

# THE REPORTER

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## Federation Campaign 2025: "This Year It's Different"

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton announced its slogan for Campaign 2025: "This Year It's Different." The official Campaign kick-off will take place on Super Sunday, September 8, and feature a brunch and a talk by author Joan Leegant. However, the Federation will be sending out solicitation letters at the end of August. "We hope everyone will send in the letter with their pledge," said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. "This helps us reduce the burden on our volunteers." More information about Super Sunday and an interview of Leegant will appear in the next issue of *The Reporter*. To read a review

of Leegant's latest book, visit [www.thereporter.org/book-reviews/off-the-shelf-israelis-and-americans](http://www.thereporter.org/book-reviews/off-the-shelf-israelis-and-americans).

"This year, everyone is feeling their own version of a shift—a change—in the world," Hubal said. "Whether it's the war in Gaza, the increase in antisemitism, the protests on campuses or so many people in need, this year feels different. But the Jewish community has been through difficult times in the past and survived by coming together. The same will be true of the future because it's when things get difficult that we witness people's generosity and compassion."



*This year it's different.*

Marilyn Bell, chairwoman of the Campaign, said that, this year, it feels as if the global Jewish community is under attack. "We need to support our Jewish neighbors and stand up to hate," she added. "I want to thank our donors for supporting the Federation family across the globe and here in Binghamton. Our needs are greater than ever. With your gift, we will keep the Binghamton Jewish community safe, strong and vibrant."

Hubal noted some of the ways gifts given to Campaign 2024 have positively affected the community:

- ◆ Relief funds of \$18,775 were distributed to Binghamton neighbors in need.
  - ◆ Two Holocaust education events were held.
  - ◆ Four safety and security trainings took place.
  - ◆ Twelve Federation sponsored programs were held during January-August of this year.
- Hubal thanked donors for their generous support this past year and looks forward to a successful Campaign 2025. "This community has proven its generosity time and time again," she said. "Please join us on Super Sunday to greet old friends and make new ones, and look for more Federation-sponsored events for all ages during the upcoming year."

## Federation to hold vigil/program to remember hostages and soldiers on Aug. 8

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton will hold a vigil/program on Thursday, August 8, at 7 pm, at Temple Israel, 4737 Deerfield Pl., Vestal. The event will start with a vigil featuring area rabbis and the reading of the names of the hostages, and then conclude with a one-hour long presentation by Eitan and Varda Morell, whose son, IDF Staff Sgt. Maoz Morell, was wounded on February 15 while fighting in Gaza and died on February 19 at the age of 22. If the hostages are released before the event,

At right: IDF Staff Sgt. Maoz Morell (Photo courtesy of the Israel Defense Forces)



the vigil will offer thanks and blessings instead. The Federation is looking for volunteers to read the names of the hostages

during the program. Volunteers should contact the Federation at 607-724-2332 or [director@jfgb.org](mailto:director@jfgb.org). Registration for the event is requested to help prepare, but is not required, and can be made by contacting the Federation or registering at [www.jfgb.org](http://www.jfgb.org).

"The stinging loss of Maoz Morell was felt by Jews worldwide," said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. "People all over mourned his death. His parents will share the inspirational story of his heroism in life and in death in the context of three generations of Jewish survival and

strength. It is especially meaningful to Eitan to come back to his hometown and share his son's story."

Hubal added, "It's important that we don't forget the hostages and those who died on October 7 or during the fighting that has occurred since. While we continue our lives, the hostages are being held captive and their loved ones wonder if they will ever see them again. We need to raise our voices to show they are not forgotten. We must also remember all those who are risking their lives or who have died defending Israel."

## Federation to hold "Guardian/Greeter Safety Training" on Aug. 27

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton will hold a "Guardian/Greeter Safety Training" on Tuesday, August 27, at 6:30 pm, at the Jewish Community Center, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal. Mark Henderson, the director of community security for the Jewish Community Federation of Greater

Rochester, will lead the session. The training is open to the entire community. To register for the program, visit [www.jfgb.org](http://www.jfgb.org) or contact the Federation office at 607-724-2332 or [director@jfgb.org](mailto:director@jfgb.org).

The program teaches people to be guardians by showing how they can take personal responsibility for the safety and

security of themselves, their families and their community. It focuses on the skill sets that people need to identify, protect and respond to all hazards. The course's motto is, "Get involved. Get empowered. Get trained."

"This training is aimed at all members of an organization or congregation because, at some time, almost everyone will open a door

and need to make a decision about whether or not it's safe to do so," said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. "It teaches how to identify suspicious people, vehicles and packages, and learn ways to protect our community. We all should become active bystanders who can respond to incidents and situations."

### Film Fest meeting



The Binghamton Jewish Film Fest Committee met on July 10 to plan for the 2024-25 Film Fest. Standing: Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation of Greater Binghamton. Seated (l-r): Steve Lisman, Susan Hubal and Ben Kasper.

### Federation Security Committee meeting



The Federation of Greater Binghamton's Security Committee met on July 9. L-r: Debra Martinez, Federation Executive Director Shelley Hubal, Steve Malkin, Raychel Reilly, Charlie Manasse, Jon Burgman and Neisen Luks.

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## Opinion

## From the Desk of the Federation Executive Director

## With gratitude

SHELLEY HUBAL

It was only a short visit, but I noticed a few subtle indications that things were different this summer. Large posters with the distinctive “Bring Them Home Now” slogan hung outside the camp office. Israeli flags were flying all over the camp. Many of the campers and counselors wore what looked like dog tags, but I immediately recognized them as “Bring Them Home Now” tags. These are some observations from my recent visit to Camp Ramah New England.

While we walked around the camp on visitor’s day, my son, Joshua, shared a prayer for peace that he learned.

Turns out, the camp has added this to the daily service. I learned that the camp held a special *shira*, or singing session, in honor of the hostages as another opportunity to thoughtfully hold a safe space for this young generation of Jewish people to grieve, heal and take pride in their heritage.

August 2 will mark 300 days of captivity for the hostages in Gaza. As of right now, there are no real prospects for a ceasefire and hostage deal. If, like me, you are hurting, then I encourage you to join our gathering for peace on August 8. There will be song, prayer and a special reading of the

names of the hostages. We will also listen to the testimony of Eitan and Varda Morell, parents of Moaz Morell, who courageously gave his life for the love of his country and the Jewish people. For more information on the program, see the article on page 1.

I recognize that many in our Jewish community are beyond their summer camp days. Perhaps that is why creating a special opportunity to come together and share our grief and faith is so important. It will help us to heal our hearts and remind us that we are all in this together. I know that is good for everyone, not just a few lucky youths.

## One Perspective from Israel

## “Despite all of this, we have not forgotten Your name. Likewise, please don’t forget us.”

JEREMY STAIMAN

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

Ten years ago, my wife and I went on a “roots” tour to Prague, Czech Republic.

My father-in-law, the late Harry Bush, grew up there, until he was arrested and sent to Tereizenstadt early in the war. Thanks to a cousin who lived there in the aftermath, we were able to locate his childhood home.

It was a powerful and meaningful trip, including a trip to Tereizen, which was guided by a Holocaust survivor who had been forced into that ghetto himself. In the course of comparing historical dates, we were shocked to discover that he and my father-in-law had actually been deported on the very same date, from the same station, on the same train. Later, both were sent to Auschwitz, and were fortunate to be among the remnants who survived.

