

THE REPORTER

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Super Sunday on Sept. 8 to feature talk on “Israel’s multi-culture”

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton will hold the kick-off of Campaign 2025 on Super Sunday, September 8, at 10 am, at the Jewish Community Center, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal. The event will include a brunch and talk by author Joan Leegant called “Israel’s multi-culture: it’s not just the Ashkenazim and Sephardim anymore—and never was.” Attendees will have the opportunity to make their pledge for Campaign 2025 if they have not already done so. The brunch is free due to the generous support of the David and Virginia Eisenberg fund.

Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation, noted that the slogan for Campaign 2025 – “This Year It’s Different” – reflects how many people in the community and the world are feeling. “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.”

Leegant will speak about Israel as a multi-cultural nation and the process of writing about Israel as an American. “Who are Israelis today?”

Leegant noted in an e-mail interview. “They’re Filipino caretakers, Thai farm workers, African refugees and asylum seekers, along with Druze, Bedouins, Russians, Arabs and Jews from across the Middle East.” She plans to discuss “who are they, how they are (or aren’t) part of Israeli life, and how they’ve been affected by October 7,” in addition to speaking about her writing. She added that the events of October 7 “have also provided a window into the diverse



This year it's different.

“Do a mitzvah – pledge now”

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton has kicked off Campaign 2025 with an emphasis on pledging early. Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation, has urged community members to make their pledge before Super Sunday, September 8. Campaign letters will be sent to donors ahead of Super Sunday to encourage early pledging. People can also use the form on page 9 of this issue of *The Reporter* and mail it to the Federation at 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850; call

the Federation office at 607-724-2332; e-mail Hubal at director@jfgb.org; or visit www.jfgb.org.

“We hope everyone will send in the letter with their pledge or make their pledge early by one of the other easy-to-use methods,” said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. “That helps to cut back on the manpower we need to get through the Campaign and reduces the burden on our volunteers. When the community pledges early, the allocation process is also much easier. Do a mitzvah and pledge now!”

Holocaust memorial service set for Oct. 6

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton will hold a memorial service at the Holocaust Memorial Monument in the Temple Israel Cemetery, on Conklin Avenue in Conklin, on Sunday, October 6, at 10 am. The service will be led by area rabbis. Stephen Herz will speak at the event. The monument was one of the first memorial stones in the United States to acknowledge the Holocaust.

“We are pleased to be able to hold this important event again this year,” said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. “We not only remember those who lost their lives in the Holocaust, but honor those who developed, created and sustained this important community memorial.”

The monument was the project of the Get Together Club, which was a social and philanthropic group formed in 1948 by 13 German-speaking Jewish women. The women were the wives of cattle dealers who had resettled in the Southern Tier after fleeing Nazism. The decision to raise a memorial stone occurred after a member’s husband wished he had a place to say *Kaddish* for his parents, who, since they had died in the Holocaust, had no grave he could visit. The club raised the necessary funds for the stone. The names of more than 250 individuals who died in the Holocaust and had no grave were placed in a copper box, which was buried at the foot of the monument. The inscription on the stone says, “Victims of Racial Persecution who lost Their Lives in Europe During the Years 1933-1945. They Will Never Be Forgotten.”

The first ceremony took place on Sunday, November 9, 1952, and continued for 20 years. Then, after Professor Rhonda



The Holocaust Memorial in the Temple Israel Cemetery

Levine spoke about the Get Together Club at the Federation’s Super Sunday in 2015, it was decided to resume the ceremony, holding it between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur each year.

“I want to thank our local clergy for supporting the memorial program,” said Hubal. “I hope you will join us for what is always a moving event. It’s important that we never forget the lives lost in the Holocaust.”

makeup of Israeli society, which I’m keenly interested in.” (For an interview of Leegant, visit www.thereporter.org/local-news/leegant-discusses-writing-and-israel.)

People are encouraged to make their 2025 pledge at the brunch, if they have not already made it. If community members would like to make their pledge ahead of the kick-off event, they can call the Federation office at 607-724-2332. Making pledges and donations in advance of the allocation process in mid-November will help the Federation know what funds are available to be distributed and will save time for the volunteers that make Campaign calls.

The money raised during the Campaign will then be allocated to local organizations. “The Federation does many things behind the scenes to help all of our local Jewish organizations to be their best,” said Hubal. “When you support the Federation, you support the entire Jewish community. With your generous donations, we ensure there are quality, engaging Jewish programs for community member of all ages, support for our neighbors in need and an enduring local Jewish infrastructure.”

Hubal added, “Join us to see old friends, meet new ones and listen to what is certain to be a fascinating talk!”

Film Fest announces its 2024-25 season

By Reporter staff

The Binghamton Jewish Film Fest will feature six films in its 2024-25 season:

- ◆ November: “Martha Liebermann: A Stolen Life” (The film will be viewed online and a Zoom discussion will take place on Sunday, November 10)
- ◆ December: “All About the Levkoviches” (The film will be viewed online and a Zoom discussion will take place on Sunday, December 8)
- ◆ January: “Golden Voices” (The film will be viewed online and a Zoom discussion will take place on Sunday, January 26)
- ◆ February: “Shoshana” (The film will be viewed online and a Zoom discussion will take place on Sunday, February 9)
- ◆ March: “Kidnapped: The Abduction of

Edgardo Mortara” (in-person on Sunday, March 30)

◆ April: “Troll Storm” (The film will be viewed online and a Zoom discussion will take place on Sunday, April 6)

“We have an exciting season planned,” said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton. “The Film Fest Committee has done a wonderful job vetting films. Our line-up includes a nice variety of genres. There will be something for every Jewish film buff to be excited about. We hope you will join us.” Committee members are Hubal, Susan Hubal, Ben Kasper and Steve Lisman.

More information on the films and how to access them will appear in future issues of *The Reporter*.

Federation alert

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton is profoundly grieved by the recent murder of six more hostages in Gaza.

We send our deepest and heartfelt condolences to the families and communities in Israel, here in Binghamton and across the world that are grieving the tragic loss of these young souls. We continue to stand in solidarity with those working tirelessly to see the remaining hostages back at home.

May the memories of the fallen be for a blessing and may those who are left to mourn be comforted among all the mourners of Zion and the world.

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Opinion

From the Desk of the Federation Executive Director

With gratitude

SHELLEY HUBAL

We walked to our cars after dinner and I simply asked, "How can I help?" Her response wasn't simple at all. She said, "Just don't forget me."

I knew that did not even scratch the surface. The parts unspoken were, "I have lost too many friends," "I have no time to care for myself," "I don't need you to 'fix' my life" and "I am too tired to put on a happy face." I could probably go on.

My friend is brilliant. She has a Ph.D., she loves to read and have meaningful conversations, but her life for

the last 21 years has been a steady stream of doctors' appointments, hustling to find qualified aides, frustrating school meetings and much more, all to care for her child with multiple disabilities, which leaves her little time and energy for anything else.

Forget her? Impossible. Her words and the look in her eyes will be with me for a long time. I had never seen her this low.

Instinctually, I always try and be there to help, especially when someone I care about is carrying a heavy load. Can

I grab some groceries for you? Drive you to an appointment? I believe those of us with a little strength left at the end of the day have a responsibility to pick up some slack for those in need. However, on this night, I was reminded that sometimes you just have to show up, hold the space with an open heart and open ears, and hope that is enough.

As the long days of this beautiful summer dwindle, I hope you all have found some peace. With gratitude for this compassionate Jewish community, I hold an open heart. You are not forgotten.

One Perspective from Israel

Avinu Malkeinu: an unseasonal, timely prayer

JEREMY M. STAIMAN

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

Editor's note: This column originally appeared in March, but is still relevant for the upcoming holiday season.

"A prayer offered without intent (*kavanah*), is like a body without a soul."

When the rabbis taught us that lesson, they were encouraging us that when we recite our personal and public prayers, rather than merely reciting the words, we should garb them with our own personal meanings and thoughts. Just as our clothing choices help us stand apart, so do our contemplation and intent transform even standardized prayers into deeply personal, unique offerings.

Avinu Malkeinu. Our Father. Our King.

Who is unfamiliar with this powerful refrain, chanted, and pleaded, and cried over and over during the High Holiday season? Who isn't moved by our supplication to

God, both in His identity as our Father and in his role as our King? So well known are the lines of *Avinu Malkeinu* that Barbara Streisand recorded a version of it on one of her albums (to a tune by German composer Max Janowski), and performed it live at President Shimon Peres' 90th birthday. Peres was so moved by that rendition, that it was reprised by David D'Or at Peres' funeral.

Avinu Malkeinu.

Since the outbreak of the war, this plaintive prayer has been recited twice daily in many *shuls* around Israel and perhaps beyond. I suspect that many have found that the verses resonate with them in novel, deep and powerfully-relevant ways – ways which may never have occurred to us during their seasonal recitations.

Here are some of the meanings which have adorned the words of my own *Avinu Malkeinu* over the last number of months.

◆ Our Father, our King, foil the plans of our enemies.

The Palestinians were working on the October 7 plan for years, or possibly decades. Some reports say that they had planned coordinated attacks from the north and the west.

Was that You who got in the way of those plans, oh God? Are there tunnels from Lebanon leading into Israel awaiting the orders to attack? Probably. Are there tunnels from the Arab villages in Judea and Samara which lead to our precious Jewish communities? Again, probably. Despite the unspeakable devastation of October 7, You foiled their grander plans for our sudden and complete defeat. Our Father, our King, please continue to have our backs, frustrate the plots of our foes, and allow us to live in peace in Your land.

◆ Our Father, our King, shut the mouths of those who instigate and work against us.

See "Prayer" on page 8

In My Own Words

Privilege, luck and the New Year

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

I've written before about how I like to pause during the fall holiday season and appreciate the many things in my life for which I am grateful. Since parts of 2024 were emotionally difficult for a number of reasons, this feels even more important this year.

Some of these blessings are things we take for granted because we are lucky enough to have immigrated to or been born in the United States. For example, I've never lived in a war zone (although not everyone in the U.S. lives in a safe environment) and our democracy offers us freedoms not found in many other lands. I know there are debates about our political system, but recognizing the many blessings we have gives me the courage to work to keep our country strong.

I know people bristle and become defensive at the thought of being called privileged, but I embrace the idea because my life is an example of privilege. I live in my parents' house (one I could never afford to buy) on land that my grandfather purchased for them. Although I'm sure my brother, who is half owner, could use the money if we sold it, he encourages me to remain in our family home. Even though my parents were not what anyone would consider rich, I left college and rabbinical school with no debt. My rabbinical school tuition was paid from a fund owned by another branch of my extended family. Even more important, my parents believed in me when I had health problems, although there were family members and friends who thought I was faking and should be thrown out of the house. I've written before about how my mother would have gone to the end of the world to find a cure for my health is-

ues. Not everyone is blessed to have had parents who believed in them.

