

THE REPORTER

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Jewish Family Service continues to serve the community

By Reporter staff

Jewish Family Service continues to serve the community through its current programs and by formulating new initiatives. “We are grateful for the community’s support that helps us continue our successful programs,” said Rose Shea, director of Jewish Family Service. “At the same time, we are always looking for new ways to help community members.”

Shea noted, “One successful program is We Remember You. We have 16 persons who are in need of financial assistance and spiritual support during the holidays. That

means not just supplying them with funds to purchase food for holiday meals. We recognize that people may have other difficulties, for example, needing help in order to attend services. We contact the people on our list and help them find transportation to their synagogue if they need it. We also check to see if they face other challenges that might prevent them from celebrating the holiday. Listening to them and understanding their needs is an important part of our work, as is helping them to resolve their challenges. Everyone we help always responds with gratefulness and appreciation that they are

not forgotten by the community.”

JFS continues to help people with housing, utilities, grocery and other personalized needs. “We also network with community agencies to make and enhance community connections so we can help people find resources,” Shea said. “These relationships help our clients receive services and support from other community agencies.”

Because of the changing air quality due to Canadian wildfires, JFS has received an increase in requests for N95 masks. “N95 masks are available at the JFS/Federation office and at the Broome County Health

Department,” Shea said.

Shea noted that JFS begins a new program once she learns of additional ways to help community members. A recent example occurred after JFS learned of Jewish community members who are lonely or homebound and would benefit from home visitors. “JFS is partnering with the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton to establish a list of home visitation volunteers for Jewish community persons who would benefit from visitors,” Shea said. “We hope to have a group of people in place so these
See “JFS” on page 3

TI to hold class on preparing for the High Holidays

Rabbi Micah Friedman, the new rabbi of Temple Israel, will host a learning series throughout the month of August focused on preparing for the High Holidays. The course, titled “Fundamentals and Flairs of Jewish Prayer,” will highlight the core components of Jewish prayer

since antiquity and invite interactive discussion with the hope of deepening people’s experience in services on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, as well as throughout the year.

The course will be free and open to anyone in the community, though donations are

welcome. It will be hosted at Temple Israel and over Zoom on Wednesdays, August 2-30, from 6:30-8pm. For more information, contact Temple Israel at 607-723-7461 or e-mail Friedman at rabbimicahfriedman@gmail.com.

“The core components of Jewish prayer should be seen as spiritual technologies that have their roots in the practices of our

ancient ancestors, and have been sharpened and honed over the course of many generations,” Friedman remarked. “Both those of us who have been going to synagogue for years and those who are newcomers can discover anew the wisdom of Jewish tradition when we look more closely at the *siddur* (regular prayer book) and the *mahzor* (holiday prayer book).”

Federation allocation timeline

To help community members better understand the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton’s allocations process, below is the timeline for organizations to submit their allocation requests. It shows the process that each allocation undergoes and the ability of board members to ask questions before the official vote.

- ◆ June 16: Organizations received their allocation forms.
- ◆ Friday, August 25: Allocation forms are due at the Federation office.
- ◆ Tuesday, August 29: Allocation forms are distributed to the Federation board members.

- ◆ Tuesday, September 12: Deadline for board members to submit questions that will be sent to organizations to answer.
- ◆ Thursday, September 14: Questions are collated and sent to the organizations.
- ◆ Monday, October 9: Organizations’ answers are sent out to board members.
- ◆ Wednesday, October 18: If requested, organizations are asked to give a presentation and answer questions.
- ◆ Wednesday, November 15: The full Federation board meets to decide allocations based on a motion from the Federation Executive Committee.

Statement from JFNA

The Jewish Federations of North America are deeply pained over the growing polarization we have witnessed in Israeli society as a result of the judicial reform process. We are also extremely disappointed that the leaders of the coalition moved ahead with a major element of the reforms without a process of consensus, despite the serious disagreements across Israeli society and the efforts of President [Isaac] Herzog to arrive at a compromise.

Our everlasting love for and commitment to the Jewish state and people of Israel transcend any policy or government action. It is clear that the work of building

our Jewish state continues, and the Jewish Federation system renews and affirms its commitment to this work. We will continue to support the organizations and individuals who are helping to unite Israelis and to build the institutions of civil society that will allow the diverse populations of Israel and global Jewry to live together in peace and harmony and to resolve our differences respectfully.

We urge the coalition leaders to suspend any further unilateral changes to the judicial reforms, and urge all parties to return to negotiations under the auspices of President Herzog.”

Spotlight

First person: Going to Kaplan

By Jonathan Karp

Toward the close of Shabbat in Tel Aviv, as twilight drifts toward dusk, streams of people holding flags and dressed in black tee-shirts converge at the heart of Kaplan Street for what has become a new, weekly ritual. No, they are not a religious sect seeking to draw out the Sabbath to its last sacred second. They are ordinary citizens, some religious but most secular, who gather each week by the tens of thousands to – in their eyes – save their country from a government aiming to crush democracy.

It is a remarkable spectacle, mirrored in cities across Israel – teens, young couples, sometimes with children, bands of army veterans, comrades from one of Israel’s wars, as far back as 1973 or even ‘67, squads of women marching in formation – a great cacophony of voices and slogans periodically punctuated by a unified chant

of “de-mo-crat-ia, de-mo-crat-ia” – democracy! Alternatively, when the visage of a despised government figure is projected onto one of the many giant screens lining the street, an image of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu or Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich or National Security head Itamar Ben-Gvir, the shout morphs into an admonition: “*Busha! Busha! Busha!*” – shame, shame, shame!

I was in Tel Aviv for six weeks starting in mid-May, and I attended every one of the demonstrations during that period. I did so out of a combination of curiosity about, but also solidarity with, this unexpected popular outcry. The protests (*hafganot*) had begun shortly after the late December formation of the current government, headed by Netanyahu, which, with a coalition of ultra-religious parties
See “Kaplan” on page 8



Israelis protested the overhaul the Israeli Supreme Court on a Saturday evening in Tel Aviv. (Photos by Jonathan Karp)



Israelis protested the overhaul the Israeli Supreme Court on a Saturday evening in Tel Aviv. (Photos by Jonathan Karp)

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Jewish Baseball Players

Yentl at the bat, part III: Jewish women and baseball, Rebecca Alpert

BILL SIMONS

In the male-dominated world of baseball, Rebecca Alpert is an outsider. Amongst the first to be ordained at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, Dr. Alpert, professor of religion emerita and former department chairwoman at Temple University, has grappled with questions of Jewish identity. As a married mother of two children, she divorced her husband and came out as a lesbian. In Philadelphia, breaking with her mother's allegiance to the Brooklyn Dodgers, she morphed into a Phillies fan. Historian, public intellectual and social activist, Rabbi Alpert has shared insights about Jewish baseball in her publications and lectures through the years, focusing on the intersection between religion, race, sexuality and sport.

