

THE REPORTER

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Temple Beth-El Ithaca to host Hanukkah festival and book fair on Dec. 2

Temple Beth-El will once again open its doors to the Ithaca community in celebration of Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights. The holiday begins this year on the evening of Sunday, December 2. The festival will be held on December 2 from 11 am-3 pm. The temple is located at the corner of Court and Tioga streets in downtown Ithaca.

Organizers invite the community to “drop in and find a lively indoor market where the scents of savory potato latkes and sweet apple fritters mingle with the melodies

of a special holiday concert and the beauty of handmade gifts for sale. New this year will be a book fair of gently used books of Jewish interest. The prices will be great.”

There will be demos, workshops and a concert. At noon, a Maccabee swordplay demonstration for all ages will be followed by two swordplay workshops for children ages 9 and above (pre-registration



Carmel Tadmor Kaminer

required at www.tbeithaca.org). From 12:30-1:30 pm, Paper Snowflake Art will run a workshop for all ages in the art of paper cutting. A family crafts program will run from 1:30-3 pm.

The highlight of this year’s festival will be a concert at 2 pm by Carmel Tadmor Kaminer titled “From Jerusalem of Gold to Hallelujah.” Kaminer has an international career,

combining concert repertoire, theater music, Hebrew songs and folk songs. She has performed as a solo singer with many different music groups, such as the Haifa Symphony, and for organizations such as the Rotary, Bnei-Brith, the Haifa Foundation and the municipality of Haifa. Her performances, which she says seek to promote love, acceptance and peace, have led her from Israel to the U.S., France, Germany and Bulgaria.

The event is free and open to the public. For further information, call 257-9924.

JCC participating in Scholastic Pajama Drive

By Paige Bartholomew

The JCC will be participating in the 10th Annual Scholastic Pajama Drive. Sponsored by Scholastic Book Clubs, the annual drive collects brand new pajamas, in both child and adult sizes, and matches every pair of pajamas donated with a brand new book. The pajamas and books are then distributed to families living in shelters to help give every child “a cozy and reassuring bedtime.”

The JCC is now accepting donations of new pajamas in infant, child and adult sizes. The pajamas must be in complete sets, or nightgowns, in order to be accepted. Child sized pajamas must be manufactured and

labeled as pajamas to ensure that they are flame-retardant and safe. Boxes will be placed throughout the JCC to collect any donations as they come in. Donations must be dropped off no later than Wednesday, December 12.

Last year, the JCC’s first year of participation, the organization collected 226 pairs of pajamas through the Early Childhood Center. In total, Scholastic Book Clubs received 129,353 pairs of pajamas to donate to families in need.

For more information about the Early Childhood Center or the JCC, contact the JCC office at 724-2417.

At right: JCC preschoolers showed off some of the 226 pairs of pajamas that were donated for the 2017 drive.



Film series on antisemitism to take place in Ithaca

The Ithaca Coalition for Unity and Cooperation in the Middle East hold a film series about antisemitism. The series will open on Tuesday, November 27, with “Crossing the Line 2: the New Face

of Antisemitism on Campus.” The film will be followed by a panel of Cornell University and Ithaca College students talking about their experiences. The event will take place at Cinemapolis, 120 E.

Green St., Ithaca, at 7 pm and is free to the public.

“The horrific attack on a synagogue in Pittsburgh was not an isolated event,” said film series organizers. “Antisemitic incidents in the U.S. rose nearly 60 percent in 2017, the largest single-year increase on record, and Jews were the targets of more than 60 percent of the religious hate crimes in the US, despite Jews being only 2 percent of the population. Campus antisemitic incidents have nearly doubled, two years in a row. Why the rise, and what does it mean for society at large?”

ICUCME’s “Antisemitism around the World” series will also address the debate about where the boundary lies between criticism of Israel and antisemitism. In 1968, Martin Luther King Jr., said, “When

people criticize Zionists, they mean Jews. You’re talking antisemitism.” The series will look at whether King’s statement still holds true today.

The next two films in the ICUCME film series, beginning with “Antisemitism in the Middle East Today,” will be screened in the spring.

ICUCME is a grass-roots anti-racist community organization working to bring a constructive approach into dialogue about Israel and the Greater Middle East. As a non-partisan organization, ICUCME seeks to embrace fact-based, respectful dialogue, mutual recognition and cooperation to promote understanding and support peace in the region.

For more information about ICUCME, see <http://icu-cme.org>.

Hillel at BU to hold Aroma Café on Nov. 19

On Monday, November 19, Hillel at Binghamton University will hold its annual Aroma Café event. Aroma Café has been called the biggest student-run event of the semester, where students recreate a makeshift Aroma Café on campus.

The event will feature a free three course

meal, which will include authentic Aroma products shipped from New York City, and Israeli music. It will take place in Old Union Hall in the University Union building on campus from 12-4 pm. “Celebrate Israel’s most famous coffee chain with us,” said organizers of the event. “All are welcome.”

TITC adult ed. talk on “The Jewish 1968” on Nov. 18

The next Temple Israel/Temple Concord Adult Education Program will be held on Sunday, November 18, at 10 am, at Temple Israel. Professor Jonathan Karp will discuss “The Jewish 1968.”

According to organizers, “The year 1968 was a monumental year in modern world history – one of global student protests, political revolutions, tragic assassinations, and violent upheaval. Little attention has been paid to the significance of 1968 in Jewish history. Instead, 1967 has been viewed as the historical watershed, particularly in light of Israel’s remarkable six-day rout of its Arab neighbors, an event that profoundly

altered Jewish power and politics for decades.”

In his “The Jewish 1968” talk, Karp will argue that 1968 was transformative for Jews worldwide. It was a year in which Communist Poland purged Jews from Polish life and the Soviet Jewry movement began to gather steam, while in America the post-World War II liberal order was seen as fractured by the open conflict of blacks and Jews in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville section of Brooklyn. “The Jewish 1968’ will situate



Prof. Jonathan Karp

these and other major events in a panoramic portrait of global Jewry undergoing profound change,” said organizers of the program.

Karp is associate professor in the History and Judaic Studies Departments at Binghamton University. He is the author of “The Politics of Jewish Commerce: Economic Thought and Emancipation in Europe” (2008) and is completing a study of cultural and economic relations between American Jews and African Americans, “Chosen Surrogates: How Blacks

and Jews Transformed Modern American Culture.” He is also the editor of numerous volumes – most recently “The Cambridge History of Judaism in the Early Modern World” (2017), with Adam Sutcliffe, and “World War I and the Jews” (2017) with Marsha L. Rozenblit. From 2010-13, he served as executive director of the American Jewish Historical Society and is currently chairman of the Binghamton University Faculty Senate.

The cost of the brunch is \$5 per person. Call or e-mail the Temple Israel office at 723-7461 or titammy@stny.twcbc.com to make reservations.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

On the gridiron
A look at Cleveland Browns kicker Greg Joseph’s journey from Jewish day school to the NFL.
..... Page 3

Deciphering the past
A 1600s bath may be the earliest Jewish vestige in Brazil; oldest-ever “Jerusalem” inscription found.
..... Page 8

Rube Goldberg
A new exhibit looks at the life and career of Rube Goldberg, who did more than draw wacky machines.
..... Page 11

Special Sections
Legal Notices..... 4
Prepare for Thanksgiving..... 6
Financial Planning 8-9
Hanukkah Gifts 11-13
Classifieds 16

Opinion

Ignore the boycotters, experience Israel for yourself

By Liran Avisar Ben-Horin

(JNS)—News broke recently that John Cheney-Lippold, an associate professor in the University of Michigan's American Culture department, refused to write a letter of recommendation for a student who is seeking to study abroad at Tel Aviv University, citing his support for the Palestinian-led academic boycott of Israel. He went as far as analogizing, "If a student had wanted to do a study abroad at an institution in Apartheid South Africa, I would have declined to write a letter for her as well."

The professor's actions are not only discriminatory, an abuse of power and a clear violation of his school's policies. They reflect a basic fear among those who seek to demonize and delegitimize Israel — fear of the truth about the only democracy in the Middle East.

As the leader of the largest organization bringing Jewish young adults to Israel for immersive experiences (mainly from four to 10 months), I have a message for anyone who might listen to Cheney-Lippold and those like him: Ignore the boycotters. See Israel for yourself.

You can ask any one of the 140,000 students who have come to Israel through Masa Israel Journey.

They intern in the Knesset, in Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with members of Israel's Supreme Court, including Arab Judge Salim Joubran, the court's former deputy chief justice. In Israel's thriving democracy, members of minorities like the Arab community (representing about 20

percent of the nation's population) are represented in the country's most senior positions in the judiciary, politics, business and arts; the same cannot be said for any other state in the region.

They work in Israel's booming culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, which leads the world in start-ups per capita, including for MobileODT, whose technology systems use mobile phones to aid in early detection of cancer and other diseases, and for Playbuzz, a Disney-backed platform whose real-time analytics tools create interactive stories for hundreds of millions of users. These start-ups do more than innovate. Their cutting-edge technologies make the world a better place.

They teach English to immigrants from Ethiopia, Bedouins in the Negev and work with Islam seekers in south Tel Aviv and underserved communities all over the country.

