

## Federation forms Needs Assessment Workgroup

**By Reporter staff**

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton has formed a Needs Assessment Workgroup, which will be co-chaired by Shelley Hubal, Federation executive director, and Nancy Dorfman, a member of the Federation board. The group will focus primarily on identifying local community needs and to determine their relative priority as part of its mission “to create a caring, vibrant, enduring community locally.”

“As the demographics and resources

of our community change over time, it is important to periodically examine our priorities and determine where we have opportunities to better meet those needs,” said Hubal. “As a local umbrella organization, we may also identify some potential opportunities for synergy and collaboration between organizations in the Greater Binghamton area.”

“The goal of the workgroup is to identify community needs and priorities in alignment with the Federation’s mission,” Dorfman added. “We plan to provide

feedback, which we hope will be useful to the Federation board when it reviews allocation requests in the fall.”

The group held its first meeting on June 28 and expects to hold one or two more meetings before offering providing its feedback to the Federation board. Workgroup members include board and non-board members, and feature a range of demographics from the community. The Workgroup’s first meeting lasted two hours and its agenda was to review the participants’ responses to a needs

assessment exercise created by Hubal and Dorfman.

“Our first meeting was focused on identifying priorities,” said Hubal. “The committee recognized that we need to engage community members of all ages. Some priorities, such as the need for security were easily agreeable, while others required more in-depth conversation.”

Hubal also noted the many roles the Federation plays in the community, including organizing events to connect community members and community organizations, raising and allocating funds, providing Jewish educational, cultural and spiritual programming, and collaborative social services. She sees these as vital to the community, but noted that it’s important to prioritize needs, identify how these needs tie into the Federation’s mission and to also determine whether there are needs which are not currently being met.

## BD to offer stipend to families/ individuals moving to area

Saba Wiesner, Beth David Synagogue’s president, has announced what the Beth David executive board called “a unique opportunity” for a family or individual who is willing to relocate to Broome County and become a resident. Thanks to a generous donor, a family or individuals who move to the Binghamton area will receive a monthly subsidy of up to \$500 per month for one year. This \$500 can be applied to a rent or mortgage payment. The subsidy will be provided for a maximum of three years. In return, the family or individual will be requested

to become an active member of the Beth David Synagogue community. To be an active member, a male member, who is above bar mitzvah age, is asked to attend Shabbat services two or more times a month. Female members are asked to be involved in the Beth David Sisterhood.

“Our community,” Wiesner noted, “offers affordable housing, no traffic, beautiful parks, a Hebrew day school, a three-hour drive to New York City and a Beth David congregation that will embrace you and your family!”

Wiesner added, “Beth David Syna-

agogue is a warm, friendly, modern Orthodox *shul* with active members. This is a positive and exciting opportunity for both the *shul* and for the family or individuals who are willing to become a part of the Beth David family. We are excited to hear from interested people and to welcome them to our community.”

Those wishing to obtain further information should contact Beth David Synagogue by sending a letter to the synagogue at 39 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905, e-mailing bethdavid@stny.rr.com or calling 607-722-1793.

## BD Sisterhood closed out year



On June 14, the Sisterhood of Beth David Synagogue held its closing meeting for the 2022-23 season. L-r: Kerry Wright, Susan Wright and Michael Wright enjoyed the evening’s entertainment. See article on page 3. (Photo by Cathy Velenchik)

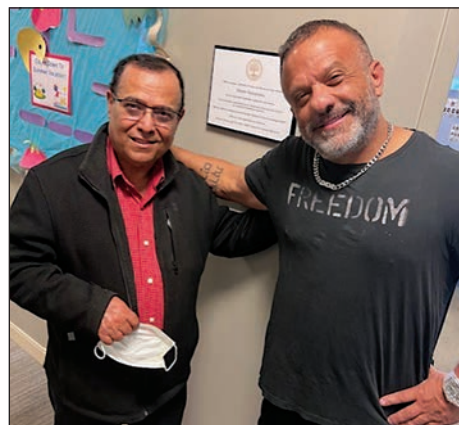
## Hillel Academy honored Shmaryahu

Hillel Academy of Broome County honored Rabbi Moshe Shmaryahu, head of Jewish studies at the school, with a plaque on June 20, thanking him for his ongoing commitment to the school, as well as the community. The plaque was presented on behalf of the school, families, teachers and community members.

Shmaryahu is currently undergoing treatment in his fight against cancer. Community members showed up to offer support, strength and messages of healing, and also signed up to send a kosher meal. Anyone who would like to participate in sending a meal should contact Joy Yarkoni in the Hillel office at 607-304-4544.



The plaque given to Rabbi Moshe Shmaryahu.



L-r: Rabbi Moshe Shmaryahu and Adam Weitsman

## Hillel Academy graduation

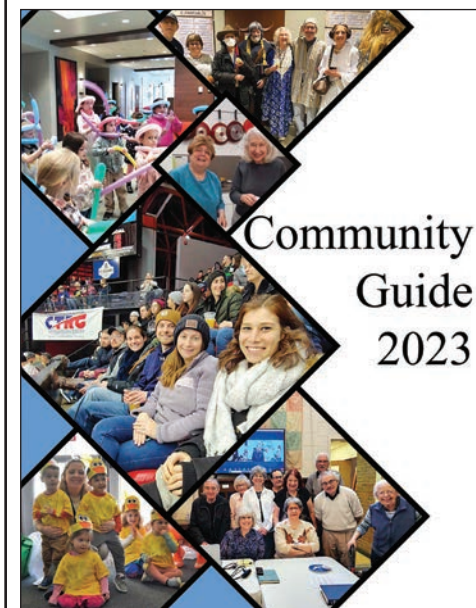


At left: Three students graduated from Hillel Academy of Broome County in June: Shterny Chein, Micah Yarkoni and Mayaan Menora. Both Chein and Yarkoni began Hillel at the Gainenu level, while Menora joined in fourth grade when their family moved here from Israel. The graduation ceremony included speeches, songs and stories of their experiences at Hillel. The ceremony was followed by a barbecue.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

#### Special Sections

Book Reviews.....	4
Congregational Notes .....	6
Classifieds .....	8
Community Guide.....	1A-20A



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

#### When in Rome...

A new scholarly paper says Jews watched, but weren’t part of, Roman gladiatorial games.

.....Page 5

#### The Russians are coming

An Israeli nonprofit helps Russian-speaking *olim* manage the challenges of *aliyah*.

.....Page 7

#### News in brief...

Survey finds philanthropic teens are more connected to Judaism; and more.

.....Page 8



## Jewish Baseball Players

# Yentl at the Bat, Part II: Jewish women and baseball, Jane Leavy

BILL SIMONS

Jane Leavy is the pre-eminent Jewish baseball biographer. Her biographies of three of baseball's most iconic figures – “Sandy Koufax: A Lefty's Legacy” (2002), “The Big Fella: Babe Ruth and the World He Created” (2018) and “The Last Boy: Mickey Mantle and the End of America's Childhood” (2010) – are classics of the game's literature. During the 1950s, however, prevailing conventions for little girls and perceptions of personal frailty threatened to distance the young Jane Leavy from the sport she loved.

The apartment of Leavy's beloved grandmother Celia Zelda Fellenbaum was close enough to Yankee Stadium to hear the crack of the bat. Mantle – The Mick – the best player on baseball's most storied team was Jane's favorite. It was not just the switch-hitting centerfielder's tape-measure home runs and boyish, muscular good looks that attracted the little girl. Young Jane felt that she and her grandmother were bound to Mantle by shared physical vulnerability and pain leavened by the courage to soldier on. By mid-adolescence, chronic osteomyelitis racked Mantle's legs and ankles. Jane found common bravery in her grandmother's Yom Kippur fasting despite severe diabetes, which required daily insulin shots administered to the thigh, and Mantle playing through pain. Young Jane, born prematurely, also knew physical challenge. Still, she wanted to play the Mick's game. And it was her grandmother who bought Jane a baseball glove.