Alpert's 2011 book, "Out of Left Field: Jews and Black Baseball" announced a singular perspective in its title. "Out of left field" is the vernacular for the unexpected and idiosyncratic. The book is about the lesser-known connections between Jews and Black baseball. In this work, Alpert's focus – eschewing triumphal well-trod narratives – is most definitely not on the usual set pieces featuring such

eponymous figures as Hank Greenberg, Sandy Koufax and Jackie Robinson. Instead, she follows the trail of less celebrated, even relatively obscure, protagonists, events and phenomena, including the Black Jewish players of the Belleville Grays. Her tone is analytic rather than exultant.

Coming of age, Alpert heard from her family and Reform temple that the Major League Baseball debut of Jackie Robinson in 1947 represented a validation of American democracy, a victory facilitated by Judaism's commitment to social justice. She later recognized, however, that continued inequality muted Black celebration of Robinson's achievement. As Jews evolved from race to white ethnic group in the national culture, they failed to fully comprehend that anti-Black racism would prove far more intractable than American antisemitism. The common trajectory of Jewish assimilation and economic upward mobility did not prove normative for African Americans. For centuries, restrictions and prejudice had relegated European Jews to circumscribed spheres, sometimes as rent collectors, moneylenders and traders, positioned precariously between

dominant elites and resentful workers. In the United States, numbers of Jewish shopkeepers and landlords appeared to retain attributes of that uncomfortable middleman status in Black neighborhoods. Unfavorable perceptions of the Jewish economic presence in their communities, according to Alpert, impacted the African American view of Jews in Black baseball.

Jews and Blacks viewed their shared baseball experience from sharply different perspectives. Documenting a substantial Jewish presence in Black baseball, Alpert rejects facile generalizations that fail to capture the complexity and nuance of the phenomenon. "Out of Left Field" posits three distinct roles played by the Jewish outsider in Black baseball: players, entrepreneurs and reformers.

As booking agents, promoters, league officials and team owners, Jewish businessmen occupied a central role in Black baseball. Jewish businessmen effectively promoted Black baseball, but their scheduling of barnstorming games ran counter to the establishment of stable Negro Leagues. See "Alpert" on page 5

Opinion

From the Desk of the Federation Executive Director

With gratitude

SHELLEY HUBAL

There is a narrow bend on the Lilly Lake Trail at Chenango Valley State Park where the Pine trees stand like giants, their fallen needles soften the path below. In the summer, the lilies crowd the lake and, on a sunny day, there are lazy turtles sunning themselves on a log that pokes out of the water. Often a breeze comes off the lake and curls up against the hill behind the trail. I have found that if I pay close enough attention, this narrow bend with all its simple

wonder will permeate my loving heart with a lasting peace.

Traditionally, I stop at this point on the trail to close my eyes, fill my lungs and listen to the birds sing. Lately, I daydream about Lilly Lake. I wonder what it is like in the middle of a dark night or under a full moon? At dusk or dawn? Everywhere I go, especially during these turbulent times, I carry Lilly Lake and it reminds me to meditate on the love in my heart. It reminds me that there is a special

spark inside each of us that is God given.

My wish for all of you is that you find your Lilly Lake. Take a moment everyday to just rest and listen. Listen to the silence. Listen to the birds sing. Feel the presence of your loved ones. This is where you will find the peace that will sustain you through life's challenges. I am sending my gratitude to all of you for the love you have given me and the Federation for so many years. *L'shalom.*

In My Own Words

Thoughts on my 50th reunion from high school

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

I didn't go. I also didn't go to any of my prior high school reunions so this really shouldn't be a surprise to anyone who knows me well. My reasons for not going? I am not nostalgic about my teenager years and have no desire to talk to people I haven't seen in 50 years. I had some excellent teachers in high school, so the academic part of that time was fine. But I had only one real friend in high school (actually we became friends in junior high) with whom I've kept in contact throughout the years. I never spent much time thinking about the fact that I didn't go to any prior reunion, so you might wonder why I'm thinking about it now. The answer is easy: Facebook.

The high school friend I mentioned is the person who enticed me to join Facebook. She was planning to share information about her life on Facebook, rather than writing

Printer error with Community Guide

The July 14 issue of *The Reporter* contained some printer errors. The central section of the annual community guide appeared in the wrap, rather than within the guide itself. Also page 13A, which featured the community's two *eruv*s, did not make it into the printed guide. Page 5 of the wrap accidentally appeared on that page instead. The complete guide, including the *eruv*s, can be found at https://cdn.fedweb.org/fed-131/2/bng0714cg_sm.pdf. The complete version of the wrap can be found at https://cdn.fedweb.org/fed-131/2/bng0714wrap_sm.pdf.

e-mails, so I figured if I wanted to still keep in touch this was the way to do it. For some reason, she began searching for people that went to high school with us and became Facebook friends with many of them. Some of those people sent me Facebook friend requests and it felt rude not to accept. I can't say I'm real friends with any of them, even those who live in this area. None of us have suggested getting together for coffee or otherwise meeting in person. Please note that I haven't made any offers in that direction, either, so we all are to blame. I did see one at the funeral of a mutual non-high school friend, but since I was officiating, even if we'd wanted to chat, that wasn't the time or place.

Facebook greatly changed how much I knew about the recent reunion. In the past, it was easy to ignore them: I received an invitation in the mail and sent it to the circular filing cabinet (AKA the garbage can). One reason that was easy is because the big draw of the event was "all the beer you can drink." Since I don't like beer and find talking to people who are drunk boring, that didn't make me eager to attend.

This time, though, I received a Facebook posting and updates about the reunion and how excited people were about it. The posts listed names and showed photos of people I don't remember. Actually, I wasn't surprised: I've had the embarrassment of being contacted on Facebook by someone who is a friend of a mutual friend and who remembered me from high school. What was embarrassing about that? I have no idea who the person is.

One name on the list of those attending did bring up a memory: he and two others who were members with me in the National Honor Society made antisemitic comments at one point during our last year of school. I don't remember

what they said, but I do remember it was one of the few times in my life I actually had a good comeback, something along the lines of, "If I want to say something bad about you, it wouldn't be about your religion." One of them later apologized to me and I've always respected him for that. But I later learned from my one friend that she was the target of antisemitic comments, mostly along the general line of why was she friends with the Jew.