When I faced back issues this summer, my friends and community rallied around me. I was on vacation visiting a friend when we realized I really needed to see a doctor. That friend let my four day vacation extend into six and would have allowed me to remain with her family as long as I needed. Her care was wonderful and I am so grateful to her. (Although I do think I could have walked up and down the stairs by myself. If I fell on her, both of us would have ended up in the hospital. But I did and do appreciate the reasons why she wanted me to be extra careful.) When I returned home, I had people volunteering to go grocery shopping for me and then received enough meals that I didn't have to cook for almost a week. (I don't like the back problem, but, boy, I could get used to not having to cook.)

I am also grateful for Facebook. Yes, social media was an excellent way for me to let people know what was happening. The outpouring of support and suggestions let me know that people cared. As a single person with no children, it's wonderful to know I have a community that will step up. The support was especially meaningful when what I thought would be a simple diagnosis of a pulled muscle turned out to be the more complex one of severe spinal arthritis. That came as a shock and I coped the way I normally do. First, I fell to pieces. (Yes, that is always my standard first response.) Then I pulled myself together after a few days and began figuring out how to cope with the problem. (That is my standard second response.)

Another important thing to remember this time of year is that the privilege I have is mostly based on luck. I know

some theologies posit that God decides everything that happens to us, but that's hard for me to accept when I look at all the suffering in the world. I am lucky my relatives were either smart or fortunate enough to leave Europe before the Holocaust. I am lucky that they came to the United States. I am lucky that my father went out for ice cream when he attended Harpur College after World War II because my mother would never have sat at that table in the library if she'd known those were his books. They might not have dated; they might never have married. I might not exist, at least in this form of me.

However, it is not always easy to pause and think about my life. There are many things I wish were different, including not having lost years dealing with my health problems. Nor is it always easy to live with a hearing loss that radically changed part of my life. But these challenges made me who I am and I don't know who or what I would be without them. I've also become more emotional about Rosh Hashanah since my mother died the morning before the holiday began in 2022. Losing her left me more time to focus on different concerns since I no longer had to worry about her health and safety.

I know we get caught up in family gatherings and food and rushing to services, but sometime during the holiday, take a moment to look at your life and appreciate the good things you have. It might affect the way you think about your faults and the changes you may want to make during the upcoming year. Acknowledging our blessings can make a big difference.

Wishing everyone a *shanah tovah*, a healthy, joyous New Year.



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of Greater Binghamton

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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.

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

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Intersisterhood event on Sept. 24 to feature talk about the ethical significance of High Holidays

Temple Israel will host this year's Intersisterhood event on Tuesday, September 24, at 7 pm. The evening will feature a presentation by Dr. Allan Arkush on "Reconstructing the High Holidays." Following the presentation, attendees will enjoy a musical interlude by Kaskeset, Binghamton University's Jewish *a cappella* group. The program will begin with time for refreshments and schmoozing. All

members of the community are welcome to attend; the cost for the event is \$6. The event is made possible by the generous sponsorship of the Victor and Esther Rozen Foundation. Those interested in attending are encouraged to make reservations by contacting their synagogue office by Friday, September 20, to ensure a spot. The phone numbers for the synagogues are Beth David 607-722-1793, Temple

Concord 607-723-7355 and Temple Israel 607-723-7461. Attendees will also have the chance to participate in a raffle, thanks to the generous donations from local organizations. Prizes include two memberships in the Binghamton Philharmonic's "Best Seats Club," tickets to a KNOW Theatre production, gift certificates for PS Restaurant, Weis Markets and Price Chopper, and tickets for an Anderson Center concert.

Arkush is a distinguished scholar who has been teaching courses on modern Jewish history and thought at Binghamton University since 1987. He is also a senior contributing editor of the Jewish Review of Books, a position he has held since 2009. His talk will explore the ethical significance of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, drawing on the perspectives of Rabbi Mordechai Kaplan, the founder of See "Ethical" on page 4

Federation, JCC to hold joint AED and CPR training

By Reporter staff

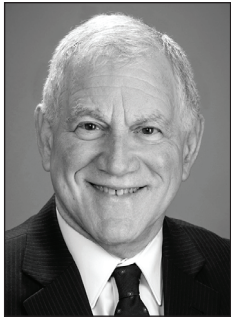
The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton's Safety and Security Committee and the Jewish Community Center will hold a program on how to use an automatic defibrillator and perform CPR on Wednesday, September 25, from 6:30-9:30 pm, at the Jewish Community Center, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal. Additional sponsors of the program are the Sisterhoods of Beth David Synagogue, Temple Concord and Temple Israel. The program is free and open to the entire community. To register for the program, visit www.jfgeb.org, or contact the Federation office at 607-724-2332 or director@jfgeb.org.

"This is really a continuation of our Stop the Bleed program," said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. "After the program, people mentioned that they had AEDs in their building, but no one knew how to use them. We decided it would be a great idea to offer a class in their use and how to perform CPR."

"At the JCC, the safety and well-being of our community is a top priority," said Raychel Reilly, COO of the Jewish Community Center. "We are honored to partner with our friends at the Federation to offer a free CPR and AED class to members of our community. This initiative ensures the greater Jewish community is equipped with the necessary skills to provide this vital layer of protection in an emergency situation."

"Training sessions, like this CPR/AED class, offer an opportunity to learn and practice basic life saving skills," said Steve Malkin, chairman of the Federation's Safety and Security Committee. "As someone already at the scene, you will be able to respond, act and support a life until professional first responders can arrive. You could save the life of a child or adult, stranger or friend, or even a member of your own family. Experience using an AED or knowing how to perform CPR enables you to act – on your own or while being coached by a 911 dispatcher. What would you do to save a life? Nothing is not an answer."

BD luncheon on Sept. 14 to feature Richard C. Lewis



Richard C. Lewis (Photo courtesy of Hinman, Howard and Kattell)

Beth David Synagogue annual Luncheon series for 2024-25 will be held on Saturday, September 14. The community is invited to attend. Morning services will begin at 9:30 am, with the luncheon and program following the conclusion of services. The luncheon is free and open to the public. Attorney and community member Richard C. Lewis will be the featured guest.

Lewis introduced what have been called "groundbreaking initiatives." One of these was the task force on Combating Antisemitism and Anti-Asian Hate, which Lewis initiated in the first month of his term, and on which he served as executive committee liaison. The task force issued a close to 50-page report, which was passed by the House of Delegates in January 2024.

Lewis, an attorney at an attorney at Hinman, Howard and Kattell, will focus on what his position as president entailed, and will highlight in particular the task force's recommendations on combating antisemitism. These include statutory changes that would make the Hate Crimes

Act easier to enforce. Also proposed were acts to deal with Internet hate speech, as well as ways to improve hate crimes reporting. "Dick has generously arranged for copies of the See "BD" on page 4

OF NOTE

Temple Concord

Temple Concord has been awarded HIAS' highest congregational honor, the Pathways Trailblazer Award, for its "extraordinary work helping refugees, asylum seekers and other forcibly displaced people. Knowing how hard this past year has been for the Jewish people, you have been a steadfast and unwavering beacon of light and hope."

The letter from HIAS also noted, "At an unparalleled moment in human history with more than 120 million people who have fled persecution and violence, you have embraced a central tenet of Torah to welcome the stranger. Communities like yours represent the best of Jewish values lived in the world."

It concluded by saying that "even in times of overwhelming darkness and challenge, we are a people defined by relentless hope. Thank you for continuing to remind us of that. Let us not only pray but continue to act toward building a world of peace, security, and tranquility – for the Jewish people and every human being."

DEADLINES

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

ISSUE	DEADLINE
September 20-October 3	September 11
October 4-17	September 25
October 18-31	October 9
November 1-14	October 21 (early)

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

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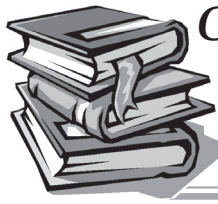
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Off the Shelf

When and why did we start doing that?

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Minhag hamakom: the local custom or tradition. *Minhagim* (the plural) are sometimes said to outweigh *halachah* (Jewish law). While originally not commanded, they are often treated as if they were given at Mt. Sinai. However, as Rabbi Zvi Ron, Ph.D., notes in his thought-provoking “Jewish Customs: Exploring Common and Uncommon Minhagim” (Maggid Books), these customs evolved and changed over time. Although Ron’s writing is dry and technical, his prose is easy to read and he offers clear, detailed explanations gathered from Jewish texts over the centuries.

“Jewish Customs” is divided into several sections – “Life Cycle,” “Shabbat and the Cycle of the Year” and “Liturgy,” with an additional chapter about Jewish clothing titled “Stripes, Hats, and Fashion” – that explore the origins and development of more than 28 customs. A great deal of the liturgy section focuses on Orthodox prayer books, but most of the other customs discussed will be familiar to readers. For example, the custom of saying *lechayim* after drinking an alcoholic beverage is a common one in most parts of the Jewish world. Although Ron notes that a variation of the word can be found in the biblical text, no one is sure exactly what it meant in that context. The first real discussion of using *lechayim* is found in “Tanhuma,” a collection of *midrash* (rabbinic explanations/stories). It focuses on what occurred when the ancient Sanhedrin (a legislative and judicial assembly) was dealing with capital crimes (those punishable by death). If the person was found not guilty of a crime, members of the Sanhedrin would announce that by saying *lechayim*. If the person was sentenced to death, then they would give him a glass of potent wine to ease the pain of his punishment. Therefore, when someone was saying *Kiddush* or *Havdalah*, they would say *lechayim* as a way of noting, “This cup [of wine] is for the living.”

The author continues his discussion by looking at writings from later centuries. For example, he notes “Sefer HaPardes,” an 11th century text, and other later texts speak

of how drinking wine can be dangerous. Saying *lechayim* before drinking, therefore, served as protection against those dangers. Ron lists what he calls the “four major negative associations of wine” as 1) the wine given to someone about to receive capital punishment, 2) wine as connected to the sin of Adam because some rabbinic thinkers believed the grape was the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, 3) the curse of Noah who became drunk from wine he made after the flood and 4) the fact that wine was originally created to comfort the mourner. This is only a brief outline of a well-done and absorbing chapter.

Other chapters also offer interesting and, sometimes, unexpected explanations of how certain customs developed over the years. These include:

◆ The fact that *Yizkor* began not as a prayer or prayer service, but rather as a fund-raiser. During the service, people pledged money in honor of deceased loved ones. Even after the change to prayer, it was common for people *not* to remain in the sanctuary the first year after a loved one died.

◆ Noting that the original custom was to light only one light on Shabbat. Ron writes that the Talmud always spoke about the Shabbat lamp in the singular. The earliest reference he can find for the use of two candles is in the writings of Rabbi Eliezer ben Yoel HaLevi of Bonn (1140-1225). Rabbi Eliezer believed that, since one candle is normally used so one can eat, using a second candle shows that Shabbat is a special event. Ron also discusses the different words – remember and observe – used in the two biblical versions of the commandment concerning Shabbat. The author lists the reasons given by other rabbis – there are too many to list here – to show the many different explanations for the custom. He does note that the use of two candles began in the Ashkenazic world and later spread to Sephardic communities.