Decades later, Leavy would acquire a more complex relationship with her childhood hero. During her ascent as a sportswriter and feature writer for *The Washington Post*, Leavy battled vulgar sexual harassment in baseball locker rooms, including a masturbating coach. Billy Martin's Oakland A's drugged her drink. As Leavy evolved into a major American biographer, she manifested the courage she had perceived in her grandmother and Mantle years before.

Research on Mantle brought Leavy into rude conflict with the idealized romanticism of her youth. During her first time alone with an inebriated Mantle, Leavy felt shock and dismay as his uninvited hand advanced up the inside of her right leg. Leavy was determined not to let this proceed, but it was Mantle's drunken collapse into unconsciousness, with his face tucked into her lap, that brought closure to the

session. Nonetheless, subsequent interviews with Mantle followed. Critics credited Leavy with chronicling the alcoholic, irresponsible, sexist man-child, while finding the courageous, generous and tormented Mantle.

Her position as a Jewish woman significantly influenced Leavy's approach to Koufax. That Leavy produced a brilliant biography of Koufax is remarkable since he turned down interview requests and prohibited contact with relatives. Much that one would expect from a groundbreaking Koufax biography is absent. The reader learns little of Koufax's biological father, mother, stepfather, stepsister, years as an only child, wives, military service, academic record or private thoughts. Yet, much of significance is revealed, setting Leavy's work above other Koufax biographies. Leavy is candid but unapologetic about omissions, asserting, “You don't need to know everything to write the truth. You just need to know enough.”

Despite the boundaries Koufax set, Leavy forged compensatory paths. Leavy conducted an astonishing 469 interviews, encompassing teammates, managers, opponents, friends, fans and a myriad of others. Koufax agreed to confirm biographical details.

Although not the recluse that other writers have fashioned, Koufax is a private man, spurring Leavy to locate places she could mine. As a woman and an outsider, Leavy dug deep, more so than previous writers, into areas either distorted or neglected. She meticulously analyzed Koufax' biomechanical pitching perfection. Essentially, Koufax threw only two pitches, fastball and curveball. During his abbreviated career, Koufax, suggests Leavy, was arguably the most dominant pitcher in major league history. With a blinding fastball, dropping “12-to-6 curveball,” and acquired pinpoint control, Koufax totally overpowered batters.

Leavy casts Koufax' September 9, 1965, perfect game as a Greek chorus, weaving it through nine interspersed chapters, each devoted to a single inning. There is a dramatic artistry to Leavy's telling of this historic game that envelops the reader in the illusion of presence at a specific time and place. Moreover, she invests the tale of perfection with an empathetic humanity, granting the ill-fated Cubs' losing pitcher

Bob Hendley with dignity. In the best game of his pitching career, Hendley yielded but one hit and lost on an error.

Leavy values detail, truth and significance, attributes that shape her Koufax biography. She sets the Koufax story within the context of American history, exposes the full extent of the physical agony pitching placed on Koufax's gifted but severely injured arm, vitiates the myth that Koufax was a loner and a host of other shibboleths, and marks the Koufax-Don Drysdale salary holdout as the genesis of the transformation of baseball labor-management relations. And she brings gravitas to discussion of Koufax's Jewishness.

Previous commentators emphasized Koufax as a source of Jewish pride, anchored in his refusal to pitch on game one of the 1965 World Series because it fell on Yom Kippur. Rather than depicting Koufax as an exemplar of Jewish tradition, Leavy casts him as a reflection of evolving assimilation and acceptance. A secular, non-observant Jew, Koufax was not bar mitvahed, but he spent a dozen summers at the Jewish Camp Chi Wan Da and countless hours on the basketball court at the Jewish Community House of Bensonhurst. In Leavy's words, Koufax was “more dutiful than devout,” cognizant of the expectations of his parents and his connection to the Jewish community. During his 12-year, MLB career, Koufax never pitched on the High Holidays, but, despite mythology, he did not necessarily attend religious services on those days. Leavy invests much import to Koufax as a counter to the image of the Jewish male as a physically underdeveloped, timid intellectual. Also, central to Leavy's depiction is her insistence that Koufax's commitment to social justice, manifested by his close relationship with Black teammates and battle to improve conditions of baseball labor, derived from his Jewish conscience. Leavy attributes an ethnic cultural affinity and sensibility to this “very Jewish being.”

Jane Leavy has set a high bar for Jewish baseball biography. *Bill Simons is a professor emeritus at SUNY Oneonta where he continues to teach courses in American history. He is also the co-director of The Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture, and served as a speaker for the New York Council on the Humanities.*

## Opinion

### In My Own Words

# Being a sucker or harming the needy?

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

I love reading books about social psychology, particularly ones that not only give me a greater understanding of human nature, but make me question my own behavior. But rarely do I have the opportunity to read a news story that highlights the idea under discussion while I was reading about it.

The book is “Fool Proof: How the Fear of Playing the Sucker Shapes Our Selves and the Social Order – And What We Can Do About It” (Harper Wave). The author, Tess Wilkinson-Ryan, is a professor at the University of Pennsylvania Law School and has a law degree and a doctorate in psychology. Her work talks about how our fear of being suckered – that is, having someone take advantage of us – can work against our best interests, personal and political. The studies she discusses show that people often act against their own best interest because of that fear. This includes people turning down a deal if they feel it's unfair, even if it would have meant they received money they didn't earn.

The chapter that relates to the news story I mentioned spoke about how we may want to help people, but are also afraid of being suckered. Most of us agree that hungry children don't learn well in school and it's to our society's benefit that children have enough to eat. At one time, this was considered important for our defense: too many men were unable to become soldiers during World

War II because of the malnutrition they suffered during the Great Depression.

As far as I can recall, no one has actually said, “I don't care if children starve.” However, that can be the result of their actions if they fear being fooled. In this case, the headline said, “Republicans Plan to Cut Free School Lunches” ([www.newsweek.com/republicans-plan-cut-free-school-lunches-1807361](http://www.newsweek.com/republicans-plan-cut-free-school-lunches-1807361)) and its first paragraph made the connection clear: “The largest ideological caucus in the House Republican conference is proposing steep cuts to free and reduced school lunch programs nationwide, citing the need to ‘prevent the widespread fraud present in the program.’” (The italics are mine.) While stopping fraud is a good idea, the underlying idea is “we're afraid that we are being played for suckers by giving money to what might be a good program because some of the people may be abusing it.”

To be clear: I'm not saying that there isn't fraud in the program and/or there may be better ways to handle the problem of child hunger. I think there should be transparency and oversight of all government programs not only to prevent fraud, but to see if there are better ways to deal with a particular problem. The government's first try at anything almost always needs to be refined. But after reading “Fool Proof,” it's also clear that these legislators'

main fear is that people are taking advantage of the program. By the way, no one is saying that feeding hungry children isn't a good thing. Finding the most efficient way to do so is an excellent goal. But the statement from these legislators is not “we should find a better way to do this,” but “we think people are taken advantage of us and that makes us suckers.”

Of course my liberal leanings mean that I would rather feed 100 children who don't need it rather than risk one going without. But this is also the Jewish response: According to our tradition, everything we have is given to us by God and it's our obligation to help others, for example, the biblical law stating that we have to leave the corners of the fields for the needy. This is not a choice. In fact, rabbinic tradition says those parts of our fields do not belong to us, but to those in the community who are in need. No one is to question those who glean from those fields: we are not the gatekeepers.

