position at the University of Chicago Divinity School, where she remained until her death in 2006. While looking through her papers, her children discovered a manuscript she'd written, but never published. That work is now available as “Wisdom from the Witch of Endor: Four Rules for Living” (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company).

“Wisdom from the Witch of Endor” is more of an extended essay, rather than a fully realized book. Its size is small (4.5 inches by 6.5 inches), as are the number of pages (fewer than 80). The rules offered are fairly simple” 1. Know your power. 2. Strive to excel. 3. Choose the moment. 4. Win well.” What is of great interest, though, are Frymer-Kensky's thoughts on the biblical tale itself.

The Witch of Endor is yet another unnamed woman in Bible. Frymer-Kensky includes the biblical text of her story: How after Samuel died, King Saul was unable to communicate with God and, disguising himself, sought the services of a witch so he could speak with Samuel. The Witch, who does not recognize Saul, notes that communing with the dead has been forbidden by the king himself. Saul promises her that she will come to no harm. Once Samuel appears, he condemns Saul, telling him he will lose the kingship. Although Saul falls into despair, the Witch helps him by

preparing food, which he is coaxed to eat before leaving to face his final battle.

Frymer-Kensky notes that, while the Bible does condemn some sorceresses, it does not condemn everyone who uses occult powers. She sees the Witch as using a method not included in the text's condemnation: The Witch summons Samuel with “an ob.” The author believes that object was used to communicate with the dead. However, she also writes that it is impossible to use an ob today because no one knows exactly what that object was. She also discusses how other cultures (including some contemporary ones) believe in the ability to communicate with the dead.

The author notes the kindness the Witch shows Saul. His request to speak to the dead might have cost her her life. Then, when the king was in an extremely vulnerable state after Samuel condemned him, you would be excused for thinking that she might want to take revenge on him. He certainly was in no state to stop her. Instead, she shows him kindness, preparing food for him and being what Frymer-Kensky calls “a paragon of humane benevolence. Seeing Saul at her feet, her thoughts are of him, not herself.” According to the author, the Witch teaches us a valuable lesson in how to treat those who have harmed us, noting that “revenge is a dish best not tasted at all.”

Frymer-Kensky's thoughts about the Witch of Endor – a minor character in the biblical text who is often overlooked or dismissed – are what make reading “Wisdom from the Witch of Endor” worthwhile. This short work gives readers a fascinating look at the lessons the Bible offers in contemporary times.

Book Club at TC announces 2024-25 schedule

The Morning Book Club at Temple Concord announced its book list for its 21st reading season 2024-25. Book club meetings will take place on the first Tuesday of the month, except October when the club will meet on the first and fifth Tuesdays; the club does not meet in November. Unless otherwise indicated, book club meetings take place in the Temple Concord library and on Zoom beginning at 10:30 am. Everyone is welcome to participate whether or not they have read the book. For the Temple Concord Zoom link or to join the Morning Book Club e-mail list, e-mail Merri Pell-Preus at merrypell.preus@gmail.com.

The 2023-24 book list is:

- ◆ July 2: "Kunstlers in Paradise: A Novel" by Cathleen Shine
- ◆ August 6: "The Rabbi Who Prayed With Fire" and "The Rabbi Who Prayed for the City" (Rabbi Vivian Mysteries) by Rachel Sharona Lewis
- ◆ September 3: "The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store: A Novel" by James McBride
- ◆ October 1: "The Village Idiot: A Novel" by Steve Stern
- ◆ October 29: "Anything but Yes: A Novel of Anna Del Monte, Jewish Citizen of Rome 1749" by Joie Davidow
- ◆ No meeting in November: Election Day
- ◆ December 3: "The Wolf Hunt" by Ayelet Gundar-Goshen, translated by Jessica Cohen

- ◆ January 7: "Gangsters vs Nazis: How Jewish Mobsters Battled Nazis in Wartime America" by Michael Benson (non fiction)
- ◆ February 4: "The Hebrew Teacher" by Maya Arad, translated by Sondra Silverston
- ◆ March 4: "The Island of Extraordinary Captives: A Painter, a Poet, an Heiress, and a Spy in a World War II British Internment Camp" by Simon Parkin (non fiction)
- ◆ April 1: TBA
- ◆ May 6: TBA and Annual Book Selection Meeting
- ◆ June: date to be determined late because the regular meeting date, June 3, is the second day of Shavuot.

Beth David held annual dinner, honored Prestons



Beth David held its annual dinner on May 19. Attendees enjoyed the meal offered.



L-r: Gabby Yonaty, Robert Kutz and Gerald Hubal served as bartenders before the dinner began.



L-r: Anna Popl with her parents Valerie and Leonard Preston, who were this year's honorees at Beth David Synagogue's annual dinner.



Before the dinner, attendees had an opportunity to talk with friends.



Teen..... Continued from page 4

from any other drivers involved. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "drivers ages 16 to 19 are nearly three times more likely than drivers aged 20 and older to be in a fatal crash." Mitigate the risk by talking frankly about accidents with your teen.

5. Get Real-Time Peace of Mind – You can have the benefit of real-time crash alerts, vehicle speed monitoring, easy access to roadside assistance and one-touch emergency SOS with the ADT Go app. Get notifications when your

teenagers get home from school and get driving reports on your teenagers' trips; you'll have peace of mind and they'll have their independence.

Things..... Continued from page 2

◆ Dogs, elections and resurrections

A month or so ago, there was an enormous fuss when excerpts from South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem's memoir appeared in the press. She wrote about killing a puppy she'd been unable to train. The Internet exploded with people condemning her. I know people who were unable to tame their pets: they took them to animal shelters, rather than shooting them. (Shooting her dog does seem an overreaction to what she said the pet did.) I also know of people who consider their dogs part of the family and who were horrified by her actions.

Noem was (and may still be) under consideration as a running mate for Trump, but this may sink her. The wisest words I heard about this were posted by a friend on Facebook: "You can deny that Joe Biden was elected President, no problem, or that January 6th was an insurrection, but shooting your dog – now that's beyond the pale!" His sarcastic comment shows just how skewed and ridiculous the political climate in the U.S. has become.

◆ Artists, writers and Zionists

I've written before about the current state of Jews/Zionists in the arts, but I feel the need to comment on a few recent examples. A Vancouver comics festival had banned a Jewish artist because she had once served in the Israeli army. Fortunately, that decision was rescinded and she will be allowed to attend. The ban received a decent amount of press coverage and the resulting upset and condemnation caused the change. After all, it's difficult to preach about being open to all voices when you ban specific ones of which you don't approve.