◆ The explanation that the salt water used during the Passover seder represents the tears the Israelites shed as slaves first appeared in the 17th century. Ron notes that

the Talmud does not specify into what type of liquid the vegetable was supposed to be dipped. Some scholars believe that charoset was originally used for both the vegetable and the bitter herbs. However, during the Greco-Roman period, vinegar and salt water were often used as vegetable dips. The author believes this custom was borrowed from them and later was given a religious meaning.

◆ The fact that of the different *megillot* read during holidays, the only one commanded is the reading of the book of Esther on Purim. Ron gives careful and detailed information about how the other books came to be connected with particular holidays.

In his conclusion, Ron discusses how an action or behavior can come to be considered a Jewish custom. If Jews do something that is found in the surrounding culture – for example, drinking coffee is one he mentions – that doesn’t make it a Jewish custom. This changes, though, if Jews start to give the action symbolic meaning. He notes, “However, what of a case where a practice was once cross-cultural, shared by Jews and non-Jews alike, but over time was dropped by the majority of the wider world and retained primarily by Jews? And what if, with the passage of time, Jews no longer recalled the original context of these practices and gave them a new, symbolic meaning, one that carries a Jewish message? It would seem that this practice would now be a Jewish custom.” Ron also notes that this can occur even if another culture retains the custom, but most Jews are no longer aware of it. One case mentioned is braided bread, which is still a Ukrainian practice, but which has been transformed in Judaism as a special bread used on Shabbat and holidays.

“Jewish Customs” assumes that readers have some familiarity with Jewish customs and rabbinical writings. However, even those with less background will still be able to appreciate parts of the work due to Ron’s clear and simple explanations. Anyone interested in how Jewish customs or how Judaism has changed and adapted over the years will find much to enjoy.



Off the Shelf

Saving her own life

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

The discovery of the BRCA1 gene has greatly affected many women’s lives, particularly those with a family history of breast cancer. Now they can test to see if they have a genetic tendency toward the disease and make educated decisions. Gila Pfeffer, the author of “Nearly Departed: Adventures in Loss, Cancer, and Other Inconveniences” (The Experiment), tells of her mother’s early death from breast cancer and her attempt to prevent a similar occurrence in her own life. Her

memoir would be extremely difficult to read were it not for her humor about parts of her health journey, which greatly lighten the experience.

Pfeffer writes about her mother’s heart-rending experiences while ill and the way she and her siblings managed to cope through the *shiva*. Some in their Orthodox community expected the author to drop out of college to take care of her father’s household and raise her siblings. She refused, although she did come home weekends to help. Her mother wished Pfeffer would marry before she died, but Pfeffer’s dating experiences did not go well, that is until years later when she found the right person: Phil, who became her husband.

When Pfeffer gets tested, she finds out that she has the BRCA1 gene, which was not a big surprise since her mother, paternal and maternal grandmothers, and a great-aunt all had breast cancer. She begins having mammograms at age 30, although she had to fight with her health insurance to pay for them. Wanting to add a fourth child to her family in her 30s, she undergoes additional tests and is told all the scans are clear.

Pfeffer didn’t want her children growing up without a mother so she opts for a voluntary double mastectomy after her fourth child – having a type of reconstructive surgery

that uses her stomach fat to fill the tissue. (She jokes that, after having four children, the operation also gave her a much needed tummy tuck.) Unfortunately, the doctors find some very small cancerous tumors in her breasts and she now faces more surgery and chemotherapy, exactly what she was trying to avoid by having the mastectomy.

Her major concern – besides staying alive for her young children – was to shield them from the fact that she is sick. She manages to keep her children from understanding what was happening, although she writes of how she later realized she needed to tell them – in age understandable ways – what occurred, if only because she decided to go public with her experience.

Reading about how her family and friends pitched in to help her shows the power and beauty of community. Parts of her memoir could be regarded as a love letter to her husband. Overshadowing her experience is the phantom of the Holocaust: both her parents’ families had lost members during the war and it feels as if part of her reason for having four children is to replenish the number of Jews, although it’s also clear that she loves big families – both her family of origin and the one she creates with Phil.

But “Nearly Departed” is also filled with humor, from her sarcastic answers to an intake form (or rather, the answers I’m sure she wished she’d written) to chemotherapy inspired lyrics to be sung to the tune of “Under the Sea,” to her vision of her organs dancing to a ragtime tune while leaving her body. Her snark will definitely endear her to readers.

It’s clear that Pfeffer hopes that her work will encourage others to get tested for the BRCA1 gene and take charge of their own destiny. As numerous doctors told her, getting the double mastectomy saved her life. The story is also an inspiring tale of courage and family, leavened by Pfeffer’s Jewish faith and her desire to not leave her children orphaned as she once was.

Ethical Continued from page 3

Reconstructionist Judaism. “Attendees can expect a deep and engaging discussion on how these holidays continue to resonate with contemporary ethical challenges,” said organizers of the event.

Organizers continued, “This event promises to be a rich experience, combining thoughtful intellectual discussion, inspiring music and a strong sense of community, all in preparation for the High Holidays. Don’t miss this opportunity to deepen your understanding of these sacred days and connect with fellow community members.”

BD Continued from page 3

task force report to be available to everyone who attend,” organizers say, “And will point to other publications that are more relevant than ever in the times we live in.” Lewis will also talk about his experience with the various members of an Israeli delegation that came to New York during the height of the encampments and demonstrations, and his continuing interactions with them.

Beth David’s luncheon speaker series takes place the second Saturday of the month after Shabbat morning services, and is open to the community. There is no charge for the luncheon. Since the monthly series’ continuation depends on the generosity of contributors, Beth David welcomes and appreciates donations to the Luncheon Fund in order to keep the program going. Donations can be made in honor of or in memory of someone, or to mark a special occasion. Those wishing an acknowledgment to be sent to the person being honored, or to the family of someone being remembered, can indicate that, along with the necessary information. Donations can be sent to Beth David Synagogue, 39 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905, Attention: Luncheon Fund.

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@thereporter.org.

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



Whether you’re moving across town or across the country, please let *The Reporter* know so you can stay up to date on community news and quickly receive the paper at your new (or temporary) address!

E-mail reporter@aol.com with “Reporter Address change” in the subject line, or call 607-724-2360, ext. 254, to let *The Reporter* know about your new address.

TC/TI Adult Ed. Committee program on Sept. 15

The Adult Education Committee of Temple Concord and Temple Israel will hold a program and brunch on Sunday, September 15, from 10 am-noon, at Temple Concord, 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton. Rabbi Leah Moser, Temple Concord's new spiritual leader, will speak on "Gender Diversity and Jewish Values." The entire community is welcome to attend. Refreshments will be served. There is a suggested donation of between \$5-20

per person. A Zoom option will be available; contact the Temple Concord office at templeconcordaa@gmail.com for the link. For more information and to RSVP, contact the Temple Concord office at 607-723-7355 or Temple Israel at 607-723-7461, or via e-mail at templeconcordaa@gmail.com, by Wednesday, September 11, so enough refreshments can be prepared.

In her talk, Moser will explore a number of tradi-

tional Jewish texts that recognize a spectrum of gender expression beyond the male-female binary and discuss their relevance to the efforts of contemporary transgender, nonbinary and gender-nonconforming Jews to find recognition and welcome in the broader Jewish community. The program will include a short reading from Moser's Jewish young adult fantasy novel, "Magical Princess Harriet."

BD Sisterhood meeting to feature book discussion

The Sisterhood of Beth David Synagogue will hold its first meeting of the new season on Wednesday, September 11, at 7 pm, in the Beth David social hall. The program

for the evening will be a discussion of the novel "The Little Liar" by Mitch Albom, author of "Tuesdays with Morrie." The discussion will be led by Susan Hubal. The

meeting is open to the entire community, both male and female, whether or not they are affiliated with Beth David Synagogue. Female attendees are encouraged to show their support for Sisterhood by paying \$25 to officially become members for the year. Refreshments will be served at the meeting and non-perishable food items will be collected for CHOW.

"The Little Liar" begins during the Holocaust when an innocent young Greek boy is convinced that he is helping his fellow Jews by encouraging them to peacefully board trains that will supposedly relocate them to new homes and jobs. He is changed forever when he discovers the truth and becomes a pathological liar. "The novel is a parable that explores honesty, survival, revenge and devotion," said event organizers. "It is a timeless story about the harm we inflict with our deceptions and the power of love to ultimately redeem us."

Tea and Talk returns on Sept. 12

Chabad of Binghamton, with co-sponsorship from the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, has announced the dates of its Tea and Talk meetings for September-December. The Thursday program is held from 11 am-noon in Chabad's atrium lounge. Tea and Talk is open to Jewish community members over the age of 55, free of charge. To RSVP or for more information, visit www.JewishBU.com/Tea.

"Tea and Talk is back by popular demand!" said event organizers. "Tea and Talk is an hour-long casual group discussion about current life events, upcoming Jewish

holidays and sometimes some good ole reminiscing of the *alte heim* (the ancestral home) over refreshments."

"I've had a lot of fun in these discussions on the many varied topics selected," said Dennis Foreman, who along with his wife, Sandy, has been attending Tea and Talk for two years. "The stories and perspectives of other members of our Jewish community have given me a lot to think about."

Addition Tea and Talk events include September 26, October 10, October 31, November 14, December 5 and December 19.

Federation held guardian/greeter training



The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton held a "Guardian/Greeter Safety Training" on August 27 at the Jewish Community Center. Around 50 people attended the event. Mark Henderson (at right), the director of community security for the Jewish Community Federation of Greater Rochester, led the training.



Annual Campaign 2025

THIS YEAR IT'S DIFFERENT. MAKE YOUR PLEDGE EARLY!

We hope we can count on your generosity again in the year to come.

You can make your pledge 3 ways:

- 1) Visit the Federation website at www.jfgb.org and click on "make a pledge."
- 2) E-mail Federation Executive Director Shelley Hubal at director@jfgb.org with "pledge" in the subject line.
- 3) Fill out the form in this ad and mail it to the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850

This year it's different.



Mail this form to:

Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton,
500 Clubhouse Rd.,
Vestal, NY 13850

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____

State/ Zip Code: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone Number: _____

Amount Pledge: _____

PREPARE FOR ROSH HASHANAH

High Holiday services at area synagogues

All information was provided by the synagogues listed below. Other area synagogues are still in the process of planning their services to ensure the safety of their congregants – as those plans may change, those interested in attending services are asked to contact synagogues for their most up-to-date service schedule. See the Congregational Notes on page 10 for contact information for all of the area synagogues.