Perhaps rather than being worried about being a sucker, we should be grateful for what we have and use it to help others. Yes, I know this is not an American ideal, but perhaps we should worry more about our Jewish practice than about the American fear of being taken for a sucker. Yes, make each program as good as it can be, but also make sure those children get fed. In Jewish terms, that's what matters.



**Jewish Federation**  
of Greater Binghamton

Shelley Hubal, Executive Director

607-724-2332 ~ [www.jfgeb.org](http://www.jfgeb.org)

#### The Reporter Editorial Committee

Rebecca Goldstein Kahn, chairwoman

Rachel Coker, Ben Kasper,

Toby Kohn, Richard Lewis,

Robert Neuberger, Ilene Pinsker

#### HOW TO REACH THE REPORTER

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

E-mail ~ [TReporter@aol.com](mailto:TReporter@aol.com)

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

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

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



BINGHAMTON, NY

#### 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 weekly deadline is noon, Wednesday, for the following week's newspaper.

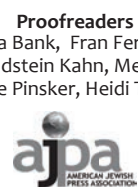
Executive Editor Rabbi Rachel Esserman

Layout Editor Diana Sochor

Advertising Kathy Brown

Bookkeeper Kathy Brown

Production Associate Julie Weber



#### Proofreaders

Barbara Bank, Fran Ferentinos,

Rebecca Goldstein Kahn, Merri Pell-Preus,

Ilene Pinsker, Heidi Thirer

“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](mailto:TREPORTER@AOL.COM).

[www.thereporter.org](http://www.thereporter.org)

# BD Sisterhood held closing meeting for 2023-23

On June 14, Flag Day, the Sisterhood of Beth David Synagogue held its closing meeting for the 2022-23 season. New board members were voted in, and Susan and Kerry Wright, who will soon be leaving the community, were presented with a *mezuzah* in appreciation of their service to Sisterhood.

The guest speaker was local 18<sup>th</sup> century historian George Cummings, who dressed as an 18<sup>th</sup> century gentleman. He spoke about George Washington, Betsy Ross and the first American flag, and demonstrated various household items that were common in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.



Above, l-r: Kerry Wright and Susan Wright were presented with a *mezuzah* in appreciation of their service to Sisterhood. (Photo by Dora Polachek)



Above right: Attendees listened to the speaker talk about flag day. Front row (l-r): Kerry Wright, Susan Wright and Michael Wright. Middle row: Judy Silber and Toby Kohn. Back row: Dora Polachek and Phillip Goodman. (Photo by Cathy Velenchik)



At left: Speaker George Cummings dressed as an 18<sup>th</sup> century gentleman, displayed a variety of items typically found in a late 18<sup>th</sup> century home, including a Tea Flag from Revolutionary times, cooking pots, a toaster, a spice grinder, a lantern, a candle mold, and more. (Photo by Cathy Velenchik)

At right, l-r: Michael Wright and speaker George Cummings spoke at the meeting. (Photo by Dora Polachek)



## 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.

◆ Maven will hold the virtual lecture "LGBTQ+ Poetic Voices in Israel" on Tuesday, August 1, from 1-2 pm. The cost to attend is \$18. Dr. Rachel Korazim will discuss three of Israel's most prominent LGBTQ+ poets: Robert Friend, Dory Manor and Daniel Segal Weingarten. For more information or to register, visit <https://events.org/events/calendarcourse?tid=67301345-0e92-4127-ab55-b744424f445d>.

◆ Melton will offer the lecture "Israeli Judicial Reform" on Thursday, August 10, from 1-2 pm. The cost to attend is \$18. Avi Ben-Hur, an Israeli educator who specializes in Land of Israel studies, will share a historical perspective and identify what factors contributed to the current situation. For more information or to register, visit <https://events.org/events/calendarcourse?tid=792f3902-ff57-41a0-ae91-caee3b6907b1>.

◆ The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research will hold the virtual program "When Yiddish was Young in Israel" on Tuesday, July 25, at 2 pm. Shachar Pinsker will discuss the "Yung Yisroel" (Young Israel), the name of a group of Yiddish writers in 1950s-1960s Israel, and the history of Yiddish as it played out in cultural production. For more information or to register, visit <https://yivo.org/YCLS2023-Pinsker>.

◆ Melton will hold the virtual course "Soul Searching: Jewish Views on the Afterlife" on Mondays, August 7-28, from 1-2:30 pm. There is a sliding scale cost to attend. Rabbi Michele Faudem will explore Jewish views on a variety of topics related to the afterlife. For more information or to register, visit <https://events.org/events/calendarcourse?tid=69677a51-f961-49c9-b41a-e82d84910de8>.

◆ Maven will hold several virtual events: "The Watchmakers: A Story of Brotherhood, Survival, and Hope" on Wednesday, July 26, from 3-3:45 pm (<https://maven.aju.edu/events-classes/program/the-watchmakers-a-story-of-brotherhood-survival-and-hope>); "AJU Presents: A Jewish Hollywood Memoir with Julian Schlossberg" on Wednesday, August 2, from 3-3:45 pm (<https://maven.aju.edu/events-classes/program/aju-presents-a-jewish-hollywood-memoir-with-julian-schlossberg>) and "Israel 201: Your Next-Level Guide to Life in the Holy Land" on Tuesday, August 8, from 3-3:45 pm (<https://maven.aju.edu/events-classes/program/israel-201-your-next-level-guide-to-life-in-the-holy-land>).

◆ Hadassah Magazine will hold the virtual discussion "TikTok's Leading Jewish Women" on Wednesday, July 19, at 7 pm. The panel will feature two Jewish influencers on TikTok – Miriam Ezagui, an Orthodox labor and delivery room nurse, and Libby Walker, who portrays an archetypal Jewish mom and re-enacts scenes from Jewish summer camp – and Brandeis Professor Sabine von Mering, co-editor of "Antisemitism on Social Media." For more information or to register, visit [www.hadassahmagazine.org/2023/06/05/magazine-discussion-tiktoks-leading-jewish-women/](http://www.hadassahmagazine.org/2023/06/05/magazine-discussion-tiktoks-leading-jewish-women/).

◆ Melton will offer the virtual lecture "Shalom Berlin! Germany's Most Jewish City" on Wednesday, August 16, from 2-3:15 pm. The cost to attend is \$18. Dr. Rachel Seelig explore literature, art and food to uncover Berlin's Jewish heritage in contemporary times. For more information or to register, visit <https://events.org/events/calendarcourse?tid=053be617-ef41-4978-bfdd-c63bad11bd2c>.

◆ Uri L'Tzedek, Orthodox Social Justice, will hold the virtual program "Water Access: A Halakic Argument" with Rabbi David Polsky on Wednesday, August 9, at noon. The lecture will analyze water issues from the perspective of the Talmud and other halakic sources. For more information or to register, visit [https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/WN\\_e1SnocDaSGu5\\_4W90IQiVQ#registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/WN_e1SnocDaSGu5_4W90IQiVQ#registration).

◆ The Museum of Jewish Heritage will hold the virtual "The Island of Extraordinary Captives Book Talk with Simon Parkin" on Sunday July 23, at 2-3 pm. He will See "Resources" on page 5

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

**Lois Levitt**

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to **Richard Orringer** on the death of his brother,

**Alan Orringer**

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

**Dr. Jerry Louis Schachter**

### DEADLINES

The following are deadlines for all articles and photos for upcoming *REPORTER* issues.

ISSUE	DEADLINE
July 28-August 10.....	July 19
August 11-24.....	August 2
August 25-September 7.....	August 16
September 8-21.....	August 30

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

## Celebrate the Simcha

If you can celebrate it, we can make an ad for you!

Engagements • Weddings  
Births • Birthdays  
Graduations • Moves  
Promotions • Retirements  
Anniversaries & much more!