The most powerful moment of the trip for me was when we entered a small, covert *shul* in Tereizen. On the walls were painted murals, with various quotes. When I read this one, taken from the *Tachanun* prayer from the morning service, it was like a punch in the gut. I still get emotional thinking about it.

Loosely translated: “Despite all of this, we have not See “Forget” on page 5

## In My Own Words

## Feed the children

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

“When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap the corners of your field, nor should you gather the gleanings of your harvest. And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and the stranger. I am Adonai your God.” (Leviticus 19: 9-10)

All three Abrahamic religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – command us to feed the hungry and care for the poor and the stranger. If we accept the claim of those on the conservative end of the political spectrum – that the United States is a Christian country – then that means our leaders should follow the Christian precepts laid down by Jesus, who, in the New Testament, performed a miracle by multiplying five loaves of bread and two fish in order to feed 5,000 hungry people. You don’t have to believe in Christianity to note that Jesus, who was Jewish, was following the biblical principle of feeding the hungry. The Jewish and Christian versions of Jesus would have wept to read a recent *USA Today* headline: “GOP states opting out of summer EBT funds; 9.5M kids denied access to new food aid program.”

According to the article, there are 12 states – all with Republican governors – who are refusing the aid, calling

it “welfare” and saying that is an overreach on the part of the federal government. I would be fine with this, except for one problem: how can you call yourself a practicing Jew, Christian or Muslim if you refuse aid for those who are hungry, unless you use other means to feed them? It doesn’t sound as if they are all successfully doing that because, according to the article, two of those states have the highest rates of food insecurity in the country.

Fortunately, not all Republican governors have opted out of the program. What is interesting is the opposing quotes featured in the article: “Nebraska Republican Gov. Jim Pillen has said the program is ‘just another form of welfare ... and it’s not doing our kids any good’ whereas Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders, an Arkansas Republican and former Trump administration official, described it as ‘an See “Feed” on page 3

## Letters

Appreciation for *The Reporter* and its staff

To the Editor:

I’m writing this as I sit outside enjoying the sunny, wonderfully hot weather (yes, I really do love it!) on one of the few summer weekends I’m in Binghamton, taking a much-needed break from my peripatetic summer lifestyle. I’ve just finished reading the July 12-25 issue of *The Reporter* and felt the need to share some thoughts of appreciation and praise rather than keep them to myself. All too frequently letters to the editor are submitted to complain about the state of the country, the world, personal gripes, etc. Instead, I thought I’d take the opportunity to write something positive.

I’ve realized for the umpteenth time how fortunate we are to have a Jewish paper in our little ole’ city of Binghamton. This most recent issue included a riveting article from Bill Simons’ “Diaspora Report”; a moving, brilliantly written column by Executive Editor Rabbi Rachel Esserman; and an article by Jeremy Staiman, who has graciously allowed *The Reporter* to reprint his column that appears in the *Times of Israel*. I would be remiss if I did not mention Rachel’s reliable, “fan-favorite” book review – many of which have been award-winning, and all of which have been the catalyst of dozens of books I and so many others have added to their list of must-reads!

I believe Rachel has missed publishing a review only two or three times in all these years.

For those who don’t know me, I served as the executive editor for two years, from the end of 2005 until the end of 2007. I have been a member of the Editorial Committee for several years, the last two years as chairwoman. For various reasons, I decided to resign, and am now content being a committee member and proofreader for the paper.

I can attest that this paper is a *labor of love*. It’s hard work, nobody is getting rich (believe me!) and it’s a lot of stress. Newspapers are not exactly thriving these days (in case you’ve been living under a rock for the past decade or so) and the fact that *The Reporter* still exists is a testament to Rabbi Rachel, the staff – which has dwindled from something like eight full-time employees to one since I left – doing what they do because they understand how meaningful and vital the paper is to this community.

In Rabbi Esserman’s column this week, “The Precariousness of Life,” she wrote about her Shabbat ritual of noting five blessings /gratitudes for that week. I would like to say that this week, I am grateful to Rachel for being my close friend and also for her role at the helm of *The Reporter*. Thanks for all you do!

Rebecca Kahn

## Addendum

This photo arrived after the publication of *The Reporter’s* Family Living issue.

Amira Eliza Samuels  
Parents: MiRit Wartell  
Samuels and Justin Samuels  
Grandparent: Rabbi Barbara  
Goldman-Wartell



Jewish Federation  
of Greater Binghamton

Shelley Hubal, Executive Director

607-724-2332 ~ www.jfgeb.org

## The Reporter Editorial Committee

Rebecca Goldstein Kahn, chairwoman  
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## HOW TO REACH THE REPORTER

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

E-mail ~ TRReporter@aol.com

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

Extension#/Department ~ 1. Advertising 2. Business Office  
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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 TRReporter@aol.com.

Executive Editor Rabbi Rachel Esserman

Layout Editor Diana Sochor

Advertising Kathy Brown

Bookkeeper Kathy Brown

Production Associate Julie Weber

Columnist Bill Simons

## Proofreaders

Barbara Bank, Fran Ferentinos,  
Rebecca Goldstein Kahn, Merri Pell-Preus,  
Ilene Pinsker, Heidi Thirer



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# BD luncheon speaker to address “What the Jewish People have Learned since October 7<sup>th</sup>” on Aug. 10

Beth David Synagogue will host a luncheon and speaker on Saturday, August 10. The community is invited to attend. Morning services will begin at 9:30 am, followed by the luncheon and talk at approximately 11:45 am. The luncheon is free and open to all. Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider will speak on “What the Jewish People have Learned since October 7.” Goldscheider serves as the chief editor of the OU Israel’s weekly “Torah Tidbits,” is the coordinator of rabbinical and

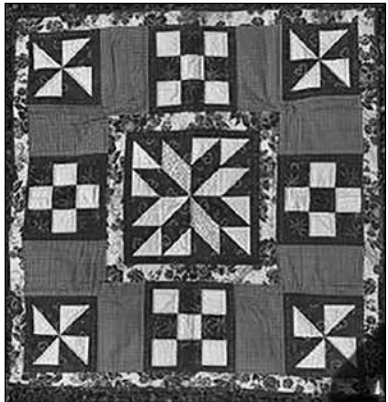
leadership training at Yeshiva University’s Gruss Kollel, and is a faculty member of the Rabbinical Assembly of America’s conversion program in Jerusalem. He is the author of the haggadah “The Night that Unites,” as well as the recently published “Torah United.” “We are looking forward to a highly insightful discussion on the Shabbat preceding Tisha B’Av,” said organizers of the event.

At right: Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider (Photo by Ora Goldscheider)



# TI to hold Summer Porch Party on Aug. 15

Temple Israel will hold a Summer Porch Party on Thursday, August 15, at 6:30 pm. It will feature the music of Steve Gilbert and feature kosher light refreshments and a raffle. The cost is \$5 per person; children under 12 can attend at no cost. Those attending are asked to help bring a donation to CHOW; a list of preferred household items and food is available from the synagogue office at 607-723-7461. Anyone interested in attending is asked to RSVP by Tuesday, August 13, by contacting the synagogue office.



The quilt that will be raffled at the Temple Israel Summer Porch Party. (Photo by Maxine Rosenberg)

The event will also feature a raffle: the prize is a quilt started by the late Pam Lavker and finished by Maxine Rosenberg and a friend. Raffle tickets are \$3 each or \$10 for four tickets. One need not be present to

win. To purchase raffle tickets before the event, contact the temple office. Gilbert is professor emeritus of psychology at SUNY Oneonta, a past president of Temple Israel, a frequent *davener* at services and an amateur performer known as Ukulele Steve by residents of several senior living facilities in the area. He has entertained many times at the Senior Friendship Club, as well as at several Temple Israel events. His varied repertoire includes Jewish music. “Jewish tradition says we should celebrate life by giving to worthy causes graciously,” said organizers of the event. “Temple Israel is embracing this idea with a Summer Porch Party. In the spirit of the event, we are asking attendees to help support CHOW with a tangible donation.”