I admit that I probably was not an easy person to like in high school. I was focused on academics and had little traditional school spirit: I never went to any sporting events. I also never understood the social customs of my peers and tended to do my own thing. I can remember one conversation with my friend during which she was telling me I had to do something a particular way (I wish I could remember what the subject was, but it's gone) and I kept asking why because it made no sense to me. Actually, I've had the same thing happen in other times and places since made-up customs (like not wearing white after Labor Day) feel irrelevant to my life. That's one reason I love *The Reporter* staff: they are willing to put up with my idiosyncrasies and don't mind if my ideas are... um, well, let's be polite and just say, unusual.

I recognize that all those from my high school with whom I'm Facebook friends are good people: I can tell that from their posts. Most seem to lead meaningful, enriching lives. I just didn't have the desire to spend an evening attempting to have conversations with people who are basically strangers. From the Facebook photos and notes that were posted after the reunion, it looks like they had a good time. I'm glad that they did, but I still don't regret not attending.



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BINGHAMTON, NY

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

LETTERS

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

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DEADLINE

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

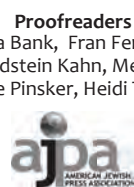
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www.thereporter.org

Federation members cheered on Rumble Ponies



At left: The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton sponsored a Jewish community outing to see the Rumble Ponies baseball game on July 18. Around 20 people attended the event.

OF NOTE

Sussman

Rabbi Lance J. Sussman, former rabbi of the former Temple Beth Endicott and Temple Concord of Binghamton, has published a new book, "Portrait of an American Rabbi: In His Own World." The work consists of a selection of his sermons and essays. The writings chronicle his life as a rabbi and a scholar. Sussman's work seeks to offer insights, inspiration and a historical context to American Judaism at the turn of the 21st century.

Sussman is also rabbi emeritus of Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel and chairman of the Board of Governors of Gratz College.

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to **David Artus** on the death of his mother,
Loretta Artus

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to **Jonathan Burgman** on the death of his mother,
Sylvia Cheyette Burgman

High Court ruling on reform law could trigger constitutional crisis

By Joshua Marks

(JNS) – If Israel's Supreme Court, sitting as the High Court of Justice, strikes down the "reasonableness law" that the Knesset enacted on July 24 it would create an unprecedented constitutional crisis, legal experts tell JNS.

Several Supreme Court justices visiting Germany, including Court President Esther Hayut, cut their trip short and are returning to Jerusalem to study petitions opposition groups filed against the amendment to Basic Law: The Judiciary.

"The court has recognized Basic Laws as constitutional, even those passed without a broad consensus. If it strikes down a Basic Law, especially one dealing with its own jurisdiction, it means the court doesn't get to just interpret the constitution, but also to decide what goes in it," Professor Eugene Kontorovich, director of international law at the Kohelet Policy Forum, told JNS.

On July 24, all 64 members of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's governing coalition voted in favor of the judicial reform legislation. Opposition lawmakers boycotted the third and final vote.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid said he would petition the High Court on July 25. The Movement for Quality Government in Israel, a leading group in the protests against judicial reform, said it has already requested an injunction from the court.

Kontorovich said that striking down the law would give the court "absolute power of a kind unknown in Western democracies and trigger a fundamental constitutional crisis." See "Court" on page 8

DEADLINES

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

ISSUE	DEADLINE
August 11-24.....	August 2
August 25-September 7.....	August 16
September 8-21	August 30
Sept. 22-Oct. 5	September 13

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

New in Books

Kalaniot Books to release two new children's books in August

Kalaniot Books announced that it will release two new children's picture books for fall 2023:

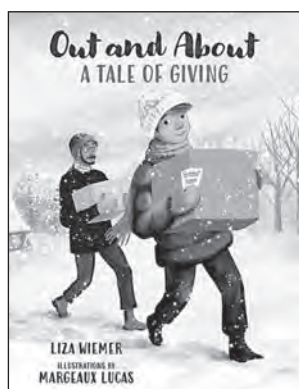
◆ "How to Welcome an Alien" written by Rebecca Klempner and illustrated by Shirley Waisman (Release date: August 1)

Klempner tells the story of what happens when a friendly alien family's spaceship lands in the Abrahams' backyard. The family offers them traditional Jewish hospitality. Based on the biblical idea of welcoming the stranger, it features a humorous approach. There is a note at the end that ties the idea of biblical hospitality to contemporary times.

◆ "Out and About: A Tale About Giving" written by Liza Wiemer and illustrated by Margeaux Lucas (Release date: August 15)

Wiemer and illustrated by Margeaux Lucas (Release date: August 15)

Daniel wonders why his parents frequently leave the house carrying boxes and wonders what is inside them. Rather than the toys he imagines, he learns that his parents are delivering boxes to those in need. This discovery helps Daniel learn the true meaning of giving to others. A note at the end explains the concept of *tzedakah* so that young readers can learn about the Jewish concept.



The cover of "Out and About" (Used with permission of Kalaniot Press)



The cover of "How to Welcome an Alien" (Used with permission of Kalaniot Press)

JFS..... Continued from page 1

community members will know they are not forgotten."

Shea expressed her thanks for the support JFS receives from the community. "JFS could not do its work without the generous support of community members," she said. "On behalf of JFS clients, I'd like to thank the community for all it does to help."

Anyone looking to donate to JFS can write a check and mail it to Jewish Family Service, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850 or make an online donation at www.jfsg.org/local-global-community/jewish-family-service. To contact Shea, call 607-724-2332 or e-mail familyservice@jfsg.org.

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Sunday, August 6th **KIDS EAT FREE SUNDAY** **SENIOR STROLL SUNDAY**
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Off the Shelf

Second chance for fame and love

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

A second chance for fame and love: that is the main premise for two recent novels: "The Bird Has Flown" by Susanna Hoffs (Little, Brown and Company) and "Once More With Feeling" by Elissa Sussman (Dell). Yet, that doesn't adequately describe my reaction to these works because it fails to capture just how funny and entertaining they are. Yes, they have their serious moments, but reading them was like being on vacation.

Readers can assume that Hoffs knows something about rock stardom: the author was a member of the pop rock group The Bangles, which had several top 10 hits. Unfortunately, her 33-year-old heroine Jane Start only had one: her version of a lesser known song by the superstar Jonesy. But that was 10 years ago and before an album filled with her own music bombed. After breaking up with her cheating boyfriend of four years, Jane finds herself living with her parents and looking for work, any work. That includes embarrassing herself by dressing up like she did in the video she made of her one hit – something that makes her cringe now – and singing at a bachelor party in Las Vegas. But Jane's British manager Pippa is still determined that she'll be a success and sends Jane to London so she can write new music.