Beth David Synagogue

Saturday, September 28

Selichot – 10 pm

Thursday, October 3 – Rosh Hashanah 1

Shacharit – 8:15 am

Shofar – 10:50 am

Tashlich at Confluence Park – 6 pm

Friday, October 4 – Rosh Hashanah 2

Shacharit – 8:15 am

Shofar – 10:50 am

Saturday, October 5

Shacharit – 9:30 am

Friday, October 11 – erev Yom Kippur

Kol Nidre – 6:10 pm

Saturday, October 12 – Yom Kippur

Shacharit – 9 am

Yizkor – 12:20 pm

Mincha and Neilah – 4:15 pm

Shofar, end of fast – 7:08 pm

Thursday, October 17 – Sukkot day 1

Shacharit – 9 am

Friday, October 18 – Sukkot day 2

Shacharit – 9 am

Saturday, October 19

Shacharit – 9 am

Wednesday, October 23 – Hoshanah Rabba

Shacharit – 7 am

Thursday, October 24 – Shemini Atzeret

Shacharit – 9 am

Yizkor – 10:45 am

Hakafot for Simchat Torah – 6:45 pm

Friday, October 25 – Simchat Torah

Shacharit – 9 am

Hakafot – 9:45 am

Saturday, October 26

Shacharit – 9:30 am

Congregation Tikkun V'Or

Congregation Tikkun v'Or (Ithaca Reform Temple) welcomes everyone to join for High Holiday services and programs. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services are in-person and streaming; all are welcome to attend in person or on Zoom. Note that there are different locations for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Registration is required for all services. Space is limited for Rosh Hashanah, so sign-ups are first come, first served. To register for in-person attendance or for the Zoom link, contact highholidays@tikkunvor.org. Membership is not required; donations are always welcome. Services will be led by lay leaders (Faith Rogow, Miranda Phillips, Jeff Bercuvitz, Lauren Korfine and Michael Margolin) and musicians (Azameira).

Wednesday, September 11

"Selichot: Prepare To Be Awed" with Rabbi Lenore Bohm – 7-8:30 pm

A conversation about how Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur can stimulate personal and spiritual growth.

Sunday, September 22

Selichot presentation with Dalya Tamir – 3-5:30 pm

Presentations and discussions on *teshuvah*, the act

of return, with short meditation periods, sharing in small groups and some movement.

Wednesday, October 2 – erev Rosh Hashanah

Service at Tikkun v'Or – 6:30 pm

Thursday, October 3 – Rosh Hashanah

Service at Tikkun v'Or – 9 am

Community picnic (bring your own) and Tashlich – Noon

Friday, October 11 – erev Yom Kippur

Kol Nidre at the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca (306 N. Aurora St.) – 6:30 pm

Saturday, October 12 – Yom Kippur

Morning service at the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca (306 N. Aurora St.) – 9 am

Afternoon and evening services and programs at the First Unitarian Society, including meditation with Ira Kamp, chair yoga with Ginny Miller, Avodah service, Yizkor, Neilah, Havdalah and this year's Isaiah Challenge speaker: Liz Karabinakis of "Healthy Food for All." Followed by a community break-the-fast.

Wednesday, October 16 – erev Sukkot

Sukkot Festival – 4:30-7 pm

Friday, October 25 – Simchat Torah

Service with Lauren Korfine, Miranda Phillips – 7:30 pm

Temple Beth El – Oneonta

Check the temple's website, www.templebetheloneonta.org, for information about non-member tickets, to reserve a place for the break-the-fast, and for updates to the schedule.

Wednesday, October 2 – erev Rosh Hashanah

Evening service – 7 pm

Thursday, October 3 – Rosh Hashanah 1

Services – 10 am

Friday, October 4 – Rosh Hashanah 2

Tashlich – 1 pm

Friday, October 11 – erev Yom Kippur

Kol Nidre – 7 pm

Saturday, October 12 – Yom Kippur

Services – 10 am

Yizkor

Torah study

Forgiveness workshop – 4:30 pm

Neilah – 6 pm

Break-the-fast

Temple Brith Sholom, Cortland

Wednesday, October 2 – erev Rosh Hashanah

Arovt – 7 pm

Thursday, October 3 – Rosh Hashanah 1

Shacharit (with Torah and shofar service) – 10 am

Tashlich – 12:45 pm

Evening service/program – 7 pm

Friday, October 4 – Rosh Hashanah 2

Shacharit (with Torah and shofar service) – 10 am

Friday, October 11 – erev Yom Kippur

Kol Nidre/Arovt – 6:45 pm

Saturday, October 12 – Yom Kippur

Shacharit (with Torah service) – 10 am

Break – 12:30 pm

Afternoon program – 3 pm

Jonah reading and discussion

Avodah service

Presentation: Abayudaya Jews of Uganda

Yizkor – 4:30 pm

Neilah – 5:30 pm

Havdalah – 6:30 pm

Break the fast dinner – 6:45 pm

Temple Concord

Saturday, September 28

Selichot will be held in collaboration with Temple Israel. (Check with rabbi for time.)

Wednesday, October 2 – erev Rosh Hashanah

Evening service – 8 pm

Thursday, October 3 – Rosh Hashanah

Morning service – 9:30 am

Religious school service – 10:30 am

Super Kiddush to follow in the Kilmer Mansion

Tashlich – around 1:30 or 2 pm

Friday, October 11 – erev Yom Kippur

Kol Nidre musical interlude – 7:30 pm

Kol Nidre service – 7:45 pm

Saturday, October 12

Morning service – 9:30 am

Religious school service – 10:30 am

Discussion – 1:15 pm

Meditative music – 3 pm

Yizkor – 4:30 pm

Healing service – 5:15 pm

Neilah – 6 pm

Havdalah – 6:45 pm

Break fast to follow

Wednesday, October 16 – erev Sukkot

Evening service – 7:30 pm

Thursday, October 17 – Sukkot

Morning service – 10:30 am

Followed by potluck dairy lunch

Friday, October 18

Wine and cheese in the sukkah before services

Thursday, October 24 – Shemini Atzeret-Simchat Torah

Service with Yizkor – 7:30 pm

Friday, October 25 – Simchat Torah

Service with Yizkor – 10:30 am

Temple Israel

All Temple Israel holiday services will be in-person and live-streamed online via Zoom.

Saturday, September 28 – Selichot

TI/TC Selichot – 9 pm

Wednesday, October 2 – erev Rosh Hashanah

Service – 7:30 pm

Thursday, October 3 – Rosh Hashanah I

Preliminary/Shacharit services – 8:45 am

Torah and shofar service – 10 am

Children's Tefillah (prayer service) – 10:45 am

Sermon – 11 am

Musaf service – 11:15 am

Tashlich (behind Newman House) – 4:15 pm

Mincha – 5 pm

Friday, October 4 – Rosh Hashanah II

Preliminary/Shacharit services – 8:45 am

Torah and shofar service – 10 am

Sermon – 11 am

Musaf service – 11:15 am

Erev Shabbat Shuvah services – 5:30 pm

Saturday, October 5 – Shabbat Shuvah

Services – 9:30 am

Sunday, October 6

Communitywide Holocaust Memorial Ceremony at

TI Cemetery – 10:30 am

Visiting TI Cemetery – 11:15 am

Friday, October 11 – erev Yom Kippur

Kol Nidre services – 6:15 pm

Saturday, October 12 – Yom Kippur

Preliminary/Shacharit services – 8:45 am

Torah service – 10 am

Children's Tefillah (prayer service) – 10:45 am

Yizkor – 11 am

Sermon – 11:15 am

Musaf service – 11:30 am

Break

Study session (sanctuary only) – 4 pm

Mincha – 5 pm

Neilah (ark open) – 5:45 pm

Ma'ariv – 6:45 pm

Havdalah, break the fast – 7:08 pm

Sunday, October 13

Building the Temple Israel sukkah – 10 am

Thursday, October 17 – Sukkot I

Services – 9:30 am

Friday, October 18

Erev Shabbat services – 9:30 am

Saturday, October 19

Shabbat and Chol Hamoad Sukkot services – 9:30 am

Thursday, October 24 – Shemini Atzeret

Shemini Atzeret and Yizkor services – 9:30 am

Friday, October 25 – Simchat Torah

Services with song and dance – 9:30 am

Erev Shabbat services – 5:30 pm

Saturday, October 26

Shabbat services – 9:30 am



WE REMEMBER YOU 2024 A Project of Jewish Family Service

During the High Holidays 5785, JFS will be distributing monetary gifts to community members in need who always say,

"Thank you for remembering me."

Please help fund this program with monetary contributions by **Sept. 13** to: Jewish Family Service, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal NY 13850.

Advertisers... be a part of our special sections for

Rosh Hashanah



Contact Kathy Brown at 607-724-2360, ext. 244 or advertising@thereporter.org.

Our September 20 Rosh Hashanah Issue includes Health Care Greetings:
Ad deadline: September 12

THE REPORTER

Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton

PREPARE FOR ROSH HASHANAH

High Holiday Jewish online resources

By Reporter staff

A variety of Jewish groups are offering High Holiday online resources. Below is a sampling of those.

◆ The Noshers will hold the virtual program “The Easiest Rosh Hashanah Dinner Ever” on Sunday, September 22, at 4 pm, with Chef Sonya Sanford. The cost to attend is \$20. The program will offer “a Slavic-inspired menu with an appetizer, a one-pot meal and a dessert you can whip together quickly.” For more information or to register, visit www.eventbrite.com/e/the-easiest-rosh-hashanah-dinner-ever-tickets-998822804897?aff=oddtcreator.

◆ My Jewish Learning will hold the virtual class “Do Not Raise Your Hand Against the Boy: The Binding of Isaac in the Torah and Midrash” on Mondays, September 9-30, at 5 pm. Ruby Namdar will look at some biblical, talmudic and midrashic texts that will expose the great complexity of the story and the lessons that might be learned from it. For more information or to register, visit <https://my-jewish-learning.teachable.com/p/do-not-raise-your-hand-against-the-boy-the-binding-of-isaac-in-the-torah-and-midrash>.

◆ The Jewish Theological Seminary will hold several webinars about the upcoming fall holiday season: “Repentance and the Mystical ‘Rope’: The Divine/Human Relationship in Jewish Thought: on Monday, September 16, from 1-2 pm; “Shemini Atzeret, Rain, & Resurrection” on Monday, September 23, from 1-2 pm; and “Book Talk: ‘Seeking the Hiding God: A Personal Theological Essay’” on Monday, September 30, from 1-2 pm. For more information or to register, visit www.jtsa.edu/event/jts-high-holiday-webinars-2024/.