To place a simcha, please contact Kathy Brown at 724-2360, ext. 244 or [advertising@thereporter.org](mailto:advertising@thereporter.org)

THE REPORTER  
Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton

EPAC Repertory Company presents

# Kinky Boots

July 13 - 16

EPAC  
The Robert Eckert Theater  
102 Washington Ave, Endicott, N.Y. 13760  
(607) 785-8903  
[www.endicottarts.com](http://www.endicottarts.com)

## THE DOUBLE-A YANKEES ARE COMING!

SCHERRET PATRIOTS VS BINGHAMTON RUMBLEPONIES

### JULY 14 - JULY 16

<b>JULY 14TH</b> MILLER AUTO TEAM FIREWORKS SERIES IRISH HERITAGE NIGHT BEER SPONSORS: MACK, WOLF, BUDWEISER	<b>JULY 15TH</b> WILD WEST NIGHT 607 SATURDAY FAMILY 4-PRCK DENIM RICHARDS APPEARANCE BEER SPONSORS: MACK, WOLF, BUDWEISER, FOX40	<b>JULY 16TH</b> KIDS EAT FREE SUNDAY SENIOR STROLL SUNDAY (Home Instead) SOCK OUT CANCER NIGHT BEER SPONSORS: MACK, WOLF, BUDWEISER, FOX40, MCDONALD'S KIDS CLUB
---	---	---

TUESDAY, JULY 18<sup>TH</sup> - SUNDAY, JULY 23<sup>RD</sup>  
ERIE SEAWOLVES VS. RUMBLE PONIES  
AA-TIGERS VS. AA-METS

f /RUMBLEPONIESBB @RUMBLEPONIESBB  
607.722.FUNN [www.BINGRP.COM](http://www.BINGRP.COM)



Off the Shelf

## A wandering Jew

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Some prose is easy to read: the pages quickly slip by, which allows readers to focus on the plot. Other prose is far more difficult, especially when a novel ignores traditional grammar, for example, refusing to use quotation marks to note dialogue or make clear the difference between the main character's thoughts and those of an omniscient narrator who appears and disappears throughout the text. As if this wasn't difficult enough, a recent novel included many non-English terms that were never translated. Whenever I read a work that contains these elements, I often find myself pausing partway through to decide if it's worth the struggle to continue. That was true of "The World and All That It Holds" by Aleksandar Hemon (MCD/Farrar, Straus and Giroux). Fortunately, I decided to continue because, by the novel's end, I was able to appreciate this unusual and ultimately absorbing work.

From the map that appears in the opening pages of the novel, it's clear that Rafael Pinto will become a wandering Jew, although what begins his travels is not related to Judaism, but the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and World War I. Rafael had recently returned from Vienna to take over his father's pharmacy. He's not thrilled to be back in Sarajevo and medicates himself with laudanum and dreams of erotic encounters with the men who enter the store. That changes dramatically when war is declared and Rafael is drafted into the army.

The redeeming feature of having been drafted is that Rafael meets the love of his life, Osman, a fellow soldier who surprises him by returning his love. Otherwise, life in the trenches would have been completely unbearable.

The soldiers have no idea what their government and the army is attempting to accomplish: their actions are based solely on the desire to survive. The omniscient narrator notes that "it's only after the end, if there ever is an end... that those who have lived through a war string such days into concatenations of history, so they can claim to know what happened, and when, and how, and why, so that the undoing is undone and everything hurried back to having a form, solid and named, everything goes back to a shape that might make up for everything that vanished forever."

Unfortunately for Rafael and Osman, the war never seems to end. They are captured by the Russians and continue their journey across the Soviet Union. Even when it looks as if they will regain some control of their lives, fate intervenes and separates the two men. But that is when Rafael discovers a new purpose in life: an infant, whose life becomes more important to him than his own. Their travels take them further across the continent to Shanghai, which is not the safest place to live once World War II begins.

The plot of "The World and All That It Holds" is like a roller coaster: Rafael is captured, escapes, is captured, escapes, etc. Sections skip years, with readers only learning what happened during that time period in retrospect. At times, death seems everywhere: Jews being killed in Europe and Muslims being killed in Asia. Rafael thinks about God, but comes to no satisfactory conclusion about God's relationship to the world. He wonders if "God was invented by the lonely people, by those who could not bear

to think that no one would ever care about them, spend a thought on their loneliness. We are not chosen, what we are is terribly lonely and unloved." This leads to Rafael's discovery of the meaning of life: "The meaning of life is not to be dead; you live so as not to die. That's it. Ask any soldier or refugee, anyone one who has lived through a war, or any of those children still alive and begging for a handful of rice.... All we want from life is to keep living. It's that simple. Only the rich ponder a reason to live. Everyone else who is alive just wants to live. There is no meaning to it... There is just life. When there is no life, there is no meaning." While this may sound nihilistic, that's not true because, at times, Rafael clings to those he loves: the meaning of his life is to keep them alive.

The last section of "The World and All That It Holds" features the omniscient narrator and places the earlier part of the novel into context. Readers will wonder if the events in that section are true: I certainly was curious to know if the characters are based on real people. In the end, though, that doesn't matter because Rafael – the Rafael of the novel – becomes real to readers, whether or not he ever existed. Yes, some of the history of both wars is true (and recounted by the omniscient narrator), but in the end, it's the characters who matter.

"The World and All That It Holds" is definitely not for everyone: some readers will be impatient with the way it skips through the years and will find it its plot too episodic. It does take patience and determination to finish its 331 pages. In the end, though, it was moving and intriguing enough to make me glad I persevered.



Off the Shelf

## Family sagas

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Family sagas have been called "kitchen sink" novels with the term used in a pejorative way, suggesting that family life is only of interest to women. But women's lives are as greatly influenced by world events as men's, something shown in two recent novels: "The Woman Beyond the Sea" by Sarit Yishai-Levi (Amazon Crossing) and "Kantika" by Elizabeth Graver (Metropolitan Books). The former offers three generations of women who were affected by events in Palestine/Israel, while the latter portrays the dispersion of one family after the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

"The Woman Beyond the Sea" explores the lives of three women during the last years of the British rule in Palestine through the Yom Kippur War: Eliya, her mother Lily and the unknown woman who is Lily's mother. When Eliya's husband – a demanding writer – dumps her unceremoniously, Eliya returns in despair to her parents' home. She'd left school and a potential career to support her husband and lacks the resources to continue. Unfortunately, Eliya and Lily have never gotten along, partly because Eliya feels she could never replace the perfect child, the son that Lily and her father, Shaul, lost at a very young age. She also knows almost nothing of her mother's history because Lily has not only limited what she's told Shaul, but forbidden him from telling Eliya anything about her life.

The reason for this is that Lily still struggles to understand her own life: left at a convent soon after her birth, she has no idea whom her mother is and why she was given up. In fact, Lily was unaware that she was Jewish until one of the nuns finally offered her what little information they had about her. Lily then ran away and lived in the streets until she was discovered by a group of Jewish women who arranged for her to go to boarding school. Unsure of herself,

Lily followed the advice of a fortune teller and married Shaul soon after she graduated. While Shaul is still madly in love with her, Lily doesn't share his feelings and is also unable to constructively cope with Eliya's depression.

A change occurs in the family members' relationships, though, when Eliya attempts to take her life. The doctor helping her tells her that she needs to connect with Lily, to learn her mother's story in order for them to forge a meaningful relationship. In order for that to happen, Lily must also come to terms with her own life. To do so, the two women need to learn about Lily's mysterious mother in order for them to lay the past to rest.