They study at world-renowned universities that serve as key engines that drive the country's innovative identity, such as the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa, whose professors and researchers pursue seemingly impossible goals like finding a cure for cancer and ending global drought. Those who want to boycott Israeli universities are, in effect, boycotting solutions to some of the world's most serious problems.

They contribute their energy and passion to Israeli nonprofits that provide social welfare to vulnerable individuals throughout Israel's entire society (not just its

Jewish population) and worldwide. This includes Save a Child's Heart — an international NGO that improves the quality of pediatric cardiac care for children in developing countries and across the Middle East, and creates centers of health-care competence in those countries — Innovation Africa and many others.

Our participants hear a range of multifaceted, complex, diverse perspectives on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict — unlike the simple, one-sided and defamatory accusations leveled by boycott activists like Professor Cheney-Lippold — that allows them to make up their own minds about the situation facing Israelis and Palestinians.

After their experience, Masa participants return to America and other countries around the world with a better sense of who they are and what they want to be, how they aspire to contribute to their societies and economies, a deeper comprehension of the world around them and nuanced perspectives on what the state of Israel is, and what the complex reality of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict looks like. Our alumni are building bridges between peoples, unlike narrow-minded boycott proponents like Cheney-Lippold who drive people apart.

We encourage all students and young adults to disregard the boycotters on campuses and in other spaces, and to spend time in Israel. Come see the full picture for yourselves.

Liran Avisar Ben-Horin is the CEO of Masa Israel Journey.

I tested positive for the cancer-causing BRCA mutation, now what?

By Laura Osman

(JTA) — Curiosity about my ancestry spurred me to order an at-home genetic testing kit by mail earlier this year. Maybe my blonde hair was a result of some hidden Swedish genes?

When the kit arrived, I quickly spit in the tube and sent it off, not giving any thought to the genetic and ancestry testing boxes I checked off. Although I just went through a rigorous prenatal genetic testing process while pregnant with my third child less than two years earlier, I figured the small price difference to do more genetic testing could be worthwhile.

Several weeks later, an ordinary morning sipping coffee would become extraordinary. Quickly scrolling my phone, I clicked on my available testing report from the testing kit. First came my ancestry: 99.9 percent Ashkenazi Jewish. As I kept scrolling, my heart stopped as I saw BRCA1 POSITIVE. CONSULT WITH DOCTOR.

This is a mistake, I thought. No one in my family, men or women, have had breast or ovarian cancer. Shaken, yet hopeful of a lab error, I called my ob/gyn and explained the situation. That afternoon I was sitting in her office awaiting a medical grade test, the gold standard in BRCA testing.

Seven days later I received the call confirming my nightmare: I indeed was BRCA1 positive.

My initial shock and anger were replaced with a paralyzing fear that I already had developed cancer. Women carrying the BRCA mutation begin advanced screenings starting at age 25, and here I was at 37 never having had a mammogram or ovarian cancer screening. With the BRCA1 mutation, I faced an up to 88 percent lifetime risk of developing breast cancer and a 45 percent lifetime risk of ovarian cancer. My body, which I pushed to the limit as a track and cross country All-American in college, was a ticking time bomb.

Immediately I knew that feeling sorry for myself was not a productive option. When my breast and ovarian cancer screening (CA125 and a pelvic ultrasound) came back clear, I breathed a momentary sigh of relief, realizing how lucky I was to catch this. Then I moved quickly to a plan of action.

Five weeks after receiving the initial e-mail from my at-home genetic testing company, I underwent my first surgery: a laparoscopic tube and ovary removal with my incredibly knowledgeable doctor at a major Los Angeles hospital. Eleven days later, my doctor laughed when I showed up to my post-op checkup anxiously awaiting to be cleared for exercise in my running shorts. Although I was hobbling and out of breath on that first run back, I was also smiling knowing I had significantly reduced my risk of ovarian cancer.

See "Cancer" on page 6

In My Own Words

Despair and hope

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Despair and hope: those two words explain how I felt during the Solidarity Shabbat that occurred the weekend after the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting. I'm not sure why I had such different feelings over the course of the day, but each felt real in the moment.

Even though there were readings about Pittsburgh during the Friday night service, I felt partly detached from them until the Mourner's *Kaddish* arrived. Standing when my father's name was read from the *yahrzeit* list, I suddenly felt a sense of despair. I was actually glad that he had not lived to see what our country has become. My father was a progressive who supported liberal candidates and wanted equal rights for all. He was also a patriot who signed with the Marines in World War II before he could be drafted. He taught me — through word, deed and the many books from his young adulthood that he shared with me — about compassion and understanding. While my father was not religiously observant, he embodied the best parts of our Jewish heritage.

I recited that *Kaddish* mourning not only for my father,

but because those who hate now feel free to shout that hate for everyone to hear. I mourned and despaired those who believe their hatred benefits our country — those who would have turned my grandparents and great-grandparents away from our shores because they didn't speak English or were too poor or had no special skills. I despair thinking that my cousins and their children and their grandchildren might not be alive because, if their ancestors had not reached this country, they might have died in the Holocaust.

Then Shabbat morning, we stood for a moment of silence at the time that the shooting began in Pittsburgh the previous week. Afterward, we were asked to share our feelings. After a few people spoke — people who sounded like I had felt the night before — I suddenly had a different feeling. I remembered a photo one of my rabbinical colleagues had shared the day before: It showed the front page of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, a secular newspaper. The headline was in Hebrew, the first four words of the Mourner's *Kaddish* I had recited the previous evening. That was followed by a subhead that read, "These are the

first words of the Jewish mourners' prayer, 'Magnified and sanctified be your name,' to be recited tonight on the first Sabbath since the tragedy at the Tree of Life."

What made me suddenly feel hopeful? The fact that, while some were cheering what happened to the Jews of that synagogue, many others were horrified. But even more important, they were willing to show their support publicly. If there is one thing that shows just how different the United States is from Nazi Germany, this is it: People standing in solidarity with the Jewish community. Whether it's the iman who gave words of comfort, the head of the NAACP who spoke of us as one people, the Christian clergy or the large number of non-Jews who came to the vigil at our Jewish Community Center, we must be thankful that this time we do not stand alone.

I know that my feelings will change and change again as I read the news. Despair and fear aren't that easily banished. But I will remind myself again and again that hope should reign over them. Even more important, I will stand by, and for, anyone who is targeted by the culture of hate.



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OPINIONS

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

LETTERS

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

ADS

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

DEADLINE

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www.thereporter.org

TC to hold Artisan Holiday Marketplace on Nov. 18

Temple Concord Sisterhood's seventh annual Artisan Holiday Marketplace will be held on Sunday, November 18, from 10 am-3 pm, in the Kilmer Mansion and the social hall at Temple Concord, 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton.

Vendors will feature clothing, jewelry, paintings, mosaics, woodwork and much more. Homemade food and baked goods will be available for purchase to eat in or take out. Admission is a donation toward Kilmer Mansion res-

torations or a canned food donation for CHOW. Marilyn Strosberg and Helene Philips are co-chairwomen for the Marketplace, with Roz Antoun and Marsha Luks in charge of the bake sale.

Cleveland Browns kicker Greg Joseph's long journey from Jewish day school to the NFL

By Ed Carroll

CLEVELAND (Cleveland Jewish News via JTA) – Browns rookie kicker Greg Joseph said it's been a "wild ride" for him since being cut at the end of preseason by the Miami Dolphins, signing with Cleveland in Week 3 of the regular season and, just days later, playing an "integral role" in the NFL team's first victory in nearly two years.

To cap his "wild" five-week stretch, Joseph booted a game-winning 37-yard field goal – which was reportedly partially blocked by a defender – in overtime on October 7 against the division rival Baltimore Ravens.

After that win, Joseph returned to his new home in Cleveland from FirstEnergy Stadium and ended the day with a familiar – and likely comforting – symbol hanging outside his door: a *mezuzah*.

Rabbi Yossi Friedman of the Chabad of Downtown Cleveland, who helped Joseph and his parents, Glen and Ilana, put the *mezuzah* up on his door, said Joseph recited the traditional blessing during the process. Joseph was introduced to Friedman by Rabbi Yossi Denburg of Chabad of Boca Raton, FL, near where Joseph grew up.

Joseph, 24, was born in Johannesburg, South Africa, and moved to Florida with his family in 2001. He played football and soccer at Donna Klein Jewish Academy in Boca Raton, FL, and also attended American Heritage School in Delray Beach, FL. He graduated in 2017 from Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton as the Owls'



Cleveland Browns kicker Greg Joseph, right, with Rabbi Yossi Friedman of the Chabad of Downtown Cleveland. They are standing by a mezuzah that Friedman helped Joseph put up outside his new apartment in Cleveland after kicking a game-winning field goal against the Baltimore Ravens in overtime on October 7. (Photo by Glen Joseph)

all-time leader in field goals made, points scored, PATs (point-after-touchdown) made and field goals attempted. He also holds the university's single-game records for PATs, field goals, points scored by kicking and holds the record for the Owls' longest field goal.

He went undrafted, but soon signed with the Dolphins and was in a training camp battle with fellow rookie Jason Sanders, a seventh-round pick, to be the team's kicker. In three preseason games with the Dolphins, Joseph was 3-for-3 on field goals, including a 54-yard kick. Unfortunately for him, Miami decided to go with Sanders.