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to the family of **Donald Livsky**

## DEADLINES

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

ISSUE	DEADLINE
August 9-22.....	July 31
August 23-September 5.....	August 14
September 6-19.....	August 28
September 20-October 3.....	September 11

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

# Thirty-six states adopt Jew-hatred guidelines amid global resurgence

By Joshua Marks

(JNS)—Thirty-six countries and international bodies led by the United States have endorsed the Global Guidelines for Countering Antisemitism ([www.state.gov/global-guidelines-for-countering-antisemitism/](http://www.state.gov/global-guidelines-for-countering-antisemitism/)) in Argentina. The special envoys and other representatives adopted the 12 nonbinding guidelines at a time when the world is seeing a spike in antisemitism, in part triggered by events in the Middle East.

Buenos Aires hosted the global gathering on July 18 as

they attended a ceremony to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the bombing of the Jewish community center in the Argentine capital. Eighty-five people were killed in the attack on the Argentine Israelite Mutual Association (Spanish initials: AMIA) and more than 300 were wounded. The terrorist attack was ordered by the Islamic Republic of Iran and carried out by its Lebanese proxy Hezbollah.

JNS caught up with Michal Cotler-Wunsh, a former member of Knesset who is Jerusalem’s special envoy for combating antisemitism, just before she entered the ceremony. She praised the inclusion of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism in the document. “In order to combat antisemitism, governments need tools to understand its various manifestations. The legally non-binding @TheIHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism is an important internationally recognized instrument used by over 40 U.N. member states since its adoption...” Cotler-Wunsh posted on X on July 17.

“This was an especially important declaration on behalf of all the states and certainly Israel as a signatory,” Cotler-Wunsh said. “The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism is the benchmark by which we can identify and combat all strains of what is an ever-mutating, shape-shifting hatred that kills.”

Cotler-Wunsh added, “Israel was involved in the framing and in not just the endorsement of the global guidelines, but actually in the understanding that IHRA is going to have to be the key, the only way to be able to identify this new mutated strain of anti-Zionism which negates Israel’s very right to exist.” The IHRA definition mentions Israel several times in examples of antisemitism, based on Natan See “States” on page 8

The JCC of Binghamton Board of Directors and Staff send condolences to the family of Don Livsky, who passed away on Saturday, July 6, 2024. He leaves behind his loving wife of 63 years, Marilyn; two children, Barry (Heather) Livsky, & Nancy (Byron) Keefer; and two grandchildren, Sophie and Hayden Livsky. Our thoughts go out to the Livskys during this difficult time. May his memory be a blessing.

## OF NOTE

### Schwartz

Howard Schwartz was the recipient of the Henry Beach Volunteer Award given by Action for Older Persons. He received the award for his 12 years of providing Medicare counseling. According to AOP, he has counseled 600 clients and is estimated to have saved them more than a half million dollars.

### Feed.....Continued from page 2

important new tool to give Arkansas children the food and nutrition they need.” I’m not sure how feeding children is a bad thing. Does Pillen think that these children will expect the government to feed them for the rest of their lives? If the state gives them a good education and creates a stable job market, those children will someday be tax paying members of society, able to help others who need aid.

One reason I don’t object to paying taxes is that I want my tax money to feed the needy. That money also goes for paving roads, making sure I have clean water and air, that the food I buy in the store is safe from contamination.... I could go on, but you get the idea. The reason for our laws is to protect us and shelter us. They also work for the greater benefit of our country: remember that the Food Distribution Administration was founded in 1942 because too many men who were malnourished as children during the Great Depression were unfit to serve in the army.

Even if your state has enough funds (which, cynic that I’ve become, I find hard to believe), why not take the extra money that’s available? Feed the hungry. Help the poor. But don’t call yourself a practicing Jew, Christian or Muslim if you are willing to let these children go hungry.

“When you are asked in the world to come, ‘What was your work?’ and you answer, ‘I fed the hungry,’ you will be told, ‘This is the gate of Adonai, enter into it, you who have fed the hungry.’” – Midrash Psalms 118:17 (as translated by Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger)

## The Reporter is offering sponsorships!

Celebrate your simcha with the community or honor your loved one.

There are four levels: Bronze \$200, Silver \$400, Gold \$600 and Platinum \$1,000.

To arrange for a sponsorship or for answers to questions, contact Rabbi Rachel Esserman at [rachel@thereportergroup.org](mailto:rachel@thereportergroup.org).

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## COME SEE THE PONIES AUGUST 2-4

**FIREWORKS ON FRIDAY NIGHT**  
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**FRIDAY, AUGUST 2<sup>ND</sup> - 7:05 PM**  
POP STAR NIGHT  
FRIENDSHIP BRACELET  
SPECIALTY JERSEYS  
HAPPY HOUR  
5:00 PM - 8:30 PM

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 3<sup>RD</sup> - 6:07 PM**  
JETT WILLIAMS BOBBLEHEAD  
PRESENTED BY NEWS 34  
1<sup>ST</sup> 1,000 FANS

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 4<sup>TH</sup> - 5:05 PM**  
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ALL KIDS 12 & UNDER RECEIVE A TONGUE FOR A FREE HOT ONE AND REGULAR SIZE  
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Off the Shelf

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

# An almost PI, a manipulative mystery writer and a cynical lawyer

**“Cinnamon Girl”**

There is a great deal to dislike about Adam Zantz, the hero of Daniel Weizmann’s “Cinnamon Girl” (Melville House). He refuses to take responsibility for his actions and often spins a lie, rather than tell the complete truth. Yet, readers will once again become so absorbed in his story that they’ll forgive him all of his sins. “Cinnamon Girl” is the second book in the Pacific Coast Highway Mystery series, and it offers just as much fun and suspense – with a side of music – as the first book, “The Last Songbird.” (To read *The Reporter’s* review of that work, visit [www.thereporter.org/book-reviews/off-the-shelf-two-mysteries-and-a-thriller?entry=452265](http://www.thereporter.org/book-reviews/off-the-shelf-two-mysteries-and-a-thriller?entry=452265).)

A former would-be songwriter and singer, Adam still drives for Lyft in order to make ends meet, although he is now studying for his private investigator’s license. While he technically is not allowed to investigate cases until he receives that license, he is unable to say no to a request from his former piano teacher, Charles Elkaim, who now lives in a nursing home and only has a short time to live. Decades before, Elkaim’s son, Emil, was arrested for murder and then killed while in prison awaiting trial. A former friend of Emil’s visited Elkaim claiming that he now has evidence that Emil was innocent. Unfortunately, he never paid the promised return visit. Elkaim wants Adam to find this friend and exonerate Emil, so he can die in peace.

Adam is reluctant to take the case, although he knew and admired Emil, who seemed a shining hero when Adam was young. But he worries investigating without a license could get him into trouble. Yet, he finds it impossible to say no to a man who was his late uncle’s friend. While, at first, the evidence seems to suggest the murder was related to drugs, it soon becomes clear that there is far more to the story. Things become complicated when Adam finds a recording made by Emil and a band, a recording someone is willing to kill for. This is only the start of a complex and interesting plot that will keep readers quickly turning pages.