More problematic are things that don't receive a great deal of publicity. For example, I was looking on a bookstore website to check out a potential book to review. I noticed a one-star review on the page, which I decided to read. The memoir deals with the author's religious life, but the review focuses on two facts: the author had visited Israel and the author's sister married an Israeli. The reviewer's complaint? The book did not address Palestinian issues. Seriously? Does every book written by someone Jewish have to speak to that? Are Jewish writers required to condemn Israel in order to get good reviews? There is something seriously wrong when an author is dismissed for something that has nothing to do with the actual value of his/her work.

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OR
GET PULLED OVER**




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DON'T DRINK & DRIVE

A community service message from
Binghamton Police
Benevolent Association

Annual Report June 2023 through May 2024

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton

Mission Statement

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton strives to create a caring, vibrant, enduring community locally, in Israel and worldwide. The Federation uses its assets and contributions to strengthen local Jewish institutions and organizations, to support Jewish people in need, and to educate the people in the Southern Tier about Jewish values and identity.

Message from Leadership

Dear Community Members,

This year is different. After Hamas attacked Israel on October 7th, killing more than 1,200 innocent people and taking 240 hostages, our collective Jewish community was wounded, and continues to grieve to the depths of its soul.

Hope has been hard to come by, but we know that the Jewish people are resilient. We also know that difficult times generate compassion. With every dollar that has been given to support the Jewish Federation, Jewish Family Service or The Reporter, we have felt the burden lifted. For every volunteer who gave their time to make our community whole, we were so very grateful. With every person who engaged in one of the twenty-three Federation sponsored or co-sponsored events in the last year, we felt stronger.

This annual report highlights the impact of contributions to the Jewish Federation from June 2023 through May 2024. None of the work we do would be possible without all of you. We are humbled to serve the Binghamton Jewish and we know, now more than ever, that our work is meaningful, and that we must continue to "take care of our own," just as the generations who came before us have done.

L'Shalom,
Shelley Hubal, Executive Director
Suzanne Holwitt, President

Jewish Family Service

Guided by the principal of "chesed" or loving-kindness, Jewish Family Service delivers essential human services to individuals and families facing challenges to their well-being. Financial assistance is provided within specific guidelines as funding permits. It is through thoughtful listening and compassionate caring that JFS can help people move from instability to a more secure and positive place. JFS collaborates with the human service network in Binghamton to meet the needs of the community.

JFS impact June 2023 - May 2024:

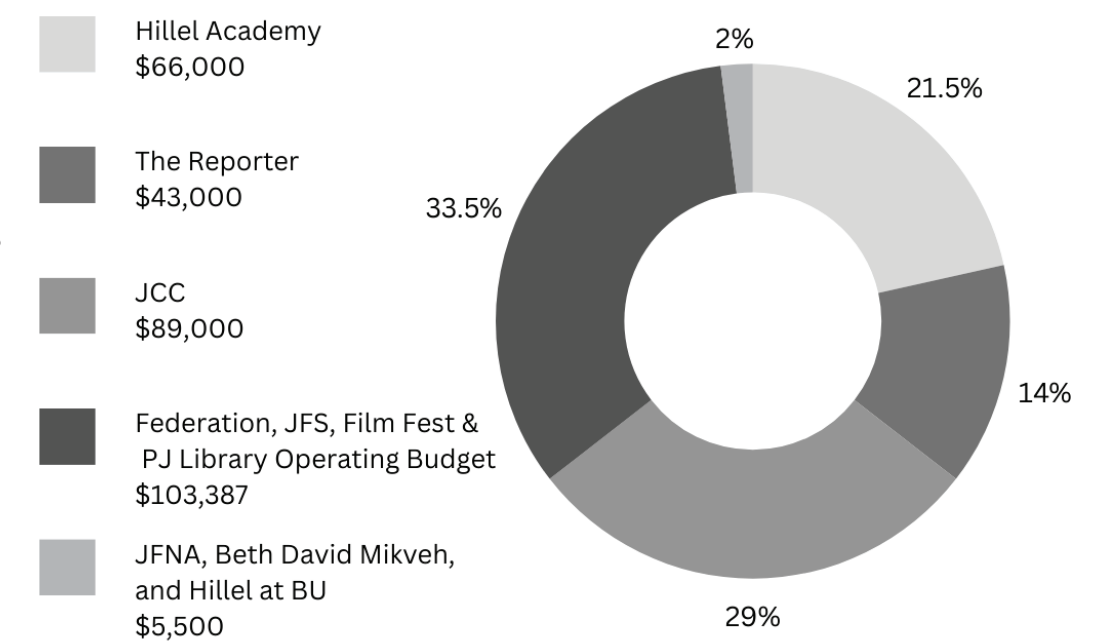
- \$9,550 to Jewish families "We Remember You" program
- \$2,003 miscellaneous emergency financial help
- \$2,185 rent or moving assistance
- \$700 grocery cards
- 72 emotional support calls
- 70 well check calls
- 45 referrals to food pantries
- 38 referrals to NYSEG for funding support
- \$630 in assistance for NYSEG bills
- 35 referrals for housing and rent support
- 10 referrals for home care
- 45 referrals for mental health support
- 28 referrals for legal assistance
- \$200 in gas cards for emergency travel
- 3 home visits
- 11 collaborations with families out of the area
- 4 referrals for employment assistance
- 2 refugee assistance support calls
- \$300 in direct Israeli refugee assistance distributed

JFS would like to thank all our donors for their generosity.

Federation Supported Organizations and Financials:

2023 Beneficiary Agencies & Allocation Distribution

In November of 2022, the Federation Executive Committee and Board of Directors voted to allocate a total of \$306,887 to be distributed in the calendar year 2023. These allocations supported eight different organizations and programs. Funding for allocations came from annual campaign dollars.