After being released, Joseph stayed ready and stuck to his practice routine. Despite being cut by a team far closer to where he grew up and joining a team in a city he visited for the first time during a tryout, Joseph couldn't be happier than to be in Cleveland. "After I got released from Miami, [the Browns] were the first one to get in touch with me," Joseph said. "It's still an awesome feeling. It's good to feel wanted, especially in this business. Everything happens for a reason. I had a blast in Miami. I learned a lot about myself in Miami. I learned how to be a better athlete, a better man, just a better person overall. They do a great job with their personal engagement program over there. And fortunately, I got the call to come over here."



Greg Joseph celebrated after defeating the Baltimore Ravens at FirstEnergy Stadium in Cleveland on October 7. (Photo by Jason Miller/Getty Images)

The Browns signed Joseph on September 17, a Monday, after which he had to prepare for a prime-time Thursday night game on Sep-

tember 20 against the New York Jets. He didn't complain about the lack of time to prepare. "It's almost better to have a quick turnaround like that because you don't have time to think about anything," he said.

And since then, the Dolphins' loss has been the Browns' gain. Joseph is 8-for-9 on field goal attempts in four games with the Browns, his only miss coming on a 55-yard attempt against the Ravens at the end of regulation. He also missed a PAT in that game. His longest made field goal with the Browns was a 45-yard attempt against the Jets.

His impressions of Cleveland are thus far almost universally positive. "I don't know why everyone has such a negative connotation about" Cleveland), Joseph said. See "NFL" on page 10

OF NOTE

Klin

Binghamton High School senior Sophia Klin was honored in the National Merit Scholarship Program this fall. Klin was named a commended student in the 2019 National Merit Scholarship Program. As a commended student, Klin is one of approximately 34,000 students throughout the nation who are being recognized for their exceptional promise.

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to Allan Kirchheimer on the death of his mother,
Margrit Kirchheimer

Early deadline for The Reporter

Due to holiday closings, the deadline for the following upcoming issue of *The Reporter* is as follows. No exceptions will be made.

Issue..... Deadline
Friday, November 30..... Monday, November 19

TC held concert in Kilmer Mansion



Temple Concord presented a musical program titled "Vocal Gems and Classic Favorites" on November 3 in the Kilmer Mansion. The program included music by Saint-Saens, Poulenc, Liszt, Copland, Mozart, Charminade, Romberg and Rossini. The musicians were (l-r) pianist Pej Reitz, soprano Jean Miller Goodheart, baritone Tom Goodheart and flutist Jeanne Sperber.

Community Hanukkah Celebration
Co-sponsored by The JCC and The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton
Thursday, December 6 • 5:15-7pm
5:15pm - OUTDOOR CANDLE LIGHTING
5:30pm - ENTERTAINMENT
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6pm DINNER
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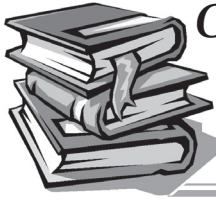
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Off the Shelf

Race, Black Jews and black Jews

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

The best works of sociology teach us new stories and help us to understand those whose worldviews are radically different from our own. However, this only partly describes what the expressive scholarly work “The Soul of Judaism: Jews of African Descent in America” by Bruce D. Haynes (New York University Press) accomplishes. This eye-opening look at the different ways Jews of African descent view themselves not only challenges readers’ thoughts about how Jews identify as white in the New World, it also offers the intriguing perspective of Black Jews who feel they are the true descendants of the biblical chosen people.

Haynes notes that it is difficult to determine what percentage of Jewish American adults are black. Part of the problem is that people mean different things when they declare themselves Afro-Jewish. The book focuses on two distinct groups and the author begins by offering the definitions he used to differentiate between the two: “For the sake of clarity, I distinguish between *black Jews* (those who are born to or adopted by a Jewish parent or have *halakhically* converted to Judaism) and *Black Jews* (members of indigenous black American groups, some of whom trace their Jewish roots to Africa and the Caribbean, and who favor the term ‘Hebrew’ or ‘Israelite’), with the caveat that individuals often cross boundaries and move between communities.”

In addition to historical research, Haynes performed in-depth interviews of 25 people from 1998-2003 and, through this work, discovered a wide range of religious connections and disconnections between Afro-Jews and white Jews. Part of the reason for this disconnection is that, while Jews were once considered “orientals” or part of the colored races, Jews in the New World began defining themselves as white. In the early part of the 20th century, this even led to some American Jews claiming that a black

person couldn’t be Jewish – a fiction that still haunts the Jewish community today.

Haynes’s discussion of the Black Jews, those who called themselves Hebrews of Israelites, contains some fascinating history of the Jewish community of which I was unaware. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Sephardic Jews, who were descendants of Conversos – Jews who pretended to be Catholic in Spain or Portugal after the Inquisition – came to the New World in the hopes of returning to Judaism. They treated their black slaves in a different manner than slave owners in the American South: “The largely Sephardic communities that sprouted across the black Atlantic continued to practice Old World Judaism, which recognized slavery in biblical terms. Slaves of Jewish owners were often immersed in a *mikvah* to legitimate their bondage, a practice that stems back to Egypt (Schorsch 2009). Household slaves were often converted via circumcision – in accordance with the Torah, which mandates that all male slaves be circumcised (Genesis 17:12-13) – or immersion to render them ritually proper to prepare kosher food (Schorsch 2000, 219).” There is also an interesting section on Brazil, where Jewish slave owners practiced patrilineal descent – meaning that any children they had with slaves would have been considered Jewish. However, by the 17th century, this changed as the group was pressured by both those who adopted rabbinic law (which only allowed for matrilineal descent) and the racial hierarchies of the country that said anyone with African blood was inferior, no matter their religious status.

Some Afro-Americans who belong to Israelite and Hebrew groups trace their ancestry back to this Jewish past. Others believe they are the true descendants of Abraham and Moses, the latter of whom they believe was African. Many members of these groups refuse efforts to convert to rabbinic Judaism because they don’t believe it’s necessary. Some groups believe it’s white European Jews who are the imposters. Although there is no one set of beliefs across the different Israelite/Hebrew groups, some mention Jesus in their theology as either a messianic figure or a rabbi like others to be respected. Haynes found these groups to generally be traditional in their religious beliefs and observances, which means that even when the Reform Movement offers acceptance, some members don’t want

to join the movement due to Reform’s liberal positions on women and the LGBTQ community.

This conservative trend can also be seen in African-Americans who convert to Judaism, something Haynes says is “consistent with broader religious trends among African-Americans,” who are generally more religiously conservative. He did notice a major difference in the reasons they gave for conversion as compared to white Americans: “Studies have shown that, within the general populations, most converts to Judaism have a Jewish spouse (Lerer and Mayer 1993), yet the black converts with whom I spoke had sought out Judaism and expressed deep personal connections with the religion. Some cited the interactive relationship with the Torah, others the clear ethical system or the music that stirred their hearts. Many knew of, or suspected, Jewish ancestry. Each made their journey independently.” Acceptance within the greater Jewish community is not always easy and many within this group feel more comfortable in Sephardic synagogues, where people don’t question the shade of their skin.

Haynes also discusses biracial Jews who have a Jewish parent, be it a Jewish mother or father. Their identification as black or Jewish differed among the people interviewed and often changed over the course of their lives. A major influence was their experiences with the two communities, particularly the level of acceptance they received. What most had in common was a dislike of having to be defined by a single identity – to say they are only Jewish or only black. This group also faced racism within the Jewish community and antisemitism in the black community, which made it difficult for them to find a community within which they felt comfortable.

“The Soul of Judaism” challenges readers to widen their view of what it means to be a member of the Jewish community, including understanding the difference between being accepted rabbinically as a Jew and having a Jewish identity. Haynes notes this difference “more often reflects ideas about culture and ancestry than religious belief or observance.” The highest praise I can offer his work is that it forced me to think differently about Jewish history and what it means to be a Jew. “The Soul of Judaism” is highly recommended for anyone who thinks seriously about Judaism and Jewish identity in the contemporary world.

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A Venezuelan-American chef wants to show the rich culinary tradition of Latino Jews

By Josefín Dolsten

(JTA) – Food has always been a way for Deborah Benaim’s family to connect to its roots. A typical Shabbat dinner featured dishes such as traditional Ashkenazi braided challah bread, Moroccan-style whitefish with red pepper paste and a Venezuelan hearts of palm salad.

“I think it’s in my blood,” said the Caracas-born chef, whose grandparents moved to Venezuela from Morocco, Spain and Moldova.

When she was 4, her family moved to the United States, escaping political instability at home. In her new home in Dallas, Benaim found that she, too, could use food as a way to remember the past. “I think it was my way – if I psychoanalyze myself – of trying to stay attached to my family: Maybe if I cook their recipes I’m still holding on to that life that I had,” Benaim, 30, told JTA recently.

Benaim, who has appeared several times on the NBC cooking show “Food Fighters,” is working on a cookbook that will showcase her family’s recipes. She also finds non-food related ways to educate about the history of Latin American Jews.

She is one of the writers of “Chutzpah and Salsa,” a show that premiered in 2016 and was performed for a second time at the Jewish Women’s Theater in Santa Monica, CA, recently. It features actors telling the stories of Jewish immigrants from Latin America, including Benaim and her Panama-born husband Ariel Lipski.