“Cinnamon Girl” is perfect for those who like gritty mysteries with flawed heroes. Weizmann managed to surprise me more than once; just when I thought I knew why something had happened, the plot would take a different direction. That continued until the novel’s dramatic and exciting ending. If most readers are like me, the identity of the murderer will blow them away. My only question at the novel’s conclusion was, “When will the next book in the series come out?”

**“The Main Character”**

Authors manipulate their characters to create interesting and suspenseful plots. What would happen if an author decided to do the same with real-life people? That’s the premise behind “The Main Character” by Jaelyn Goldis (Emily Bestler Books/Atria). Ginevra Ex is an extremely successful mystery author. Instead of inventing her characters, she hires a real person, with whom she holds extensive interviews before writing a fictionalized version of their lives. This is how she came to meet Rory, the main character of her latest work. As a present to celebrate the successful conclusion of those interviews, Ginevra gives Rory a present: a trip through Italy on the luxurious Orient Express. Rory is thrilled until she learns who else is on the train: her brother, her best friend and her former fiancé. Since this is a mystery (the novel opens with a death), readers are left not only to ponder the identity of the deceased and the killer, but the real reason behind the trip.

As in Goldis’ previous novel “The Chateau,” each chapter offers the thoughts of a different character. This creates confusion since their thoughts and actions can be interpreted in many different ways. Each chapter conceals as much as it reveals until readers learn the real story at the novel’s

end. (To read *The Reporter’s* review of “The Chateau,” visit [www.thereporter.org/book-reviews/celebrating-jewish-literature-two-mysteries-and-a-thriller?entry=441939](http://www.thereporter.org/book-reviews/celebrating-jewish-literature-two-mysteries-and-a-thriller?entry=441939).)

If readers are questioning why I am reviewing this book, rest assured it does have Jewish content. In addition to all the characters being Jewish, there is a Jewish aspect to the plot itself, although to say more would spoil the fun. Goldis does an excellent job with misdirection and, even if readers guess parts correctly, there are always more surprises to be revealed. In fact, it took me several tries before I correctly identified the deceased.

While “The Main Character” is an excellent mystery/thriller, I didn’t become emotionally attached to the characters. That is not a complaint: after having been put through the emotional wringer reading “Cinnamon Girl,” it was a relief to stand back a bit. That may not be the reaction of all readers, and there are many parts of the plot that may move and/or distress them. What does stand out is how Gordis manages to juggle her different characters and plot elements without dropping the ball or losing her readers’ interest.

**“Seraphim”**

Ben Alder, the main character of Joshua Perry’s “Seraphim” (Melville House), qualifies as one of the most depressed and depressing characters I’ve ever read about. But that makes sense in the context: The 2008 post-Katrina world of New Orleans in which the novel takes place is portrayed as a racist, violent and chaotic place. Ben, a former rabbinical seminary student and now lawyer, moved to New Orleans to work as a public defender. As a northerner with little experience in the South, he and his partner, Boris, struggle with a New Orleans justice system that treats Black children as if they were animals. They have chosen to help these children – mostly young Black tweens and teens – in

almost any way possible. Unfortunately, the justice system wants to handle these cases quickly and efficiently, which mostly means putting people behind bars.

The case that grabs Ben’s attention is that of Robert, a former client, who is now accused of shooting a New Orleans celebrity. The events of that night don’t make sense to Ben and the closer he looks, the more he realizes something is off. But the system wants a speedy answer, preferably a plea bargain. That’s often done even when a defendant isn’t guilty because too many convictions occur due to lies being told on the stand, possibilities of innocence are never explored and judges just want to clear their dockets. However, not all these children are innocent: as Ben learns, some of them are already killers, or circumstances may make them killers in the future. Ben knows he can’t cure society’s problems, though, something that creates an existential crisis that leaves him floundering.

Ben does a great deal of philosophical pondering about the nature of his job. As he sees it, the purpose of defense lawyers is to tell the jury a story, one that will lead them to find their client innocent. If that doesn’t work, he then seeks to explain the circumstances surrounding the crime so that the jury will feel sorry for the defendant and recommend a more lenient sentence. However, Ben knows that it’s not his job to care too deeply about his client or to judge him. His sole purpose is to manipulate the system to help his client.

“Seraphim” is told in the third person, which distances readers from Ben’s feelings and the action. That works, because otherwise it would be extremely difficult to read about the situations that the author describes. The novel serves as an indictment of that city’s criminal justice system. Unfortunately, it doesn’t leave readers with the hope that the situation might improve.



Off the Shelf

# Venice, Jews and the Ghetto

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Harry Freedman makes something very clear in his new book “Shylock’s Venice: The Remarkable History of Venice’s Jews and the Ghetto” (Bloomsbury Continuum): the Jews of Venice were treated far better than most Jews in Christian lands during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, even though the Venetians resented and distrusted Jews, in addition to considering them cursed by God. It was the difference in behavior that made Venice safer: “But unlike in other countries, the Venetians never expelled the Jews. Nor confiscated their belongings. They didn’t slaughter Jewish men, rape women, nor forcibly baptize children.” While that might sound like a very low bar in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it was not something to be taken for granted in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Freedman’s title, “Shylock’s Venice,” is catchy if not exactly accurate. William Shakespeare never visited Venice and it’s unclear if he even knew anyone Jewish because, while he was alive, Jews were not legally allowed to live in England. The sections about “The Merchant of Venice” (which are not a major part of the book) seem as if they belong in a different study. However, it was the title that first caught my attention and gave me the opportunity to learn more about Jewish life in Venice.

Originally, Jews were not allowed to live in Venice. The first Jews arrived in the general area in 1298 and had a their own neighborhood outside of the city. When that area was threatened during a war in 1509, the Venetian government allowed the Jews to move to safety in the city proper. However, after complaints about Jews and Christians mingling socially, all the Jews were moved into one area, which is now called the ghetto. Walls and gates were constructed, and the Jewish population was not allowed to leave during the night, although exceptions were made for specific reasons. That move took place in 1516 and the Jews remained in that area until 1797, when Napoleon Bonaparte conquered Venice, gave the Jewish population equal rights, and had the walls and gates of the ghetto torn down. Although these equal rights were rescinded when the French were forced from the city, the walls and gates were not rebuilt.

Freedman notes that the ghetto did have some positive effects on the Jewish population: it was “easier for like-minded people to meet, debate and share ideas. The few rabbis and scholars in the ghetto took full intellectual advantage of their proximity to each other, and it didn’t take long for Venice to become known as a hub for Jewish scholarship. Within a few years of its establishment, the ghetto had developed into one of Europe’s most important rabbinic centres. For those who had questions about religious belief, about the Bible, Talmud or Jewish law, the Venice Ghetto was where an answer was likely to be obtained. The ghetto became a magnet for inquisitive Jews. And sometimes for Christians seeking a Jewish perspective on an issue they were grappling with.”

This meant that Jews and Christians sometimes worked and/or studied together since some Christians wanted to better understand the Hebrew Bible and create more accurate translations. Talmudic study also flourished, until the Talmud was burned and banned in Italy. It was then that Kabbalah became a major focus of Jewish study. The fact that this occurred in an area where Jews were heavily taxed by the Venetian government, and frequently threatened with expulsion, was amazing. It also meant that life felt precarious, especially since the agreements allowing Jews to continue to live in Venice had to be renewed. In addition to threats not to continue those agreements, there were also increases in the amount of money/taxes that the Jewish community had to pay for being allowed to remain. The negotiations were often fraught for the Jewish population since the Venetian government restricted not only their movements, but what businesses they could participate in and, at times, how much they could charge at those businesses. One form of employment was that of moneylender: the government actually required the Jewish community to have a certain number of money lenders available, but limited the amount of interest they could charge.