◆ The Noshers will hold the virtual program “115 Years of Sweet Tradition: A Conversation with the Joyva Family” on Sunday, September 15, at 1 pm. The cost to attend is \$10. The program will explore “the history behind one of the world’s most iconic Jewish food brands.” For more information or to register, visit www.eventbrite.com/e/115-years-of-sweet-tradition-a-conversation-with-the-joyva-family-tickets-1000336773217

◆ The American Jewish University will hold the virtual

program “Why Is This Jewish New Year Different From All Others?” on Wednesday, September 18, at 3 pm. The program will “explore the impact of October 7 and how these events are shaping Jewish peoplehood, Zionism, and the way we relate to Israel.” For more information or to register, visit <https://open.aju.edu/event/why-is-this-jewish-new-year-different-from-all-others/>.

◆ JewBelong is offering a free download of its “High Holidays Booklet” at <https://get.jewbelong.com/roshhashanah-booklet/>. The booklet includes “traditional and modern readings; blessings, prayers, and texts; and songs”

◆ The Academy of Jewish Religion is offering a free download of the booklet “These Holy Days: A High Holy Days Supplement After October.” The booklet “is intended to support the Jewish community’s prayers and spirits through Elul and Tishrei.” To sign up to receive a link to the download, visit <https://ajr.edu/forms/these-holy-days/>.

◆ The Noshers will hold the virtual, pre-recorded “Cooking through the Jewish Holidays” with chef and food writer Vered Guttman. The cost to attend is \$100 and includes six instructional videos and downloadable and printable See “Holiday” on page 8



On the Jewish food scene Dining together

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

One suggested reason behind extending Jewish dietary restrictions beyond those outlined in the Bible was to prevent us from eating and drinking with those who don’t share our religious traditions. The idea is that, if you don’t break bread with someone, you are less likely to marry their idol worshipping sibling or suggest that your Jewish sibling should marry one of their idol worshipping siblings. Over time, though, this meant that Jews with different ways of practicing *kashrut* (the Jewish dietary laws) would sometimes not eat in the homes of Jews who were less strict in their observance.

This could create a divide in a community, making it difficult for people who belonged to different synagogues to share meals. I was delighted last year to discover that this type of separation doesn’t necessarily occur in Binghamton. After being invited to someone’s house for a Rosh Hashanah day late lunch/early dinner, I looked around the table and noticed something that warmed my heart: sitting at that table were members of Beth David Synagogue,

Temple Concord and Temple Israel. (Please note, these organizations appear in alphabetical order so as not to show preference to any particular one.)

I’m fairly sure that that table was not unique in our community. I’ve seen this occur at other more formal gatherings – such as Federation events (including Super Sunday brunches), dinners honoring members of the community at different organizations, annual meetings and other similar events – but it was wonderful to see it taking place in someone’s home. Breaking bread together reminds us that we are all connected. This is particularly important as our community becomes smaller and smaller.

I have no idea what my plans are for Rosh Hashanah this year (and if the person who invited me last year is reading this, this is *not* a pitch to be invited again, although I did have a wonderful time). But as we approach the New Year, I try – in addition to looking at how I can improve myself – to look for things for which to be grateful. Our community is one of them.

ROSH HASHANAH 5785 Greetings

Deadline: September 20 (September 12 issue)

Once again this year, *The Reporter* is inviting its readers and local organizations to extend New Year’s greetings to the community by purchasing a New Year’s greeting ad, which will appear in our September 20 issue.

You may choose from the designs, messages and sizes shown here - more are available. You may also choose your own message, as long as it fits into the space of the greeting you select. (Custom designs available upon request.) The price of the small greeting is \$21 (styles B, E and F), the medium one is \$40 (style A, C and D) and the largest one (style G) is \$78.

To ensure that your greeting is published or for more information on additional styles, sizes & designs, please contact Kathy Brown at 724-2360, ext. 244; or e-mail advertising@thereporter.org. Checks can be made payable to *The Reporter* and sent to: *The Reporter*, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850.

ROSH HASHANAH Greetings

Deadline: September 20 (September 12 issue)

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____
 E-mail _____
 Greeting Style _____
 Message _____
 How you would like it signed _____

We accept Visa Mastercard American Express Discover

Print Name on Card _____
 Card Number _____
 Expiration Date _____
 Address, City, State, Zip (Registered billing address of card) _____

Checks can be made payable to *The Reporter*, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850.



Sept. 12 Deadline

Style A - \$40
Actual Size: 3.22" x 1.975"

L'SHANAH TOVAH

Your Name(s)

A dollop of honey and a dollop of sweetness for the upcoming year!

Your name(s)

Style C - \$40 • Actual Size: 3.22" x 1.975"

Happy Rosh Hashanah!

Your Name(s)

Style B - \$21 • Actual Size: 1.5278" x 1.975"

Let the New Year be the start of only the sweetest things!

Your Name(s)

Style D - \$40
Actual Size: 3.22" x 1.975"

May this New Year be a time of peace & joy for you and all those you love.

Your Name(s)

Style E - \$21
Actual Size: 1.5278" x 1.975"

Have a sweet, happy & healthy New Year!

Your Name(s)

Style G - \$78 • Actual Size: 3.22" x 3.95"

May you be inscribed in the Book of Life for good health, peace and prosperity.

Your Name(s)

First person

Family reunion: past and present gather

By Bill Simons

Early 1950s: The Simons cousins' club filled the modest Lynn, MA, apartment of my Great-Uncle Max and Great-Aunt Lil. The four sons and three daughters of the late Abraham and Sarah Simons presided. They and their parents had immigrated to America from a shtetl located in what was then Russian Lithuania, part of the Pale of Settlement. In the mid-20th century, most of the Simons lived, worked, socialized and prayed in the same neighborhoods, businesses, venues and synagogues of Greater Lynn. And everyone knew my name.

Sunday, August 11, 2024, 10:30 am: Approximately 70 Simons—so designated either by descent from Abraham and Sarah or by marriage to one of their descendants—gathered at a family reunion organized by my cousin Steven Berman and hosted by my sister Jo Ann Simons Derr at her suburban Swampscott, MA, home. Two women arrived at the same time as my wife Nancy and I. They did not recognize us nor we them. Nancy and I exchanged introductions with my second cousins Jamie Abrams and Bette Kanner.

Upon entering Jo Ann's house, we all donned badges with our own names and those of our parents and grandparents. The passage of time, geographic dispersal, divergent connections to our Jewish and familial roots, and lineage complicated by marriages, remarriages and the emergence of generations far removed from our immigrant saga rendered some of us strangers to each other and the legacy of our ancestors. Yet, the need for connection provided impetus for travel from distant points.

Almost immediately, reunion attendees connected, first with those they knew, sometimes from decades before, and then with those they never really knew well—or at all. My sister Jo Ann and I number amongst the 11 first cousins whose grandparents were Joe and Bertha Simons, and it was to them I first reached out. For several years, cousin Ken and his sister Susan, the children of Uncle Shel and Aunt Marcia Simons, lived in the same two-family house as did Jo Ann and I, the children of Shep and Elaine Simons. Ken and Susan's younger brother Michael was born after we moved. A Milwaukee ophthalmologist animated by infectious charm, Ken and I confided to our older second cousin Louis that he was the hero of our youth as he roared up our street on a motorcycle, fitted in a leather jacket, to date our vivacious next-door neighbor, Hilda Newman. Ken and I also reflected upon our mutual admiration for Louis' immigrant father Max, owner of a Texaco gas station, Torah scholar and a tzaddik of extraordinary kindness.

For several years, my parents subsequently lived next door to another Simons sibling, Rhoda Berman and her See "Reunion" on page 11

Holiday. . . . Continued from page 7

recipe book. The videos offer a blend of "practical cooking skills, storytelling and cultural exploration of dishes that have nourished and comforted Jewish communities across the globe."

◆ The Museum at Eldridge Street will hold a virtual talk "Rosh Hashanah Judaica Seminar" with Tobi Kahn on Tuesday, October 1, at 6 pm. The cost is pay what you wish. Kahn will look at some of his Judaica objects that are on display at Eldridge Street and give an insider perspective on the artist's inspiration and process. To register for the event, visit https://fareharbor.com/embeds/book/eldridgestreet/items/565602/availability/1520572899/book/?full-items=yes.

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



The Simons family reunion (Photo by Steven Berman)

Prayer. Continued from page 2

The world is convulsing in a meticulously-choreographed uproar.

"From the river to the sea!" "Colonialists!" "Genocide!" Within days of October 7, much of the world had united in unmasking their vile, naked hatred of the Jewish people, brazenly calling for our elimination in tones not heard in generations. The voices seemed to come from nowhere. What spontaneously emerges from the depths can just as quickly be banished there. So please, our merciful Father, our merciful King, abruptly silence their hatred, seal their mouths, and allow the voice of a civilized world to lead the conversation once again.

◆ Our Father, our King, send complete recovery to those of our nation who are ill.

There is no need to recount here the myriad ways we have suffered as Jews, as Israelis, as citizens of the world. So many broken bodies, so many shattered souls. Avinu Malkeinu, heal the bodies and minds of our citizens and soldiers who have been brutalized and traumatized. Only You can provide the salves which will heal both our visible and invisible wounds, and make us whole once more.

◆ Our Father, our King, remember us for redemption and salvation.

Enable our swift, total victory. May the caches of our enemies' weapons be confiscated and destroyed. May their infrastructure crumble and crush them alive. May their leadership be decimated, without any hope of replacement. May their constituents find no hope in the old ways, and turn toward peace.

◆ Our Father, our King, remember us for livelihood and sustenance.

A nation where hundreds of thousands of its able-bodied work force are doing battle is a nation whose livelihood and economy are on the line. Our reservists have left their jobs, some of which may never return. Our businesses (parnassah) have lost key members and customers. The economies (kalkalah) of the southern towns, some of which are not safe to return to, are in dire jeopardy.

◆ Our Father, our King, cause redemption to bloom speedily.

Who could have dared dream, at the conclusion of World War II, that from the decimation of European Jewry, anything could possibly take root and grow? Who could have dreamt of a future—any future—which involved anything but basic survival?

Yet, from the ashes of the Holocaust sprouted a dream beyond any poet's wildest fantasy. A new beginning for the Jewish people. The hope borne in the souls of our people for 2,000 years of exile.

If you travel to Re'im, the site of the Nova Festival

massacre, you will visit a poignant landscape, a field composed of photos of the dead and the kidnapped. The photos are mounted on tall stakes in the bare earth below.

At the base of each stake, in the otherwise barren patch of land, someone planted seeds. At each one, a patch of grass has taken root. The killing field has sprung new life. The innocent photos of lives destroyed have become a very source of vitality. And beauty. And, somehow, a glimmer of hope.

Please cause Your redemption to bloom from this very tragedy, and let us see the splendor yet to come.

◆ Our Father, our King, have mercy on us, our children and young ones.

No age group, no gender, no nationality was spared on that infamous day. We all need a curative dose of Your infinite kindness.

◆ Our Father, our King, save us in the merit of those who were slaughtered for the unity of Your name.

There was no reason for the slaughter other than the fact that we are Jews. How many died with Your name on their lips? How many cried out Shema Yisrael? How many recognized in their final moments that they would be the latest link in an historical chain of bloodlust called antisemitism?