Throughout her life, she has found that few American Jews are even aware of the existence of Latin American

Jews. Though the family was involved in the Jewish community in Dallas, Benaim said she felt lonely as one of the few Sephardim at her day school. “If I had a nickel for every time that someone said, ‘Omgigosh, you’re Latin and Jewish? How is that possible?’” she joked.

Benaim’s story, performed by Marnina Schon during “Chutzpah and Salsa,” is about an experience she had in 2015 while visiting her sister in New York. The two were in a hardware store, and Benaim said its smell reminded her of her grandfather’s shop in Caracas, flooding her with memories. Later she found out that the day she visited the store was the anniversary of her grandfather’s death, or *yahrtzeit*.

The incident had a deep impact on Benaim, including in her cooking. “This experience reignited that spark to cook with a newfound purpose or newfound inspiration,” she said. “It’s not just let me cater this event. It’s how do I make this experience jog someone’s memory?”

Though Benaim could be found in the kitchen throughout her childhood, it wasn’t until college that she realized she wanted to pursue the hobby for a living. She transferred from the University



Deborah Benaim is creating a cookbook to showcase her family’s food, which has influences from Morocco, Spain, Moldova and Venezuela. (Photo courtesy of Benaim)

of Maryland, where she was studying psychology, to the Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management at the University of Houston. After graduating, she found a job at Spago, celebrity chef Wolfgang Puck’s flagship restaurant in Beverly Hills.

Through side projects, she also found ways to honor her family history. Last year, she teamed up with the Jewish National Fund to create a kosher Latin food truck at the annual SXSW media festival. Serving dishes such as traditional arepas and fried plantains, as well as an Israel-inspired arepa with cilantro hummus, the food truck was a hit and even sold out at lunch some days.

Last year, Benaim relocated to Dallas with her husband to focus on her cookbook. She also does catering and cooks a variety of cuisines. But she says whether or not she makes a dish that is inspired by her heritage, the Latin flavor comes through. “I may not specifically make any Latin or Jewish recipes for an event,” she said, “but when you sit down and talk about inspiration it obviously comes out.

I think it’s just embedded, ingrained, whether I want to or not – and I do want to.”

An Afro-Cuban-Yiddish opera tells the story of a Jewish refugee

By Josefín Dolsten

NEW YORK (JTA) – “Hatuey: Memory of Fire” flashes alternately among three unlikely settings and languages. The chamber opera is set in a nightclub in Havana in 1931, a Cuban battlefield where indigenous people fight Spanish conquistadors in 1511 and Ukraine in the early 20th century, where Jews face violent pogroms.

The settings may seem incongruous enough, but they are connected by perhaps an even more surprising piece of writing: an epic Yiddish poem about an indigenous chief who has been called “Cuba’s first national hero.”

The opera, with music by Grammy Award-winning klezmer musician Frank London and libretto by Elise Thoron, is having its U.S. premiere at Montclair State University as part of the suburban New Jersey school’s

Peak Performances series. It draws inspiration from the life of Asher Penn, a Ukrainian Jewish refugee who arrived to Cuba in 1924 and later founded the country’s first Yiddish newspaper.

In Cuba, Penn learned about the story of Hatuey (pronounced ha-too-WAY), an indigenous chief who led Cuba’s Taino people in an uprising against Spanish colonial forces in the 16th century. He was so taken by Hatuey’s heroism and execution at the hands of the Spanish – and the way it resonated with his own experience of pogroms in his native Ukraine – that he composed a 125-page poem about him in 1931. The catch: Penn wrote the poem in Yiddish.

London and Thoron’s production, which played at Montclair State’s Alexander Kasser Theater through September 23, stays true to Penn’s writing by including excerpts of the poem in the *mamaloshen*. The Taino characters sing in Yiddish, which could have turned out as a joke from a Mel Brooks movie, but instead eerily connects one persecuted “tribe” to another. Other parts are performed in English and Spanish with supertitles.

London, a founder of the Klezmatiks and other klezmer supergroups, learned about Penn and Hatuey through his friend, the theater director Michael Posnick, who is Penn’s

See “Opera” on page 9



Nicolette Mavroleon appeared in “Hatuey: Memory of Fire,” a chamber opera about a Yiddish poet and his obsession with an indigenous Cuban freedom fighter. (Photo by Maria Baranova)

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An Israeli singer in Amsterdam creates the world's first Ladino pop album

By Cnaan Liphshiz

AMSTERDAM (JTA) – Wandering the ornate streets of the city of Fes in northern Morocco, Noam Vazana heard several men singing a tune so familiar that it made her stop in her tracks. Vazana, a successful 35-year-old Israeli musician living here, was visiting her ancestors' country of birth for a performance at the Tanjazz festival in Tangier when she heard the tune. She began following the men through alleyways to a square where hundreds of locals were singing that same Arabic-language song at a street party.

She could neither recognize nor understand the lyrics, but the melody was woven

into some of her earliest childhood memories: It featured in a song that Vazana's late grandmother used to sing to her regularly in Israel in Ladino, the dying Jewish-Sephardic language.

For Vazana, the experience was the start of a journey to study her roots and her grandmother's language and culture. It also was the trigger for the creation this year by Vazana of what several experts in the field say will be the first album in many years entirely comprising newly written or newly composed Ladino songs for adults. The new album, which has yet to be recorded in full, is coming out under Vazana's stage name, Nani – her grandmother's nickname for her.

"Ladino was something of a forbidden language at our home," Vazana said. To her father, a Fes native, it represented the opposite of fitting into Israeli society, she explained. But hearing the melody in the Moroccan city reminded Vazana of how her grandmother would sing to her in Ladino anyway, including "one time that she and I were peeling beans in the kitchen," the singer recalled.

The Ladino album is part of a growing musical scene that came into its own about 20

years ago thanks to young Sephardic artists, many of them from Israel, who like Vazana reconnected with their roots through music. Notable artists from that scene include performer-composers like Yasmin Levi, daughter of the late researcher of Sephardic culture Yitzhak Isaac Levy, and Mor Karbasi. Both deploy their powerful voices to showcase the operatic melodrama typical of many traditional Ladino numbers.

Preserving Ladino music in all of its authentic glory is a difficult task – and many believe an important one – because of the relative paucity of historical recordings.

After the Holocaust and the creation of the state of Israel, the vast majority of the Jews of the Mediterranean basin left for Israel and beyond. The exodus meant that Ladino went from being a living, breathing language spoken by half a million people to a dying dialect spoken mostly by a graying population of immigrants in Israel and a minority of Turkey's 15,000 Jews.

Vazana said that she cares about preserving Ladino. She is currently giving a European tour of traditional Ladino songs with a modern twist, titled "Andalusian Brew" – the same title as her upcoming album, which will contain only newly composed numbers.



Noam Vazana wrote her upcoming album "Andalusian Brew" in Ladino. (Photo by Asaf Lewkowicz)

But her take is anything but ethnographic. Instead of trying to re-create Ladino music authentically, in the new album she attempts to adapt it to modern times, leaving listeners to imagine a world where Ladino and its music were allowed to evolve like other Spanish and Portuguese variants such as Canarian Spanish, Creole or Galician. Radio

stations where these dialects are spoken often play compositions that combine ancient and contemporary elements.

The themes treated in the new tour and album reflect even more poignantly Vazana's attempt at modernizing Ladino music. One track is a passionate but humorous tribute to the virtues of the eggplant, complete with cooking tips. But other songs are more risqué. One gives voice to a transgender woman who becomes a man to make her son-less father proud; another adapts the allegedly homoerotic poetry of the 11th-century philosopher Shmuel Hanagid.

A former trombone player and member of the Israel Air Force and Israel Defense Forces orchestras, Vazana shows off her skills as a musician as well as a singer in the "Andalusian Brew" show. With her powerful voice and confidence playing the piano, parts of the concert feel like See "Ladino" on page 9



Noam Vazana performed at the Tanjazz festival in Tangier, Morocco, on September 14, 2017. (Photo courtesy of Vazana)

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THE REPORTER
Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Birmingham

Cancer Continued from page 2

Next I had to tackle the surgery that scared me the most. A double mastectomy is not only physically difficult, but emotionally loaded. Instead of ignoring my fears, I began open conversations about my emotions, the pain and recovery, and how it could potentially change my relationship with running. I reached out to Sharsheret, the national Jewish not-for-profit organization that supports women and families facing or at high risk for breast and ovarian cancer. Sharsheret's Peer Support Network is a confidential program that connects women one on one with others who share similar diagnoses, treatments, family constellations and experiences.

Beyond the peers, Sharsheret has a team of skilled and sensitive social workers and a genetic counselor who speak to thousands of women like me, helping us to cope, and stay strong and resilient while making very tough decisions about our bodies, our health and our future.

Without regret, I chose to preventatively remove both healthy breasts. On July 26, I underwent a nipple-sparing bilateral mastectomy with immediate direct-to-implant reconstruction. Although the initial recovery was filled with some dark moments, each week I gained strength and was surrounded by an army of support, which undoubtedly helped me heal both physically and mentally. Now, 12 weeks past my surgery date, I am back to my eight-mile runs and chasing around three small kids. As I set out running, I am so grateful to be strong, healthy and pain-free. Each step is a reminder of how lucky I am to have caught my BRCA mutation before it was too late.