However, while some families and individuals prospered, life in the ghetto was not easy. A large percentage of the population was impoverished. There was limited space for housing, so multiple families were crowded into small spaces. The only way to increase space was to build upward, but this made the buildings even less stable than they were before the construction. Yet, as Freedman notes, even with all this, Venice was one of the best places in Europe for Jews to live.

“Shylock’s Venice” is filled with interesting details and individuals. Even readers who are familiar with Italian Jewish history should enjoy reading Freedman’s slant on the material, which offers a new way to consider Jewish life in Venice. While there is not a great amount of detail for Shakespeare fans, the author does include a potentially controversial discussion on whether “The Merchant of Venice” is antisemitic or pro-semitic. That conversation might be worth a book of its own.

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**Jews in Sports**

# My dinner with Abel: Jewish Olympian remembered

BILL SIMONS

“Pick me up, feed me and bring me home. I hope you agree or otherwise, forget your interview.” That blunt ultimatum came to me in the form of a letter dated October 8, 1985, and signed “Abel R. Kiviat.” Then 93 years old and a widower, Kiviat, one of the great runners of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and a proud Jew, lived, at the time, at the Cedar Glen West retirement community in Lakehurst, NJ. Driving over 230 miles from Oneonta, NY, to Lakehurst in early November 1985, I acceded to Kiviat’s demands and am glad that I did. He offered me cough drops, a pen, a Jewish calendar and a place to sleep for the night.

I found Kiviat direct, candid save for a few episodes of off-the-record discretion and embellishment, informative, somewhat contentious, warm and incredibly energetic, and sharp of mind for a man in his mid-90s. The Winter 1986 issue of the Journal of Sport History devoted 32 pages to the interview. As for our restaurant dinner, it was memorable. Wearing a stylish Olympic red blazer, Kiviat, gray-haired and mustachioed, ate prodigiously, talked volubly and savored a Dewar’s Scotch Whisky on the rocks.

This is a Summer Olympic year, making it timely to recall Kiviat, a medalist at the 1912 Stockholm games. He was the eldest of seven children of observant Jewish parents who left Manhattan’s congested, Yiddishkeit Lower East Side for the then semi-rural Staten Island, where they opened a small grocery. At Curtis High School, Kiviat excelled as an All-Interscholastic baseball shortstop, football pass receiver and track phenom.

Bow-legged, 5’3” and 120 pounds, Kiviat, primarily a middle-distance runner noted for the wild flapping of his arms, established several United States and track world records between 1911 and 1915. Individually and as a member of relay teams, he dominated many indoor and outdoor events during an era when track generated significant attention. Versatile and tenacious, Kiviat’s individual world records included the indoor 600-yard, 1,000 yard and one-mile runs, as well as the outdoor 1,500-meter competition. Three times he won the one-mile title at the United States Nationals.

As the 1912 Stockholm Olympics approached, experts designated the 20-year-old Kiviat the pre-race favorite in the 1,500-meter run. Anticipation animated the passage across the Atlantic aboard the *S.S. Finland* as it made its way from Hoboken, NJ, to Sweden. Aboard ship, Kiviat roomed with Jim Thorpe, arguably the greatest all-around athlete in history.

In Stockholm, Kiviat won his first three trial runs. Then, in the 1,500-meter finals, Kiviat took the lead, but, at the turn, Arnold Strode Jackson of England flew by him on the outside, temporarily taking a five-yard lead. Kiviat thought he caught Strode for a dead heat. Nevertheless, the judges declared Jackson the winner by a nose, 3:56.9 to 3:56.8 minutes. Recognizing that he had waited too long to start his sprint, a disappointed Kiviat was not happy with his second-place silver medal in the 1,500-meter run. As part of the American team in the 3,000-meter relay, however, Kiviat earned a first-place gold medal.

Growing up, and then as an adult, Kiviat lived in Jewish households while fully engaging the opportunities of American secularism. Both of his wives were Jewish. His marriage to Yetta Schiminsky, an ambitious designer of theatrical clothes and the mother of his son, Arthur, a career army officer, ended in divorce. Kiviat’s happy 40-year marriage to Isabel Solomon, an executive secretary, ended with her death, leaving a permanent void. Isabel travelled annually to Israel, kept kosher and ensured her husband’s attendance at weekly Shabbat services. In addition to the Jewish calendar, Kiviat’s Lakehurst home contained a *mezuzah*, an electric *yahrzeit* light and a few *yarmulkas*.

Despite two disturbing antisemitic incidents – serious threats from a massive discus thrower and a savage beating by unknown assailants – Kiviat, overt about his Jewish identity, always felt comfortable with people from other ethnic and racial groups. Growing up in a heavily Irish and Italian part of Staten Island, he felt secure and enjoyed friendships with people from diverse backgrounds. From childhood through their venerable years, Kiviat and Tommy Lennon, an Irish Catholic, remained best friends. As an athlete, Kiviat, barred from the restrictive, WASP-dominated New York Athletic Club, competed for the Irish American Club, marched under the group’s banner at the St. Patrick’s Day parade, and captained the squad for five years. His Gaelic teammates presented their Jewish captain with a *kippah* inscribed with the Irish American Club’s logo.

Kiviat did not allow sports to define him, nor did he obsess over his disappointing finish in the 1,500-meter Olympic run or

a long, unduly severe, suspension from amateur competition for accepting appearance money. Unlike so many contemporary world-class athletes who fail to find balance in their lives, Kiviat typically trained only twice a week. During World War I, he served overseas in an army supply unit, nearly meeting a catastrophic fate when a land mine exploded 50 feet from him. For 29 years, Kiviat took pride in doing his job well as deputy clerk for the Southern District of the Federal Court in Manhattan. A longtime press steward and racing official, he enjoyed staying part of the track world. Kiviat remained vibrant and robust during most of his 99-year life.

On the cusp of the 1984 Los Angeles games, the media rediscovered Kiviat, designating him America’s longest-living Olympian. Resilience rendered Kiviat ready for late-life fame. On television, Kiviat’s feisty charm elicited laughter from Johnny Carson and “The Tonight Show” audience. As a nonagenarian, he jogged the 1984 Olympic torch one kilometer on a windy, rainy Manhattan day as part of its journey to Los Angeles. For a Bud Greenspan documentary, Kiviat returned to Stockholm, scene of his 1912 Olympic competition. He made the most of his late life return from obscurity.

Rereading transcripts and listening to recordings of my Kiviat interview of two generations ago bring to mind lessons from his life. Value the duality of American pluralism and Jewish identification. Maintain balance between ambition and accessible satisfactions. Remain resilient as the best might come last. Thinking of my dinner with Abel Kiviat engenders aspiration for a Dewar’s Scotch Whisky on the rocks.

## 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.

◆ Melton will hold the virtual class “Tisha B’Av as a Healing Journey Through Grief” on Monday, August 12, from 2-3 pm. There is a sliding scale cost to attend. Rabbi Deborah Silver will explore multiple dimensions of Tisha B’Av. For more information or to register, visit <https://events.org/events/calendarcourse?tid=36e3b416-8dd3-497e-bd0d-0e754749f7b9>.