Safety & Security Committee Annual Report

In the last year, the Safety and Security Committee Chair and Federation Director maintained an on-going relationship with the central-western NY Jewish security cooperative. After the Israel terrorist attacks on October 7th, and the resulting increase in global unrest, this relationship became vital. Consultation and communication with the cooperative Director and the Secure Community Network improved our day-to-day security posture. The cooperative has also been essential in assisting our local institutions in applying for grant funding to improve security infrastructure. Additionally, we continued to develop relationships with the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security, local police, state police and the Broome County Sheriff's office. These relationships have become essential to

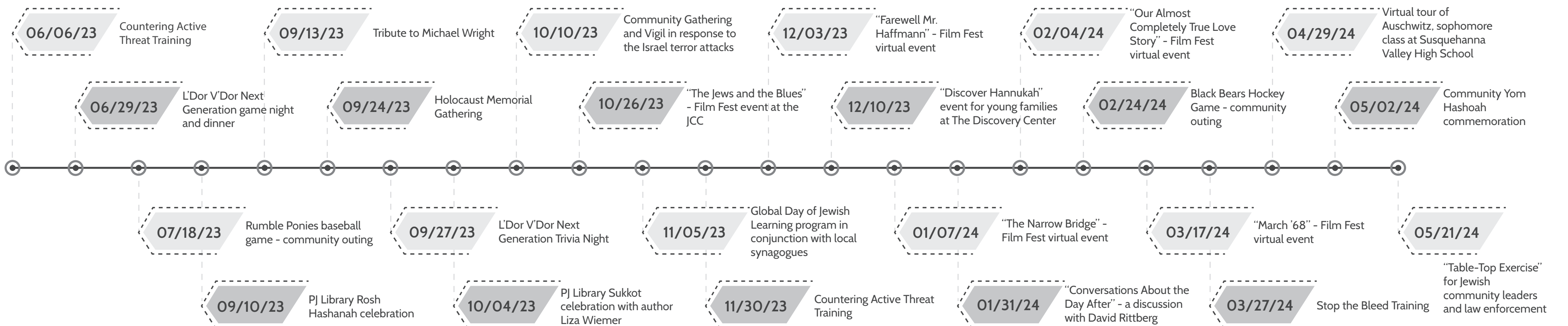
keeping our community safe.

Consistent with its purpose statement, the Safety and Security Committee accomplished the following between June 2023 and May 2024:

- \$1,500 distributed in mini-grants to offset the cost of High Holiday security were distributed to Beth David Synagogue, Chabad at Binghamton University, Temple Concord and Temple Israel.
- Seventeen Stop the Bleed Kits were purchased and distributed to the following institutions: Beth David Synagogue, Chabad at Binghamton University, the JCC, Temple Beth El in Oneonta, Temple Concord, Temple Israel and the Norwich Jewish Center.
- Three communitywide security training courses were held, educating 95 community members on "Stop the Bleed" and "Countering Active Threat" procedures.
- Local Jewish leadership and first responders participated in a table-top exercise designed to identify strengths and weaknesses of security procedures.
- \$18,104 raised for our community security fund.
- \$14,500 raised to fund an essential infrastructure project at a local synagogue.

"Improving our security posture comes at a high cost. Federation wants to thank all the donors who gave to the chai security Campaign. Your generosity will help us to meet our needs for years to come."
- Shelley Hubal

Timeline of Sponsored or Co-Sponsored Events



PJ Library sends free Jewish themed children's books to families across the community every month; enabling young children to connect with their Jewish roots in a meaningful way.

Thanks to an anonymous donor, in 2023 we were able to provide monthly PJ Library subscriptions to 93 young Jewish children in our community. PJ Library also sponsored three programs in the last year. Our Hannukah party at the Discovery Center had more than 75 participants. That is an impactful investment in our future!



BINGHAMTON JEWISH FILM FEST

The 2023-2024 Binghamton Jewish Film Fest consisted of four virtual films and one in-person screening. Approximately one film per month was shown between October 2023 and March 2024. The Binghamton and Ithaca communities combined for more than 220 views of our five films.

Thanks to generous donations from the Rozen Foundation and the generosity of our community members, we were able to keep the film fest free to the community.

THE REPORTER

The Reporter keeps our area informed of Jewish activities, programming and important news (local, national and global). Our staff continues to find ways to remain solvent and relevant during the ongoing

struggles of print media. *The Reporter* is received in more than 1,000 homes by people in 41 states. *The Reporter* Committee is also looking for ways to increase our digital presence and offer more digital opportunities to our readers.

During the pandemic, we kept readers connected with online resources and by promoting virtual programming offered by various Jewish organizations. In 2023, *The Reporter* won a Syracuse Press Club award for a guest column by Professor Jonathan Karp.

The Reporter staff wants to thank its loyal readers and generous supporters. We are dedicated to continuing the important work of keeping the Binghamton Jewish community connected and informed.

Needs Assessment

In 2023 a needs assessment was completed. You can check it out at www.jfjb.org/about-us/needs-assessment.

Annual Campaign

The Federation Annual Fundraising Campaign began one week after the horrific Hamas attacks on Israel. With heavy hearts, our task felt more urgent, meaningful and relevant. We are so grateful for the many community members who showed their support, and continue to do so during this difficult chapter in our collective history.

The Annual Campaign for 2023 raised \$301,837 in total from 306 donors. The theme of the 2024 Campaign is "We take care of our own," chosen because it is about compassion and sustaining community now and for the future. We took this quote from our own Marcy Yonaty, who uses this term often. To date, the 2024 Campaign has raised \$236,814.01 from 299 donors.

A special thank you to the David and Virginia Eisenberg Foundation for its enduring support of the Federation.

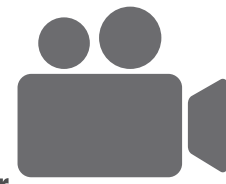
"Serving as the chair of the Federation Annual Campaign is a challenging task, but one that I am proud to do because it is my way of giving back to the community that has given me so much.

After October 7th I witnessed the resilience and generosity of the Binghamton Jewish community first-hand. They showed up. They gave. They made the Campaign a success and I am grateful for each donor and each volunteer."

-Marilyn Bell, Campaign Chair



1,030 copies of The Reporter delivered to homes every other week



5 Binghamton Jewish Film Fest screenings



\$301,837 raised in 2023 Campaign

\$9,550 in funds distributed to Jewish families through the "We Remember You" program

\$6,018 distributed in emergency relief funds



306 donors contributed to the 2023 Campaign



communitywide sponsored or co-sponsored programs

17 Stop the Bleed kits purchased and distributed to local Jewish institutions

93 Children receiving PJ Library books

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 virtual class “Threading Stones: An Elul Tradition” on Tuesdays, July 2-30 and August 6, from 2-3:30 pm. The cost to attend is \$250. The class will look at the threads Jewish women made to used to make soul candles (*neshome likht*) or protective bands worn on wrists, ankles or necks. For more information or to register, visit <https://ritualwell.org/event/threading-stones-an-elul-tradition/2024-07-02/>.