On the plane, Jane meets Tom Hardy, a professor of literature at Oxford, and is immediately attracted to him. But she wonders if she can trust her emotions since her breakup still hurts. Although she prefers to keep her own past a secret, she worries that Tom is keeping something important from her. Her feelings become even more confused when Jonesy's people approach Pippa about having Jane perform live with him, but the details are so hush-hush

that Jane has no idea what she'll be required to do. Will she be able to find success in love or work, or is she doomed to loneliness and obscurity?

Hoffs does a wonderful job making readers understand how Jane feels when she sings, how she loses herself in the song – something not always easy because she also has stage fright. But while there are wonderful moments about music, the romance outshines them. Although Jane is a bit of a mess at the beginning of the novel, readers will be rooting for her to find her way in music and love.

While Jane was a one-hit wonder, Kathleen Rosenberg, the narrator of "Once More With Feeling," was once a pop superstar under the name of Katee Rose – before her personal life destroyed her career. That information doesn't spoil the plot because the opening pages of the novel quote from a Rolling Stone magazine article that calls what happened #14 in the "Top 100 Music Scandals of the Past 50 Years." Using a similar device to that of her previous novel, "Funny You Should Ask," Sussman alternates sections that take place "Now" and that took place "Then." But readers won't complain because it works beautifully by creating great suspense not only about what is going to happen, but what happened in the past. (To read *The Reporter's* review of "Funny You Should Ask," visit www.thereporter.org/archives/feature/off-the-shelf-searching-for-romance-intellect-vs-emotion.)

While Kathleen's pop star days are long gone, she fortunately has enough money to live comfortably. She does miss performing before an audience and regrets never having fulfilled her dream of becoming a Broadway musical star. That changes when her close friend Harriet's musical

finds backers to showcase the work and, if successful, to bring it to Broadway. Even better, there is a part perfect for Kathleen. In fact, Harriet wrote the part with Kathleen in mind. There is one big problem, though: the director of the musical is Cal Kirby, with whom Kathleen has a history. He is part of the reason her career was destroyed and her anger at him has not lessened over the years. In fact, she wonders if he is only looking to humiliate her a second time. Romantic complications occur as Kathleen and Cal try to find a way to work with each other for the good of their friend and the show.

The "Then" sections of the novel focus on Kathleen's days as Katee Rose and show the ups and downs of being a pop star. Although she loves performing, Kathleen never truly feels like Katee Rose, an artificial persona put together by her manager and staff, who worry more about her public presentation than her desire to perform as her true self. Things are complicated by her romance with Ryan LeNeve, which, at times, feels more like a public relations stunt than true love because the two have few interests in common. When Ryan becomes part of the boy band CrushZone – which also includes Cal as one of its members – life becomes extremely complicated for Kathleen.

"Once More With Feeling" is great fun and the sexual content is hot. Kathleen is an interesting and complex character, who finds it hard to admit her own mistakes publicly, but takes them to heart personally. The portrayal of Kathleen and Harriet's friendship is also well done. The characters' love of music, song and theater shines clearly, making this is a real treat for rom-com fans who also love music and Broadway.



Off the Shelf

Finding meaning while wandering

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Essays that combine the personal with the political: that would be a good description of S. L. Wisenberg's "The Wandering Womb: Essays in Search of Home" (University of Massachusetts Press). Her essays serve as an exploration of her identity as a Jew, woman and American. However, she doesn't limit herself to any one perspective, so her point of view depends on the lense through which she is looking.

Although Wisenberg grew up in Texas with parents who were born in the U.S., she was still influenced by previous generations who'd emigrated to the U.S. from Europe. In "Grandma Russia/Selma," she notes that, at times, she writes as if their history was hers personally: "I say that *we* left the Russian empire. It sounds like I was there, back in the dusty or muddy wooden shtetl with its chickens scratching, and potatoes and onions waiting in the cellar, then on the ship with its smells, ploughing through the Atlantic. But the Russian empire lived and died before I was born." Her connection to her ancestors' past and the evils done to them in Europe makes it possible for her to appreciate how the Black population of the U.S. feels about slavery, something she discusses in part two of the essay. Wisenberg writes of the Confederate museums she visits in Selma, where a man talked about the traumas suffered by Southern whites during the Civil War, while ignoring the trauma those who were slaves faced. But the author notes that less than mile away is the Slavery and Civil War Museum, which offers a very different view, focusing on the horrific journey slaves experienced on their way to the Americas. Wisenberg does an excellent job showing how both Jews and Blacks have experienced the U.S. differently than white Christians.

Several essays speak to the fact that Wisenberg has been dealing with severe asthma since she was young. "Notes on Camp" explains how the author came to believe nature is dangerous. Readers won't blame her for saying that she didn't understand the appeal of summer camps because she experienced illness and discomfort, including being forced to leave camp due to health issues. In "The Jew in the Body," Wisenberg discusses the psychological problems caused by her asthma: she experiences "a voice from my body, a silent voice inside my body, since always, telling me, *you do not deserve to live*," partly because she would never have survived the Holocaust. At times, that voice threatens to take over her life and it's difficult for her to remember all the good things – "the miracles: of light, of food, of wine. Of good company. The pleasures of the body... words [that] can save me" – she has in her life.

The Holocaust and Jewish persecution in Europe also play a major role in Wisenberg's thoughts. She expresses her disappointment about not experiencing strong feelings during her visit to a concentration camp in "Auschwitz: Like the Back of His Hand." She notes that the visit "felt like a class field trip. It felt like a failure of imagination, projection. It was not as vivid as a book. There were no people there, only tourists." She also thinks that the wrong people are visiting: "We are not the people who need to visit Auschwitz. It should be deniers. But they stay home." She

also writes of family members who made it out of Europe before the war ("Luck in the Valley") and of their buried Jewish past in Poland ("In Wroclaw, Formerly Breslau").

Many of the essays focus on Wisenberg's personal life, whether looking for a Halloween party ("Halloween, Chicago") or traveling with a friend ("Separate Vacations"). She discusses working for a newspaper in Florida before moving to Chicago in "South Florida, Before." Her problems with some Jewish practices are offered in "Mikvah: That Which Will Not Stay Submerged." One of the strongest essays in the book is "The Ambivalence of the One-Breasted Feminist," in which she writes about her experience with breast cancer and her decision not to have reconstructive surgery. Wisenberg questions her reasons for not doing so, wondering whether she wants people to notice her body in its new state or ignore it. She also ponders if the desire to be noticed is something that connects to her life as a writer.