When I look at my body today, it is not a terrible reminder of my genetic mutation, but rather a beautiful result of finding a team of supportive surgeons who believe you do not have to sacrifice aesthetics to prevent cancer.

The final piece to my puzzle was finding the origins of my BRCA1 mutation. As it turns out, my father carries the BRCA gene. Although male carriers are at increased risk for prostate cancer, the mutation often goes undetected in men, as it did in my father, who had prostate cancer. A common misconception is that women cannot inherit BRCA from their fathers. Because no women in my family had breast or ovarian cancer, the possibility that I carried BRCA flew under the radar.

All Ashkenazi Jewish women and men carry a one-in-40 risk of carrying a BRCA mutation as compared to one-in-500 chance in the general population. October may have

been Breast Cancer Awareness Month, but all year round, Jewish women and men everywhere need to ask more questions about their family genetic history on both their paternal and maternal sides. It is time for us to begin conversations with our doctors, even when they may not initiate them with us. We need to be educated and to raise awareness about how BRCA, and other genetic mutations such as CHEK2 and PALB2, can be passed down from both parents. Stopping cancer before it stops us is now often in our hands. While prophylactic surgery might not be the right choice for every woman, knowing our risk and understanding our options will empower us to take control of our bodies and our lives, and will enable us to make informed and potentially life-saving decisions.

In the U.S., the average woman has a 12 percent chance of developing breast cancer and a 1 to 2 percent chance of developing ovarian cancer. But certain genetic mutations such as BRCA1 and BRCA2 can increase those lifetime risks to up to 88 percent and 45 percent respectively, according to studies published in the Journal of the American Medical Association. These mutations are found in Ashkenazi Jews 10 times more frequently than in the general population. At least 50 percent of hereditary breast cancer is related to genes we don't know how to look for yet.

At-home genetic testing companies may offer tests for three such mutations most commonly found in those of Ashkenazi descent, making it much easier for them to get tested. It's important to note that anyone who takes an at-home genetic test should first and foremost get tested by a medical provider and also consult a genetic counselor to discuss their results and help them navigate next steps.

Now that my cancer journey is behind me, I want to pay it forward and help. That's why I am sharing my story so publicly – so that other men and women understand how learning their own cancer genetic profile can save their lives, and to give a "face" to those who inherit the BRCA mutation from their fathers.

Laura Osman is a Sharsheret peer supporter. To schedule a free and confidential conversation with Sharsheret's genetic counselor or to be connected to a Sharsheret peer supporter, contact Sharsheret at clinicalstaff@sharsheret.org or 866-474-2774. Learn more about Sharsheret at www.sharsheret.org.

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Deciphering the past

Oldest-ever inscription of "Jerusalem" found on pillar

By JNS staff

(JNS)—A pillar from the Second Temple period bearing a three-line inscription was unveiled at the Israel Museum on October 9, the earliest stone inscription of the full modern Hebrew spelling of "Jerusalem."

"Hananiah son of Dodalos of Yerushalayim [the way the ancient Jewish city is written in Hebrew today]" was discovered during a salvage excavation earlier this year of a large Hasmonean Period Jewish artisans' village near what is today's western entrance to the city.

In an interview with *The Times of Israel*, Israel Antiquities Authority archaeologist Danit Levi said when her team alerted her to the find, she could not believe that the word "Yerushalayim" could be on an ancient pillar, and that it must be graffiti. When she saw the "expertly chiseled" Hebrew lettering in the 31.5-inch tall column, she dusted it off and began to read.

"My heart started to pound, and I was sure everyone could hear it. My hands were trembling so badly I couldn't

properly take a picture," she said.

Levi believes the column and inscription date back to 100 B.C.E., and belonged to or was built with money from Hananiah son of Dodalos – Dodalos being a nickname used at the time to refer to artists, based on the Greek myth of Daedalus. Levi said the column was located in a Jewish village, but that it was found in a ceramic construction workshop used by the Tenth Roman Legion – the army that would eventually destroy Jerusalem and exile the Jews – evidently being reused in a plastered wall.

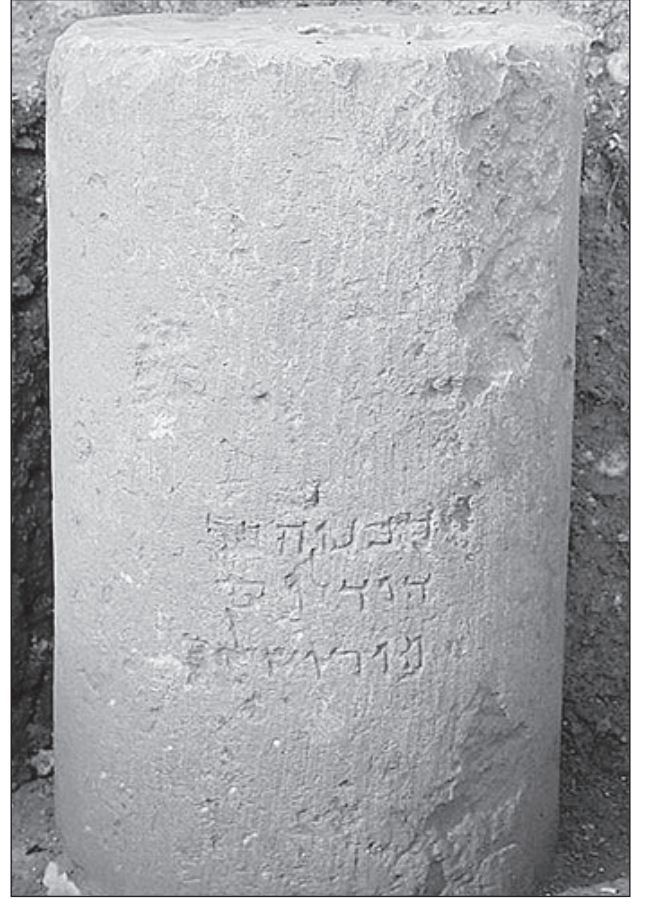
There is a disagreement among experts as to whether the word "Yerushalayim" was etched in Aramaic or Hebrew. While *bar* is the Aramaic word for "son," the Aramaic pronunciation of Jerusalem was "Yerushalem," whereas the word in the inscription was written "Yerushalayim," just like in Hebrew.

The artisan village was located near a natural source for clay, water and fuel, along a main artery leading to

the Temple, which, as noted by IAA's Jerusalem Regional Archaeologist Dr. Yuval Baruch at the event, is still in use today as a roadway to the Old City. The artisan village is situated on a 200-acre plot, likely in order to accommodate the needs of hundreds of thousands of pilgrims who would ascend to the Temple three times a year during festivals, as well as the 50,000 residents of the city at the time.

The column is currently on display at the Israel Museum in the Second Temple period exhibit.

Though this is the first inscription of its kind in stone, the full spelling of Jerusalem has been seen before, including on the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were written as early as 400 B.C.E.



The oldest discovered inscription of "Jerusalem" found to date, unveiled in October. (Photo by Danit Levy, Israel Antiquities Authority)

Medieval bath may be earliest Jewish vestige in Brazil

By Marcus M. Gilban

RIO DE JANEIRO (JTA)—Historians are investigating whether a 17th-century bath found in Brazil's first capital city is the country's oldest evidence of a Jewish presence.

The bath was discovered 10 years ago inside an old hotel located in Pelourinho, the historic center area of Salvador, the capital of the northeastern Brazilian state of Bahia. According to the facility's manager, an Orthodox Jew first raised the hypothesis that the bathtub might actually be a *mikvah*, or a ritual bath.

"I didn't know what a *mikvah* was, but this information indeed matches the fact that there were many new Christians here in the historic center area, in Bahia state, in the Brazilian northeastern region," Bruno Guinard told G1, referring to the Jews who were forced or chose to convert to Christianity in the 15th century to save their lives but kept their Jewishness in secrecy.

The hotel is located next to the Sao Francisco Church, one of the country's oldest religious temples. Brazil was a Portuguese colony until 1822. During this whole period, Judaism was forbidden by the Catholic Church, including the practice of using a ritual bath.

"A *mikvah* has the function of purification for women and is also used for conversions," Miguel Kertzman, president of the Israelite Society of Bahia, told the news portal.

Researchers from universities in Bahia and Sao Paulo began to study the place a few years ago. A tank to collect water, located above the bathtub, reinforces the chances of it being a *mikvah*, which needs fresh running water, according to the Jewish tradition.

"Every dimension, volume, depth, waterfall, everything indicates that it is a *mikvah*," historian Suzana Severs said. "But to be a *mikvah*, it would have to have religious and ritualistic use, and we don't know that yet."

To fuel the findings, the historians unveiled a lawsuit filed at that time by the Catholic Church against a Portuguese citizen who lived near the building. According to the lawsuit, the European person taught a woman Jewish religious practices, including the use of a ritual bath in an actual *mikvah*, which may or may not be the one in the hotel.

If the bath is confirmed to be a *mikvah*, it will become the oldest vestige of the Jewish presence in Latin America's largest nation, which is home today to some 120,000 Jews.

FINANCIAL PLANNING

Keeping consumers safer online

(NAPSI) – Although Americans are increasingly shopping online and are well-aware of the risks that cyber thieves pose, a majority admit they do not take the time to follow basic precautions they know can protect their personal and financial information. A few facts and tips can help you avoid trouble.