◆ Uri L’Tzedek will hold the virtual class “Was Avraham right to listen to God? ‘Yirat Elokim’ – Fearing God as the Development of a Moral Conscience” with Dr Tanya White on Tuesday, July 16, at noon. The cost to attend is \$18. The class will “question the premise of Divine authority as a premise for ethical behavior and show how a deeper understanding of biblical narratives can help us navigate a path toward understanding some difficult religious and ethical dilemmas.” For more information or to register, visit https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_6m3oMtBUTEWlaeb-SOR5IA#/registration.

◆ The Yiddish Book Center will hold the virtual program “Oysyes off the Page: The Yiddish Book Center’s Type Collection” on

Thursday, June 20, at 7 pm. The program will explore the Yiddish Book Center’s collection of type and how it plays a role in the new permanent exhibition, “Yiddish: A Global Culture.” For information or to register, visit www.yiddishbookcenter.org/events/oysyes-page-yiddish-book-center-s-type-collection.

◆ Ritualwell will hold the virtual class “Spiritual Resilience in a Time of War: Inspired by Etty Hillesum” on Wednesdays, July 10-31 and August 7, from noon-1:15 pm. The cost to attend is \$225. For more information or to register, visit <https://ritualwell.org/event/spiritual-resilience-in-a-time-of-war-inspired-by-etty-hillesum/2024-07-10/>.

◆ Jewish Women’s International will hold “Children and Guns: What Every Parent Should Know” on Monday, June 17, at 8:30 pm. The Jewish Gun Violence Prevention Roundtable will hold a conversation about how to keep our children safe from gun violence. To register, visit www.jwi.org/calendar/jgvp-june-2024.

◆ The 2024 Yetzirah Jewish Poetry Conference will take place Tuesday-Friday, July 2-5, and some of its events will be available for viewing on Zoom. A listing of events can be found at <https://yetzirahpoets.org/2024-public-events/>. Registration can be made by clicking on the event image.

◆ Ritualwell will hold the class “Can We Talk? Navigating Challenging Conversations” on Thursdays, July 11-25,

from noon-1:30 pm. The cost to attend is \$118. For more information or to register, visit <https://ritualwell.org/event/can-we-talk-navigating-challenging-conversations/2024-07-11/>.

◆ Qesher will hold the virtual Qesher Book Club: “Family Declassified” by Katherine Fennelly on Tuesday, June 18, at noon. Kennelly used her expertise as a social science researcher to answer to learn more about her maternal grandfather, a Jewish Hungarian immigrant who arrived in the U.S. one hundred years ago. For more information or to register, visit www.qesher.com/family-declassified/.

◆ Aleph will hold the virtual class “GPS for Your Inner Landscape: The Shore” on Monday, June 24, at 7:30 pm. The cost to attend is “pay what you can.” Rabbi Julie Hilton Danan will discuss how to “connect to your soul by connecting to the beauty of the natural world and Jewish wisdom about nature.” For more information or to register, visit <https://aleph.org/civircrm/event/register/?reset=1&id=554>.

◆ Ritualwell will hold two free talks: “Climate Emotions and the Wisdom Our Bodies Carry” on Tuesday, June 25, from 7-8:30 pm (<https://ritualwell.org/event/climate-emotions-and-the-wisdom-our-bodies-carry/>); and “Advot End-of-Year Celebration and Poetry Reading” on Thursday, June 27, from 7-8:30 pm (<https://ritualwell.org/event/advot-end-of-year-celebration-and-poetry-reading/>).

◆ Hey Alma will hold a virtual writing class “How to Tell Your Jewish Story” on Monday, June 24, from 6-8 pm. The class is open to everyone ages 18 and older. For more information or to register, visit www.heyalma.com/how-to-tell-your-jewish-story-a-hey-alma-writing-class/.

◆ The Jewish Theological Seminary will hold the virtual series “JTS Alumni in the World: Scholarship and Impact” on Mondays, June 17-August 12, from 1-2:30 pm. JTS alumni will talk about the contributions they are making through their work as scholars and thought leaders in their field. For more information or to register, visit www.jtsa.edu/news/summer-2024-learning-series/.

◆ The American Jewish University will hold the five-week class “Hebrew Through Israeli Songs” on Sundays July 14-August 11, at 4 pm. The cost to attend is \$96. The class will “explore the evolution of Israeli music, from the nostalgic tunes that defined past eras to the modern beats resonating with today’s generation.” For more information or to register, visit <https://open.aju.edu/event/hebrew-through-israeli-songs-3/>.

◆ The Yiddish Book Center will hold the hybrid program “Bruno Schulz and the Hijacking of History” with Benjamin Balint on Sunday, July 21, at 2-3 pm. Balint will discuss Schultz’ life ad the controversy over the mural he painted during the Holocaust. For more information or to register, visit See “Online” on page 11

Holocaust..... Continued from page 2

Israel’s existence.” Decrying the false and rampant Holocaust inversion, Rabbi Davidson condemned “abuse of the Shoah itself as a rhetorical weapon against Jews and the Jewish state. We know what genocide is. We survived one.” Rabbi Davidson prayed that we “fulfill the divine call to service... and bring healing to this world.”

Drawing parallels to the present, other speakers noted that the murder of six million European Jews, one-third of our people, began with words and boycotts. Thus, it is our duty to remember and tell the story of the victims and the survivors of the Holocaust to inspire action so that the mistakes of the past not be repeated. We were charged to remember the admonition of Elie Wiesel: “Without memory, there is no culture. Without memory, there would be no civilization, no society, no future”

Several prominent Jewish American leaders spoke at the Gathering of Remembrance, amongst them Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, the highest-ranking elected Jewish government official in American history. Many of his family members were murdered in the Shoah. Senator Schumer shared the story of his great-grandmother, who stood on her porch with 35 relatives and defied Nazi orders to gather in the town square. In retaliation, his great-grandmother and 35 relatives were shredded by Nazi machine gunfire on the porch of her home. Senator Schumer placed the generational trauma of the Shoah within the context of the October 7 massacre – the deadliest day for Jews since the Holocaust and the continuing ordeal of the hostages. He reaffirmed his commitment to fight antisemitism here and abroad by pledging “never again.”