This review only covered a few of the topics discussed in the 28 essays found in "The Wandering Womb." The works do not appear in chronological order, although clues are offered about which time period Wisenberg is writing. Most of these essays jump from one thought to another, rather than offering a cohesive narrative. Sometimes, this offers readers a wild ride through the subject, although, at other times, it can be difficult to understand the connections between sections. However, all the essays are all well written and consistently interesting.

Study shows dogs aid kids' reading

By Naama Barak

(ISRAEL 21c) – Practicing their reading is probably not on the top of any fourth-grader's to-do list. But when you add a cute dog or two to the task, it becomes much more enjoyable and, according to the findings of a recent study, more effective.

"Studies show that reading fluently is key to a child's learning process and independent learning, and that it helps them integrate into society, not to mention the social and emotional aspects of reading and the self-fulfillment that it provides," explains Shirley Har-Zvi, head of the special-education track and senior lecturer at the Talpilot College of Education in Holon.

"We sought to find an original way that would motivate students to want to practice their reading," she adds. "And to create that motivation, we decided to use dogs."

In the study, which was led by master's student Ortal Levi, a teacher herself, and supervised by Har-Zvi, 29 fourth-graders from a school in central Israel were divided into two groups that were instructed to dedicate time and effort to 10 reading sessions. Children from one group read out loud to themselves, while the kids from the other group read out loud to their four-legged friends.

The results, Har-Zvi says, were conclusive. "Both groups improved immensely, but the group that read out loud to the dogs significantly improved in terms of reading accuracy. We assume that if we'd conduct the same study on a

group for a longer period, then maybe there'd also be an impact on reading speed and not only accuracy," she says.

"Lots of children today have more reading difficulties because they didn't go through second and third grade because of Covid," she notes. "They didn't have the chance to practice reading, and that's why we're seeing a lot of children with reading difficulties. This program, which worked on reading fluency, really helped them advance."

The dogs that accompanied the study were made available by Ita Merla, a veteran teacher who works at the school where it was conducted. She also specializes in animal therapy and training. "When people hear about this, they're a bit skeptical and ask, 'Well, wouldn't children also improve if they read out to a friend? Or to their parents or teacher?'"

"The answer to that is yes, they would improve if they'd read out to friends, parents or teachers, but the problem is that they don't, for a variety of reasons. Children are very busy with a lot of other things, and parents are also far less available nowadays. Not to mention that children worry about being judged and criticized – something they won't get from dogs," she explains.

Merla notes that even when children are given dedicated reading slots at school, there's no guarantee that they'd actually use it to read. "Kids can hold the book open, but they don't necessarily end up reading. They might stare at it, or daydream – you can't technically force them to read. See "Kids" on page 8

Want to stay in the know?



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THE
REPORTER

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 “Tour Global Jewish Life: Amsterdam” on Thursday, August 10, from 3-4 pm. The cost to attend is \$21. The tour will look at Amsterdam’s Jewish community today and its Jewish past from the 17th century. For more information or to register, visit <https://maven.aju.edu/events-classes/program/tour-global-jewish-life-amsterdam>.

◆ The Lower East Side Jewish Conservancy will hold the virtual program “Super Funny Jewish Men” on Thursday, September 7, from 7-8:30 pm. The discussion will include comedians from vaudeville, radio, the Borscht Belt and nightclubs through TV, records, movies and beyond. For more information or to register, visit www.nycjewishtours.org/event-log/funny-Jewish-men-zoom-talk.

◆ Uri L’Tzedek, Orthodox Social Justice, will hold the virtual talk “Zealotry: Too Much of a Good Thing?” with Rabbi Zach Truboff on Wednesday, September 6, at 2 pm. “This class will draw upon rabbinic texts, modern Jewish thought and psychoanalysis to help us better understand zealotry’s profound dangers and why, nevertheless, it remains a necessary part of religious life.” For more information or to register, visit https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/WN_p5nLpopfQeytayIkPi5Wzw#/registration.

◆ Maven will hold several free virtual events in August: “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>); “Saving Freud From Hitler’s Third Reich” on Tuesday, August 15, from 3-3:45 pm (<https://maven.aju.edu/events-classes/program/saving-freud-from-hitlers-third-reich>); “Torah Teachings for Jewish Grandparents of Interfaith Families” on Wednesday, August 23, from 3-3:45 pm (<https://maven.aju.edu/events-classes/program/torah-teachings-for-jewish-grandparents-of-interfaith-families>); and “Star Crossed: A True Romeo and Juliet Story in Hitler’s Paris” on Thursday, August 24, from 3-3:45 pm (<https://maven.aju.edu/events-classes/program/star-crossed-a-true-romeo-and-juliet-story-in-hitlers-paris>).

◆ The Jewish Grandparent Network will hold the virtual talk “How to Talk with Grandchildren About Death and Dying” on Tuesday, September 12, from 7-8 pm. The talk will “discuss ways to have developmentally appropriate conversations with children of all ages about preparing for a loved one’s long-term illness or the dying and death of any living being we care about.” Questions can be e-mailed in advance. For more information or to register, visit https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/3bXu-GluKgKkgx7SjBrRUOg.

◆ The Forward will hold the virtual program “What did our great-grandparents eat for breakfast? Exploring the See “Resources” on page 7

Alpert.

With little commitment to ending Jim Crow baseball, they recognized that integration would ultimately destroy their income from Black baseball. Nonetheless, Alpert acknowledges Jewish reformers who supported the racial integration of baseball, including slugger turned General Manager Hank Greenberg, *Daily Worker* sportswriters, Pittsburgh Pirates owner William Benswanger and Boston City Councilman Isadore Muchnick.

From other platforms, Alpert has given attention to Jewish ballplayers. Taking a somewhat contrarian stand, she argues that the decision of Detroit Tiger slugger Hank Greenberg to play on Rosh Hashanah amidst the 1934 American League pennant race was as important as his observance of Yom Kippur: “If he hadn’t played, I think there probably would have been a lot of antisemitism that rained down.” Intellectually assertive, Alpert takes issue with those who downplay the significance of Sandy Koufax giving Yom Kippur priority over pitching game one of the 1965 World Series as compared to a similar decision by Greenberg 30 years before during a time of more virulent antisemitism: “[W]hen you talk to a generation of Jewish men who grew up during the [Koufax] period, it mattered a lot. Jews... were seen at the time as not very masculine,

as weak figures.” In her baseball writing, as in other areas of her personal and professional life, Alpert reflects choices of a Jewish woman of her generation.