"The Woman Beyond the Sea" is a melodrama in the best meaning of the word: readers will be swept along on an emotional roller coaster that made the novel feel far shorter than its 400 pages. Yishai-Levi makes it possible to extremely dislike a character on one page and then feel an enormous amount of sympathy for her a chapter later. The historical background of the novel adds depth, but doesn't take away from the exploration of Eliya and Lily's emotions and feelings. This is a family saga at its best.

While "The Woman Beyond the Sea" takes place in one country, the main character, Rebecca Cohen, in "Kantika" spends time in four different places: Constantinople/Istanbul, Barcelona, Havana and the greater New York City area. Rebecca's early life is one of ease and wealth, surrounded by family and friends. Unfortunately, Rebecca's father, Alberto (Abraham) is not the businessman his forefathers were, something not helped by the change of

government. World War II not only meant the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, but the end of a halcyon time for its Jews. By the time Alberto finally decides to move, the only position he can find is a lowly one as caretaker of a synagogue in Barcelona.

Except for giving her two sons, Rebecca's first marriage ends in disaster and forces her to fend for herself. She sets up a successful sewing business in Barcelona by pretending not to be Jewish. Although Spain claimed to welcome the Jews from the Ottoman Empire, the reality is that extreme prejudice still existed. When Rebecca has a chance to marry a refugee living in the United States, she agrees to meet him in Cuba. Unfortunately, once again, reality does not match what she's been told, especially when it comes to her new stepdaughter Luna.

Rebecca is a fascinating character and Graver does an excellent job showing how her ideas changed and developed as she was forced to forge a life for herself. The author also created a character who is convincing in her own time: Rebecca is independent, but she is not a feminist, rather she is someone who lives in the realities of her time. The section showing her relationship with Luna was particularly moving as she was willing to be disliked in order to improve her stepdaughter's life. The one chapter told from her son David's point-of-view – about his time in the Navy during World War II – felt out of place and distracted from the flow of the story, although it's understandable that Graver wanted to include it. However, that's a minor quibble about a work that offers readers a lesser known view of Jewish life in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*Want to stay in the know?*



Send your e-mail address to [treporter@aol.com](mailto:treporter@aol.com) (with "e-mail blast" in the subject line) to stay up-to-date on the latest news between *The Reporter's* biweekly issues! We promise not to share it with anyone and we won't send you junk, just good stuff!

THE  
REPORTER



*On the Jewish food scene*

## My mom and watermelon

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

When I was very young, I thought bread only had three corners because my mom would cut off one of the corners and eat it. OK, she didn't *always* do that, but often enough for me to remember. (And, yes, it became a family joke.) She also never understood how anyone could like something cooked differently, so my father, who liked his steak rare, was forced to eat his meat well done. In fact, my mom liked things slightly burnt, something I've started to enjoy when roasting vegetables. (There is something about those burnt edges that make them the best part.)

My mother and I both adored fruit. I think we once polished off a dozen oranges between us in a single day. My mom was normally generous – willing to take less of something so we kids could have more. However, there was one exception: watermelon. As my mother once put it: there is no mother-daughter relationship when it comes to watermelon. (Those were her exact words.)

I've been thinking about that now that summer is here and the fruit we both loved is out in abundance. We would

carefully watch for when cherries were on sale, buy several pounds and eat them as fast as we could. Then watermelon season would hit; when I was young, you could only get good watermelons in August, so we would inspect them carefully. My mom's sure-fire way to find a good watermelon was to knock on it and, if it didn't answer, it was OK. (Yes, I know another bad joke, but since she would actually say this, you have to blame her this time.) But even a bad watermelon was a good watermelon because, well, it was watermelon.

This is the first year my mom and I won't be sharing any summer fruit. I just bought a big bunch of cherries and can't help but think of her when I eat them. I've already had some watermelon and didn't have to worry about someone eating it before I had a chance. I would be happy to have that problem again.

Some Jewish mothers offer you chicken soup; others always have a plate of homemade cookies available. My Jewish mother filled our refrigerator with fruit and now I do the same.





## Weekly Parasha

Mattot-Masei, Numbers 30:2-36:13

# Facing the impact

CANTOR ABBE LYONS, HILLEL AT ITHACA COLLEGE AND HILLEL AT BINGHAMTON

When the movie "Saving Private Ryan" was released in 1998, it startled viewers by showing in detail the brutality of war, rather than emphasizing heroics. It was not an easy movie to watch. Similarly, *parashat* Mattot, where we come face to face with war and its impacts, is not easy to read. There are other themes in the *parasha*, such as the importance of making promises you can keep or the 42 journeys of the Israelites. Yet this year I find myself drawn to wrestling with this disturbing, vengeful battle and its aftermath because war is very much in the news, with photos from Ukraine of apartment buildings devastated by airstrikes, soldiers readying for battle and civilians amidst the rubble. While the Wikipedia list of ongoing armed conflicts lists the war in Ukraine as the largest of the current wars, 19 others are included on the list, including the Sudanese conflict between rival factions of what was supposed to be an interim military government, killing thousands and displacing two million Sudanese.

In Mattot, war is grim. Soldiers, civilians and even

children, are killed. Settlements are burned and anything of value is looted, including herd animals, clothing and precious metals. From our much distanced vantage point, it is possible to read these passages, describing a long ago battle, with a certain detachment. We may focus on how we view the justification for this violence. We who live far from war zones even have the luxury of not paying attention. We may seek to make meaning out of events, as humans across all ages strive to do. In fact, some commentators seek a metaphoric meaning for this and many other episodes in the Torah. The Ishbitzer Rebbe, for example, reads this battle as an allegory for an inner struggle, in which Moshe is seeking to slay his own illusions. With this interpretation, this passage calls on each of us to engage in this inner struggle in order to remove the illusory barriers that keep us from connecting fully with God.

Yet, for people actually involved in war, whether as aggressors, defenders, soldiers, noncombatants, or even relatives of those involved, it is not possible to escape the

immediacy of war. In addition to the physical risks, soldiers also risk moral injury. We see hints of this in the descriptions of what happens after the battle. Moshe instructs that both people and loot must go through a purification process. In addition, there is a detailed inventory of the newly-captured animals, and an accounting of how half was given to the soldiers and half to the entire community, with each giving a small share to the Levites. Rashi and other commentators note that these instructions specify that both the one who has killed and the noncombatant who has merely come into physical contact with a corpse are equally instructed to stay outside the camp for seven days, wash their clothes and undergo purification. The commanders and officers report to Moshe that none of their soldiers are missing, and they make a point of bringing gold jewelry from their share of the loot as an offering "to make an atonement for our souls" (JPS) or as Everett Fox says, "for our lives." Perhaps these post-battle practices helped some people to re-enter the See "Impact" on page 7

## Congregational Notes

### Beth David Synagogue

Affiliation: Orthodox Union  
 Rabbi: Zev Silber  
 Address: 39 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905  
 Phone: 722-1793  
 Rabbi's Office: 722-7514  
 Fax: 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.

### Temple Israel

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

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

On Saturday, July 14, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person (masks are required for unvaccinated participants). The Torah portion is Numbers 30:2-36:13 and the haftarah is Jeremiah 2:4-28; 3:4. At 10 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom.

On Wednesday July 19, there will be a Ritual Committee meeting at 10 am.

On Saturday, July 22, at 9:30 am, Shacharit services will be held via Zoom and in-person (masks are required for unvaccinated participants). The Torah portion is Deuteronomy 1:1-3:22 and the haftarah is Isaiah 1:1-27. At 10 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom.