One of the six aged Holocaust survivors to light a candle in memory of the six million Jewish lives snuffed out in the Shoah, Martin Bloch, pledged to continue to tell the story of the Shoah as long as he had breath.

The grandson of a Holocaust survivors, Jordan Farkas related the story of his grandmother, Marguerite Berkowitz Farkas. On May 10, 1940, as Nazi bombs raked her Belgium community, 12-year-old Marguerite, along with her parents Jankiel and Rivka Berkowitz, older brother Abram and younger sister Eva, fled to France for refuge. But in October 1940, the Berkowitz family were carted off to a relocation site, enduring fetid conditions along with many other Jews. Then, in August 1942, 15-year-old Marguerite and her family were packed like animals into a boxcar destined for the Auschwitz death camp.



Holocaust survivor Martin Bloch. (Photo by John Halpern and published courtesy of Jeff Simmons)

The gas chamber and ovens awaited Jankiel and Rivka and several of their relatives, as it did so many other Jews. Miraculously, Abram survived Auschwitz. And members of the partisan resistance rescued Marguerite and Eva from Auschwitz, but their future was still fraught.

For a time, the partisans moved the Berkowitz sisters from farmhouse to farmhouse of brave and compassionate Christian families who resisted Nazi dictates. As the Nazi pursuers pushed forward, the partisans instructed the girls that they must flee to safety and follow the North Star over many, many miles to safety in Switzerland. Remarkably, their relentless determination delivered Marguerite and Eva to the refuge of an aunt’s care in Switzerland.

Before the irrevocable final separation from their daughters, Jankiel and Rivka told them, “Go live for us.” Those words became a sacred injunction for Marguerite, and she wrote a memoir titled “Go Live for Us.” Marguerite imparted her story to her own children, and then to Jordan and her other grandchildren.

As a third-generation Holocaust survivor, Jordan has assumed Marguerite’s mission. Jordan asserted his commitment to make the Holocaust and Marguerite’s survival relevant and relatable to his own children, even as the Shoah grows chronologically more distant from the present, so that his children will teach their children about the meaning of Yom Hashoah – and that the story will resonate in all the generations to come.

Marguerite not only lived, she thrived. Pharaohs, fuhrers and terrorists have and will come, but, for all Jews, it is our obligation in this generation and in the generations yet unborn to remember the words of the victims of the Shoah: “Go live for us.”

➔ Visit us on the web at www.thereporter.org

The Reporter wants the community to kvell with you

If your baby was born between July 2023 and July 2024, submit your baby’s picture to *The Reporter* for the annual Family Focus issue, which will be published on June 28. Pictures must be e-mailed by Tuesday, June 18. Parents and grandparents are welcome to e-mail a photo to TReporter@aol.com as a JPG or TIF. Please include the baby’s name, sex, date of birth, parents’ names, grandparents’ names and great-grandparents’ names.



War..... Continued from page 2

So although it was no surprise, it was still a shock when they got the call right before *Pesach* to show up for duty only a few days later, during the holiday.

It’s not the kind of news that you can really prepare for, although several days notice is a lifetime compared the frenetic call-ups of October 7.

You have to suck it up, organize your gear, and show up for duty. The men and the women. The front lines and the Homefront.

No one gets to choose their role. In our lives, as parents and in-laws of soldiers, our job is to support. We do our best to help whenever and however we can. Whether that’s cooking, watching the kids or ferrying our sons to their bases after some time off, within the limits of our strength, we try to be there as needed. Our duties don’t entail a uniform, but we are proud to serve in what

limited capacity we are able.

We’ve all done this before. The mothers will again assume their dual responsibilities. The fathers will check their emotions at the door, don their warrior personas and do battle for the future of our people. We parents will worry, lose sleep, hug our children fiercely as they leave, pray for the well-being of all of our forces, and do what we can in the background.

It’s an encore we have awaited.

It’s an encore we have dreaded.

It’s an encore we hope and pray will lead to complete victory.

In every single sense of the word.

P.S. This was written a week or two ago.

In the end, though both of our sons’ returns were temporarily deferred, their units are active and the war has come to Rafah. The sentiments above remain exactly the same.



Catering
Extra Parking in Rear
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Weekly Parasha

Naso, Numbers 4:21-7:89

Finding merit in discontinued rituals

RABBI SUZANNE BRODY, ITHACA BEIT MIDRASH

We are no strangers to rituals that appear odd or confusing to outsiders. We walk around waving branches, engage in extreme housecleaning and so much more. One could view the actions taken in the case of the *sotah*, the suspected adulteress, as just one more example of a unique ritual that seems strange to an onlooker. However, unlike waving the lulav or cleaning for Passover, the *sotah* ritual is one that is foreign even to those within our own community.

When a husband suspects his wife of adultery, without witnesses or proof, he has no legal recourse against her, and suspicion is therefore left to fester and potentially destroy the marriage. To avoid this, the husband is encouraged to bring the woman to the priest to undergo the *sotah* ritual, whereby her head is uncovered, she is instructed on the words to say and is made to drink a concoction of water, dirt from the floor of the Tabernacle and the words of a curse (which includes God's name) that have been written

and then rubbed off into the water. If she was innocent, nothing would happen; if guilty, physical changes such as a sagging belly would become apparent, potentially immediately.

Being forced to undergo the *sotah* ritual is no doubt humiliating. By taking off her headcovering, she is forced to stand practically naked before all assembled. Then, she is made to drink what sounds like an absolutely awful concoction (worse than the peanut butter and coke one I made with a friend when I was a child, for sure).

Many modern commentators have tried to put a positive, empowering spin on this ceremony. While they don't necessarily address the humiliating acts that the woman is made to suffer, they do believe that there is a positive intent behind the ritual. Dr. Aviva Zornberg contends that the ideal outcome of the *sotah* ritual is that all ambiguity will be resolved, so that the husband and wife can move

forward. Rabbi Roy Tanenbaum points out that the entire point of the ritual is about establishing that the woman is innocent (whether or not she is), restoring trust between the partners and allowing the marriage to continue. But, Dr. Zornberg and Rabbi Tanenbaum also acknowledge that there is no such thing as magic; trial by ordeal does not work and total certainty can never be achieved in human affairs. And yet, they seem optimistic that this ritual can help a couple to reconcile.