Rebecca Alpert, Jane Leavy and Aviva Kempner possess the gifts to take the story of Jewish women and baseball to the next level. Thus far, the monumental baseball work of the three has focused on men despite the notable non-baseball work of Jewish women and Alpert’s brief piece on Tiby Eisen. A Leavy biography would bring the achievements and significance of Eisen the recognition it merits. An All-American Girls Professional Baseball League outfielder and manager, Eisen stole 674 bases, the second highest total in the circuit’s history. In her ninth decade, the indomitable Eisen was still running youth baseball clinics.

Paralleling her treatment of the intersection of Jews and Black baseball, Alpert might illuminate the neglected connections between Jewish women and the game. Employing case studies, she could introduce a diverse range of neglected endeavors. Numerous topical possibilities beckon, including baseball maven, self-promoter and actress Helen Dauvray; New York Female Giants team organizer and pitcher Ida Schnall; All-American Girls Professional Baseball League stalwarts Blanche Schachter and Anita

Foss; and New York Yankees color commentator Suzyn Waldman. An Alpert venture might examine the long and evolving participation of Jewish women in baseball as players, fans, family enablers, writers, broadcasters and filmmakers, from settlement houses and summer camps to professional leagues.

A Kempner documentary on pitcher, coach and promoter Justine Siegal would engage Jewish girls, inspiring pursuit of their dreams. Surmounting scorn and derision, Siegal – armed with determination, ability and a Ph.D. – was the first woman to pitch batting practice to a major league team and serve as an instructional league coach within a major league organization. Founder of Baseball for All, Siegal asks, “If you tell a girl she can’t play baseball, what else will she think she can’t do?”

With Yentl at the bat, it is time for Alpert, Leavy and Kempner to chronicle the journey of Jewish women out of the bleachers.

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.

Continued from page 2



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Weekly Parasha

Vaetchanan, Deuteronomy 3:23-7:11

What happens to a dream deferred?

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

Parashat Vaetchanan opens with Moses describing his impassioned plea for God to allow him to enter the land of Israel. God has already told Moses his desire would be denied because he hit the rock rather than speaking to it to bring forth water for the people. Yet Moses does not simply accept God's decree, but prays repeatedly to God to reverse His decision. Vaetchanan implies both pleading, as well as a request to find favor, for God to "gift" him his desire as it were.

We might ask why he prayed at all once God announced his decision. This is the essential dilemma of prayer that is at the heart of every prayer. For if God is kind and just, and He knows what is best for us and what we deserve, of what use is prayer at all?

Prayer is effective because through the very process of prayer, we become different people – more sensitive, more attuned to the spiritual and, thereby, more worthy. From this

perspective, prayer works because the very act of prayer changes us. At the same time, the process of reflection that is inherent to prayer makes us more aware of our human frailty and that we are in no position to demand anything; it makes us aware that we are already the beneficiaries of far more than we deserve. From that perspective, we ask God to give us what we ask not because He owes it us, but simply because in His merciful kindness, He can.

God's response to Moses also contains a double message. "*Rav lach*," he says. "That's a lot for you." A lot of praying, begging, asking again and again. Enough is enough. Sometimes, it is time to accept reality and to know that certain things are not meant to be – at least not right now. Sometimes, you need to trust the process, accept God's judgment and let it go. But "*rav lach*" also signals to Moses that "there's a lot for you" stored away and waiting for the proper moment in the future. God is telling Moses his

prayers are not wasted or ignored. God sees his heart, his inner growth and his cries are not unheard. Ultimately, when the right moment has come, they will achieve their goal.

When there is some objective that we care about deeply, like Moses, we, too, are both pleaders and dreamers. We invest a huge amount of work into raising our children, striving to help them reach their potential – and we also realize that we can only do so much for them – and that part of their thriving is a God-given gift. We invest in our communities, trying to ensure that all its members are cared for, and yet, it is not in our power to avert every crisis, to soothe every broken heart, or to meet every pressing need.

And sometimes God's response is "*rav lach*." Enough. As a people, we have endured disappointment, tragedy and calamity on both personal and national scales. We cannot fathom the mind of God. Like Moses, we will not enter that land.

See "**Dream**" 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 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 28: At 7:30 pm, Shabbat services led by Rachel, Sophie and Charlotte Coker. 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/.

Saturday, July 29: At 10:45 am, 11 am and 11:15 am – Kilmer Mansion is part of the Trolley Tasting Tour. The Kilmer, Phelps and Roberson mansions will be open for guided tours that include taste testing local fare. The event is \$45 a person, and advanced registration is required, as each tour is limited to 25 participants, who must be 21 or older to attend. For more information or to reserve a spot, visit <https://fareharbor.com/embeds/book/phelpsmansionmuseum/items/469687/calendar/2023/07/?flow=no&full-items=yes>.

Sunday, July 30: From 11 am-2 pm, a Kilmer Mansion "Tea Blend and Taste Event." Attendees will learn about tea and be able to make their own tea blend. Tickets are \$35. For more information or to register, visit <https://friendsofkilermansion-bloom.kindful.com/e/tea-blend-taste-workshop-vol-1>.

Friday, August 4: At 7:30 pm, Shabbat services led by Shari and Rob Neuberger. 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/.

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: fertigg@roadrunner.com
Contact: Guilia Greenberg, 373-5087
Purpose: To maintain a Jewish identity and meet the needs of the Jewish community in the area.
Adult Ed.: Shabbat study sessions are held on designated Saturday mornings at 10 am. Call ahead, text or e-mail to confirm dates.

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.

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.

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 28, light candles before 8:09 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, July 29 9:08 pm
Friday, August 4, light candles before 8:01 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, August 5 9 pm
Friday, August 11, light candles before 7:52 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, August 12 8:51 pm

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 29, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person (masks are required for unvaccinated participants). The Torah portion is Deuteronomy 3:23-7:11 and the haftarah is Isaiah 40:1-26. At 9:45 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom.

On Saturday, August 5, 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 7:12-11:25 and the haftarah is Isaiah 49:14-51:3. There will be a kiddush honoring Rabbi Micah Friedman following services. At 9:15 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom.

On Monday-Tuesday, August 7-8, office hours will be 2-4 pm.

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.

Jewish Community Center

FUN IN THE SUN AT CAMP JCC



Camp JCC held its first ruach circle to start the summer off on July 3.



Above, left and right: Camp JCC campers played wiffle ball outside, while others enjoyed indoor athletic activities.



Children were ready for a swim lesson during week two of Camp JCC.



Campers played gaga ball at Camp JCC.