◆ The Qesher Book Club will discuss “The Loving Life: Memoirs of an Iranian-Jewish Woman” by Ilana Ebrahim Kahen on Tuesday, August 20, at 3 pm. Kahen will discuss the impact of the 1979 Islamic Revolution on Iran’s Jewish minority. For more information or to register, visit <https://www.qesher.com/the-loving-life/>.

◆ Uri L’Tzedek will hold the virtual program “Should we publicly advocate that Hasidic children receive a secular education?” on Monday, July 29, at noon. The cost to attend is \$18. Beatrice Weber will discuss the principle “every Jew is responsible for one another” in context of advocating for Hasidic children to receive a basic education. For more information or to register, visit [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_6FYpEKpDQN-CLeE6LMmqMZQ#/registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_6FYpEKpDQN-CLeE6LMmqMZQ#/registration).

◆ Tikvah is offering “Faith and the Found-

ers: The Hebrew Bible and American Independence,” a limited series podcast with Rabbi Dr. Meir Soloveichik. For more information or to register for links to the podcast, visit <https://tikvahfund.org/july-4-podcast/>.

◆ The American Jewish University will hold the virtual event “Memoirs of a Jewish Immigrant: Jake Marmer – AJU’s 2024 Word Grant Winner” on Monday, August 5, at 3 pm. Jake Marmer will discuss the intersection of personal history, the immigrant experience and creative expression. For more information or to register, visit <https://open.aju.edu/event/memoirs-of-a-jewish-immigrant-jake-marmer-ajus-2024-word-grant-winner/>.

◆ Melton will hold the virtual class “The Ketubah: What’s Love Got to Do with It?” on Monday, August 19, from 7-8 pm. There is a sliding scale cost to attend. Rabbi Mark Cohn will explore the origins and development of this time-honored Jewish wedding document. For more information or to register, visit <https://events.org/events/calendarcourse?tid=ac1955e0-d025-4829-b0f8-d732e3a8492b>.

◆ The Museum at Eldridge Street will hold the virtual program “The Jewish J.P. Morgan: A Virtual Seminar on Banker, Philanthropist and Humanitarian Jacob Schiff” on Wednesday, August 21, from 6-7 pm. The cost to attend is pay what you wish. For more information or to register, visit <https://fareharbor.com/embeds/book/eldridgestreet/items/558804/availability/1486128898/book/?full-items=yes>.

See “Resources” on page 7

## Forget. . . . . Continued from page 2

forgotten Your name. Likewise, please don’t forget us.”

From the depths of living hell, from a place where God’s presence seemed to be nowhere to be found, the people proclaimed that they had not forgotten God. The pure faith of a decimated, seemingly-hopeless people, who knew that there was indeed hope and a future with their Creator.

I’m sure I am not alone in wondering about the final moments of our brothers in the south on Simchat Torah. I have no doubt that many fought to their last breath,

and saved others in the process. I have no doubt that many, as they lay there shot or burning or awaiting the terrorist’s blade, called out the ultimate declaration of our faith: “*Shema Yisrael – Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One!*”

For a few hours on that awful, awful day, God, You hid Your face. But we know we have not been forgotten.

Not in Tereizen.  
Not in Southern Israel.  
Not anywhere.  
Ever.

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# A story of love, life and legacy

CHANA SILBERSTEIN, PH.D., DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, ROITMAN CHABAD CENTER AT CORNELL UNIVERSITY

*Parashat Pinchas* includes the story of the daughters of Tzelafchad. Their father died in the desert, leaving five unmarried daughters behind. The land of Israel was apportioned only to men. Their father was a member of the tribe of Menashe, half of whom were assigned a portion of land on the east bank of the Jordan, outside of Israel proper.

The daughters, who loved the land of Israel and the spiritual mission it represented, approached Moses and asked that, when the land was divided, they be given a portion within the land of Israel so that their father's name would not be forgotten, as he had no sons to inherit his portion. After consulting with God, Moses acceded to their request.

The daughters, in making their claim, noted that their father died many years earlier by his own "sin" or lack – that he was not party to the group of Jews who died in the desert due to their rebellion against God or Moses. They spoke humbly and wisely – not bringing forth their request until the end of Moses' life, when he began to assign the tribal territories. God supported the sincerity and justice of their claim – one not made in a spirit of personal complaint or bitterness, but motivated by concern for the legacy of

their father, as well as their love of the land.

My mother died this summer. She confronted many challenges in her life. Born in 1934, she was scarred by the war. Both sets of grandparents in Lithuania were brutally murdered soon after the Nazis invaded.

In 1950, she moved with her parents to Canada, the first country to accept them as they attempted to leave war-decimated Europe. At age 16, she went to work in a factory, delivering her pay check to her parents to help support the family, reserving only carfare for herself. She went to night school to learn a new language and office skills.

Eventually, she moved to New York. In 1960, she married my father, a Holocaust survivor from Hungary who similarly had his youth and schooling stolen by the war. My siblings and I were born in rapid succession in 1961, 1962 and 1963. It was a hectic but glorious time, in which my parents were working hard to build a family and a new future.

Then, one Sabbath in 1964, my father suddenly died.

Alone, my mother had to fight for custody of her young children and for access to my father's bank accounts. She

needed to find work and childcare in an age when most children were home until they started first grade at age 6. Yet she created for us a wonderful home, filled with joy and love and Jewish values.

When I was a teenager, she began to lose her hearing. The loss of her hearing greatly constricted her world, making it difficult for her to function in social situations. It also limited her job prospects.

After my brothers and I married, I worried. Despite the difficulties of raising us alone, that task gave her purpose. What would happen next? Would she feel lonely, bitter, bereft?

My concern was misplaced. My mother was a deeply devoted grandmother and great-grandmother. Indeed, even this past year, at 89 years of age, she hosted a grandchild for six months who had just moved to New York and was in the process of "launching his life."

And her loving, giving nature extended well beyond the family. She traveled back and forth to Toronto for almost five years to care for her elderly mother. When I came to visit, I sometimes saw her babysitting a neighbor's child. See "Legacy" on page 8

## 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](mailto:office@templeisraelvestal.org)  
Website: [www.templeisraelvestal.org](http://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, July 27, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person. The Torah portion is Numbers 25:10-30:1 and the haftarah is Jeremiah 1:1-2:3. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 9:45 pm.

On Saturday, August 3, Shacharit services will be held at 9:45 am via Zoom and in-person. The Torah portion is Numbers 30:2-36:13 and the haftarah is Jeremiah 2:4-28; 3:4. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 9:15 pm.

A "Tefillah Talk" with Rabbi Micah Friedman will take place on Tuesday, August 6, at 4:30 pm.

### Norwich Jewish Center

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

### Temple Beth El of Oneonta

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

### Temple Beth-El of Ithaca

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

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

### 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](mailto:bethdavid@stny.rr.com)  
Rabbi's e-mail: [rabbisilber@stny.rr.com](mailto:rabbisilber@stny.rr.com)  
Website: [www.bethdavid.org](http://www.bethdavid.org)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/bethdavidbinghamton](http://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](mailto:aslonim@binghamton.edu)  
[rslonim@chabadofbinghamton.com](mailto:rslonim@chabadofbinghamton.com)  
Address: 420 Murray Hill Rd., Vestal, NY 13850  
Phone: 607-797-0015, Fax: 607-797-0095  
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E-mail: [zchein@Jewishbu.com](mailto:zchein@Jewishbu.com), [rchein@Jewishbu.com](mailto:rchein@Jewishbu.com)  
Rabbi Levi and Hadasa Slonim, Downtown and Development  
Chabad Downtown Center: 60 Henry St., Binghamton  
E-mail: [lslonim@Jewishbu.com](mailto:lslonim@Jewishbu.com), [hslonim@Jewishbu.com](mailto:hslonim@Jewishbu.com)  
Rabbi Yisroel and Goldie Ohana, Programming  
E-mail: [yohana@Jewishbu.com](mailto:yohana@Jewishbu.com), [gohana@Jewishbu.com](mailto: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).