Ben Azai, however, found a different way to make the *sotah* ritual more palatable. He suggests a way to mitigate the suspected adulteress' suffering. The Mishnah (Sotah 3:4) comments that if a woman "has merit," she will not be subject to her face becoming green and her eyes bulging as soon as she finishes drinking the concoction. Instead, depending on that merit, these effects might not come to See "Merit" on page 11

Congregational Notes

Temple Israel

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

Service schedule: Tues., 5:30 pm; Fri., 5:30 pm; Sat., 9:30 am
On Fridays and Tuesdays at 5:30 pm, services will be led by Rabbi Micah Friedman via Zoom and in-person.

On Saturday, June 15, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person. The Torah portion is Numbers 4:21-7:89 and the haftarah is Judges 13:2-25. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 9:45 pm.

The Annual Congregational / Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 18, at 7 pm.

The Ritual Committee will meet on Wednesday, June 19, at 10 am.

On Saturday, June 22, Shacharit services will be held at 9:45 am via Zoom and in-person. The Torah portion is Numbers 8:1-12:16 and the haftarah is Zechariah 2:14-4:7. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 9:45 pm.

Office hours for Monday, June 24, will be from 2-4 pm.

The office will be closed on Tuesday-Wednesday, June 25-26.

Rabbi Micah Friedman's Installation weekend will be held Friday-Sunday, June 28-30.

Norwich Jewish Center

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

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.

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.

Friday, June 14, light candles before..... 8:23 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, June 15 9:23 pm
Friday, June 21, light candles before..... 8:25 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, June 22 9:25 pm
Friday, June 28, light candles before..... 8:25 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, June 29 9:25 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, June 14: At 7:30 pm, PRIDE Shabbat service with Cantor Abbe Lyons. 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, June 15: At 9:15 am, Torah study with Cantor Abbe Lyons in person and on Zoom (http://bit.ly/3XDnvRE, meeting ID 825 1226 2831 and passcode 743892).

Tuesday, June 18: At 8 pm, General (Board of Trustees) Meeting. Meetings are open to members of Temple Concord. Contact the synagogue office for the meeting link at 607-723-7355 or templeconcordaa@gmail.com.

Friday, June 21: At 7:30 pm, Shabbat service with Robin Sobol, former WRJ Northeast District president. Join via Zoom at https://bit.ly/3hRmW2Y, meeting ID 869 9699 8146 and passcode 826330, or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/templeconcord/. For more information, see the article on page 3.

Saturday, June 22: At 9:15 am, Torah study with Robin Sobol, former WRJ Northeast District president, in person and on Zoom (http://bit.ly/3XDnvRE, meeting ID 825 1226 2831 and passcode 743892). For more information, see the article on page 3.

See "TC" on page 11

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.

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.

Young Jews call for justice in new book amid rising antisemitism

By JNS staff

(JNS) – A new book, titled “Human Rights: Written by Young Jews from 40 Countries,” was released at a ceremony in Oporto, Portugal, attended by Israel’s Ambassador to Portugal Dor Shapira. The book is a response to the unprecedented attacks on Jews worldwide and the weaponization of “human rights” to attack the Jewish state, particularly in the wake of the October 7 massacre. It is an initiative of B’nai B’rith Portugal together with the International Observatory for Human Rights, a Portugal-based group.

“The book comes in the wake of Hamas’ October 7

massacre and seeks to highlight that Jewish human rights have been forgotten or minimized in the service of a narrow yet hateful ideology, sadly led by those for whom human rights is a mere slogan,” said David Nataf, vice president of B’nai B’rith Portugal.

“The book is a wake-up call by young Jewish men and women scattered around the four corners of the Earth,” said Luís Andrade, president of the International Observatory of Human Rights. Chapters are written by Jews ages 16-30 from all corners of the globe, including China, Tunisia, Australia and Guatemala.

Writing on the theme of justice, Mara Garrett, 17, from Portugal, recalled, “The Jewish people created national and international law, dinim, which imposes on humanity a system of justice with honest laws and honest judges operating in a context of truth and good faith. However, exactly three months after Hamas perpetrated the worst massacre of Jews since the Holocaust, Israel was tried for genocide at the International Court of Justice. This demonstrates a lack of a real commitment to law, if it just becomes a weapon in the service of political attacks.”

Several writers addressed the current rise of antisemitism and discrimination.

Yochanan Caldes, 26, from Belgium, wrote, “The Holocaust happened 80 years ago. I always imagined that it would be centuries before there were further discriminations against human beings in general and the Jews in particular. But, today, I can testify to the opposite in Brussels, at the heart of Europe.”

Shlomo Elijah, 24, from the United Kingdom, wrote, “Antisemitism has always been used to express a prejudiced aversion to Jews, viewed as the root of all society’s evils. In a world that protects minorities in extreme and passionate form, the Jews are forgotten. Again.”

Also addressing the event were Ambassador Manuela Franco, National Coordinator of the European Strategy to Combat Antisemitism and Promote Jewish Life, and Luís Campos Ferreira, chairman of the ruling party’s international relations commission.

The book is in English and Hebrew and is available free of charge at www.bneibrit-humanrights.org/ and other international organizations and online.

WRJ Continued from page 3

Sobol is a member of Congregation Beth Emeth in Albany, where she has served as a board member. For the last six years, she has been an officer to the Board of Trustees. Beth Emeth encompasses 740 family units. She has chaired the Education Committee and the Ritual Committee. She has served as secretary to the board and, for the last four years, has served as treasurer. Beginning July 1, Sobol will assume the role of first vice president of the congregation. “She loves to sing in the choir and enjoys the challenges of chanting Torah and writing *d’vrei* Torah,” said organizers of the event.

Merit Continued from page 10

pass until after one year, two years or even three years. How might a woman gain this merit? Ben Azai says that she gains merit from learning Torah.

Bartenura agrees that learning Torah conveys merit, but he does not think it is the woman herself who is learning Torah. Rather, he backpedals a bit, saying that the merit comes not from the woman herself studying Torah, but for the ways in which she enables her husband and children to learn.

Even with these positive spins, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai, an extraordinary Jewish leader and scholar who managed the fragile transition of the Jewish people to life without a Temple, nullified the administration of the *sotah* ritual to a suspected adulteress. While there are those that argue that the ritual stopped being performed because we could no longer use dirt from the floor of the Temple, the explanation given in the Talmud is that adultery proliferated to such an extent that it no longer made sense to perform the ritual. Instead, we moved from the performance of the ritual to the study of it. From this, we learn that there is merit in learning even about rituals that do not pertain to us. We are encouraged to keep learning Torah and, in doing so, we will discover merit that will sustain us through our own ordeals in life.