### 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: 273-5775  
 E-mail: rabbi-safman@tbeithaca.org, secretary@tbeithaca.org  
 Website: www.tbeithaca.org  
 Presidents: David Weiner and Linda Aigen  
 Sisterhood President: Gail Zussman  
 Director of Education: TBA  
 Services: Fri. 8 pm; Sat. 10 am, unless otherwise announced.  
 Weekday morning minyan 7:30 am (9 am on Sun. and legal holidays).  
 Religious School/Education: September-May: Classes meet on Sunday, 9 am-12:30 pm and Wednesday, 3:45-5:45 pm. The Midrashah (eighth grade and high school) classes will meet at times designated by their respective teachers.  
 Adult Ed.: Numerous weekly courses, several semester-long courses and a variety of mini-courses and lectures are offered throughout the year. Call the temple office for more details.

For upcoming services and events on Zoom, visit [www.tinyurl.com/HappeningAtTBE](http://www.tinyurl.com/HappeningAtTBE).



### Synagogues limit face-to-face gatherings

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

### 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: 797-0015, Fax: 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](http://www.JewishBU.com/S2020Partnership).

### Penn-York Jewish Community

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

### Norwich Jewish Center

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

### 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.

Friday, July 14, light candles before ..... 8:20 pm  
 Shabbat ends Saturday, July 15 ..... 9:20 pm  
 Friday, July 21, light candles before ..... 8:15 pm  
 Shabbat ends Saturday, July 22 ..... 9:15 pm  
 Friday, July 28, light candles before ..... 8:09 pm  
 Shabbat ends Saturday, July 29 ..... 9:08 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: 723-7355  
 Fax: 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, July 14: At 7:30 pm, Shabbat services led by Rabbi Rachel Esserman, Suzanne Holwitt and Robin Hazen. Masks are optional for those attending in person. Join via Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3hRmW2Y>, meeting ID 869 9699 8146 and passcode 826330, or on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/templeconcord/](http://www.facebook.com/templeconcord/).

Friday, July 21: At 7:30 pm, Shabbat service led by Allan Krongold and Robin Hazen. Masks are optional for those attending in person. Join via Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3hRmW2Y>, meeting ID 869 9699 8146 and passcode 826330, or on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/templeconcord/](http://www.facebook.com/templeconcord/).

### Temple Brith Sholom

Affiliation: Unaffiliated  
 Address: P.O. Box 572, 117 Madison St., Cortland, NY 13045  
 Phone: 607-756-7181  
 President: Carol Levine, 315-696-5744  
 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.

### Congregation Tikun v'Or

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism  
 Address: PO Box 3981, Ithaca, NY 14852; 2550 Triphammer Rd. (corner of Triphammer and Burdick Hill), Lansing, NY  
 Phone: 607-256-1471  
 Website: www.tikkunvor.org  
 E-mail: info@tikkunvor.org  
 Rabbi: Shifrah Tobacman, rabbishifrah@tikkunvor.org  
 Presidents: Sue Merkel and Laurie Willick, presidents\_22@tikkunvor.org  
 Education Director/Admin. Coordinator: Naomi Wilensky  
 Bnai Mitzvah Coordinator: Michael Margolin  
 Services: All services currently on Zoom. E-mail info@tikkunvor.org for the times and links. Contemplative morning services every Tuesday from 8:30-9:30 am. Saturday mornings, Gan Shabbat and other special services at least once a month. Call for the weekly schedule.  
 Jewish Learning Experiences (JLE) for second through seventh grade classes meet on Sunday mornings. Sixth and seventh grades also meet on Wednesday afternoons. Family programs for kindergarten and first grade held monthly.  
 Adult Education: Offered regularly throughout the year. Check the website for details.

# Helping Russian-speaking *olim* face the challenges of integrating into Israeli society

By Pesach Benson

(JNS) – With more than 5,000 Russian-speaking immigrants arriving in Israel each month, Shishi Shabbat Yisraeli (Israeli Weekend), a nonprofit founded in 2010, has been working to support the families and facilitate their integration into society.

Linda Pardes-Friedburg, the founder of Shishi Shabbat Yisraeli, emphasized the importance of community support for Russian-speaking immigrants. “Especially in these times of war when many have left family and friends behind in dangerous, war-torn countries, Russian-speaking *olim* need the support of a community,” she said.

Before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Israel had been absorbing around 1,200 Russian-speaking immigrants each month since 2010. But since the war began, this number has sharply risen. Approximately 70,000 immigrants have arrived from former Soviet countries, including young children, senior citizens, adolescents and mothers who have left their husbands and sons behind on the battlefield.

An estimated 500,000 persons in Russia qualify to immigrate under Israel’s Law of Return, which offers Jews anywhere in the world the right to move to Israel and obtain citizenship. However, the challenges of relocating to a new country and adapting to a different culture and language, combined with the hardships of war and the uncertainty of the fates of loved ones left behind leave many new immigrants feeling disconnected from Israeli society. Instead of facing these obstacles and striving to overcome them, many choose to leave Israel in search of opportunities elsewhere.

The trend prompted the Israeli government to reinstate a requirement for immigrants to live in Israel for a year before receiving permanent passports. Under the proposed law, immigrants during their first year would be given temporary passports for travel.

Knesset legislation noted that 4,094 new immigrants requested passports between June 2021-June 2022 within a month of obtaining citizenship, but only 60 percent of those immigrants were living in Israel. Interior Ministry officials believe the other 40 percent only went through the paperwork of immigrating to obtain Israeli passports.

Shishi Shabbat Yisraeli aims to counter this trend by organizing holiday events for new immigrants and for lone soldiers without family in Israel who can help them, volunteer projects with Russian-speaking seniors, Hebrew language courses, professional mentoring and the more recent Argaman Jewish Cultural Project, which facilitates meetings between Israeli artists and immigrants to teach them about Israeli culture. These programs all deepen their understanding of Israeli society and their own Jewish identities, Pardes-Friedburg said.

Lidia Shtelmach, one of Shishi Shabbat Yisraeli’s first participants, is today the organization’s national Sabbath host coordinator. “The recent months have been especially difficult for Russian-speaking *olim*,” said Shtelmach. “We are dealing with a monthly influx of thousands of *olim* every month from Russia and Ukraine, and the absorption and

acclimation challenges they face are enormous.”

Earlier in June, Shishi Shabbat Yisraeli brought more than 100 immigrants, including several Russian-speaking lone soldiers, to a berry-picking farm in Gush Etzion, south of Jerusalem. The trip was followed by a tour of the area and a visit to the Gush Etzion Winery for some wine tasting.

Arkady, 24, a lone soldier in the Israel Air Force who joined the Gush Etzion trip said, “It was the first time I tasted fresh berries in over two years! But it wasn’t just the good old-fashioned fun that made the experience so special, but the opportunity to hang out with like-minded individuals who are going through similar challenges, whom I can support and turn to for support. I don’t know what my plans are for the future yet, but I’m definitely planning on staying in Israel.”

The bureaucratic hurdles for Russian-speaking immigrants can be formidable. “Unfortunately, the Israeli government has not been able to keep up with the increased rate of *aliyah*,” Pardes-Friedburg said. “Thousands of new immigrants have not yet received their *teudat oleh* [‘immigration certificate’], which entitles them to government financial aid and welfare assistance.”

Without official immigrant status, dozens of families have been reduced to hunger and grave financial distress.



Russian-speaking immigrants visited Gush Etzion in Judea on June 16. (Photo courtesy of Shishi Shabbat Yisraeli via TPS)

Their children can’t start school and the parents can’t begin looking for work before all the paperwork is arranged. The urgency led Shishi Shabbat Yisraeli to expand its services from social-professional support to distributing urgent financial assistance.

This past month, the organization distributed 1,000 shekel (about \$275) food gift cards to more than 90 families.

Since Shishi Shabbat Yisraeli’s establishment, some 15,000 immigrants have participated in the organization’s programs.

## Israel to invest 40m shekels in technologies of the future

By JNS staff

(JNS) – The Israel Innovation Authority is investing an additional 40 million shekels (approximately \$10.8 million) to advance “disruptive, future technologies” in the Jewish state, the authority announced recently. The 40 million shekels come on top of the 115 million that the state agency invested in quantum computing research earlier this year.