That is one of the key findings of the CASC's (CA Security Council's) 2015 Consumer Trust Survey, which reveals that:

- ◆ Most consumers have at least one device they don't bother password protecting. The most common device left unguarded is the tablet, a device that 61 percent leave unprotected.
- ◆ On a positive note, 53 percent of respondents identify the padlock as adding confidence in an e-commerce site, with 42 percent associating the green bar and organization name in the URL with greater safety. The green bar indicates a

website has earned an Extended Validation digital certificate.

- ◆ 43 percent of respondents are happy to use public Wi-Fi without regard to security issues, as long as it is free.

- ◆ 33 percent use just one or two passwords to log in across all their websites. This is especially problematic when considering the number of companies that have experienced breaches that resulted in stolen passwords within the last few years.

To help consumers stay secure, the CASC offers these tips:


- ◆ Look for "https" in the address bar. The "s" means it's secure. You should also see a padlock symbol. For an added sign that the site is authentic, look for the green browser bar and the website's name to appear in green.

- ◆ Update your browser to the latest version, which addresses the most current online risks.

- ◆ If your browser gives you a message about an untrusted security certificate for a website, don't proceed.

- ◆ Wherever possible, don't allow an organization to keep your payment information on file.

The CASC is an advocacy group committed to the advancement of the security of websites and online transactions. The Council advises all American consumers to be more attentive protecting themselves from cyber thieves, whose attacks have grown increasingly sophisticated and difficult to detect. Proactive measures include looking for the EV indicators and taking time to click on the Certificate Information in order to verify that the name and URL address of the company or organization match the site they plan to visit.



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New 3D bioprinted lungs to be available for global transplants

By Abigail Klein Leichman

(ISRAEL21c via JNS) – CollPlant, an Israeli regenerative medicine company focused on 3D bioprinting of tissues and organs, signed a license, development and commercialization agreement with United Therapeutics Corporation of Maryland for 3D bioprinted lung transplants.

The agreement combines CollPlant’s proprietary recombinant human collagen (rhCollagen) derived from engineered tobacco plants, and its BioInk technology, with the regenerative medicine and organ-manufacturing capabilities of United Therapeutics subsidiary Lung Biotechnology PBC.

One of many companies founded by Hebrew University nanotechnology pioneer Professor Oded Shoseyov, CollPlant will manufacture and supply BioInk for a few years to meet development process demand, and will provide technical support to United Therapeutics as it establishes a U.S. facility for the manufacture of CollPlant’s rhCollagen and BioInk.

The BioInk product line also includes a soft-tissue-repair matrix for treating tendinopathy, as well as a wound repair matrix to promote a rapid optimal healing of acute and chronic wounds.

In addition to the initial focus on 3D bioprinted

lungs for transplant surgeries anywhere in the world, the agreement grants United Therapeutics an option to expand the field of its license to add up to three additional organs.

“We are excited to work with CollPlant’s extraordinary Israeli technology to transform the tobacco plant that is so associated with lung disease into a collagen-expressing plant that will be essential to the production of an unlimited number of transplantable lungs,” said United Therapeutics Chairwoman and CEO Martine Rothblatt.

Once the agreement is approved by the Israel Innovation Authority and meets certain closing conditions, Ness Ziona-based CollPlant will receive an upfront payment of \$5 million and milestone payments of up to \$15 million based on the achievement of operational and regulatory milestones related to the development of manufactured lungs.

Ladino Continued from page 6

an unlikely fusion between the music of pop innovator Vanessa Carlton and one of the great Ladino divas of the 20th century, Rosa Ashkenazi.

One of her songs, “A Second Skin” (“Una Segunda Piel”), which will be on the new album, concerns an ancient Sephardic custom called “La Mortaja” in which middle-aged people were wrapped in shrouds and given a mock funeral – often after becoming grandparents or retiring.

“It looks very macabre at first, but actually the ceremony is not about death at all but about rebirth,” Vazana said. “You come to grips with your mortality, but at the same time you shed the shroud and symbolically your troubles away with it and begin a new phase in life.”

In preparing the tour and album, Vazana studied Ladino culture and poetry with Jonathan Benavides, the chairman of the Jewish community of the Dutch city of Leiden. Benavides is also among a handful of Ladino language teachers in the Netherlands, whose centuries-old Portuguese Jewish community used to be one of the world’s greatest Sephardic diasporas.

“To my knowledge, so far there have been no Ladino music albums made up of with newly written songs and melodies,” Benavides told JTA. “There have been recently terrific albums with traditional Ladino works.”

Devin Naar, a professor of Sephardic studies at the University of Washington, told JTA that when it comes to newly written music albums in Ladino, he is aware only of two featuring children’s songs: the 2016 “Ora de Despertar” by Sarah Aroeste and another compilation released recently in Israel titled “Yeladino.”

Benavides has not seen Vazana’s tour, but said he is not sure about some of her interpretations of the sources she studied under his instruction – including the allegedly homoerotic Hanagid poem. “It is true that homoerotic [poetry] was written in 12th-century Spain by some poets,” Benavides said. “But I’m not sure you can say that Shmuel Hanagid did that.”

More broadly, though, Benavides said he has limited faith in any project that explores Ladino in a secular context, as Vazana appears to be doing. “It’s not that Ladino is a religious language. It’s not,” he said. “But it was part of a world, of a community, defined by the Jewish religion. And when you examine it outside of that context, well, you’re looking at half the story.”

Opera Continued from page 5

son-in-law (the Penn family later moved to the United States). Posnick serves as co-producer of the opera.

In a phone interview with JTA, London said that he initially wanted to adapt the poem itself into an opera. But after he teamed with Thoron, his previous collaborator on a work about Marc Chagall and the Soviet Yiddish Theater, the pair decided to interweave the story of the poet and his poem’s hero.

“Once we had the idea to incorporate the story of poet in our theater piece, that’s where it got both very rich, very complicated, very multilayered and trilingual, but a lot of fun because that opened the door also for us to include the Afro-Cuban music,” he said.

London, who lives in New York, has performed Afro-Cuban music almost as consistently as klezmer in a career that spans some 500 CDs.

Though the pair concocted the fictionalized nightclub setting – and a romance between Penn and the singer to whom he tells the story – the rest of the opera is based on the true stories of Penn and Hatuey, London said.

Even though he was enthusiastic about combining the various narratives and languages, London said it wasn’t necessarily an easy fit. “It took us a long time to figure out how this piece was going to work,” he said.

The diverse cast of 16, none of whom knew Yiddish previously, learned the entire libretto in the span of two weeks. London said it helped that they are all opera singers and thus used to performing in foreign languages. “It’s hard to act in a language you don’t know,” he said, “but opera singers are trained to learn how to sing in languages they



Frank London, a Grammy Award-winning trumpeter, is the composer of “Hatuey: Memory of Fire.” (Photo by Anya Roz)

don’t know – that’s what they do.”

The production also received assistance from the National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene, which helped with translation and transliteration into Yiddish.

Writing an opera in Yiddish had been a longtime goal for London, but he struggled with finding a story that fit. “I didn’t just want to take a beautiful Sholem Aleichem shtetl story in Yiddish and make a klezmer-shtetl opera,” he said, referring to the famed Yiddish author and playwright. “I really wanted this to have a more universal message and not be a nostalgic piece.”

As a member of the Klezmatics, London has long blended Yiddish musical traditions with contemporary music. For “Hatuey,” he wanted to do something in a similar vein. “The Klezmatics’ entire career was based on the same premise but within music: to create a vital, living Yiddish klezmer music that is directly connected to our roots and history and to its history, but that is perfectly alive in our world,” he said.

Last year, London staged the opera in Cuba, but he had to make modifications to accommodate the production company’s limitations. The Yiddish parts were performed in Spanish, and London altered the music so it could be played by a band rather than a full orchestra. The New Jersey production represents the opera’s first run as it was written.

London said that putting on a new opera helps bring Yiddish theater back to its roots. “Yiddish theater 80-100 years ago was cutting edge, avant-garde zeitgeist theater,” he said. “We’ve gotten back to that.”

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Writer A.J. Jacobs traveled thousands of miles to thank everyone who had a hand in his morning coffee

By Cindy Sher

(JUF News via JTA)—Author A.J. Jacobs has encouraged his three sons to be grateful for all they have. He and his wife urge them to write thank-you notes, to thank the bus driver – even thank their household voice assistant Alexa for weather forecasts.

Jacobs, who is Jewish, sometimes says a prayer of thanksgiving with his family at the dinner table in appreciation of those who helped get food to their plates. But not too long ago, Jacobs' son Zane raised an observation to his dad. "You know these people can't hear you, right?" he asked.

Zane's remark got Jacobs thinking. Indeed, those people could not hear him. So the Manhattan-based humorist and writer set out on a quest to thank everyone who plays a role in making his morning coffee possible. He chose coffee because it was a more manageable undertaking than an entire meal – and he "can't live without" his java.

Jacobs chronicles the journey in his new book, "Thanks A Thousand: A Gratitude Journey" (TED Books), which was to come out on November 13 in conjunction with a TED Talk that he was to deliver on the same topic.