TC Continued from page 10

Friday, June 28: At 6 pm, there will be a potluck dinner, which will be in-person only. It will include candle lighting, the blessing over the wine, the healing prayer, the Mourner’s Kaddish and the blessing over the challah.

Saturday, June 29: At 9:15 am, Torah study in person and on Zoom (<http://bit.ly/3XDnvRE>, meeting ID 825 1226 2831 and passcode 743892).

Tuesday, July 2: At 10:30 am, the Tuesday Morning Book Club will discuss “Kunstlers in Paradise, a Novel” by Cathleen Shine. For more information, contact Merri Pell-Preus at 607-222-2875 or merrypell.preus@gmail.com. To join via Zoom, visit <https://bit.ly/3CXVd9b>, meeting ID 881 6469 4206 and passcode: 653272

Friday, July 5: At 7:30 pm, Shabbat service with Rabbi Leah 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, July 6: There will be no Torah study.

Netanyahu unveils \$950 million plan to aid Israel’s north

JNS staff

(JNS) – The Israeli government recently unveiled a 3.5 billion shekel (\$950 million) plan to rehabilitate the country’s north, which has suffered near-daily attacks by Hezbollah since October 7. More than 60,000 area residents remain displaced nearly eight months into the war.

The immediate-term plan joins a longer, multi-year plan dubbed “Northern Dawn” that offers specific proposals for rebuilding and developing the region. The new plan “will greatly assist the residents of the north,” said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The plan’s approval brings the overall budget for Israel’s north to 6.5 billion shekels, or roughly \$1.8 billion. “We will provide a socio-economic solution for the north, and a broad security solution,” said the prime minister.

The plan was formulated by the Prime Minister’s Office’s Home Affairs, Planning and Development branch, in cooperation with government ministries and the heads of northern local councils. A staff will be set up in the PMO to implement it. The prime minister will head a ministerial committee to oversee overall government policy for the plan.

Its short-term goals include: 1) increasing certainty for the northern communities and the population under threat; 2) providing assistance for defending and unifying those communities; and 3) offering aid for northern businesses and strengthening employment security, among other items.

The long-term plan involves proposals to reinforce overall economic life and well-being in the north. The creation of an innovation and food-tech ecosystem in the **See North** on page 12

Online Continued from page 9

www.yiddishbookcenter.org/events/bruno-schulz-and-hi-jacking-history-benjamin-balint.

◆ Hadar will hold the virtual class “Intro to Rebbe Nahman: Conversations With A Man of Faith” with Rabbi Avi Strausberg on Mondays and Wednesdays, June 24-July 31, from noon-12:30 pm. The class will explore the teachings of Sihot HaRan in which Rebbe Nahman’s student Rebbe Natan recorded teachings from his teacher. For more information or to register, visit www.hadar.org/learn/classes-events/intro-rebbe-nahman-conversations-man-faith.

◆ The Congress for Jewish will offer a virtual course on “Der Shtumer Minyen” (“The Silent Minyan”) by Chaim Grade with Shane Baker on Sundays, June 23-July 28, from 3-4:30 pm. The discussions will be in English, but Shane will read it aloud in class in Yiddish. To register for the class, e-mail Shane at kongres@earthlink.net.

◆ The Forward will hold the virtual program “How Young Cantors are Embracing the Sound of the Traditional Synagogue” on Tuesday, June 25, at 7 pm. Forward Deputy Yiddish Editor Zach Golden will talk with Cantors Judith Berkson and David Childs, who will also sing. For more information or to register, visit <https://forward.com/events/how-young-cantors-are-embracing-the-sound-of-the-traditional-synagogue/>.

tors-are-embracing-the-sound-of-the-traditional-synagogue/.

◆ My Jewish Learning is holding the eight-part course “Jewish Funeral Practices: Your Helping Hand Through a Challenging Time.” The course will offer a behind-the-scenes journey through Jewish funeral planning and the mourning process. The classes are tapes and available for viewing. For more information or to register, visit <https://my-jewish-learning.teachable.com/p/jewish-funeral-practices-your-helping-hand-through-a-challenging-time>.

◆ The American Jewish University will hold the virtual talk “What Does It Mean to Be a Christian Ally of Israel?” on Tuesday, July 9, at 3 pm. Johnnie Moore, oresident of JDA Worldwide and the Congress of Christian Leaders, will be in conversation with AJU President Jeffrey Herbst “to discuss his perspective on Israel after October 7th, the current wave of antisemitism, the feeling of many Jews being abandoned, and his own experience of advocacy.” For more information or to register, visit www.aju.edu/events/what-does-it-mean-be-christian-ally-israel.

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

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Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton

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Amsterdam summit demands Europe address “existential threat to Jewish lives”

By Amelie Botbol

(JNS) – One hundred Jewish leaders approved a resolution on June 4 demanding European decision-makers address the “record rise in antisemitism and the associated existential threat to Jewish lives in Europe.”

The motion passed at the European Jewish Association’s “emergency summit” in Amsterdam aims to counter a surge of anti-Jewish and anti-Israel sentiment in Europe.

Among the practical aspects of the resolution is a call for “the immediate establishment by European governments of an online mechanism for reporting ongoing harassment of Jews and antisemitic threats and that this reporting mechanism be directly linked to law enforcement agencies to enable rapid response.”

The decision also urges “comprehensive police training to boost identifying antisemitism, dealing with antisemitism and arresting those who perpetrate antisemitic acts,” and for “police departments to adopt a zero-tolerance attitude toward violent and/or intimidatory protests and zero-tolerance for terrorist organization banners, flags or insignia.”

Pascal Markowicz, a member of the Board of Directors of CRIF, which represents the Jewish community in France, told JNS that the goal of the conference was to devise practical mechanisms to ensure the safety of European Jewry. “It is essential to adopt laws that protect Jewish life in Europe and prevent antisemitism, as well as boycotts of Israel and anti-Zionism in general,” Markowicz said.

“The pro-Palestinian demonstrations since October 7 are the difficulty. The problem is not demonstrating for the Palestinian cause. One can be against Israeli policies – we



Jewish leaders approved the motion by show of hands at the European Jewish Association’s emergency summit on antisemitism in Amsterdam on June 4. (Photo by Yoav Dudkevitch)

live in a free world – but these rallies are not against Israeli policy, they are antisemitic and prevent Jews from going about their daily life freely,” he added.