Lest we think that the nightmare may be over, let us remember that Hamas has vowed to repeat October 7 over and over again.

◆ Our Father, our King, protect those who put themselves through fire and water to sanctify Your name.

Just as in English usage, "fire" can mean not only flames, but being "under fire" from guns, the Hebrew word "eish" has the same dual connotation. When our soldiers fought to recapture Kfar Aza and the other southern towns in the early days of the war, they discovered not only the fires of battle, but quite literally they had to deal with the water. Explosions had ruptured water mains and house plumbing, and water was everywhere. Often the removal of the bodies of those murdered involved tedious extraction from ravines of mud which had formed.

Our soldiers went through fire and water to do their holy missions. Please cleanse their minds and souls of all the lingering reminders of that horror.

Avinu. Our Father.

Malkeinu. Our King.

This is a year where we are—perhaps more than ever before—taking our prayers and making them our own. And then we are hurling them heavenward, to the One who anxiously awaits the deeply creative dressing in which we have enveloped His words.

Avinu Malkeinu is a prayer which technically belongs to the season of repentance. Yet this year, it appears it will be recited right into the season of freedom. And our prayers—usually separated by a gulf of two seasons—might just create some sort of celestial mashup as they ascend, to become a mighty new plea:

Avinu. Malkeinu. Dayeinu.

Our Father. Our King. It's enough.

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

If Your Goal is to:

Make a quick and easy gift

Avoid tax on capital gains

Defer a gift until after your death

Receive guaranteed fixed income that is partially tax-free

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

Make a large gift with little cost to you

Reduce taxable income from IRA Required Minimum Distributions

Then You Can:

Simply write a check now or use a credit card

Contribute long-term appreciated stock or other securities

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

Create a charitable gift annuity

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

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

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

Your Benefits May Include:

An income tax deduction and immediate charitable impact

A charitable deduction plus no capital gains tax

Exemption from federal estate tax on donations

Current and future savings on income taxes plus fixed stable payments

Tax relief to your family on inherited assets

Current and possible future income tax deductions

Reducing taxable income



STAY UP TO DATE!

Follow the Jewish Federation on Facebook and Instagram

@jewishbinghamton

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.

◆ Keshet is looking for members of the LGBTQ+ community and Jews of Color to fill out a survey about their experiences in the Jewish community. The LGBTQ+ Jews of Color in Jewish Spaces Survey can be found at www.keshetonline.org/qjoc-survey/. The deadline to complete the survey is September 22.

◆ Literary Modiin will hold a virtual “Solidarity Session Commemorating One Year Since October 7th” on Sunday, October 6, at 1 pm. The program will offer readings, perspectives, prayers and support. For more information or to register, visit <https://www.juliezuckerman.com/event-info/literary-modiin-solidarity-session-commemorating-one-year-since-october-7th>.

◆ The Qesher Book Club will hold two virtual book talks: “The Architecture of Modern American Synagogues, 1950s-1960s” by Anat Geva, Ph.D., on Tuesday, September 24, at 3 pm (www.qesher.com/modern-american-synagogues/); and “Wave After Wave” by Sarah Ansbacher on Tuesday, October 8, at 3 pm (www.qesher.com/wave-after-wave/).

◆ Literary Modiin’s September virtual author event will feature Batnadv HaKarmi (“The Love of Mortal Beings”), Sasha Vasilyuk (“Your Presence is Mandatory”) and Lynne Golodner (“Cave of Secrets”) on Sunday, September 15, at 4 pm. For more information or to register, visit www.juliezuckerman.com/event-info/literary-modiin-september-2024-author-event.

◆ Shpait.AI will hold the virtual event “Elevate Torah Learning with AI” on Sunday, September 15, from 9 am-5 pm. The cost to attend is \$369.99. The event will offer a “hands-on workshop where you’ll learn how to use AI technology to enhance your Torah learning experience.” For more information or to register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ai-for-torah-learning-masterclass-workshop-live-and-or-zoom-option-tickets-940675123617?aff=oddtcreator>.

◆ The Noshier is offering a free digital cookbook “12 Jewish Breakfasts from Around the World.” For more details or information on how to receive the book, visit www.myjewishlearning.com/12-jewish-breakfasts-from-around-the-world/.

◆ The Jewish Telegraphic Agency will hold the virtual event “The Future of Memory: October 7 and Its Aftermath” on Thursday, September 12, at 6 pm. Authors Amir Tibon, Lee Yaron and Ilan Troen have written new works about October 7 and the state of Israel’s conflict with its neighbors. They will discuss the personal, communal and national stories their books tell. For more information or to register, visit <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdmaoEVUKglz6cD-DzkzTKBGFqS2jSuV0q2P-wB7ADjCTIHcFQ/viewform>.

◆ The Braid will hold the virtual class “Learn to Write Your Story” on Thursday, September 12, at 6:30 pm. The cost to attend is \$21. The Braid’s Artistic Director Ronda Spinak will share “the secrets of writing a story from the heart.” For more information or to register, visit https://thebraid.my.salesforce-sites.com/ticket/PatronTicket_PublicTicketApp#/.

◆ Tikvah will hold the virtual four-part lecture series “The Liberal Betrayal of the Jews” by Dr. Ruth R. Wisse. The lectures will taped and then the link to the video will be

sent. Donations are requested. For more information or to register, visit <https://tikvahfund.org/liberal-betrayal-reg/>.

◆ The Jewish Book Council will hold the virtual program “Community One Read in Honor of Dr. Ruth” with Allison Gilbert and Lori Gottlieb on Tuesday, September 24, from 1-2 pm. For more information or to register, visit www.jewishbookcouncil.org/events/community-one-read-in-honor-of-dr-ruth-with-allison-gilbert-and-lori-gottlieb.

◆ The Institute for Jewish Spirituality will hold a virtual evening with IJS President/CEO Rabbi Josh Feigelson in conversation with Rabbi Yitz Greenberg on Thursday, September 26, from 8-9 pm. Greenberg will talk about his new book, “The Triumph of Life: A Narrative Theology of Judaism.” To register, visit <https://ijs.regfox.com/josh-in-conversation-with-yitz-greenberg>.

◆ The Yiddish Book Center has launched a new digital guide on Bloomberg Connects, the free arts and culture app, making the Center accessible from anywhere. The digital

guide seeks to enhance the overall experience by providing access to information before, during and after a visit. The guide is available by downloading the Bloomberg Connects app from Google Play or the App Store and searching for the Yiddish Book Center.

◆ The Israeli American Council is offering a free download of its “College Student’s Guide to Antisemitism.” The booklet can be found at <https://iac360.org/library/college-students-guide-to-antisemitism>.

◆ Melton+ will hold a variety of courses this fall. There is a cost for some of the courses. Classes include “The Real Heroines of Sephardic Culture” on Monday, September 9, from 2-3 pm (<https://events.org/events/calendarcourse?tid=17390239-e0d8-4ad1-aa54-f1db5dcb7233>); “Is the Golden Age Over for American Jews?” on Monday, September 16, from 1-2 pm (<https://events.org/events/calendarcourse?tid=0692e980-428f-439d-bfee-745bab941755>); See “Resources” on page 11

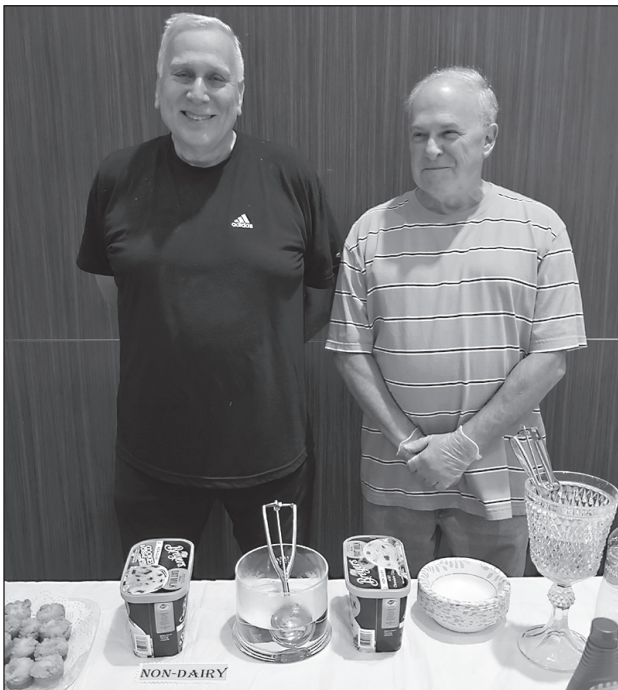
Temple Israel held porch party



Around 75 people attended the Temple Israel porch party, which was held on August 15.



Steve Gilbert entertained those attending.



At left, l-r: Michael Wolff and Jim Schutzer stood behind the table with the refreshments for the evening

Below: Members of the Green family attended the event; L-r: Shira Green, Lynne Green, Eli Green and Brett Green.



Fall Home & Garden

Prep-your-place for fall pointers

(NAPSI) – Many people may be surprised to learn that fall is actually the most affordable season for home prep and repair projects. There’s less demand, so homeowners might enjoy breaks on equipment and services.

An easy place to begin is at the window. Cracked and warped windows can often cause heat to escape. “Windows that produce a draft or feel cold on the inside should be replaced,” explains Richard Kasunic, a home repair expert with Window Nation, a window replacement company. Modern vinyl windows fit tightly to shield homes from wind, water infiltration and inclement weather overall. With

that said, many homeowners have older windows and are often “heating the outside,” adds Kasunic.

“On average, homeowners spend 40 percent of their utility expense dollars on heating and cooling,” he says. “But if new windows aren’t in this year’s home budget, you might want to pick up insulated curtains, window and door gap seals, and add draft snakes on windowsills.”

He also suggests replacing the weather stripping around doors if you see any light around the edges. For less than \$10, you can likely reduce electrical bills throughout the year. Additionally, exterior outlets, plumbing and utility ac-

cess, chimneys and walkways should be sealed for unwanted holes, says Kasunic. And homeowners should have their furnaces and roofs professionally cleaned and inspected.

Finally, cover the water heater and change the furnace filter so your furnace doesn’t have to work as hard.

Be a part of our upcoming
WINTER HOME IMPROVEMENT AD SECTION
To advertise, please contact Kathy at 607-724-2360, ext. 244 or advertising@thereporter.org.
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DEADLINE: OCT. 10
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Weekly Parasha

Shoftim, Deuteronomy 16:18-21:9

Fix yourself first

RABBI JARED ANSTANDIG, JEWISH LEARNING INITIATIVE ON CAMPUS DIRECTOR, BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY

Many of us have grand ideas about what other people need to do for the world to be a better place. Like the Monday morning quarterback, we sit back and judge others for their missteps and failures. This approach, while perhaps personally satisfying in the immediate, provides little to no resolution for the future. As we will see, the Torah intends for us to take a different approach.