The program has been developed in conjunction with various government ministries and organizations, including the Ministry of Transport and Road Safety, the Ministry of Health and the Israeli Police. It will focus on initiatives in three categories: delivery services, healthcare technology, and school and campus security.

The Israel Innovation Authority named same-day delivery by walking robots, 3D-printed organs for donation and state-of-the-art school security to protect children against violent incidents as examples of the technological advancements it seeks to facilitate.

“We are focusing on areas that we believe have tremendous growth potential, and in which Israeli technology companies have a relative advantage as well as the possibility of leading innovative products’ development that will change the world,” explained Dror Bin, CEO of the Israel Innovation Authority.

“The program is designed to propel the Israeli technological leadership in the selected sectors,” Bin said.

As part of the program, the Israel Innovation Authority



An image of pexels (Photo courtesy of Tara Winstead/Pexels)

will collaborate with regulatory entities to develop “adaptable and enabling” regulatory conditions, with the ultimate goal of accelerating the breakthrough of Israeli technology into the global market.

## Impact . . . . .Continued from page 7

camp feeling more like themselves, yet as we have seen with veterans from recent wars, for some the impacts can last longer, perhaps even the rest of their lives. Noncombatants can also endure physical and psychological trauma, survivor’s guilt, the loss of family, community, housing and even livelihood. In Mattot, the only Midianite prisoners of war are children, and we have seen over and over again the toll war can take on children. The Ukrainian children who lived in those shelled apartment buildings and many Sudanese children in Khartoum and Darfur no longer have homes. Some have lost their parents. The World Health Organization estimates that 100,000 Sudanese children are at risk for severe malnutrition.

It can be daunting and overwhelming to contemplate these devastating impacts. It’s tempting to make it feel more comfortable. Yet, this is why we need to keep wrestling with this passage every year. As long as humans continue to engage in armed conflicts, we must remind ourselves not to turn away, but to pay attention.

Rabbi Arthur Waskow notes that, in the Mourner’s *Kaddish*, among all the many ways we say we are praising God, we are also consoling God. For what are we consoling Hashem? Rabbi Waskow links this to the important principle of *B’tzelem Elohim*, that we humans are created in the Divine Image. He teaches that we need to console God when “some who bear Your Image . . . are slaughtering others who bear Your Image.” This is what happens in war. This teaching challenges us to look for the Divine Image in every human being, and not to dehumanize anyone, even those we are at war with. Let’s broaden the Ishbitzer’s suggested practice so that we also slay the illusions that keep us from perceiving the Divine Image within every human being, even those whom we just read about in a news article. May this inspire us to work toward a world where war becomes more and more unthinkable.

### Moving any time soon?

Please let *The Reporter* know so you can stay up to date on community news! E-mail [reporter@aol.com](mailto:reporter@aol.com) with “Reporter Address change” in the subject line to let *The Reporter* know about your new address.



### Quick Reference Guide to Planned Giving

Use this planned giving quick reference guide to help determine the best strategy for achieving your philanthropic and financial goals.

For further information or assistance, please contact Shelley Hubal at 724-2332 or [director@jfgb.org](mailto:director@jfgb.org)

**If Your Goal is to:**

Make a quick and easy gift

Avoid tax on capital gains

Defer a gift until after your death

Receive guaranteed fixed income that is partially tax-free

Avoid the two-fold taxation on IRA or other employee benefit plans

Make a large gift with little cost to you

Reduce taxable income from IRA Required Minimum Distributions

**Then You Can:**

Simply write a check now or use a credit card

Contribute long-term appreciated stock or other securities

Put a bequest in your will (gifts of cash or a share or the residue of your estate)

Create a charitable gift annuity

Name a charity as the beneficiary of the remainder of the retirement assets after your lifetime

Contribute a life insurance policy you no longer need or purchase a new one and designate a charity as the owner

Make a qualified charitable donation directly from your IRA (after age 70½)

**Your Benefits May Include:**

An income tax deduction and immediate charitable impact

A charitable deduction plus no capital gains tax

Exemption from federal estate tax on donations

Current and future savings on income taxes plus fixed stable payments

Tax relief to your family on inherited assets

Current and possible future income tax deductions

Reducing taxable income



Visit us on the web at [www.thereporter.org](http://www.thereporter.org)

## NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

**Survey: Philanthropic teens feel more passion for Judaism**

Young people who take part in charity programs feel more connections to Judaism. That's according to a new survey from Honeycomb, a Jewish youth philanthropy resource. "By creating space to blend these passions with Jewish learning and values, these philanthropy programs open up a new world to teens and develop them as leaders," Danielle Segal, executive director of Honeycomb, stated. "They experience ways that Judaism adds meaning to their lives and want to engage in even deeper ways with the community." The survey drew upon data from 3,500

teens associated with Honeycomb in the United States, Australia and Israel. An overwhelming majority (88 percent) of young people enrolled in Honeycomb programs said it would recommend the program to a friend. When asked before and after entering a program how they would rate their feelings about Jewish identity, their passions for Judaism and their connections to charitable giving, participants tended to rate each of the three after about 5 percent higher after the program compared to prior to it.

**UAE-Israel land bridge through Saudi Arabia planned**

A proposal to create a land bridge connecting the United Arab Emirates to Israel through Saudi Arabia and Jordan

to facilitate the movement of goods is being advanced. The U.S.-backed "Land Connectivity by Trucks" project would enable trucks to transport cargo between the Gulf of Dubai and Israel's Haifa Port while significantly cutting costs and time, even before the normalization of relations with Riyadh, Ynet reported. The land corridor, which would later expand to Bahrain and Oman, is initially intended for cargo. In the future, it would serve passengers, including tourists. Currently, trucks leaving the UAE reach Haifa Port via the Allenby Bridge from Jordan, but they face bureaucratic procedures, including required driver changes, paperwork and lengthy wait times. Another option for shipping goods is by ship through the Suez Canal and then to European ports, which is also costly. The current proposal would reduce the time of the journey from several weeks to two or three days, saving up to 20 percent in shipping costs, according to a study conducted by Israel's Foreign Ministry and the U.S. government cited in the report. The Foreign Ministry and the U.S. embassy in Jerusalem declined to comment on the plan on July 10. The proposal comes amid a separate long-term plan to create a rail link between Israel and the Gulf states through Saudi Arabia that would be part of a train project linking Israel, the Gulf, Europe and points East.

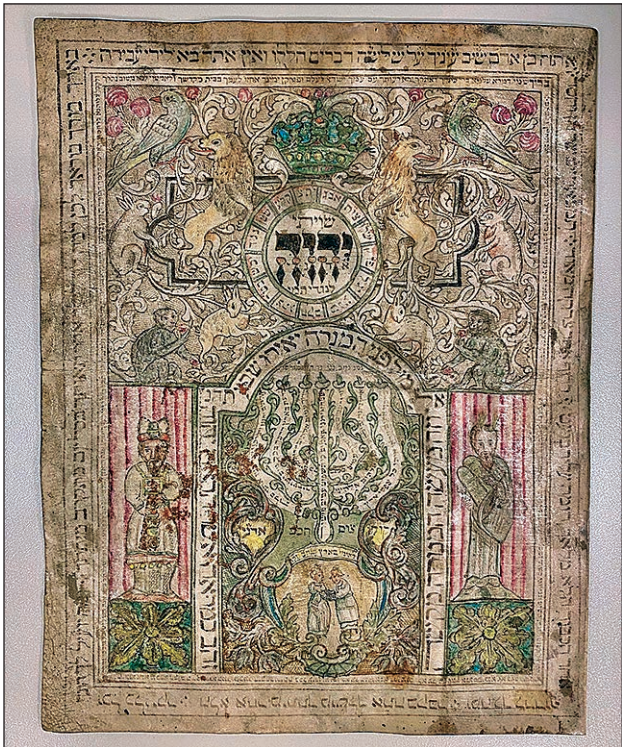
**Israel Museum acquires rare 18<sup>th</sup>-century "shiviti" Jewish booklet**

By JNS staff

(JNS) – Among the new acquisitions that the Israel Museum in Jerusalem recently announced are a "rare" 18<sup>th</sup>-century decorated *shiviti* booklet and an "extremely rare" 1828 wall map of the Holy Land with important Jewish and Christian narrative illustrations.

The two items, plus the other recent acquisitions, span "multiple continents and many centuries, marking significant growth for the museum's encyclopedic collection over the past year," stated the museum.

The central European booklet is a *shiviti*, which takes



The *shiviti* booklet. (Photo by the Israel Museum in Jerusalem)

its name from Psalm 16:8, "I have placed God before me always, for when He is at my right hand, I will not fall." The first word, *shiviti*, comes from a root, whose meanings include "to place."

The new acquisition is "the most lavish example of *shiviti* represented in the collection," the Israel Museum stated. (The Jewish Museum has 10 *shiviti* works, which can also be found at the Minneapolis Institute of Art, Museum of International Folk Art and Jewish Museum of Greece.)

"Wrestling with ways to externalize the presence of God," *shiviti* objects "center upon the graphic representation of God's ineffable four-letter Hebrew name, the Tetragrammaton," writes Francesco Spagnolo, curator of the Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life, which contains several dozen *shiviti* objects, dating at least as far back as an 1844 German amulet.

"Deciphering the content of a *shiviti*, or simply classifying it within the realm of cultural production, is a fascinating puzzle for today's scholars. Research on these documents encompasses the analysis of biblical and prayer texts, magical formulae, visual motifs and material culture across the world," added Spagnolo. "The persistence of these documents into the present, including the Internet, attests to the ongoing beliefs in the power and efficacy of magic and meditation that accompany the more normative aspects of Judaism as we know them."

The Israel Museum also gained the wall map by D. Haines of Philadelphia dated to 1828. The map describes "the most important events in the Old and New Testaments," including the Exodus, Moses receiving the Ten Commandments at Sinai as well as Christian scenes, per the museum.

"The map was created in the tradition established by the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch family of cartographers, van Doetechum, and depicts a panoramic bird's-eye-view of the Holy Land, divided among the Twelve Tribes of Israel," it stated. According to other images of a Haines 1828 map of the Holy Land, an inscription appears to misspell the Hebrew Tetragrammaton.

**Israeli stabbed in suspected NYC antisemitic attack**

An Israeli man was stabbed in New York City on late July 7 in a suspected antisemitic attack, according to Israeli media reports. The student, a Hasidic Jew, was walking in the Crown Heights neighborhood of Brooklyn on Shabbat when two male suspects approached him and asked if he was Jewish, to which he replied in the affirmative. The assailants then stabbed him in the arm with a screwdriver. He was released from the hospital on the morning of July 8 in good condition. Yaacov Berman, a representative of the Jewish community in the Crown Heights neighborhood, reported the incident via social media after being informed of the attack by the victim. A report published on antisemitic crimes in New York City published at the end of last year found that 94 percent of anti-Jewish assaults were against Orthodox Jews.

**Games. . . . Continued from page 5**

this research as a doctoral candidate in classical studies at Bar-Ilan University, was the difference between ancient Jews and modern-day ones, "compared to what is taught at school and kindergarten in Israel, as well as in certain academic circles in Israel and abroad.

"There are too many anachronistic views and assumptions that are based on how Jews are today," he told JNS. "When looking at Jews in the arena, it is clear as to how limited the rabbis' power and influence was throughout the Roman period, even in Judea."

The rabbis opposed Jews watching gladiatorial games, but there is historical evidence that Jews attended anyway. An inscription dated between the second and third centuries C.E. identifies a particular seating area in the theater of Miletus, in western Anatolia (present-day Turkey), as a "place of Jews who (are also known as) the ones who fear God." Another translation renders it "both of the Jews and of the Godfearers," but either way, Jews are singled out.

"They often had to succumb to the will of the ordinary people, who continued to do things that the rabbis did not approve," Olshanetsky told JNS.

Even if Jews ignored rabbinic bans on attending the games, Olshanetsky thinks that if there were Jewish gladiators, they would have preferred fighting animals to fellow humans. Gladiatorial games are not among the few exceptions the Torah provides to the rule that it is sinful to spill human blood, but JNS asked Olshanetsky about the prohibition on torturing animals, too.

"I presume that the Jews really wanted to take part in the games and that they compromised," Olshanetsky told JNS. "For them, fighting animals was the lesser evil. I presume that when you really want to do something, you can always find a justification, so that the animals' welfare was not an obstacle for those that decided to participate in that capacity."

Olshanetsky's article addresses many pieces of evidence that have been cited as proof of Jewish gladiators, and he finds them all wanting to some degree. He told JNS, however, that there still could have been Jewish gladiators. "Most of what existed is gone, and what we have is fragments. It is like a puzzle where you don't have a reference to what you are making and most of the pieces are missing," he said. "You try all the time to understand how you can combine the pieces that remain to see the bigger picture while trying to find more pieces."

Although there is no clear evidence for Jewish gladiators, he said, "and only slightly better evidence for Jewish venatores, there is always the chance that this is just pure luck, statistics, and that there were, in fact, many Jewish gladiators. But the only reconstruction I can offer is according to what we actually have, which is meager."

The evidence doesn't point to plentiful Jewish gladiators or venatores. "On the other hand, I can say that there were plenty of Jews in the audience, who enjoyed cheering those fighting in the arena," Olshanetsky said. "For this, we have plenty of evidence."

# Eye-Catching Classifieds

**YOUR HEATING & PLUMBING SPECIALISTS**

## BAKER'S PLUMBING & HEATING

*We Also Do Natural Gas Conversions & All Plumbing Work*  
Free Estimates • Fully Insured • Residential & Commercial

**PLUMBING BAKERS HEATING & CO.**

*We Install, Service & Repair...*  
Furnaces • Air Conditioners  
Water Heaters • Gas Fireplaces

**SERVING BROOME & TIoga COUNTIES**

pbaker927@yahoo.com **754-6376** Emergency Service 24 Hours

A unique boutique specializing in one of a kind items, clothing for the whole family, household goods, as well as handmade apparel & accessories.

For the latest inventory selection  
Visit us at [silbercreations.com](http://silbercreations.com)

**HOURS BY APPOINTMENT ONLY**  
**CALL (607) 727-9738 TODAY!**

Accepting consignments & donations.

Contact me if you would like me to sell your stuff for you.

**Silber Creations**  
106 Washington Ave  
Suite 4  
Endicott, NY 13760



**The Care You Need - in the Home You Love**

*Affordable, Professional Home Care You Deserve*

Let At Home Help provide you or your loved ones independence and dignity by providing non-medical care services in the familiar surroundings of home, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



**Some of our many services:**  
Companionship • Alzheimer's & Dementia Care • Medication Reminders • Grocery Shopping • Laundry • Hospice Support  
• Overnight Care • Meal Preparation • House Cleaning  
*Plus other services tailored to your needs*

607-238-1123 • Locally owned and operated • Free consultation  
[AtHomeHelpofBinghamton.com](http://AtHomeHelpofBinghamton.com)

**THE REPORTER** Contact Advertising Representative Kathy Brown for all your advertising needs at 724-2360, ext. 244, or [advertising@thereporter.org](mailto:advertising@thereporter.org)