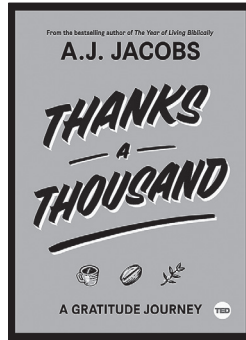
During his quest, which took him from a farm in Colombia to a steel plant in Indiana, he discovered how

interconnected the world is. So many more people than he could have imagined contribute to his morning cup of coffee. Obviously there are baristas and farmers, but also unsung heroes like artists (think coffee lid and sleeve designer), chemists, biologists, truckers and miners.

"I went around the world and thanked everyone I could find," he said, "because they reminded me there are so many people who help with every little thing in our lives and we take them for granted."

All told, Jacobs said he thanked 1,000 people for his cup of coffee – and actually could have thanked way more.

Along the way, he learned that gratitude isn't just a nice gesture for the recipient – scientific research show it's healthy for the thanker, too. A study in Scientific American found that gratitude is the single best predictor of well-being and good relationships. Psychological research shows that



"Thanks a Thousand: A Gratitude Journey" (Photo by Simon and Schuster)



A.J. Jacobs said before his adventure that he had "more a Larry David than Tom Hanks way of looking at the world." (Photo by Lem Lattimer)

gratitude can lift depression, improve one's diet, help heart patients recover quicker and lead to overall greater kindness and happiness.

Before the quest, Jacobs said, his default mood was usually grumpiness. The adventure helped him change his mindset. "I believe that genetically or culturally my default is negative – more a Larry David than Tom Hanks way of looking at the world. It's fun to watch on TV, but not necessarily fun to live," he said.

And Jacobs is certainly not alone – people are genetically programmed, evolutionary psychologists say, to focus on what goes wrong in daily life because it was a matter of survival back in Paleolithic times. But the result today is modern-day anxiety – a so-called "deficit mindset" – that's no longer helpful, said Jacobs.

See "Jacobs" on page 15

NFL.....Continued from page 3

"The weather's been awesome and the people are nice."

Joseph hasn't experienced a trademark Cleveland winter – lake effect snow can affect playing conditions at FirstEnergy Stadium, right on the Lake Erie shoreline – but he's ready for the challenge. "I'll take each challenge as it comes," he said. "Right now, the weather is good. I'll have to look into it further when [the bad weather comes]. I'll get in touch with people who have kicked here and experienced it. But then again, you can only learn so much from them, you have to go through it first-hand to really impact your learning curve."

Joseph said he wants to continue to further acquaint himself with Northeast Ohio's Jewish community and give back as much as he can. "It's a virtue close to my heart, since my mom kind of instilled that in me from a young age," he said. "That's why I'm leaning toward going out and talking with some Jewish day schools and hopefully something with the Jewish Federation, which would be very cool. That's in the works, hopefully."

He said his faith has "absolutely" guided him during his life and career. "At the end of the day, I believe it's written that what's going to happen is going to happen," he said. "That's why I go about my business with a smile on my face because I look at every experience as a learning experience. I believe there's a plan. What's written is written, you just go by that. That's why I never take anything too heavily. I choose to live my life in a positive manner, with a smile on my face, positively impacting the people around me, which is definitely a goal of mine."

Joseph said he was in Cleveland for Yom Kippur and, after practice, he got a ride to an evening service at Chabad of Downtown Cleveland, where he met Friedman. He moved into his apartment a few days before the Ravens game, and now, for the most part, he said he feels settled in his new city – although he continues to get to know people in and around town.

He noted the Browns normally get an off day on Tuesdays

– he hopes he can use it to give back. "Every Tuesday, there are community service events," Joseph said. "I just told our community relations people to sign me up for every one. I'll be there, it's something that's important to me. I want to reach out and use this platform while it's here to help whoever I can help and positively impact the greatest amount of people's quality of lives that I can possibly impact. Football is a great platform for that, and I feel like I'd be wasting it if I'm not using it. That's my goal here, to get out and help people."

Joseph wants Clevelanders to know he plans to do his best on the field, but he's here for more than football. "The Browns are in a position to win, but while I'm here, I want to get involved in the community," he said. "I want to try to go talk to and inspire Jewish kids all across Cleveland to let them know that it's possible to do basically whatever you want. It's not just football, it's not just sports. If you have a goal, my big thing is, put your head down and work. Anything is possible."

CHANUKAH Greetings

Deadlines: November 20 (November 30 issue) **and November 29** (December 7 Health Care Greetings issue)

Once again this year, *The Reporter* is inviting its readers and local organizations to extend Chanukah greetings to the community by purchasing a Chanukah greeting ad, which will appear in our November 30 and December 7 issues (Deadlines: Nov. 20 & 29). 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 \$18 (styles B, E & F), the larger one is \$36 (styles A, C & D) and the largest one (style G) is \$68.

To ensure that your greeting is published, please contact Bonnie Rozen at 724-2360, ext. 244 or bonnie@thereportergroup.org. Checks can be made payable to *The Reporter* and sent to: *The Reporter*, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850.

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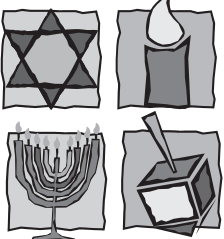
Wishing you a Happy Chanukah
light • peace • love



Your Name(s)

Style B - \$18 • Actual Size: 1.5278" x 1.975"

May the lights of Chanukah shine in your hearts forever



Your name(s)

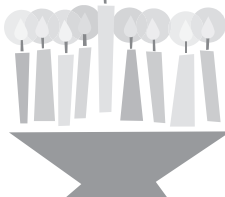
Style C - \$36 • Actual Size: 3.22" x 1.975"

CELEBRATE CHANUKAH

Your Name(s)

Style D - \$36
Actual Size: 3.22" x 1.975"


Warm Chanukah wishes to you and your family!



Your Name(s)

Style E - \$18
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HAPPY CHANUKAH!



YOUR NAME(S)

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THE REPORTER
Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton

Rube Goldberg did more than draw wacky machines

By Stephen Silver

(JTA) – When one hears the name Rube Goldberg, one concept instantly comes to mind: those fun machines that complete simple tasks in overly complicated and humorous ways. Think a ball rolling down a long ramp that hits a series of dominoes, which hits something else, and so on and so on.

Nearly 50 years after his death, his name will come up in politics or another field to explain something that's unnecessarily complex. Cartoonist Art Spiegelman, best known for his Pulitzer Prize-winning graphic novel "Maus," once said that "Rube Goldberg knew how to get from A to B using all the letters in the alphabet."

But as an exhibit at the National Museum of American Jewish History points out, there was a lot more to Rube Goldberg than the machines he drew.

Goldberg, who was born in 1883 and died in 1970, also was a prolific editorial cartoonist, as well as an inventor, engineer, humorist and author. He even had stints in

the advertising industry and in Hollywood in a career that spanned more than 70 years. He won a Pulitzer in 1948 for his political cartoons, and is considered an enduring inspiration to children in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields, where his creations are still used in lessons.

Goldberg's complete life and work is the subject of "The Art of Rube Goldberg," an exhibition that runs through January 21 at the Philadelphia museum. The exhibit, which follows stops at museums in San Francisco and Chicago, but features some new items, is the first major exhibition of Goldberg's work since the Smithsonian presented one shortly before his death.

"The Art of Rube Goldberg" consists of machines and cartoons, as well as artifacts from Goldberg's life. Included are numerous editorial and political cartoons – on topics ranging from government austerity measures to the continual struggle for peace between Jews and Arabs – that wouldn't be out of place today.

Goldberg, in fact, drew an estimated 50,000 cartoons in his career, but only a small fraction of them were related to his eponymous machines, his granddaughter Jennifer George said. He drew for papers such as the *San Francisco Bulletin* and the *New York Evening Mail*, where his strips

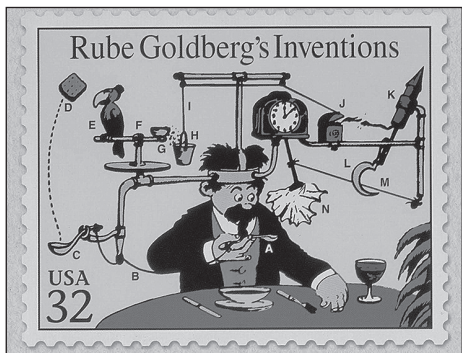
were introduced to the masses through McClure, the country's first newspaper syndicate. He started the machine drawings in the late 1920s in one of his several syndicated series – one involving a character named Professor Lucifer Gorgonzola Butts.

The exhibit, supervised in Philadelphia by chief curator Josh Pearlman, is presented with the cooperation of two of Goldberg's grandchildren – George and her cousin, John George, both children of Goldberg's sons. The two sons, Thomas and George, changed their surname to George at the insistence of their father (yes, one became George George). He claimed that it was for their safety because he received copious amounts of hate mail for his political cartoons, but there is debate within the family over whether the name's obvious Jewishness had anything to do with it. Goldberg was the son of Jewish parents in San Francisco and lived through a time of "harsh antisemitism" before the world wars.