In *parashat Shoftim*, we are commanded, “*Tzedek tzedek tirdof*” (“Justice, justice you shall pursue”). (Deuteronomy 16:20) The ancient Aramaic translator Onkelos renders this phrase as “*kushta kushta tirdof*,” which literally means “truth, truth you shall pursue.” Drawing on this Aramaic translation, my teacher, Rabbi Baruch Simon of Yeshiva

University, connects this verse to a passage in the Talmud, Baba Metzia 107b. In the passage, Reish Lakish states that one must first “*keshot*” (beautify) oneself before attempting to “*keshot*” (beautify) others. Here, Reish Lakish emphasizes the need to first improve oneself before attempting to improve others. Rabbi Simon notes the linguistic similarity between “*kushta*” (truth) and “*keshot*” (beautify), and suggests that the repetition of “justice” in our verse carries a similar message to Reish Lakish’s teaching. There are two stages in our pursuit of justice: first we turn inward, and only then do we turn outward.

This is not to say that we should never work for the world to change. Quite to the contrary, we are acutely aware of

the pain and suffering in the world and have a responsibility to do everything in our power to reduce and eliminate that pain. (I write this on the third day of the Democratic National Convention, when Hersh Goldberg-Polin’s parents reminded the United States that there are still 109 hostages held in Gaza.) Nonetheless, Reish Lakish and Rabbi Simon argue that before we pass judgement on the failings of others, we must address our own failings.

As we step ever closer to Rosh Hashanah and the new year, may we be able to focus less on what needs to be changed with other people, and more on our own growth and development. This year may we become the best versions of ourselves that we can be.

Congregational Notes

Temple Israel

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

On Fridays and Tuesdays at 5:30 pm, services will be led by Rabbi Micah Friedman via Zoom and in-person.

Tuesdays, September 4, 11 and 25, at 10:30 am: Pre-High Holiday community class with Rabbi Micah Friedman called “Making More out of Mahzor on the High Holidays.”

On Saturday, September 7, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person. The Torah portion is Deuteronomy 16:18-21:9 and the haftarah is Isaiah 51:12-52:12. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 8:15 pm.

On Saturday, September 14, Shacharit services will be held at 9:45 am via Zoom and in-person. The Torah portion is Deuteronomy 21:10-25:19 and the haftarah is Isaiah 54:1-10. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 8 pm.

On Tuesday, September 17, at 7 pm, there will be a Board of Trustees meeting.

On Tuesday, September 24, at 7 pm, there will be an Intersisterhood event at Temple Israel. (For more information about the program, see the article on page 3.)

Norwich Jewish Center

Orientation: Inclusive
Address: 72 South Broad St., Norwich, NY 13815
Phone: 334-2691
E-mail: fertigj@roadrunner.com
Contact: 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.

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 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, secretary@tbeithaca.org
Website: 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.

Synagogues limit face-to-face gatherings

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

Beth David Synagogue

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

Rohr Chabad Center

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

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

Congregation Tikkun v’Or

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



Friday, September 6, light candles before 7:09 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, September 7..... 8:08 pm
Friday, September 13, light candles before 6:57 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, September 14..... 7:56 pm
Friday, September 20, light candles before 6:45 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, September 21..... 7:44 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
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, September 6: Early Shabbat service at 6:30 pm with Rabbi Leah Moser. Join via Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3hRmW2Y>, meeting ID 869 9699 8146 and passcode 826330, or on Facebook www.facebook.com/templeconcord/.

Saturday, September 7: At 9:15 am, Torah study in person and on Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3z3oSl5>, meeting ID 825 1226 2831 and passcode 743892.

Tuesday, September 10: First day of Hebrew classes; and at 8 pm, General Board of Trustees meeting. Meetings are open to members of Temple Concord. For the meeting link, contact the synagogue at 607-723-7355 or by email at templeconcordaa@gmail.com.

Friday, September 13: At 7:30 pm, Shabbat service with Rabbi Leah Moser. Join via Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3hRmW2Y>, meeting ID 869 9699 8146 and passcode 826330, or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/templeconcord/.

Saturday, September 14: At 9 am, first day of Shabbat classes; and at 9:15 am, Torah study in person and on Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3z3oSl5>, Meeting ID 825 1226 2831 and passcode 743892.

Sunday, September 15: At 10 am, the Adult Ed. Committee of Temple Concord and Temple Israel will hold a program and brunch. For more information, see the article on page 5.

Temple Beth El of Oneonta

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

Temple Brith Sholom

Affiliation: Unaffiliated
Address: P.O. Box 572, 117 Madison St., Cortland, NY 13045
Phone: 607-756-7181
President: Nick Martelli
Cemetery Committee: 315-696-5744
Website: templebrithsholomcortland.org
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Temple-Brith-Sholom-114006981962930/>
Service leaders: Lay leadership
Shabbat services: Either Friday evening at 7:30 pm or Saturday at 10 am from Rosh Hashanah to Shavuot. Holiday services are also held. Check the Facebook page or weekly e-mail for upcoming services. Contact the president to get on the e-mail list.
Religious School: Students are educated on an individual basis. Temple Brith Sholom is a small equalitarian congregation serving the greater Cortland community. Congregants span the gamut of observance and services are largely dependent on the service leader. The Friday night siddur is “Likrat Shabbat,” while the Saturday morning siddur is “Gates of Prayer.” The community extends a warm welcome to the Jewish student population of SUNY Cortland, as well as the residents of local adult residences.
Services and programs are held by Zoom on the first and second Fridays of the month.

Resources

Continued from page 9

“The Time Traveling Guest at the Back of the Class” on Wednesday, September 18, from 1-2 pm (<https://events.org/events/calendarcourse?tid=b877d77c-c7c2-4678-96a3-e986f2b26866>); “Live from Israel: The Local Discourse on What Matters to Israelis Today” on Monday, September 23, from 1-2 pm (<https://events.org/events/calendarcourse?tid=dc60dc50-4568-4aad-9d59-033672abb078>); “The Difficult Moral Choices Everyday Heroes Had to Make on October 7” on Tuesday, September 24, from 7-8 pm (<https://events.org/events/calendarcourse?tid=f1dd5d0d-6614-4ec5-913a-4593afa00b57>); and “From Creation to the Flood: The Dual Foundations of Judaism” on Mondays, September 30-October 21, from 1-2:30 pm (<https://events.org/events/calendarcourse?tid=8886eab3-19f2-4a33-8e0c-7b0c16207205>).

◆ The Jewish Telegraphic Agency will hold the hybrid event “Eyewitness to Atrocity” on Sunday, September 22, from 7-8:30 pm. There are several different types of tickets available. Israeli journalist Amir Tibon will tell the story about he, along with his wife and their two young children, were rescued from Kibbutz Nahal Oz on October 7, 2023, by Tibon’s own father – “an incredible tale of survival that also reveals the deep tensions and systemic failures that led to Hamas’ attacks that day.” For more information or to register, visit www.eventbrite.com/e/eyewitness-to-atrocity-tickets-967227893667.

◆ Hadassah Magazine will hold the virtual program “How Are We Doing?” during which Hadassah Magazine Executive Editor Lisa Hostein will moderate a discussion with Rabbi Dov Linzer and journalist Abigail Pogrebin, co-authors of “It Takes Two to Torah: An Orthodox Rabbi and Reform Journalist Discuss and Debate Their Way Through the Five Books of Moses,” on Thursday, September 19, at 7:30 pm. Linzer and Pogrebin will share their observations and strategies for how American Jews might meet the upcoming holidays and October 7 anniversary with Jewish and spiritual resilience. For more information or to register, visit www.hadassahmagazine.org/2024/04/06/magazine-discussion-how-are-we-doing/.

◆ Hillel International is offering a free “2024 Hillel Magazine,” including a guide to Jewish college life, featuring the Top 60 schools chosen by Jewish students. To request a digital version of the magazine, visit <https://hillel.tfaforms.net/306>.

◆ Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History will hold the hybrid event “Redefining Antisemitism in the United States: A Historical Approach” with Britt P. Tevis, J.D./Ph.D., on Tuesday, September 17, at 7 pm. The cost for just the individual lecture is \$15. Tevis is the Phyllis Backer Assistant Professor in Jewish Studies in the Department of History at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. For more information or to register, visit <https://theweitzman.org/events/britt-tevis-nei-2024/>.

◆ The Lower East Side Jewish Conservancy will hold two Zoom events in September: “Babylonian Jews in Hashemite Iraq Zoom Tour” on Wednesday, September 11, from 7-9 pm (<https://lesjc.squarespace.com/event-log/babylonian-jews-in-hashemite-iraq>); and “Chasidic Williamsburg: A Zoom Tour” on Tuesday, September 17, from 7-9 pm (<https://lesjc.squarespace.com/event-log/chasidic-williamsburg-a-zoom-tour>). The cost for each event is \$15.

◆ The American Jewish Committee has released the second season of the podcast “Forgotten No More,” which focuses on Jews who left or fled Arab nations and Iran. Both seasons are available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify and other popular podcast apps. For more information, visit www.ajc.org/news/forgotten-no-more-award-winning-ajc-podcast-on-jews-who-left-or-fled-arab-nations-and-iran.

◆ The Jewish Theological Seminary’s Emerging Leaders Fellowship is accepting students for its 2024-25 program. From November through June, participants will study Jewish texts, traditions and history together. During the program, they will also collaborate with rabbinical school mentors to create and execute individual projects. The cost of the program is \$500. Sessions will meet virtually from 7:30-8:45 pm on Tuesdays, November 5-26 and December 3-10. In 2025, students will begin working on their projects. The deadline to apply is Friday, September 27. For more information or to apply, visit www.jtsa.edu/jts-emerging-leaders-program/.

◆ The Museum of Jewish Heritage will hold the hybrid program “Land of My Soul: The Theater of Sholem Asch” on Thursday, September 19, at 7 pm. Caraid O’Brien will perform excerpts from some of Asch’s most successful and controversial dramas, including “God of Vengeance,” “Motke Thief,” “The Dead Man,” “Rabbi Doctor Silver” and more. There is a suggested donation of \$10. For more

information or to register, visit <https://mjhnyc.org/events/landofmysoul/>.

◆ The American Ladino League will hold the virtual program “Becoming a Sephardic Storyteller” with Ruth Behar and Hannah Pressman on Monday, September 16, at 7 pm. The conversation will held in English with Ladino references and last 75 minutes. For more information or to register, visit <https://americanladinoleague.org/programs/>.

◆ The Museum at Eldridge Street will hold a virtual book talk about “The Incorruptibles: Kingpins, Crime Busters, and the Birth of the American Underworld” on Tuesday, September 24, from 6-7 pm. The cost is pay as you wish. Author Dan Slater will discuss his work. To register for the program, visit <https://fareharbor.com/embeds/book/eldridgestreet/items/571310/availability/1524475511/book/?full-items=yes>.