The first week of camp ended with a party and games. (Names of all campers withheld)

Resources Continued from page 5

food traditions of our East European Jewish heritage” on Monday, August 7, at noon. Rukhl Schaechter, Eve Jochowitz, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Joe Baur will discuss the food culture of that time. For more information or to register, visit <https://forward.com/events/what-did-our-great-grandparents-eat-for-breakfast/>.

◆ The Biblical Archaeology Society will hold a hybrid version of its “26th Annual Fall Bible and Archaeology Fest” from November 17-19. There will be 18 lectures over the course of the three days and a question-and-answer plenary with Jodi Magness speaking on “The Ancient Synagogue at Huqoq.” For more information or to register, visit www.biblicalarchaeology.org/travel-study/26th-annual-bible-and-archaeology-fest/.

◆ The Lower East Side Jewish Conservancy will hold “A Virtual Tour of Jewish Krakow – Part 1: The Golden Age” on Tuesday, September 19, from 7-8:30 pm. The cost to attend is \$10. The tour will focus on Krakow’s old Jewish quarter Kazimierz. A second tour will be held in October, but each can be taken separately. For more information or to register, visit www.nycjewishtours.org/event-log/jewish-krakow-zoom.

◆ The Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies is accepting registration for its online winter 2024 program “In the Image of God: Exploring What Makes Us Uniquely Human,” which will take place Sunday-Tuesday, January 14-16. There is a sliding scale cost for the program. The program will look at biblical, rabbinic and modern Jewish texts. For more information or to register, visit www.pardes.org.il/pardes-learning-seminar/.

◆ The Tikvah Fund is holding the virtual course “How Jews and Jewish ideas were at the heart of the American founding” with Rabbi Meir Soloveichik. The eight lectures, which are already available online, look at the Jews who influenced America’s early leaders and how Jewish ideas informed the American intellectual debate. For more information, visit <https://founders.tikvahfund.org/>.

◆ Dayenu, a Jewish Call to Climate Action and the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism will hold “Jewish Rally for Climate Pollution Solutions” on Monday, July 31, at 8 pm. The event will be a “virtual rally to sing, study and take action for climate pollution solutions.” For more information or to register, visit <https://dayenu.org/climatepollution/>.

◆ The Florence Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning will hold the virtual event “A Paradoxical Powerhouse: The Rise of Haredi Feminism in Israel” on Thursday, September 21, from 1-2 pm. For more information or to register, visit

<https://marketplace.jewishtogether.org/event/1703>.

◆ Rabbi Jill Zimmerman is offering a “Return: 30 Days of Reflection” workbook as a PDF that can be downloaded for \$18. The workbook offers questions for each day of Elul. For more information or to purchase, visit <https://ravjill.com/return-2023/>.

◆ The Institute for Jewish Spirituality will hold the virtual course “The Shofar Project: Getting Real for the New Year” with live sessions on Tuesday, August 15-September 12, from 8-9 pm. E-mails featuring Jewish mindfulness practices, questions for reflection and journaling, and supplemental materials such as poetry and music, will be sent out on the Sunday before each session. There will also be an optional online discussion group. For more information or to register, visit www.jewishspirituality.org/go-deeper/the-shofar-project-getting-real-for-the-new-year/.

For additional resources, see previous issues of The Reporter on its website, www.thereporter.org/streams/miscellaneous-features/miscellaneous-features/tag/80309?

Dream Continued from page 6

And yet, “*rav lach*.” There is plenty for you if you keep the long view. The Jewish story is a profoundly optimistic one – culminating in the Messianic era. One day, we will be able to overcome evil and injustice, sadness and loss, tragedy and destruction. Even if you do not achieve your dream today, the dream was not in vain.

Perhaps that is why Vaetchanan is always read on Shabbat Nachamu (Shabbat of Consolation) the Shabbat after Tisha B’Av, our national day of mourning, the saddest day of the Jewish year. On Tisha B’Av, we mourn for all that has been lost, all that could have been, everything that we wish for ourselves, for our people and for our world that has not yet been realized.

Yet, even in the face of disappointment, we must remember that our prayers have the capacity to effect change. Even when we do not receive an immediate response, the act of prayer molds our hearts, strengthens our resolve and aligns us with a higher purpose. Through prayer, we tap into the wellspring of hope, resilience and transformative energy that resides within each of us.

When we read this *parasha* on Shabbat Nachamu, we are reminded that the story is not yet over. So long as we take the time to dream wisely, to know our vision for a better future, to pray, to plead, to fight for that change – we can be assured that our efforts will one day bear plenty of fruit and our dreams will yet come to be.

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

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- 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



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Court Continued from page 3

Avi Bell, a professor of law at Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan and the University of San Diego, told JNS that Israel is already in the middle of a constitutional crisis because the court has acted without legal restraint. He said any attempt to invalidate the “reasonableness law” would be illegitimate. “There is no power that the court has in law to strike down an amendment to a Basic Law. There is no statutory basis for the court doing so,” Bell said.

“However, the court has invented such a power outside the law. It said that it can strike down laws because it doesn’t like the procedure by which they were adopted and it has said that it can strike down laws that it feels have a political

purpose. It has said that it can strike down laws because it feels that they are contrary to invisible and unarticulated principles that they [the judges] identify as the core of the Israeli system,” the professor continued. “In other words, the court has given itself an unlimited extra-legal power to strike down laws which it could use here.”

The amendment to Basic Law: The Judiciary bars “reasonableness” as a justification for judges to reverse decisions made by the Cabinet, ministers and “other elected officials as set by law.”

Aeyal Gross, a professor of international and constitutional law at Tel Aviv University, told JNS that while in his view the petitions have merit, the court could decide to wait for a specific case involving the new law instead of deciding to strike it down right away. This would involve the use of the “ripeness” doctrine that the law is too new to make a decision on its constitutionality. “And even then when specific cases come the court may use other administrative law doctrines such as good faith, fairness, etc., rather than say this law prevents judicial review,” Gross added.

However, if the court does decide to strike down the law, the onus is on the government, Gross said. “If the government respects [the court’s decision] it will just go out of the law books. Of course, they may try to re-legislate another version. If the government does not respect this – which I hope would not happen – this would lead to a constitutional crisis,” Gross said.

For Kontorovich, from the think tank that spearheaded the Netanyahu coalition’s judicial reform initiative, the “correct and democratic approach” to reversing the “reasonableness law” is for the next government to repeal it with enough votes in the Knesset, something that National Unity Party leader Benny Gantz indicated would happen.

Should the court strike down the law, it would mark the first time that the judicial branch has invalidated an amendment to one of Israel’s Basic Laws, which act as a sort of de facto constitution in the absence of such a document.