### 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](http://www.tikkunvor.org), E-mail: [info@tikkunvor.org](mailto:info@tikkunvor.org)  
Presidents: Martha Armstrong and Mitch Grossman, [presidents\\_22@tikkunvor.org](mailto: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](mailto:info@tikkunvor.org) for the times and links. Contemplative morning services every Tuesday from 8:30-9:30 am. Saturday mornings, Gan Shabbat and other special services at least once a month. Call for the weekly schedule.  
Jewish Learning Experiences (JLE) for second through seventh grade classes meet on Sunday mornings. Sixth and seventh grades also meet on Wednesday afternoons. Family programs for kindergarten and first grade held monthly.  
Adult Education: Offered regularly throughout the year. Check the website for details.

Friday, July 26, light candles before ..... 8:10 pm  
Shabbat ends Saturday, July 27 ..... 9:09 pm  
Friday, August 2, light candles before ..... 8:02 pm  
Shabbat ends Saturday, August 3 ..... 9:01 pm  
Friday, August 9, light candles before ..... 7:53 pm  
Shabbat ends Saturday, August 11 ..... 8:52 pm

### Temple Concord

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism  
Rabbi: Leah Moser  
Address: 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905  
Office hours: Tues.-Fri., 10 am-2 pm  
Phone: 607-723-7355, Fax: 607-723-0785  
Office e-mail: [TempleConcordbinghamton@gmail.com](mailto:TempleConcordbinghamton@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.templeconcord.com](http://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 26: 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 <https://www.facebook.com/templeconcord/>.

Saturday, July 27: At 9:15 am, Torah study in person and on Zoom at <http://bit.ly/3XDnVRE>, Meeting ID 825 1226 2831 and passcode 743892.

Friday, August 2: 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 <https://www.facebook.com/templeconcord/>.

Saturday, August 3: At 9:15 am, Torah study in person and on Zoom at <http://bit.ly/3XDnVRE>, Meeting ID 825 1226 2831 and passcode 743892.

Tuesday, August 6: At 10:30 am, the Tuesday Morning Book Club will meet to discuss "The Rabbi Who Prayed with Fire" and "The Rabbi Who Prayed for the City" (Rabbi Vivian Mysteries) by Rachel Sharona Lewis. For more information, contact Merri Pell-Preus at 607-222-2875 or e-mail [merrypell.preus@gmail.com](mailto:merrypell.preus@gmail.com). Join via Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3CXVd9b>, meeting ID 881 6469 4206 and passcode 653272.

### 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](http://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.

# Jewish Community Center

## Fun in the sun at Camp JCC



During week one of Camp JCC, campers cheered on the Rumble Ponies baseball team and explored the beauty of Greenwood and Chenango Valley State Parks.



### Resources.....

Continued from page 5

- ◆ ALEPH will hold the four-part class “An Elul Journey: Navigating Powerful Emotions with R.A.I.N.” on Wednesdays, September 4-25, from 8-9:15 pm. The cost to attend is \$72. Dr. Tara Brach will teach the R.A.I.N. process for navigating powerful emotions. For more information or to register, visit <https://aleph.org/civicrm/event/register/?reset=1&id=559>.
- ◆ Uri L’Tzedek will hold the virtual program “Stigma in the Jewish Community – What’s the big secret about addiction?” on Monday, August 5, at noon. The cost to attend is \$18. Rabbi Chaim Tureff will use the Torah as a guide on how to help those struggling with addiction. For more information or to register, visit [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_JstXHVcrQxCtIO\\_wGyfwWA#/registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_JstXHVcrQxCtIO_wGyfwWA#/registration).
- ◆ Melton will hold the six-part virtual class “Jewish Answers to Life’s Most Challenging Questions” on Tuesdays, August 20-September 24, from 1-2:30 pm. The cost to attend is \$179. The course will explore multiple understandings of these timeless questions through the eyes of the rabbinic sages as well as those of modern thinkers. For more information or to register, visit <https://events.org/events/calendarcourse?tid=ac1955e0-d025-4829-b0f8-d732e3a8492b>.

- ◆ One Book, One Hadassah will hold a virtual discussion about “The Boy with the Star Tattoo” with author Talia Carner on Monday, July 29, at 7 pm. Carner will be in conversation with Hadassah Magazine Executive Editor Lisa Hostein to discuss her latest novel, “The Boy with the Star Tattoo.” For more information or to register, visit [www.hadassahmagazine.org/2024/05/30/one-book-one-hadassah-talia-carner/](http://www.hadassahmagazine.org/2024/05/30/one-book-one-hadassah-talia-carner/).
- ◆ The American Jewish University will hold the virtual talk “Generations of Shanda with Letty Cottin Pogrebin and Robin Pogrebin” on Thursday, August 15, at 3 pm. They will discuss Letty’s memoir “Shanda: A Memoir of Shame and Secrecy.” For more information or to register, visit [www.aju.edu/events/generations-shanda-letty-cottin-pogrebin-and-robin-pogrebin](http://www.aju.edu/events/generations-shanda-letty-cottin-pogrebin-and-robin-pogrebin).
- ◆ The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research has launched the virtual exhibit “Yitskhok Rudashevski: A Teenager’s Account of Life and Death in the Vilna Ghetto,” the second exhibition of the digitally native YIVO Bruce and Francesca Cernia Slovin Online Museum. It can be found at [museum.yivo.org](http://museum.yivo.org).
- ◆ The Center for Jewish History will hold the virtual program “Family History Today: Researching your Jewish Ancestors in Greater Hungary” on Thursday, August 8, at

5 pm. The cost to attend is “pay what you wish.” Jordan Auslander, a forensic genealogist, will offer information about resources that are available online and in European archives for tracing a family history in Hungary and former Hungarian. For more information or to register, visit <https://programs.cjh.org/tickets/family-history-today-2024-08-08>.  
 For additional resources, see previous issues of The Reporter on its website, [www.thereporter.org/jewish-online-resources](http://www.thereporter.org/jewish-online-resources).

### Moving any time soon? Or just leaving town for a few months?



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# Human Rights Watch finds Hamas guilty of war crimes on Oct. 7

By David Isaac

(JNS) – Human Rights Watch, an NGO better known for its anti-Israel positions, broke form on July 17 to release a report documenting war crimes committed on October 7.

The goal of the report, “Palestinian Armed Groups’ October 7 Assault on Israel,” was to record “the nature and extent” of humanitarian law violations committed by terrorists on that day, in which some 1,200 Israelis, most civilians, were killed and 251 taken hostage.

“Palestinian armed groups committed a widespread attack directed against the civilian population, meeting the definition required for crimes against humanity,” said an HRW spokeswoman in a press briefing on July 15 ahead of the report’s release.

“We have further found that the killing of civilians and taking hostages were all central aims of the planned attack, and not actions that occurred as an afterthought or as a plan gone awry, or as isolated acts, for example, perpetrated by unaffiliated Palestinians from Gaza,” the spokeswoman said.