◆ Hillel International will hold the virtual “Hillel’s Virtual College Prep Series: College Selection: Finding the Best Fit for Your Student” on Thursday, September 19, at noon. To register for the program, visit <https://hillel.jotform.com/242355138391962?af=&gs=>.

◆ The Hebrew Union College will hold the hybrid program “Creatures in Medieval and Early Modern Books: Forms, Functions, and Artistic Fantasy” on Thursday, September 19, at 12:30 pm. The lecture will “explore the forms and functions of these fantastic beings, which appear not only in the margins, but also as the focus of religious and secular books alike.” For more information or to register, visit <https://huc.edu/event/creatures-in-medieval-and-early-modern-books-forms-functions-and-artistic-fantasy/>.

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

Jewish Community Center

JCC Friendship Club

The JCC Friendship Club met on August 21. The meeting was called to order by Sylvia Diamond. After reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and singing “Hatikvah,” Sue Herzog gave the treasurer’s report. Bruce Orden set up the projector and we were able to see a movie. He showed “The Jazz Singer” starring Neil Diamond. We were so engrossed in it that we stayed one half hour longer to see the end of it. Neil played the part of a cantor and sang Sabbath songs, as well as part of a Yom Kippur service. Thanks to Bruce, it was a good experience.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 18, when we will meet the new rabbi from Temple Concord. Rabbi Leah Moser will be the guest speaker. Come join us at the JCC at 1:30 pm on September 18.

Sylvia Diamond
President

Reunion

Continued from page 8

husband, Irv, along with their four children. My Berman first cousins, Andy, Sandy, Peter and Steven, and I exchanged warm greetings. With my cousins, Leslie and Karen, the daughters of Uncle Alan and Aunt Sheila Simons, discussion ensued about the family business they run, a shoe store in Grandpa Joe’s time and now a retail outlet for police, fire and other uniforms.

My first cousins provided pathways for conversations with their spouses, children and grandchildren. I was eager to hear their stories and to share mine. Given my age, I was able to share details about earlier generations that were hitherto unknown to them. For example, with Avi, a charismatic comer in the Las Vegas entertainment world, I sparked interest in the saga of the departed Charlie Milhendler, who moonlighted as a professional clown. Thinking of several of our line with connections to the entertainment industry, Avi and I both wondered if there was something in our family culture hospitable to shtick.

Halfway through the reunion, cousin Steven briefly recounted that over the years a number of family members had wished for such an event, a prelude to our gathering. Sister Jo Ann led the family in singing “Happy Birthday” to the oldest attendee, Uncle Alan, who had just turned 88. Cousin-in-law Rabbi Charley Levi recited a prayer in both Hebrew and English, part of which counseled: “[W]e are more than a memory slowly fading into the darkness. With our lives we give life. Something of us can never die...”

Immediately, following the reunion, my son, Joe, and grandsons Isaac, 12, and Dan, 8, joined me at the Temple Beth El cemetery in Peabody. Beth El, founded in Lynn and relocated to Swampscott, merged with Temple Israel to form Congregation Shirat Hayam, Conservative by

affiliation and the largest New England synagogue north of Boston. As president of Shirat Hayam, Joe has titular responsibility for the cemetery. Most of the founding American generation of Simons are buried there.

Joe, Isaac, Dan and I placed stones on all Simons graves. In time, a car pulled up, and two women approached, Jamie and Bette. With the arrival of our rediscovered cousins, shared stories grew more personal. At the graves of her parents, Jamie spoke of her father Marmel (Marnie) Abrams, a tall, handsome, muscular man who found success in the theater, and who died in his early 50s from cancer, leading to his choice of cremation to destroy all vestiges of the cancer and rendering his remains, amidst controversy, the first ashes interred here. Jamie’s mother Selma (Sel) lived as a widow for 40 years, never remarrying or even dating. Outfitted with clippers, Bette trimmed around inscribed ground plates.

Emotion swept over me as I stood before the gravestone of my grandfather, Joseph Boros Simons, with my son Joseph Brian Simons by my side. Grandpa Joe and his sister, Rose, were the first of our tribe to settle permanently in America. As a shoe factory worker and wrestler, Grandpa Joe saved money to bring his parents and other siblings to the U.S. He changed our surname from Simonovich to Simons and built the family business that still survives. In his youth, Grandpa Joe was a World War I soldier and 50 years later assisted in the capture of “the Boston Strangler.”

As Joe, Isaac, Dan and I departed the cemetery, a consensus emerged that the Simons family reunion was interesting and significant, providing an enjoyable opportunity to meet relatives. Isaac had the final word, finding the visit with our departed informative, but “solemn.”

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State comptroller: 44 percent of New York hate crimes in 2023 aimed at Jews

By JNS staff

(JNS)—Data from the state of New York shows that reported hate crimes for 2023 jumped 69 percent from 2019. The office of State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli released a new analysis on August 28 titled “The Concerning Growth of Hate Crime in New York State,” which broke down hate-crime reports by intended target and compared the results with previous years. “In 2023, nearly 44 percent of all recorded hate crime incidents and 88 percent of re-

ligious-based hate crimes targeted Jewish victims, the largest share of all such crimes,” the report said.

DiNapoli stated that “fighting hatred and bigotry demands that we communicate with, respect and accept our neighbors. It requires our spiritual, political, community and business leaders to take active roles in denouncing hate, investing in prevention and protection efforts, and increasing education that celebrates the value of New York’s diversity.”

In 2023, hate crimes were divided along the lines of nearly half based on religion and about one-third for race or ethnicity, with the LGBTQ community targeted by 17 percent.

Between 2018 and 2023, hate crimes against Jews rose from 253 to 477, an increase of 89 percent. During the same period, hate crimes against Muslims in the state rose from 18 to 37, a rise of 106 percent.

“We are deeply grateful to State Comp-

troller Tom DiNapoli for producing this critical report,” said Mark Treyger, CEO of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York. “It’s a crucial reminder that each hate-crime statistic represents a New Yorker who is suffering.”

He added that the report “challenges every New Yorker, from our government offices, religious institutions, private industries, to our schools, to actively build strategies to combat all forms of hatred.”

Hochul talks with leaders from 200 New York colleges about campus security

By JNS staff

(JNS)—New York Gov. Kathy Hochul held a conference call with the academic leaders of more than 200 colleges throughout the state on August 26 about new measures to contain intimidation and crime at anti-Israel protests on university campuses. Public safety experts also participated. Hochul named public safety her “top priority” and said with

classes resuming this fall, “it is essential that all students feel safe and are free from harm.”

The governor stated that in the spring, she “directed college campuses to review and update their emergency response plans, and as tensions may be high as we start the academic year, I will continue to ensure all campus leaders and public safety officials have the resources they

need to keep students safe.”

The Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services has reviewed campus emergency plans and provided training sessions for staff based on the guidance from the Campus Planning Toolkit issued by the U.S. Department of Education.

The New York State Police has also prepared for activists opposing the Jewish state with troop commanders visiting university

administrators to advise on various issues, including the necessary forms to request assistance from local law enforcement.

John B. King Jr., chancellor of the State University of New York system, called safety “paramount.” These academic institutions, he said, “have been and remain fiercely committed to ensuring security, civil discourse and inclusivity on our campuses.”

Volunteers saved \$50m in Israeli produce during war, study finds

By Etgar Lefkovits

(JNS)—Volunteers in Israel have saved agricultural produce valued at \$50 million since the start of the war against Hamas in Gaza, even amid major damage to the country’s agricultural sector, according to a study released recently. Hundreds of thousands of volunteers from Israel and around the world have helped rescue over 35,000 tons of produce, according to Leket Israel, The National Food Bank, a registered Israel-based charity.

Nearly one in two Israelis volunteered in

the first months of the war, earlier surveys have shown, while both Jewish and Christian volunteers from around the globe came to Israel to help hard-hit farmers harvest their crops. The price of fresh produce in Israel still increased by as much as 18 percent during the first six months of the war, the report found, while fruit prices rose by as much as 12 percent. Nearly a third of Israel’s agricultural land lies in frontline areas, with about 22 percent in the Gaza border area and 10 percent on the northern border with Lebanon.

The study found that increased food waste as a result of the war cost the economy approximately \$275 million, including \$185 million worth of wasted food. More than 20 percent of produce was wasted as a result of the war, the study found, compared to less than 10 percent before the war broke out.

“The war has caused severe damage to Israeli agriculture and its consequences will be felt for many years to come,” said Gidi Kroch, CEO of Leket Israel. “Strengthening local agriculture is not only an essential economic need but a necessary condition to ensure food security and strengthen national resilience for Israel’s citizens.”



At left: Israeli reserve soldiers helped farmers pick oranges in Moshav Beit Hillel, not far from the Israeli border with Lebanon on November 10. (Photo by Ayal Margolin/Flash90)

Israel launches \$9.5M program for Negev, Galilee

By JNS staff

(JNS)—The Israel Innovation Authority recently announced a \$9.5 million fund aimed at encouraging high-tech companies to expand into Israel’s war-battered northern and southern regions. This funding, part of the “Leap to High-Tech” program, will support companies in opening new branches and hiring local talent, fostering economic growth and reducing disparities across the country. The program is being launched in collaboration with the Ministry of the Negev, Galilee and National Resilience, the Ministry for Social Equality and the Tekuma Authority.

Under the program, companies will be eligible to receive financial support for training inexperienced employees, as well as funding for experienced workers who will mentor the new hires. The companies selected are expected to launch their programs within six months of receiving the grant, with an execution period of 12-24 months.

“Strengthening employment in the Negev and Galilee is a priority. The state has a vested interest in encouraging companies to expand their activities to the Negev and Galilee, thereby increasing quality employment and allowing talented young people to remain and build their future in these regions, while also attracting new, strong populations to the area,” said Yitzhak Wasserlauf, minister for the Development of the Negev, Galilee and National Resilience.

As part of the support, high-tech companies may receive:

- ◆ Up to 70 percent of the approved budget for a program with a scope of up to one million shekels (\$273,000).
- ◆ Up to 50 percent of the approved budget



A large fire after missiles launched from Lebanon hit open areas in the Galilee on June 12. (Photo by Ayal Margolin/Flash90)

for a program with a scope of up to five million shekels (\$1.4 million).

- ◆ Up to 30 percent of the approved budget for a program with a scope of up to 15 million shekels (\$4.1 million).

Companies interested in expanding their operations to the Negev, Galilee, and periphery regions can submit applications until September 29.

Simultaneously, the Investment Authority at the Ministry of Economy and Industry has launched a program designed to assist in the establishment and relocation of knowledge-intensive, high-salary operations for businesses in the industrial and high-tech sectors in national priority areas and Jerusalem. Companies may receive a grant of up to 30 percent of the cost of new employees’ salaries. The assistance includes covering up to 30 percent of the employees’ salaries, with the call for proposals open until September 16.

“The ‘Leap to High-Tech’ program is designed to reduce the risk for high-tech companies considering following the path of many others and opening operations outside of their main headquarters,” said IIA CEO Dror Bin.

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