To this end, the resolution passed recommends “the appointment of dedicated professionals to deal with antisemitic complaints to adopt much tougher responses to antisemitic incidents, and establish a fast-track procedure towards prosecution.”

It also calls on national parliaments to enshrine in law the principles of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of Jew-hatred, and establish the legal means to prosecute those in breach of those principles.

The motion expresses “great concern” over European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, who has demonstrated “clear and repeated anti-Israel bias that has been a significant contributory factor to the ongoing antisemitism and the vilification of the state of Israel as a whole in the European public space.”

In May, Israel’s Foreign Ministry blasted Borrell for comments in which he panned the Jewish state for rejecting the Hamas terrorist group’s proposal for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. Borrell’s remarks were a “dangerous mix of ignorance, hostility and the legitimization of terrorism,” Israeli spokesman Oren Marmorstein said.

The top E.U. diplomat had told reporters that “Hamas accepted, Israel rejected and the land offensive against Rafah has started again, despite all the requests of the international community. I am afraid that this is going to cause again a lot of casualties, civilian casualties.”

In March, Borell accused Jerusalem of “provoking famine” in Gaza, claiming that the Israel Defense Forces is using starvation as a “weapon of war.”

“Gaza was before the war the greatest open-air prison. Today, it is the greatest open-air graveyard,” Borrell claimed in separate comments.

The resolution urged the European Council to properly vet the next E.U. foreign policy chief and ensure that the position is not allowed to be “exploited and manipulated for partisan purposes.”

The resolution will be shared with and discussed with all European national parliaments and governments, all European special envoys for combating antisemitism and the presidents of the European Council and European Commission.

Israel opens “prehistoric Garden of Eden” to public

By JNS staff

(JNS) – A new Israeli national park in the Jordan Valley was officially opened to the public recently, with government officials hailing its 1.6-million-year-old archeological site as a “prehistoric Garden of Eden.”

Ubeidiya National Park, which is located near Kibbutz Beit Zera, south of the Sea of Galilee, and was first discovered in 1959, contains 30 geologic layers with evidence of ancient human activity, researchers say.

The recent festive opening ceremony was held in the presence of Jordan Valley Regional Council head Idan Greenbaum; Israel Antiquities Authority Director Eli Escudido; Israel Nature and Parks Authority Director Raya Shourky; and Lake Kinneret Authority Chairman Moti Dotan.

“Every year, the Israel Antiquities Authority develops tens of archaeological sites, making them accessible to the public. But Ubeidiya is unique: This is a prehistoric site of inestimable scientific importance for researching the beginnings of the human race,” said Escudido.



The Ubeidiya site is accessible and open to the public. (Photo by Emil Aladjem/Israel Antiquities Authority)

He noted that previous attempts to develop the site were unsuccessful due to “the lack of appropriate partners to manage and maintain it.”

Ubeidiya contains geologic layers with evidence of human activity dating back some 1.6 million years. Archaeologists have found traces at the site indicating how conditions on Earth were between one-two million years ago.

Shourky noted that the site’s importance spans from prehistoric times to modern Zionist history. “First, ‘Ubeidiya’s prehistoric site represents man’s entry into the Middle East 1.5 million years ago. Secondly, adjacent Tel Ubeidiya represents early Israel, based on an inscription dating to the Egyptian Pharaoh Merneptah. And finally, Moshav Menahemia represents the beginning of the Zionist movement – established here in 1901 right in this very district, and heralding Zionism flourishing throughout this region,” Shourky explained.

“These three sites tell the story and provide the complete picture of life in this region throughout the course of history until our own times,” added the Nature and Parks Authority head.

The Authority declared Ubeidiya a national park in 2022. At the same time, the site was incorporated into a national project to revive the greater Southern Jordan River Reserve, led by the Lake Kinneret Authority and the Jordan Valley Regional Council. Government organizations combined forces in recent months to open the park to the general public. Access roads were paved, as well as a circular pedestrian route with explanatory signs. The site is currently in the first of three site development stages. In the next stage, a visitors center will be opened in the original field laboratory.

Saudi Arabia removes anti-Israel material from schoolbooks

By JNS staff

(JNS) – Saudi Arabia has removed practically all antisemitism and anti-Israel material from its schoolbooks, in a major shift from the past and a harbinger of a better future, a study released on May 28 found. The study, conducted by the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education (IMPACT-SE) – an international research organization – found a “marked reduction” in anti-Israel content in the Saudi curriculum, which no longer teaches that Zionism is a “racist” European movement, nor denies the historical Jewish presence in the region dating back 3,000 years.

North. . . . Continued from page 11

area is specifically mentioned, along with a new university to be established in Kiryat Shmona.

With regard to Hezbollah, during a May 23 visit to the army’s Northern Command headquarters in the Upper Galilee city of Safed, Netanyahu said that Israel has “detailed, important and even surprising plans.” Hezbollah terrorists fired a barrage of around 30 rockets from southern Lebanon at the Upper Galilee the same day.

On May 19, Netanyahu had met with the heads of northern local councils in Hezbollah’s line of fire to discuss a plan to return displaced Israelis to their homes and compensate them and their communities. “In the end, the revival and the momentum of the northern border depend on security,” he acknowledged.

In addition, according to the study, hostile references to Israel in the textbooks have been modified, while the word “Palestine” has been removed from maps of Israeli sites. The study also noted that all remaining violent interpretations of *jihād*, which had been in place for years, were removed or altered in this year’s textbooks.

References to homosexuality as a “monstrous atrocity,” or claims that emulating the opposite sex is a “deviation from normality,” were removed, as well. While retaining a traditional approach to gender roles, there has been a notable improvement in the depiction of women, the study revealed.

“Saudi textbooks published for the 2023/24 school year constitute another step towards the transformation of a curriculum into an educational framework which encourages tolerance, peace and greater equality,” said IMPACT-se CEO Marcus Sheff. “Having already removed antisemitism from the textbooks, it is particularly encouraging that Saudi curriculum designers have made further revisions which portray Israel in a more positive light. These changes bode well for the future of the region as a whole.”

The significant positive changes in the Gulf Kingdom’s educational curriculum come amid renewed reports of a United States-brokered Saudi-Israeli normalization deal. This is despite Hamas’s October 7 attack on the Jewish state – which some Mideast analysts assess was launched, in part, to scuttle such a deal – and the ongoing war in Gaza.

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THE REPORTER
Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton