

THE REPORTER

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BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK

JCC to hold "Comedy Cafe at the J Fund-raising Gala" on Nov. 16

The Jewish Community Center will hold a "Comedy Cafe at the J Fund-raising Gala" on Saturday, November 16, at 7 pm, at the JCC, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal. It will feature Mike Albanese, a "nationally acclaimed" comedian known for "his quick wit and engaging storytelling." Opening the evening will be local talent Josh Wallenstein, with additional special guest appearances by Naima Kradjian and Jan DeAngelo.

Tickets are \$65 and all proceeds will go toward supporting the JCC's youth

programming and providing scholarship assistance for families in need. Sponsorship opportunities are available at three levels: Gaffaw for \$1,000, Chuckle for \$500 and Giggle for \$250. Sponsors will receive recognition during the event and help ensure the JCC can continue its work throughout the year. To reserve tickets, or to sponsor the event, contact the JCC at 607-724-2417 by Tuesday, November 5.

"Join us for an evening of laughs and generosity at the 'Comedy Cafe at the J,'" said organizers of the event. "This year's fund-raiser holds special meaning, as it will be held in memory of Giordi DeAngelo, honoring his legacy and impact on the community. DeAngelo was a beloved figure in the Binghamton community, known for his unwavering dedication to the arts, education and youth development. A talented musician and educator, Giordi used his passion for music to inspire countless young people, nurturing creativity and fostering a love for learning. His involvement

with local programs and commitment to mentorship left a lasting impact, creating opportunities for children and families throughout the region." Organizers added, "Don't miss your chance to enjoy an incredible night of entertainment and light dinner while making a meaningful difference. Reserve your tickets today and join us for a night of comedy, community and compassion on November 16 - where every laugh will help support the next generation."

Global Day of Jewish Learning to be held on Nov. 17

By Reporter staff

A Global Day of Jewish Learning event will be held on Sunday, November 17, from 10 am-noon, at Temple Israel, 4737 Deerfield Pl., Vestal. The event is co-sponsored by Beth David Synagogue, the Jewish Community Center, the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, Temple Concord and Temple Israel. A light breakfast will

be served. A suggested donation from \$5-20 is requested. To register for the event, RSVP to Temple Israel at 607-723-7461 or office@templeisraelvestal.org by Monday, November 11.

The Global Day of Jewish Learning has been held annually since 2010 and was inspired by the late Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz. The event is held in groups and congrega-

tions across the country, and is powered by Limmud, which supports the creation of "a diverse, cohesive Jewish community rooted in the importance of celebrating and learning from differences." (More information on Limmud can be found at <https://limmudna.org/>.)

"The Global Day of Jewish Learning brings the community together to explore

basic Jewish principles," said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. "That fulfills the mission of the Federation and I am excited that we can bring this opportunity to Binghamton. This year's theme is 'One People' about the connections that bind Jews together in common memory and destiny. I hope everyone will come out to learn and shmooze."

Jewish Film Fest to hold virtual showings

"Martha Liebermann: A Stolen Life"

By Reporter staff

The Binghamton Jewish Film Fest will hold a virtual showing of the film "Martha Liebermann: A Stolen Life." Andrea Kastner, M.F.A., lecturer in the Department of Art and Design at Binghamton University, will moderate a Zoom discussion of the film. People will be able to register for links to the film and discussion on the Federation website at www.jfgeb.org/film-fest. The film will be available for viewing from Thursday-Sunday, November 7-10. The discussion will be held on Sunday, November 10, at 7 pm. The film is in German with subtitles. The film fest is being co-sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton and Ithaca Area United Jewish Community.

The film is based on the real life story of Martha Liebermann, the widow of the artist Max Liebermann. However, at age 85, she is faced with a dilemma: leave her beloved Germany or be deported to a concentration camp. Martha's friends pressure her into an illegal sale to finance her escape with a resistance group. Gestapo Commissioner

Teubner and his henchmen see this as an opportunity to set a trap for opponents of the regime since the art expert consulted works for them. Can Martha trust the art expert who helps, even though he has his own reasons to help the Nazis?

The film has won or been nominated for numerous awards, including the Best Narrative Feature Award at the Boca International Jewish Film Festival, Golden Nymph Awards for Best Film and Best Actress at the Monte-Carlo Television Festival, nominee at the Venice TV Award for Best TV Movie, nominee for the Hessian TV Award for Best Supporting Performance and nominee for the Venice TV Award Best TV Movie.

"I am looking forward to the start of this year's Film Fest and we have an excellent film for the first entry," said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. "It's fascinating to see the real life story of an amazing woman come to life on the screen."



At left: Thekla Carola Wied played the main character in "Martha Liebermann: A Stolen Life." (Photo used courtesy of Menemsha Films)

"All About the Levkoviches"

By Reporter staff

The Binghamton Jewish Film Fest will hold a virtual showing of the film "All About the Levkoviches." Bill Simons, Ph.D., professor emeritus of American history at SUNY Oneonta, will moderate a Zoom discussion of the film. People will be able to register for links to the film and discussion on the Federation website at www.jfgeb.org/film-fest. The film will be available for viewing from Thursday-Sunday, December 5-8. The discussion will be held on Sunday, December 8, at 7 pm. The film is in Hungarian with subtitles. The film fest is co-sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton and the Ithaca Area United Jewish Community.

The film tells the story of Tamás, a generous but stubborn boxing coach, who gets along well with everyone except his own son, Iván. The two have not spoken since Iván moved to Israel and became Orthodox. When Tamás' beloved wife, Zsuzsa, dies unexpectedly, Tamás tells his son that he

can sit *shiva* in his house if he brings his grandson, Ariel, with him. As past conflicts resurface, the father and son embark on an unexpected journey of self-reflection and reconciliation. They must not only face their old grievances during the one-week religious mourning, but help Ariel, who believes his grandmother's spirit is still in the house, deal with his own grief.

The Budapest Reporter said of the film "a clever blend of comedy and drama, 'All About the Levkoviches' is one of the rare movies that offer a little bit for everyone. The story... is captivating and educational, offering a great insight into the life of the Jewish community in Hungary, and the characters are definitely memorable." The website Film at Lincoln Center said the film is "told with delightfully mordant humor and a genuine warmth... [director Adam] Breier's film is masterfully acted and directed, maintaining a perfectly balanced tone between comedy and pathos."

The film was nominated for the George Gund III Memorial Central and Eastern See "Film" on page 7



At right: A scene from "All About the Levkoviches" (Photo used courtesy of Ulab)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Sisterhood events
BD Sisterhood dinner to feature talk by Dr. Dina Danon; TC Sisterhood plans Whale of a Sale.
.....Page 5

After Oct. 7
Freed teen hostage describes captivity; online hatred of Jews up 36.6% since Oct. 7 attacks.
.....Page 5

Digitizing holy texts
Ethiopian Jewish holy texts have been digitized for viewing on the National Library of Israel website.
.....Page 7

Special Sections
Book Reviews..... 4
Dine Out..... 4
Financial Planning 7
Classifieds 8

Opinion

October 7, 2024: day of reflection

By Bill Simons

For many around the world, October 7, 2024, constituted a day of profound significance, a time of sadness, remembrance and polarization. Exactly one year before, Hamas terrorists launched a war of annihilation. Murderous carnage, torture and rape marked Hamas' surprise attack on *kibbutzim*, villages, military installations and a music festival in southern Israel. Employing social media, the terrorists recorded their exaltation at the slaughter in grotesque images and sounds. The massacre erased the lives of 1,139 children, elderly, invalids, women and men. Another 254 were taken hostage. The bloodiest day in Jewish history since the Holocaust, October 7 initiated the Israel-Hamas War. Israel seeks the return of the hostages, the destruction of Hamas and security.

Over the course of the past year, Israel's actions have elicited support and protest in the United States and through-

out the world. Israel itself is divided over the conduct and goals of the war as well, as the leadership of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Resurgent antisemitism from the left and right has marred the social fabric of America and Europe. Ancient shibboleths about powerful Jewish cabals resurfaced; new canards depicted Jews as genocidal racists. Controversy often centered around questions of proportionality.

Hamas built a deep and complex tunnel system over Gaza residences, schools and hospitals, provoking Israeli attacks that claimed civilian lives. The Israeli offensive, rooted in the belief that this is an existential conflict to determine if there is a future for Israel and the Jewish people, has killed more than 40,000 Palestinians.

Hezbollah and Houthi joined Hamas' crusade to obliterate the Jewish state. In the aftermath of Iran's massive missile attack on Tel Aviv, a tense world waited upon Israel's response, one that some feared could spiral into a third world

war. Rallies and protests, political debate, religious services, threats and introspective inventories of conscience marked October 7, 2024, the anniversary of war's onset.

Former president and current Republican aspirant Donald Trump observed October 7 by visiting the Queens, NY, grave of Lubavitcher Rebbe Menachem Schneerson. With her Jewish husband, Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff, Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic candidate for president, planted a pomegranate tree to honor the memory of those killed during the initial Hamas attack on southern Israel.

In the days preceding October 7, 2024, I found myself embroiled in a heated debate within my labor union, the Oneonta Chapter of UUP (United University Professions). My attachment to UUP is strong and enduring, with 30-plus years of activism under my belt, encompassing 16 years See "Day" on page 8

Shirel Golan survived the Nova massacre but died by suicide. Online denial may be to blame

By Meredith Jacobs

This story originally appeared in the Forward. To get the Forward's free e-mail newsletters delivered to your inbox, visit forward.com/newsletter-signup.

Many survivors of October 7 have spent the past year testifying about what happened to them. They find meaning in speaking for those who no longer can – those who were murdered or abducted, as well as those who were silenced by their trauma.

But many of these survivors, especially young women who witnessed or experienced sexual violence at the Nova music festival, have told me over the past year that they feel like they are screaming into the void as they try to counter anti-Israel propaganda and misinformation online.

We recently witnessed the tragic toll that can result from these survivors having to relive the most horrible day of their lives over and over again, from them being stuck in

an endless loop of trauma. Shirel Golan, who was rescued by a police car as she fled the Nova site, died by suicide on her 22nd birthday, after twice being hospitalized with acute symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder including disassociation and withdrawal.

The brutal atrocities committed on October 7, especially against the thousands of young people attending the Nova festival, were beyond imagination. I do not know how anyone experiences these horrors and moves on. Adding to the trauma of witnessing their friends hunted down, tortured, raped and murdered by terrorists, these survivors are also facing a world that refuses to believe their accounts.

Online, female hostages who have shared how they were sexually assaulted when in Hamas captivity have faced denial and mockery. "She is lying through her teeth and reading through a script," read one of the more charitable replies to Amit Soussana's testimony of being groped and

forced to perform a sexual act on her captor.

Other survivors like Golan see this. It makes healing – let alone sharing what happened – feel impossible. In her December 2023 report on the situation in Israel, United Nations Special Representative Pramila Patten noted that "the national and international media scrutiny of those who made their accounts public hindered access to survivors of the attacks, including potential survivors/victims of sexual violence."

Campaigns to deny systematic, conflict-related sexual violence are as old as the use of rape as a weapon of war. But social media's ability, today, to spread these messages of denial to millions compounds the spread of terror and trauma. Even more insidious is the use of campaigns to reshape the narrative; to justify "rape as resistance," claiming it was therefore deserved, to blame the survivor for what happened to her.

See "Blame" on page 7

In My Own Words

A rabbi explores what it means to be Jewish after 10/7

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

It's difficult to write about Rabbi Elliot Cosgrove's book "For Such a Time as This: On Being Jewish Today" (Harvest) without offering a personal take on his view of American Jewry and its relationship to Israel and Judaism. I generally avoid reading books focusing on these topics because 1) I am not a historian, sociologist or political scientist, so I can't analyze his writing from a scholarly viewpoint, and 2) it's difficult to separate my personal feelings from my professional reviewer ones when reading this type of work. I also read a great deal about the topics he covers during the work day and usually prefer to read something else in my free time (which is when I read the books I review for the paper).

As a book reviewer, I can note that Cosgrove, who is the spiritual leader of Park Avenue Synagogue in New York City, writes beautiful and moving prose. He is obviously knowledgeable and has a grasp of Jewish American history. His credentials include graduating from the Jewish Theological Seminary and earning a Ph.D. at the University of Chicago Divinity School. His biography on the Park Avenue Synagogue's website notes that his dissertation focused on Rabbi Louis Jacobs, a 20th century Anglo-Jewish theologian. That bio and the one on his book jacket also mention his involvement with numerous other organizations.

If this sounds like I'm dithering rather than writing directly about the book, you're correct. That's because I find myself both agreeing and disagreeing with his insights – sometimes over the same issue. Part of his work looks at the divide between American Jews, whom Cosgrove feels

are less familiar with Jewish ritual practice and knowledge than they should be, and Israeli Jews, whom he believes don't always feel a connection to their American brethren. Of course, this is an oversimplification, but it helps him talk about the change that has occurred in how some younger American Jews may feel about Israel. He notes that for many Jews of his generation, Israel itself became the touchstone of their Judaism, rather than ritual and religious practice. However, Cosgrove also realizes that the same is not true for groups of younger contemporary Jews, for whom Israel has always been a strong nation.

But Cosgrove is not just interested in the past. The impetus for writing "For Such a Time as This" was the October 7, 2023, massacre in Israel. That means he is also interested in how we face the current moment and the need to plan for the future.

Readers may find themselves quibbling with his suggestions for the future, but what is impressive is that he tries to outline both sides of an issue. For example, he offers reasons for a two-state solution in Israel, which are followed by the reasons showing why that option is not viable. While he still prefers the two-state solution, he notes that now is not the time for that to happen. He talks about the need for American Jews to learn Judaism as more than a secular religion, but rather as a religious practice. Cosgrove also wants a reverse Birthright Israel because he feels Israeli Jews need to meet with Jews who live in the U.S. A connection between the two groups is something he feels is vital.

He does acknowledge that there are American Jews who haven't supported Israel's actions in the territories, even before the war in Gaza, and therefore feel far less of a connection to the country. However, he does not directly address the basic flaws they see in Zionism, including that there were non-Jews living in the land who did not/do not support a Jewish state.

Cosgrove generally avoids politics. He doesn't talk about the watchers whose warnings about Hamas were ignored (although to be fair, his work may have been written before that information became public). He also does not talk about Netanyahu other than to note that not all Israelis support their government's policies. However, he sees them as supporting their country because it is their country, much as Americans can dislike the policies of a president and still love the United States.

What Cosgrove really wants, though, is for American Jews to take action. That's reflected in his title "For Such a Time as This," which is taken from the book of Esther. When Mordecai asks Esther to approach the king to save the Jews of the kingdom even though she must risk her life to do so, he tells her that perhaps it was such a time as this that she was born. Cosgrove is asking us all to stand up and act as if this is the time for which we were created. The problem he doesn't completely address is that American Jews are divided about exactly what that means. Both sides can rightly claim Jewish values for their thoughts and actions. However, Cosgrove's work is worth reading and debating. Perhaps it will spark some much needed dialogue.



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BINGHAMTON, NY

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

LETTERS

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

ADS

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

DEADLINE

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

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www.thereporter.org

Matching grant for *The Reporter*

By Reporter staff

The Reporter announced that it has received a \$5,000 matching grant courtesy of the David and Virginia Eisenberg Fund. Donations will be accepted now through November 30. Donations may be made several ways:

- ◆ Give online through The Reporter Group's website, www.thereportergroup.org.
- ◆ Through Giving Tuesday e-mails that will be sent by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton. Anyone who does not receive Federation e-mails, but would like to be on the list, should e-mail director@jfgb.org with "Federation e-mail list" in the subject line.
- ◆ Mail donations to *The Reporter*, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850 with "matching grant" in the check's subject line.

"We are thrilled to once again receive a matching grant from the David and Virginia Eisenberg Fund," said Rabbi Rachel Esserman, executive editor of The Reporter Group. "They have been so generous over the years, and we deeply appreciate all they have done and continue to do."

Esserman added, "If you are thinking about making a donation to the paper, this is the perfect time to do it. Every penny counts in this economic climate. So many Jewish newspapers are either going under or turning into online publications only. Although *The Reporter* is now biweekly, I am pleased we are still able to produce hard-copy newspapers for our readers. I know that I prefer to read offline. Plus, a hard copy is great for those of us who like to read the paper on Shabbat, but don't get on the computer that day. We try to be the one-stop shop for those interested in

learning about Jewish events in our community."

Esserman also noted, "Over the past three years, *The Reporter* has received many Syracuse Press Club awards and American Jewish Press Association Simon Rockower awards. That is pretty impressive for a small community newspaper."

Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation, was also pleased that *The Reporter* received the grant. "I think the paper is a valuable addition to our community," she said. "It not only lets me know what local organizations are doing, but helps keep us connected. Thank you to the Eisenberg Fund for its gift. I know the generosity of our community will make this fourth Giving Tuesday mini-campaign a success."

Chabad to hold JLI course "Nurturing Relationships" in Nov.

Registration is still being accepted for the new JLI course "Nurturing Relationships: Jewish Wisdom for Building Deeper, Richer Connection in all of your Relationships," which will offer participants practical wisdom for improving interpersonal relationships. The first of six weekly sessions will begin on Monday, November 11, at 7 pm. The course is being offered in person at the Chabad Center and via Zoom to remote students or locals

who prefer this option. To register for the course visit Jewishbu.com/JLIbing or call Ruth Shea at Chabad at 607-797-0015. The course fee is \$79 or \$150 per couple which includes the text book.

"Through an exploration of Jewish texts the weekly sessions will include an in depth study of empathy, the art of listening, the art of disagreement, positivity, the art of influence and forgiveness," said organizers of the class.

BD Luncheon on Nov. 9 to feature Mark Yonaty



Mark Yonaty (Photo courtesy of Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce)

Beth David Synagogue's November Luncheon will be held on Saturday, November 9. Mark Yonaty will speak on "Binghamton Transformed: Downtown Binghamton Ten Years Later and Going Strong!" 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.

Born and raised in Binghamton, Yonaty graduated from Hillel Academy and studied at SUNY Broome and Binghamton University. He is the owner of M.B. Development

and has been involved in projects that include the creation of new restaurants, residences and spaces for community services. Yonaty indicated that his passion for real estate and real estate development has resulted in the restoration and repurposing of buildings that are part of Binghamton's architectural history. This includes his most recent project, which is the opening of the Station 45 Chophouse, located

in the old Lackawanna Train Station, a space that also serves as a space for local businesses.

Among the many awards garnered by Yonaty is the 2020 Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce Entrepreneur of the Year Award. They were both honored in June 2023 with Hillel Academy's N. Theodore Sommer Community Service Award. Most recently, Yonaty was honored by the Preservation Association of the Southern Tier for his restoration of the Lackawanna Train Station.


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 See "BD" on page 7

OF NOTE

Blackwell

Lisa Blackwell will receive the Volunteer Fundraiser of the Year award from the Finger Lakes Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals. The Chapter noted that the award was "to acknowledge [Blackwell's] commitment and accomplishments in supporting the essential work carried out by numerous nonprofits in our community." The award will be presented at the organization's 2024 National Philanthropy Day celebration on November 1. The award honors an individual or family that has demonstrated "exemplary volunteer leadership in the nonprofit sector."

Blackwell was nominated by Marcia Craner, who wrote, "Lisa describes herself as a psychologist by day and a fundraiser by night. She is one of those individuals who has almost single-handedly transformed a non-profit through strong commitment, visionary stewardship, and extraordinary dedication... She has developed a passion for fundraising, and volunteers to raise dollars and support for the restoration of the Kilmer Mansion in Binghamton."



DEADLINES

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

| ISSUE | DEADLINE |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| November 15-28 | November 6 |
| November 29-December 12... | November 20 |
| December 13-26..... | December 4 |
| December 27-January 9, 2025 ... | December 18 |

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

The JCC Friendship Club is going out for lunch. Please join us on Wednesday, November 20, at 1 pm, at The Lost Dog Café. Everyone is welcome. No reservations needed.

Binghamton  Philharmonic

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Tea and Talk

Chabad of Binghamton, with co-sponsorship from the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, holds Tea and Talk programs, an hour-long gathering for local Jewish seniors who are looking for "a meaningful conversation," from 11 am-noon, in Chabad's atrium lounge.

Upcoming dates are:

- ◆ November 14
- ◆ December 5
- ◆ December 19

To RSVP and for more information, visit www.JewishBU.com/Tea or call 797-0015.

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To arrange for a sponsorship or for answers to questions, contact Rabbi Rachel Esserman at rachel@thereportergroup.org.

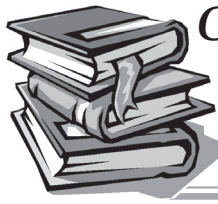


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Off the Shelf

The ancient rabbinic view of sacrifices

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Some scholars believe that the ancient rabbis' answer to the destruction of the second Temple in Jerusalem was to create a world where animal sacrifices were no longer considered necessary. In fact, there are claims that the rabbis were pleased with this turn of events because it brought their version of Judaism to prominence. Mira Balberg, professor of history and ancient Jewish civilization at the University of California, San Diego, believes the reality of the situation was far different. In her complex "Blood for Thought: The Reinvention of Sacrifice in Early Rabbinic Literature" (University of California Press), she shows how the rabbis embraced a different purpose for sacrifice, transforming the reasons for its use to resemble the *halachic* (legalistic) world of the rabbinic Judaism they were creating. Her focus is on the texts of the early generation of Tannaim with a concentration on those written before the Palestinian Talmud was compiled, for example the Mishnah, the Tosefta and the works of Tannaitic *midrashim*, which focuses on legal issues.

Balberg notes that, even within the Bible, the nature of sacrifice changed over time. The spontaneous sacrifices offered by the patriarchs in the book of Genesis became, in later books, a list of offerings, which were to be done in a specific location and in very specific ways. One thing that remained steady was the connection between the person offering the sacrifice and the deity who received that offering. According to Balberg, the rabbis changed the focus of sacrifice so that neither the giver or the deity were considered important. What now mattered instead was the priests' accurate performance of the sacrifice.

While the giver was not considered completely inconsequential, it was the ritual actions – particularly the ritual actions focusing on the blood of the animal – that made a sacrifice valid. This change was also informed by the idea that the deity did not desire the sweet smells of the

offering or the meat/food itself. The rabbis also emphasized the communal aspects of the sacrifices – that they were now thought to come from the people of Israel as a whole rather than the specific individual.

The author notes that, according to the rabbis, the essence of animal sacrifice was the shedding of blood. She writes about "the rabbis' heightened attention to the blood within the sacrificial process. But a close look at Tannaitic sacrificial legislation reveals that the rabbis do not simply underscore that the treatment of blood is the most efficacious part of the sacrificial process, but rather construe the treatment of blood as the sacrificial process per se. They both expand the ritual component of the manipulation of blood from a single action to a series of actions, and make the point that the manipulation of blood is the most critical and determining part in assessing the validity of sacrifices. Some rabbis even maintain that the sacrificial flesh is secondary in importance to the blood and that a sacrifice may be considered complete and valid even if no flesh is at hand." To show how important these sacrificial actions were, Balberg shows how the rabbis took what was once a single action and divided it into four separate steps.

In addition to the rabbinic focus on the communal aspects of sacrifice (so that even gifts given by individuals were considered part of the communal sacrifice), Balberg shows how the rabbis also changed how the priesthood was viewed. Rather than say that specific priests were to perform specific actions, they brought a communal idea to the choice of priests: now each priest could perform any of the actions. Even the role of the high priest changed: from her reading of rabbinical writings, Balberg believes that the rabbis suggested that a different person was picked to play the role of the high priest on Yom Kippur each year. The priests' individual identities were subsumed into the whole: it was the communal aspect of the priesthood that

now mattered. This meant that – just as when reciting prayers and keeping *halachic* laws of dietary, Shabbat and holiday practices – the sacrifices were for everyone and could be done by every priest.

Balberg notes that this was how the rabbis dealt with their rapidly changing world. She writes that "the rabbis developed a picture of congregational offerings as idealized manifestations of unity and solidarity at a time in which ethnic and religious identities and boundaries were going through rapid transformations, and in which those transformations were often deeply entangled in sacrificial discourse and sacrificial practice...the rabbinic discourse on congregational offerings can be seen as an attempt to fantasize a stable and self-contained Jewish identity, generated by sacrifice." Rather than dismissing sacrifice, the rabbis used it to create a vision of Jewish oneness that could now be accomplished through *halachic* practice. They created an idealized version of the Temple, one that had – at least, according to most scholars – never existed in this form.

This played into the rabbis' idea of *halachic* process, which focused on the purpose of sacrificing as attaining atonement for the community. That meant atonement for every member of the larger collective. Following *halachic* rules were considered necessary because one's private actions affected the community: "No place is hidden, and no action is silent or secret: the fundamental premise of rabbinic *halakhah* is that the private is public and the public is private, the internal external and the external internal."

This short review can't do justice to Balberg's complex ideas or her discussion of rabbinic texts. "Blood for Thought" is not an easy work to read: the prose is scholarly and dense so it is not for the casual reader. However, anyone interested in the sacrificial cult and how the ancient rabbis envisioned a post-Temple world may find it worth the struggle.



Off the Shelf

Two women in the Bible

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Close readers of the biblical text often have difficulty when those biblical characters are portrayed in fictional works. It can be jarring when a novel strays too far from the story as it appears in the biblical text or goes off on a tangent with events that aren't part of the Bible or *midrash* (stories of biblical characters told by the ancient rabbis based on their interpretation of the text). Some readers are tempted to simply list – and object to – these differences, but lovers of fiction are often willing to suspend belief. Those who are will find two recent novels of interest: "The Scrolls of Deborah: Book 1 of the Desert Songs Trilogy" by Esther Goldenberg (100 Block by Row House) and "Ahoti: A Story of Tamar" by Miriam Feinberg Vamosh and Eva Marie Everson (Raven/Parclete Press).

Since the biblical text contains two characters with these names, readers might be curious about the focus of each work. The biggest surprise is that the Deborah of Goldenberg's novel is the Deborah mentioned by name as Rebecca's nurse in Genesis 35:8. However, the nurse's name was not noted in Genesis 24:59, which just says Rebecca left home with her nurse when traveling to Canaan. Commentators have questioned whether these nurses were the same women and debated why her name was given only in the second instance. Goldenberg not only creates a back story for Deborah, she spins an elaborate web to connect Deborah and Abraham's family, a connection not

found in the biblical text.

The Tamar of Vamosh and Everson's novel is the daughter of King David, who was raped by her half-brother Amnon and whose full brother, Absalom, later murders Amnon for the offense. The text does not mention what happens to Tamar once she is taken into Absalom's house after the rape. The authors imagine the rest of her life based on a lost work "Words of Gad the Seer," which is mentioned in the books of Chronicles. A proposed version of the book was found among the texts read by the Jews of Cochin, India. The authors thanked Israeli Professor Meir Bar-Ilan, who published a study of that text, and incorporated stories from his work into their novel.

"The Scrolls of Deborah" asks for the most suspension of disbelief: The Deborah of the title is not just the nurse of Rebecca, but the great-granddaughter of Abraham and Sarah. Her grandmother, Hallel, was their first child, born long before Isaac. The patriarchs gave Hallel in marriage to Abraham's nephew, Lot, but when the families traveled to Egypt to escape a famine, Lot gave her to the pharaoh, and Abraham and Sarah never saw her again. Hallel made a successful marriage to an Egyptian and gave birth to five daughters, including Daganyah, the mother of Deborah. Through some clever plotting, the author arranges for Deborah to return to the branch of the family into which Rebecca was born. It is from there that she returns to Canaan to meet Abraham, although it is too late for her to meet Sarah.

The novel tells the story of Deborah's life, including her special relationship with Isaac and Rebecca's children, Esau and Jacob. According to Goldenberg's version, Deborah was a second mother to the twins and as close to Rebecca as a sister. The scrolls that tell her story are being transcribed by Joseph, who, at this point in time, is Jacob and Rachel's only child. Joseph is 10 years old when Deborah first tells him her

story, but they talk more than six years before her dictation ends. Her emphasis on storytelling – something she learned from her grandmother, who made her repeat her history until she had it memorized – is an important theme in the novel.

The work focuses on the life of women, including their gathering to sing, dance and tell stories under the full moon. Some parts of Deborah's tales are based on ancient *midrash*, while others offer contemporary interpretations. The latter include a controversial idea about Isaac's appearance and behavior. The author also interprets a verse about Jacob's daughters as not meaning his daughters-in-law as many traditional commentaries suggested, but rather his children by birth. The authors create names for each of these women and give them different personalities.

The prose of "The Scrolls of Deborah" is simple and easy to read, as befitting a story told orally. Goldenberg does a good job combining the traditional story from the Bible with additions not found in the original work. This is not a novel for readers who prefer to stick to the explicit details of the biblical text, but those willing to accept the Deborah's controversial lineage will enjoy a more personal and intimate look at Isaac, Rebecca and their children.

While "The Scrolls of Deborah" offers plain prose, the writing in "Ahoti" (which means "my sister") is far more poetic, with beautiful descriptions of places and people. Rather than taking liberties with the biblical text as written, the novel seeks to fill in parts of the story that the Bible is not interested in relating: what happened to Tamar after she was raped. However, it also offers tales about the life of King David, integrating them into Tamar's story.

Tamar serves as the narrator, telling of her life in Jerusalem as a healer – that is, until her life abruptly changes after her rape. When she learns that some believe that she conspired with Absalom in his desire to become the king's heir, she no longer feels safe and escapes the palace, not an easy task. Being thought a co-conspirator in her own rape leaves her feeling silenced and insecure. Noting her need to move and begin her life over several times doesn't spoil the plot because the novel opens when she is being kept prisoner in Geshur, with the king's army being told to bring her back to Jerusalem.

The last section of "Ahoti" is very suspenseful because that part of the story is not found in the Bible. Its ending is moving and satisfying, although even if the authors had made different choices, it would still have been gratifying to learn about Tamar's potential fate. Also of interest are the inclusion of *midrashic* material about the origins of David, and a psychological analysis of Amnon (who was bullied as a child) and Absalom, who, while beautiful on the outside, was cruel. There is a connection to another biblical story, but to say more would spoil that surprise. Readers who wish the biblical authors had paid far more attention to the lives of the women will enjoy this story.



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THE REPORTER
Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton

TC Sisterhood to hold Whale of a Sale

The Temple Concord Sisterhood's almost annual Whale of a Sale will begin on Sunday, November 3, from 10 am-4 pm, in the first floor social hall at Temple Concord, 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton. It will continue on Monday-Wednesday, November 4-6, from noon-6 pm. The last day will be a bag sale on Sunday,

November 10, from 10 am-4 pm. Whale of a Sale is open to the public.

The sale will feature new and nearly new clothing in all sizes for women, men, children, teens and babies. Also on sale will be household items, books for all ages, shoes, pocketbooks, jewelry, baby and children's toys and games, adult

games, small electrical items, household decorations, sports items, small furniture and more. New items may show up every day of the sale. "Everything will be priced very low," said organizers of the event.

Whale Co-Chairwomen Ani Loew and Lynn Ross noted there will be no

sale on Thursday, Friday and Saturday of that week. There may be a bake sale on Sunday, November 3.

"It is just in time for holiday gifts and winter wear for shoppers and their families," said Loew and Ross. "Don't miss this high quality once a year sale winter sale."

Dr. Dina Danon to speak at BD Sisterhood dinner on Nov. 13

Beth David Sisterhood will express its appreciation to all those who have paid their \$25 Sisterhood dues for 2024-25 by treating them to a free pasta dinner at Beth David Synagogue on Wednesday, November 13, at 6 pm. Non-dairy and gluten-free options

will be available. Non-member friends and guests, both male and female, are welcome to attend, but will be charged \$10 for the dinner. RSVPs are requested by noon on Thursday, November 7, and can be made by calling the Beth David office at 607-722-1793, and

leave a message, or e-mailing bethdavid@stny.r.r.com. Drop-ins will not be turned away.

The speaker for the evening will be Dr. Dina Danon, associate professor of Judaic studies and history at Binghamton University. She will discuss her ongoing research

into Jewish marriage in the Sephardic world, and her experiences living in Israel during the past year.

Food for CHOW will be collected at the meeting. "Please join us," said organizers of the event.

Study: Online hatred of Jews spiked 36.6 percent in 11 months after October 7 attacks

By JNS staff

(JNS) – The antisemitism watchdog group Cyberwell released a report on the evolutions of online hate both before and after the Hamas terrorist attacks in southern Israel on October 7, 2023.

The organization's research suggests that in the 11 months after the atrocities committed by Hamas, the antisemitic content tracked by its technology rose 36.6 percent with an 86 percent spike in the first three weeks. Cyberwell explains that its monitoring programs flagged 135,556 posts that were likely antisemitic in the 11 months before October 7; in the 11 months

that followed, it captured 185,229.

Cyberwell found that narratives demonizing Jews shifted after the attacks. In the 11 months before then, the claim that Jews dominated or controlled the world increased the most in antisemitic social-media discourse with 33 percent of posts. In the 11 months after, that trope fell to 13.8 percent while "Jews are evil" rose from 16.3 percent to 21.5 percent, and "Jews are an enemy" increased from 15.9 percent to 29.2 percent.

Tal-Or Cohen Montemayor, CyberWell founder and executive director, said Hamas "hijacked our favorite social-media platforms leveraging gaps in existing policies

and moderation efforts to turn these apps into weapons of mass psychological warfare and to normalize hate against Jews worldwide."

She added that "it is clear that the challenge of online antisemitism has taken a dark turn and must be addressed. Our latest report underscores not only the urgency of the situation but also the necessity for continued vigilance and proactive measures in countering hate speech."

Calling it "critical" for online platforms to "be held accountable," Montemayor urged for companies to "implement robust strategies to counteract the spread of hate. While we've seen progress in the removal rates of antisemitic content, there remains much work to be done."



An Israeli flag in Re'im, the site of the Nova music festival in southern Israel near the border with the Gaza Strip, which was attacked by Hamas terrorists who slaughtered 364 people there on October 7, 2023. (Photo by Alex Kolomoisky, KKL-JNF)

"Civilians beat us": Israeli teen discusses Hamas captivity

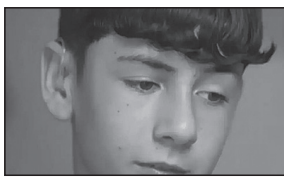
By Israel Hayom staff

(Israel Hayom via JNS) – In a poignant interview for the "Children of October 7" social media project, 13-year-old Eitan Yahalomi from Kibbutz Nir Oz shared the harrowing details of his captivity at the hands of Hamas terrorists in Gaza.

The French-Israeli survivor, who was released in November, then aged 12, as part of a prisoner exchange deal, recounted instances of physical abuse, persistent hunger and being forced to watch disturbing footage.

Yahalomi was kidnapped from his home during the October 7 Hamas onslaught. His father, Ohad, who was shot during the abduction, remains in captivity, while his mother, Batsheva, and little sister Yael managed to escape an attempted kidnapping.

"When we arrived in Gaza, many people beat us. We heard gunshots and shouting



Eitan Yahalomi (Screenshot courtesy of "Children of October 7")

in Arabic. They were waiting for us. They were civilians," Yahalomi said, describing his entry into Gaza.

When asked if he had felt scared, he responded candidly, "A bit, to be honest."

Throughout his captivity, Yahalomi faced constant hunger. "My daily ration was a pita and a cucumber," he revealed. He also spoke of being subjected to disturbing content. "They showed me videos of them killing people. They seemed happy about it."

When asked whether he tried to avoid watching, Yahalomi explained, "No, it wouldn't have mattered anyway, he wouldn't have allowed it. I saw even worse things. These images are constantly in my mind."

As for his ability to sleep at night, Yahalomi added with stark honesty, "Not much. I've been through the worst, and that's that."

Originally published by Israel Hayom.

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Weekly Parasha

Noah, Genesis 6:9-11:32

The first drunk

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR, THE REPORTER GROUP

“Noah was a tiller of the soil and he planted a vineyard. He drank from the wine and became drunk and was uncovered in the midst of his tent.” – Genesis 9:20-21

Commentators differ on whether or not to condemn Noah for drinking so much that he passed out. Some claim that, since his was the first vineyard planted and the first wine made, Noah had no way of knowing the possible effects of drinking so much of the beverage. Others say that the text teaches that even righteous men like Noah can make a mistake and drink too much. What’s clear is that both interpretations consider drinking to excess inappropriate behavior. What these commentators don’t consider is that perhaps Noah became drunk for a reason, one that had to do with the aftermath of the flood.

The Torah text never offers a description of what the earth looked like after Noah and his family left the ark. It does mention the blessings that God gave to Noah and his family. There is also the promise that God would never again destroy the world by a flood. But the world that Noah encountered after the flood was very different from the one with which he was familiar. That world was filled with extended family, friends and community. Although it contained evil people whom God wished to destroy, it was also filled with joy, celebration and companionship. All that was now gone. Noah and his family were alone in a world with only the animals from the ark as companions. There were no other humans left.

Was the world Noah encountered bare and empty

with all sign of the people who once lived there washed away in the water? Or did the remnants of their tents and buildings remain as reminders of what life was before the flood? Was the land filled with the water-logged and decaying bodies of those who had died? Either way, looking out across the land must have been a traumatic experience for Noah.

It should, then, come as no surprise that he might want to plant a vineyard and drink to forget the trauma he felt every day. While we are quick to forget all those who shared the earth with him, perhaps Noah could not. He might have felt like lifting a glass of wine in their honor and, maybe, not stopping until he no longer felt the pain of their loss.

Congregational Notes

Temple Israel

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

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

On Saturday, November 2, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person. The bar mitzvah of Dan Sokol will take place during the service. The Torah portion is Genesis 6:9-11:32 and the haftarah is Isaiah 66:1-24. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 6:45 pm.

There will be an Executive Board meeting on Tuesday, November 5, at 7 pm.

Hebrew School will meet on Wednesdays, November 6, 13 and 20.

On Saturday, November 9, Shacharit services will be held at 9:45 am via Zoom and in-person. The Torah portion is Genesis 12:1-17:27 and the haftarah is Isaiah 40:27-41:16. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 5:45 pm.

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. Weekly 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.

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 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.

Synagogues limit face-to-face gatherings

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

Beth David Synagogue

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

Rohr Chabad Center

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

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

Temple 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.

Friday, November 1, light candles before 5:38 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, November 2 6:37 pm
Friday, November 8, light candles before 4:30 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, November 9 5:29 pm
Friday, November 15, light candles before 4:23 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, November 16 5:23 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, November 1: At 7:30 pm, Shabbat service. Join via Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3hRmW2Y>, meeting ID 869 9699 8146 and passcode 826330, dial in at 646-931-3860 or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/templeconcord/.

Saturday, November 2: At 9 am, Shabbat school; and at 9:15 am, Torah study in person and on Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87897900994?pwd=bOMvwx-DuovoaBInB4aVfHoTlSyamj.1>, meeting ID 878 9790 0994 and passcode 743506. To dial in, call 646-931-3860.

November 3-6 and 10: Temple Concord’s 40th Anniversary Whale of a Sale will be held November 3 from 10 am-4 pm; November 4, 5 and 6 from noon-6 pm; and November 10 from 10 am-4 pm.

Friday, November 8: 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, dial in at 646-931-3860 or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/templeconcord/.

Saturday, November 9: No Shabbat school; at 9:15 am, Torah study in person and on Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87897900994?pwd=bOMvwx-DuovoaBInB4aVfHoTlSyamj.1>, meeting ID 878 9790 0994 and passcode 743506. To dial in, call 646-931-3860.

Tuesday, November 12: At 7 pm, General (Board of Trustees) Board meeting, which is open to members of Temple Concord. For the meeting link, contact the synagogue at 607-723-7355 or templeconcordaa@gmail.com.

Norwich Jewish Center

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

Congregation Tikun v’Or

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism
Address: PO Box 3981, Ithaca, NY 14852; 2550 Triphammer Rd. (corner of Triphammer and Burdick Hill), Lansing, NY
Phone: 607-256-1471
Website: www.tikunvor.org, E-mail: info@tikunvor.org
Presidents: Martha Armstrong and Mitch Grossman, presidents_22@tikunvor.org
Education Director/Admin. Coordinator: Naomi Wilensky
Bnai Mitzvah Coordinator: Michael Margolin
Services: All services currently on Zoom. E-mail info@tikunvor.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.

Ethiopian Jewish holy books digitized in Jerusalem

By JNS staff

(JNS) – A collection of rare holy books and manuscripts from the Ethiopian Jewish community written in Ge'ez, an ancient South Semitic language sometimes referred to as Classical Ethiopic, has been digitized and will be available online, the National Library of Israel announced recently. The 17 texts were previously held by the community's *kesim*, or clergy, in private homes or in community synagogues, but were not accessible to

Blame. Continued from page 2

Is this denial why Golan died by suicide? Was it the agony of knowing that 11 people she'd left the festival in a car with were murdered? A lack of adequate mental health support? We will never know for sure.

My Israeli peers who work to support sexual violence survivors have told me that the lack of adequate resources for survivors, in light of the overwhelming number of victims, is a serious problem. The events of October 7 have likewise been retraumatizing for survivors they serve, leading to a deluge of demand for care and institutional support. "The state killed Shirel," her brother, Eyal, told *The Jerusalem Post*. "If the state doesn't wake up, there will be more cases like this."

The strategic campaign that effectively turned the world against the victims and survivors has made recovery all the more lonely and dark.

There is a reason those of us who work to end gender-based violence know that we must believe survivors, never blame the victim, and understand that rape is never justified. Not doing so inflicts further harm. When I was in Israel in May, the survivors and those working to support them told me again and again that the most important way to help was to share their stories.

Working together over the past year, I've gotten to know the leaders of Israeli women's organizations on a much deeper level. But I'll never forget what Miriam Schler, executive director of the Tel Aviv Rape Crisis Center, told me soon after October 7: "What's worse is that the world does not believe us."

The Hamas terror attack on Israel that day was one of the most documented atrocities in history, thanks in part to the footage taken by the terrorists themselves, as well as video from security cameras and survivors' and victims' cell phones. There are hundreds of thousands of pieces of video and photographic evidence, as well as survivor, eyewitness, and first responder testimony.

It is easy to dismiss evidence that does not conform with one's narrative as fake news. But one does not need to care about or even support Israel to care that women who were raped are being silenced and humiliated.

International bodies tasked with bringing perpetrators of conflict-related sexual violence to justice must include what happens online in their investigations. Spreading terror and trauma through online campaigns, if unchecked, becomes a deadly weapon.

Survivor's guilt is real. And it is compounded when Israelis see accounts online every day vilifying their very existence and denying or even celebrating the atrocities they have endured.

The evidence should speak for itself. But without addressing the toxic and deadly online rhetoric, survivors everywhere will continue to suffer. I believe Israeli women. And it is because of this belief, and our commitment to all survivors of sexual violence, that we must never let what happened to them be denied or erased.

Meredith Jacobs is CEO of Jewish Women International. JWI is the leading Jewish organization working to end violence against women and girls. To learn more, go to www.jwi.org.

The views and opinions expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Forward. Discover more perspectives in Opinion. To contact Opinion authors, email opinion@forward.com.

the public at large.

The high-resolution scans of the items will "soon" be made available to the public via the National Library website, while the original items will remain with the Beta Israel communities. The manuscripts include the Octateuch known as The Orit (the set of scriptures used in Ethiopian Jewish synagogues composed of the Pentateuch – the five books of the Torah – and the books of Joshua, Judges and Ruth), the Jewish apocryphal texts of Jubilees and Enoch, and prayer books such as the Book of Psalms. In addition, there are holy books held by descendants of *kesim*.

"The National Library of Israel is delighted to have reached an agreement with the leaders of the Beta Israel community to enable their scanning, cataloguing and accessibility of their manuscripts for the benefit of the public for generations to come," said library curator Dr. Haim Neria.

"These cultural treasures are undoubtedly part of the community's heritage and deserve exposure to an interested public, while they will continue to be maintained with their owners in the various houses of worship," said Dr. Dalit Rom-Shiloni, an associate professor at Tel Aviv University's Department of Biblical Studies.



Liqa Kahenat Chief Kes Berko Tegegne read from The Orit at the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem. (Photo by Michael Zekri)

Jewish Community Center

JCC Friendship Club

The JCC Friendship Club met on October 16. Sylvia Diamond called the meeting to order. After reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and singing "Hatikvah," Sue Herzog gave the treasurer's report. She then introduced her husband, Howard Herzog, who played guitar. He passed out song sheets for us to join in. He sang several songs and we joined in on the chorus. Some of the songs were "Blowing in the Wind" (written by Bob Dylan), "The Gambler" (sung by Kenny Rogers) and "Lemon Tree" (as sung by Trini Lopez). In between songs, we talked about ourselves, where we grew up and what we did for a living. A good time was had by all.

There will be no formal meeting in November, but we will be going out for lunch on Wednesday, November 20, at the Lost Dog Café in Binghamton at 1 pm. I hope to see you there.

*Sylvia Diamond
President*

BD. Continued from page 3

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.

Film. Continued from page 1

European Film Competition at the Cleveland International Film Festival; and a nominee for the Grand Prix International Competition and a winner of the FIPRESCI Prize for Best Film.

"Join us for an intimate look at a Jewish family struggling with grief and animosity," said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. "This film is sure to speak to everyone."

FINANCIAL PLANNING

Treasury informs banks how to identify Hezbollah's ties to monetary crimes


By JNS staff

(JNS) – Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) has issued guidance to aid financial institutions in identifying transactions that may involve funding the Hezbollah terrorist organization.

"Hezbollah's role in the ongoing conflict in the Middle East has exacerbated the risk of a wider regional war, and its strikes on Israeli territory have displaced thousands and killed innocent civilians," FinCEN director Andrea Gacki said on October 23. "As part of the Treasury Department's enduring campaign against Hezbollah's finances and in response to Hezbollah's attacks against Israel, we are issuing this alert to help financial institutions uncover Hezbollah's illicit activities and protect the U.S. financial system from abuse by terrorists."

Treasury notes Hezbollah's involvement in oil, gas, gold, currency exchanges, real estate, high-value art, construction and import-export businesses. Its money-laundering efforts focus on Europe, West Africa and South America, but it has shown particular interest in "the tri-border area of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay, as well as in free trade zones in Panama, to generate revenue for the organization through both licit and illicit activities," according to Treasury. These plans often coordinate with drug cartels and organized crime groups.

The alert concludes with identifying seven red flags for banks to identify in countering Hezbollah's criminal transactions.



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Rare First Temple-era stone seal unearthed in Jerusalem

By JNS Staff

(JNS) – A rare and unique First Temple-era stone inscribed with a name in paleo-Hebrew script has been uncovered near Jerusalem’s Temple Mount, the Israel Antiquities Authority announced recently. The ancient black stone seal was unearthed in an excavation by the Temple Mount’s southern wall. It is believed to date back 2,700 years, and was used by a senior official in the Kingdom of Judah’s administration, the state-run archaeological body said.

“The seal, made of black stone, is one of the most beautiful ever discovered in excavations in ancient Jerusalem, and is executed at the highest artistic level,” said Yuval Baruch and Navot Rom, who directed

the excavations with funding by the City of David Foundation.

The object – which is engraved with reverse script, served its owner both as an amulet and as a signature for legal documents and certificates, according to the IAA. It has a hole drilled through its length so that it could be strung onto a chain and be worn around the neck. The artifact is engraved with the words “*LeYeho’ezer ben Hosh’ayahu*” – “For Yeho’ezer son of Hosh’ayahu” – in paleo-Hebrew script.

Experts said that the seal is an extremely rare and unusual discovery. “This is the first time that a winged ‘genie’ – a protective magical figure – has been found in Israeli and regional archaeology,” said Filip Vu-

kosavovic, IAA archaeologist and Assyriologist. “Figures of winged demons are known in the Neo-Assyrian art of the 9th-7th centuries B.C.E., and they were considered a kind of protective demon.”

The seal was apparently made by a local craftsman, “a Judahite, who produced the amulet at the owner’s request. It was prepared at a very high artistic level,” said Vukosavovic.

The name Yeho’ezer appears in the Bible (Chron. I 12:7) in its abbreviated form, Yo’ezer, one of King David’s fighters. In the Book of Jeremiah (43:2), which depicts events thought to have occurred during the same period the seal was in use, the name “Azariah ben Hosh’aya” appears. “Hosh’aya” is the abbreviated form of Hosh’ayahu.

“This is further evidence of the reading and writing abilities that existed in this period,” said Baruch. “Contrary to what may be commonly thought, it seems that literacy in this period was not the realm only of society’s elite. People knew how to read and write – at least at the basic level, for the needs of commerce.”

When Hosh’ayahu died, his son Yeho’ezer inherited the seal, and he “added his name and his father’s name on either side of the demon,” in an effort to “directly appropriate to himself the beneficial qualities he believed the talisman embodied as a magical item,” the archaeologists believe.

The paleo-Hebrew inscription “was done in a sloppy manner,” unlike the “careful engraving of the demon,” indicating that it could have been “Yeho’ezer himself who engraved the names on the object,” said



A 2,700-year-old seal inscribed in paleo-Hebrew with the name “*LeYeho’ezer ben Hosh’ayahu*” – “For Yeho’ezer son of Hosh’ayahu.” (Photo by Eliyahu Yanai, City of David)

professor Ronny Reich of the University of Haifa, who took part in the research.

“The spectacular and unique find opens another window for us into the days of the Kingdom of Judah during the First Temple period, and attests to that administration’s international connections,” said Israeli Heritage Minister Rabbi Amichai Eliyahu. “In doing so, it demonstrates the importance and centrality of Jerusalem already 2,700 years ago. It is impossible not to be moved by such an unmediated and direct encounter with a chapter of our past, a time in which the First Temple stood in all its glory.”

U.S. Postal Service releases “Hanukkah Forever” stamp

By JNS staff

(JNS) – The U.S. Postal Service has announced a “Hanukkah Forever” stamp to commemorate the eight-day Jewish “Festival of Lights.” Designed by Antonio Alcalá, it features a ocean-blue background, white *hanukkiyah* and nine floating yellow lights. USPS says the design uses “irregular lines to suggest a more human presence.”

A first day of issue dedication ceremony took place on



“Hanukkah Forever” stamp, 2024 (Photo courtesy USPS)

September 19, led by Michael Gordon, USPS government liaison director, at the Lillian and Albert Small Capital Jewish Museum in Washington, DC.

Music and activities are on the docket, and the event is free and open to the public; attendees are encouraged to register online.

The last celebrated release of a Hanukkah stamp was in 2022, featuring the work of American Judaica artist Jeanette Kuvlin Oren.

Day..... Continued from page 2

as chapter president and current service as secretary. Debate juxtaposing Israel security and free speech roiled the deliberations of the October 2 UUP Oneonta Executive Board. Dr. George Hovis, distinguished teaching professor, Department of English, submitted an open letter requesting consideration of its publication. His message took as its point of departure remarks that Tanya Reyes, president, Class of 2024, started to deliver, but was prevented from so doing during a portion of the 2024 SUNY Oneonta commencement. I am strong proponent of free speech. However, I found Dr. Hovis’ commentary to constitute a call for the termination of the Jewish state of Israel rather than an argument for free speech and so stated. Moreover, I pointed out that Dr. Hovis’ call for peace contained no provisions for the return of hostages, dismantling terrorist groups or the future safety and security of Israel. Several friends and colleagues disagreed. In the end, we compromised, acquiescing to publication

of Dr. Hovis’ piece with accompaniment of a critique by Professor Emeritus of Sociology Edward Wesnofske, a founder of UUP Oneonta and of State UUP.

Professor Wesnofske’s rebuttal provided several telling observations. Commenting on Dr. Hovis endorsement of disinvestment in Israel, Professor Wesnofske wrote, “The Boycott-Divest-Sanction (BDS) movement has as its end goal the replacement of the State of Israel with a majority Palestinian Arab state (‘one state solution’). This runs counter to U.S., international, and institutional endorsement (including UUP, NYSUT and AFT) of the ‘two state solution’ as the only road to true peace and security for both Palestinians and Israelis. In echoing the sounds of the BDS movement with respect to divestment, the controversial inference is that ‘the message of peace’ involves the elimination of the State of Israel.”

Jews around the world attended religious

services on October 7. In Marblehead, MA, my son, Joe, a synagogue president, participated in a collaborative program involving several temples and attended by approximately 400 people. Wearing the familiar kippah bestowed during my youth, I joined 30-plus fellow Jews at my Conservative synagogue, Temple Beth El, in Oneonta, NY. The service, formally designated “Temple Beth El’s October 7 Memorial Service: To remember those we lost, to pray for those who are missing, and to stand with Israel,” started at 7 pm. Planning for the program entailed discussion of security issues, and the announcement of the service was limited to members of the congregation and their families.

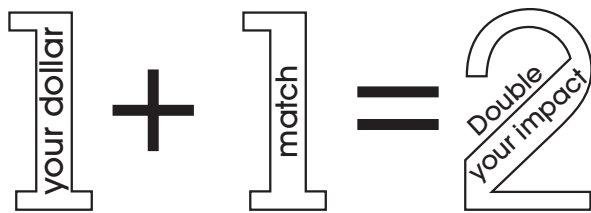
It was a beautiful service. A formal welcome, candle lighting, *Yizkor* burnished by a thoughtful reflection; the *Kaddish*, as well as prayers for martyrs, the departed and Israel; poetry; formal remarks; music from piano, flute and voice that spoke to the soul; and a singing of “Hatikvah” framed the gathering. The atmosphere mixed ele-

ments of warmth, support, apprehension and sadness. Speakers raised profound points: one asked us to ponder the distinction that scholar Elliot Cosgrove makes between Genesis Jews whose identity centers on the beauty of divine creation and Exodus Jews who define themselves by misfortune and persecution. Subsequently, the “Prayer for Israel’s Soldiers” beseeched that: “May the Almighty cause the enemies who rise up against us to be struck down... / May the Holy One preserve and rescue our fighters from every trouble and distress and from / every plague and illness, and send blessing and success in their every endeavor.” A gentile visitor would have understood the centrality of Israel to the Jewish experience.

At the end of the service, I felt renewed clarity and calm. However, as I was departing, a fellow worshipper addressed himself – and me – simultaneously: “I wish more had been said about innocent Palestinians. They will hate us for generations to come.” I opened the door and walked into the darkness.

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