It found that five terrorist groups took part: Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Fatah-associated Aqsa Martyrs Brigades. Human Rights Watch devoted a lengthy section in the document to its methodology. It said it conducted 144 mostly in-person interviews in Israel in October and November 2023. It interviewed others remotely, including 94 survivors and witnesses from the October 7 assault. It also talked to family members of victims and survivors, Gazans, foreign workers and Arab Israelis, which it referred to in its report as “Palestinian citizens of Israel.”

The NGO also verified more than 280 videos and photographs taken during or just after the October 7 invasion. One of its researchers attended a screening of the 45-minute video that had been compiled by the Israeli government mainly using footage from Hamas GoPro cameras and cellphones.

Human Rights Watch underscored the efforts it made to independently verify material. “To determine the location of each video and photograph, researchers matched landmarks with available satellite imagery, street-level photographs, or other visual material,” the report said. “Where possible, Human Rights Watch used the position of the sun and any resulting shadows visible in videos and photographs to estimate the time the content was recorded at. Researchers also confirmed that each piece of content had not appeared online prior to October 7, using various reverse search image engines,” it added.

HRW said it didn’t make use of interrogation videos of captured terrorists by Israeli authorities, claiming the “inherent unreliability” of such videos. “All prisoners must be treated with dignity and not exposed to public curiosity, and such videos often use or encourage the use of torture or other forms of ill-treatment,” HRW said (*italics in original*).

In the interrogation videos released by the IDF, no signs of torture or physical abuse were evident as the terrorists offered up lurid details of their actions on October 7, including murder and rape.

HRW included Hamas’ response to its summary findings, in which the terrorist group claimed it did not target civilians and blamed Israeli civilian casualties on Gazan civilians who rushed in and other groups not connected to its “military operation.”



Kibbutz Be’eri, as seen on October 25, after the October 7 Hamas terrorist attack. (Photo by Edi Israel/Flash90)

“Human Rights Watch has found that based on the information presented in this report, the Hamas claim that on October 7 its forces did not seek to harm Israeli civilians is false,” the report said.

Given HRW’s history of criticizing Israel, including accusing it of apartheid and war crimes, the issuance of the report has raised suspicion in some quarters of the group’s motives.

Gerald Steinberg, president of NGO Monitor, a Jerusalem-based research institute that keeps tabs on anti-Israel organizations and has for years documented HRW’s bias against Israel, said in response to the report, “This is an obvious example of HRW’s cynical tokenism and political manipulation using the facade of human rights.”

“No one needs HRW to tell us about atrocities that were broadcast live more than nine months ago. This publication adds nothing of substance – instead it exploits the tragedies of the victims and hostages to score a few cheap points through blatantly false ‘balance’ with gullible donors, board members and supporters,” he said.

The report does not suggest a change in

direction for Human Rights Watch, which included in the report’s background section the following statement: Human Rights Watch has found that Israel’s prolonged closure of the Gaza Strip constitutes a form of collective punishment and is part of the crimes against humanity of apartheid and persecution that Israeli authorities are committing against Palestinians.”

And although HRW detailed its high-level verification efforts before accepting Israeli evidence of the October 7 atrocities, it appeared to accept wholesale the casualty numbers put out by Hamas’ Gaza Health Ministry. “Between October 7, 2023, and July 1, 2024, the hostilities resulted in at least 37,900 Palestinians killed, and 87,060 others injured, according to Gaza’s Health Ministry. That figure includes an unreported number of Palestinian armed group fighters,” it said in the background section. “As U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stated in December 2023, ‘International humanitarian law cannot be applied selectively. It is binding on all parties equally at all times, and the obligation to observe it does not depend on reciprocity.’”

## Legacy . . . . . Continued from page 6

with cerebral palsy, so the parents could have an evening out. She treated everyone with dignity and respect, especially those who were often overlooked. One never felt she was doing a good deed, or performing acts of charity. It was easy to accept her kindness, because she gave because she wanted to and because it gave her pleasure. She gave not out of pity, but out of her deep love and caring.

“Our father died with his private lackings,” said the daughter of Tzelafchad. In every life there are wishes, goals and dreams that sadly are not achieved – despite Herculean efforts, courageous actions and good intentions. Some things are not meant to be. And yet, as loving daughters, they ask, “Is he not meant to have a portion in the land of Israel? Is his life not meant to bear the ultimate fruit, is it not meant

to have a lasting impact among his tribe and among his nation?”

Moses brings their plea to God, and the response is, “Yes, they have spoken properly.” Through his daughters’ efforts, their father would have a portion in the land.

All of us who have lost loved ones whose lives bore losses and disappointments can take encouragement from this story. Their lives need not end in a barren desert. Through our love and our concerted efforts to ensure that we live by their inspiration and example, we can claim for them their rightful portion in the land of Israel – an ongoing spiritual legacy that continues to grow and blossom over time.

I love you, Mom. I aspire each day to be like you. May your memory be a blessing for us all.

## Israeli boy finds 1,800-year-old ring on Mount Carmel

By JNS staff

(JNS) – A 13-year-old Israeli out for a hike with his father – who had just returned from four months of military reserve duty – on Mount Carmel uncovered an 1,800-year-old ring engraved with a goddess of war from ancient Roman and Greek mythology, the Israel Antiquities Authority announced on July 17.

Yair Whiteson of Haifa stumbled upon the small green ring while walking near the ancient quarry site that lies below Khirbet Shalala, or the Mishmar HaCarmel Farm. “I’m curious about fossils and rocks and love to collect them,” he recounted in a written statement. “[The ring] was corroded, and at first I thought it was just a rusty bolt. At home, I saw it had an image on it. At first glance, I thought it was a warrior.”

The family contacted an inspector at the IAA’s Theft Prevention Unit, who transferred the ring to the state-run archaeological body’s National Treasures Department for review.

It emerged that the teen’s identification of

the figure as a warrior was very close: The experts said that the figure is, apparently, the Roman goddess Minerva, known as Athena in Greek mythology. On this beautiful ring, preserved in its entirety, is the image of a helmeted naked figure,” said Nir Distelfeld and Eitan Klein of the Theft Prevention Unit. “In one hand she holds a shield, and a spear in the other.”

Minerva was considered to be, among other things, the goddess of war and military strategy, and also of wisdom, according to the IAA. The small ring likely belonged to a woman or girl during the Late Roman Period (2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century C.E.) who lived on a nearby Roman farm. Another possibility is that it was dropped by a quarry worker, or was a burial offering. Either way, it will be displayed to the public this summer at the IAA’s Jerusalem archaeological campus.

As for Whiteson, he received a tour of the archaeology center and a Good Citizenry commendation.

## States . . . . . Continued from page 3

Sharansky’s “three Ds” test: delegitimization, demonization and double standards.

The envoy also cited another Hezbollah attack in Buenos Aires two years before the AMIA bombing, when a suicide bomber drove a truck into the Israeli embassy, killing 29 civilians and wounding 242 others. The AMIA bombing was followed 29 years later “by the October 7 war crimes and crimes against humanity, in which the very same Iran and its very same proxies Hezbollah and Hamas and others continue in their intent to annihilate the state of Israel and Jews around the world,” Cotler-Wunsh said.

She emphasized the importance of the IHRA’s antisemitism definition, which has been adopted by more than a thousand global entities, including more than 40 United Nations member states, since the IHRA adopted the language in 2016.

U.S. Envoy for Combating Antisemitism Deborah Lipstadt in an X post on July 17 called the guidelines a “significant step forward in our collective efforts against antisemitism,” while urging more governments and institutions to “join us in this crucial mission to safeguard Jewish communities and promote a world free from antisemitism.”

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