“The question on everyone’s mind is if the coalition

government would respect that kind of ruling by the Supreme Court. It is difficult to say – we have never been in that kind of extreme situation where the coalition does not respect a ruling by the Supreme Court on such a major constitutional issue,” said Guy Lurie, a research fellow at the Israel Democracy Institute.

“If that will be the case then we will be in what is called a constitutional crisis, a disagreement as to the powers of whom to obey, and I very much hope that it will not come to such a crisis,” he said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Real Madrid opens Jerusalem soccer clinic

Spanish superclub Real Madrid opened its youth training camp in Jerusalem on July 24, welcoming teenage soccer players from Israel, Morocco, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority. The children of personnel at foreign missions in Israel will also participate. The third edition of the training clinic, held at the initiative of Israel’s Ministry of Regional Cooperation, will allow more than 450 children to benefit from the advanced training methods of one of the biggest soccer clubs in the world while at the same time helping to connect cultures and nations. The camp will be held at the training grounds in Jerusalem’s Katmonim and Sheikh Jarrah neighborhoods and will run through August 18. The focus will be on developing skills and playing abilities, alongside the implementation of advanced training methods to stimulate and motivate the children, instilling common values and forming and creating a common language through sports. This year, too, Real Madrid’s people will follow the “outstanding talents,” who may get an opportunity to continue developing within the club’s training infrastructure.

Kids Continued from page 4

But with the dogs they’re really motivated to do it, even the kids who didn’t initially want to,” she says.

“The dogs provide the motivation and never-ending excitement, and this has results, which I’m happy also came through in the study. The dogs provide the children with a non-judgmental environment, and they sit calmly and attentively next to the children while they read out loud – and there’s no one to laugh at you or correct you,” Merla adds. “They exercise self-criticism when they read out loud, and are able to fix their own mistakes, without worrying about keeping up with anyone else’s pace.”

Moreover, she notes, “Children who you couldn’t get to read, however creatively you tried, have become reading champs.”

She was also surprised that even children who already read well wanted to read out loud to the dogs. “In the study, there was a group that read to the dogs and a control group. When the study ended, we let the control group read to the dogs as well,” she tells ISRAEL21c.

“There’s something about animals, and dogs in particular, that is very accepting of children. This feeling that they give them – that they’re loved and accepted as they are – it comes through.”

Kaplan Continued from page 1

and far right extremists, soon announced its intention to overhaul the Israeli Supreme Court. Neutering the Court, many feared, would free the government to do whatever it pleased: arbitrary, limitless power.

Exultant, if not exactly celebratory, the demonstrations have become more or less obligatory for politically conscious Israelis. Restaurants, bars and concerts are out; Saturday night is reserved for the *hafganah*. Back in May, when the country’s imagination was momentarily captured by the appearance of Yulia, a monk seal that had chosen the waters off of Tel Aviv’s Banana Beach as a favorite sunbathing spot, a cartoon in the newspaper *Haaretz* depicted her being casually asked, “Nu, are you going to Kaplan?”

Still the size, fervor and persistence of the demonstrations has surprised many observers who assumed that the Israeli electorate was totally demoralized by the seemingly endless string of bruising elections and failed coalition governments. And still today many Israelis on the left and center will tell you the situation is hopeless, that they are vastly outnumbered and that the demographics favor the right in league with the expanding ultra-Orthodox. Yet despite their professed pessimism, the protesters keep on turning out.

And though mostly peaceful, the protests are actually surprisingly militant, with speakers – including former prime ministers and retired generals – calling for mass resistance,

general strikes, even “revolution” if the government persists in its plans. It is as if the vaunted “start-up nation,” land of cocksure entrepreneurs and techie-hipsters, had absorbed the spirit of the Paris Commune of 1870, with proletarian masses preparing to seize the means of production and drive the bourgeoisie from power.

But in truth, there appears very little economic or class-based in these displays. Perhaps most surprising in our jaded times, the protesters affirm with unabashed earnestness the sacredness of liberal values: freedom, independence and democracy. As you proceed down Kaplan Street toward the heart of the protest, you can hear a crackling recording of David Ben-Gurion’s historic recitation of the Israeli Declaration of Independence played in a perpetual loop: “The state of Israel . . . will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture.” The words are even projected in giant Hebrew letters onto the wall of a nearby building.

As I ambled down the street, slowly enveloped in the thickening throng, I found myself suddenly at a table laden with signs and shirts denouncing not just the government’s “judicial coup,” but the now 56-year-long occupation of lands conquered in the 1967 war. I thought I recognized the woman dispensing the merchandise. “Aviva, is it you?”

“Yonatan!,” she responded, “you are here? But why didn’t you call us?” She was an old friend, though one I hadn’t seen for several years, since before the COVID pandemic. The spouse of a close academic colleague, she is a longtime activist with the volunteer organization Machsom Watch, comprised of Israeli women who monitor the military checkpoints to witness and document mistreatment of Palestinians entering Israel for work or family visits. It seemed astonishing that amidst this chaotic throng of protesters I would suddenly experience such a happy personal reunion.

There is no consensus among the protesters, let alone in the broader Israeli public, over the proper status of the territories, on which millions of Arabs live both directly and indirectly under Israeli rule. The current government certainly includes elements that aim to absorb the West Bank into a “Greater Israel,” while permanently subordinating if not ultimately “transferring” the Palestinian population.

Over the course of my visit extremist settler marauders, many of them key constituents of the governing coalition, launched repeated violent rampages against West Bank Palestinian villages. Various speakers at the demonstrations labeled these outrages literally “pogroms” whose perpetrators had darkly stained the reputation of the Jewish people. True, most of the organizers do not want to divide the opposition by entangling it with the divisive topic of occupation. But for some protesters the issues are inseparable. Their signs read “*eyn demokratiya ‘im kibush*” (“democracy and occupation cannot co-exist”) or “*shataknu la-kibush, kibalnu diktatura*” (“we were silent over the occupation, and so got dictatorship”).

As an American, I felt exhilarated, but also oddly disoriented, amidst this remarkable display of patriotic dissidence. These democracy protests seem to uncannily echo the democratic and egalitarian values professed in the American creed, ones so heartily absorbed by American Jews, but now also under threat from dark forces in the United States. The other side, the side of extremism, will not desist or simply fade away. It has to be fought. The Israelis are showing us how.

Jonathan Karp is a professor in the Judaic Studies and History Departments of Binghamton University and is the undergraduate director of Judaic Studies.



Israelis protested the overhaul the Israeli Supreme Court on a Saturday evening in Tel Aviv. (Photos by Jonathan Karp)

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