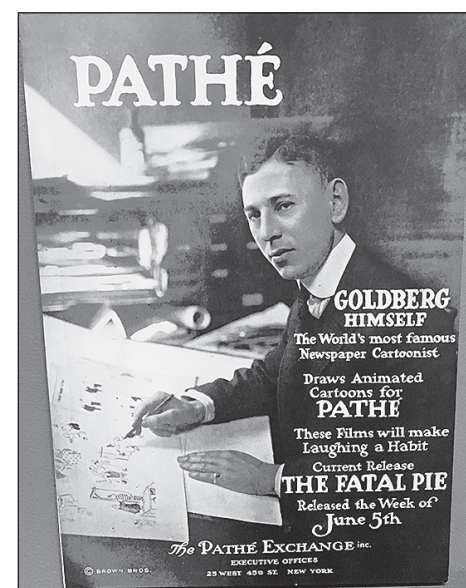
The exhibition also includes more personal, never-before-seen items, such as a cigar box belonging to Goldberg's father. There's a video installation showing modern-day movies – from Wes Anderson flicks to Wallace and Gromit tales to "Pee Wee's Big Adventure" – that have all used Rube Goldberg-like concepts.

Also new is a *Forbes* magazine cover drawn by Goldberg from 1967 that looked at "the future of home entertainment." It was tracked down recently by the daughter of a former *Forbes* art director and lent to the exhibit.

Goldberg died when Jennifer George was 11 years old, but she is the primary custodian of Goldberg's intellectual property and legacy. "I remember him through the



A Rube Goldberg cartoon used on a U.S. postal stamp. (Photo courtesy Rube Goldberg Inc.)



Rube Goldberg on a poster by the Pathé news agency calling him the "World's most famous Newspaper Cartoonist." (Photo by Stephen Silver)

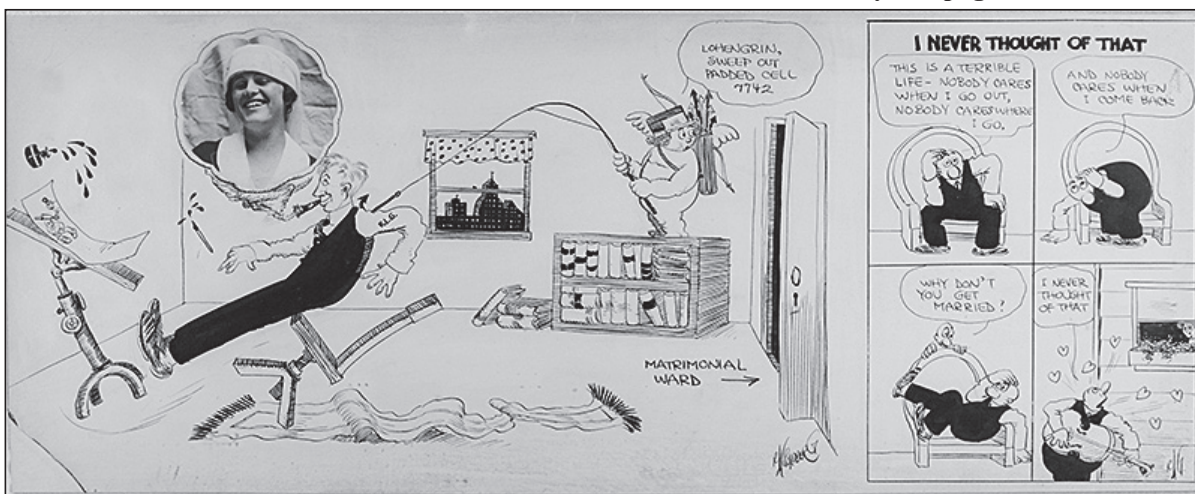
lens of a child. But when carrying on the legacy of Rube fell into my lap when my dad died, over a decade ago – I really had to do some heavy lifting," she said. "All of the cartoons that had once been on the walls of the den in the house that I grew up in, and in our grandparents' study, which I had never read, suddenly I had to start reading them, and I had to start educating myself as to who Rube Goldberg was, through the lens of an adult, at least if I was going to do this correctly."

Several events related to the exhibit are planned, including a Rube Goldberg Machine Contest for local high school students. See "Wacky" on page 13



One of Rube Goldberg's more political cartoons is on display at the exhibit. (Photo by Stephen Silver)

At right: Rube Goldberg's cartoons were not all of complicated contraptions. (Photo courtesy Rube Goldberg Inc.)





HANUKKAH GIFTS

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California wildfires damage Jewish institutions

By Marcy Oster

(JTA)—The fires racing through Southern California have led to the evacuation of more than 260,000 people, burned more than 83,000 acres and destroyed more than 170 homes, as well as damaged several Jewish institutions as of November 10.

The Jewish institutions, including several synagogues, turned to their social media pages to distribute information and offer support. Many held *Havdalah* services the night of November 10 at other nearby sites, most livestreamed on their social media pages, in order to provide support and healing for their members.

At the Ilan Ramon Day School in Agoura, fire destroyed the school's computer lab, administration building and a bathroom. "Our school, at its core, has never been about the physical space or the buildings in which the children learn. Our school is a sacred and special community," the head of school, Yuri Hronsky, wrote on November 9 in a Facebook post. "Our school is about heart and soul, not about brick and mortar. I wish I had better news to share as we enter Shabbat this evening." The school launched a GoFundMe page on November 9 titled "Help Rebuild Ilan Ramon Day School," with a goal of \$750,000.

The fire also reached the Shalom Institute, a camp and conference center located in the mountains of Malibu. In a message sent on November 10, institute leaders said in a letter that the fire had caused damage to the facility, but it was not yet known how serious. The staff, animals and Torah scrolls located on the campus of the institute were safely evacuated on November 9, according to the message signed by Gil Breakman and Rabbi Bill Kaplan, the president and executive director, respectively, of the Shalom Institute, and Joel Charnick, director of Camp JCA Shalom. "We know

this news is upsetting to hear and we share your sadness," the message said. "Camp is magical, but its magic transcends the buildings and structures. The magic comes from the loving community that we create when we are together. Though these losses may be painful, we know that the memories, friendships and joy that this place brings to so many lives on."

Camp Hess Kramer, a camp owned by the Wilshire Boulevard Temple, said in a message to camp families that "at least some structures" at the camp were consumed by the fire. The camp's Torah scrolls were evacuated ahead of the fire, and the camp is fully insured, according to the message. "Our thoughts and prayers are with all the first responders working so hard to protect life and property and to those who are suffering. May we begin a new week with them and each other in our prayers," read the message, posted on Facebook and signed by the synagogue and camp leadership.

The Reform Congregation Or Ami of Calabasas on November 9 set up a "Kid Camp and Adult Hangout" at a nearby high school, which was scheduled to continue on November 11. "For anyone needing support, food, or simply a space to be," the synagogue said on its website. "We will provide breakfast, snacks and lunch. We also have games and activities for kids, as well as spaces for adults to gather and process. Teens: come be with your friends, or hang out with kids. There will be counselors available for support for anyone who wishes it."

On November 9, the rabbi and president of Temple Adat Elohim, a Reform synagogue in Thousand Oaks, located in the same neighborhood as the Borderline Bar and Grill, the site of a deadly shooting on November 7, managed to enter the syna-

agogue on November 9 and remove its four Torah scrolls as mandatory evacuations were underway. The synagogue's cantor, David Shukiar, on November 10 posted on the synagogue's Facebook page that the grounds of the synagogue had been burnt, but that "the temple is in great shape." He noted that the homes in the area of the synagogue were "burnt to the ground."

Some 175 families who make up the congregation of the Malibu Jewish Center and Synagogue were evacuated from their homes, as was the synagogue. On November 10, the synagogue posted on its Facebook page that the building remained unharmed. The Torah scrolls had been removed a day earlier as a precaution to the Kehillat Israel synagogue in Pacific Palisades, which played host to a bar mitzvah that had been scheduled for the Malibu Jewish Center. The family of the bar mitzvah invited the entire

congregation to gather at the synagogue and celebrate with them.

In a message titled "We are here for you" posted on November 9 on the website of the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, Federation CEO Jay Sanderson, wrote: "The past few weeks have tested our strength and resolve as a community and a nation. ...I want to assure you that we are doing all we can to help our community as this natural disaster affects our Jewish institutions and homes."

Mandatory evacuation orders were issued on November 9 for families and institutions in Calabasas, Malibu and Thousand Oaks. Strong winds were forecast to pick up in the area on November 11, which combined with little moisture in the air and extremely dry ground from months of drought could cause the fires to continue to spread, according to Accu-Weather.

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Israelis near Gaza border block goods in protest of weekly riots, greenhouse fire

Israelis from the Gaza border region blocked trucks laden with goods and fuel for Gaza with their bodies on the morning of Nov. 11 in protest of the government's decision to allow the products into the region, despite ongoing riots on the border and the Nov. 9 infiltration of a man who set fire to a greenhouse. Israel's Channel 10 news reported heavy traffic near the Kerem Shalom Crossing on the morning of Nov. 11. On Nov. 9, a terrorist from Gaza broke through Israel's border fence, running 500 hundred meters into Israel and setting fire to an agricultural greenhouse belonging to a Jewish community. He was subsequently apprehended. Army officials said the infiltrator was spotted even prior to breaching the border and tracked throughout the incident. "Following the identification, large military forces were rushed to the area and operated in cooperation with civilian security forces," the army said. The forces surrounded the area where the suspect was identified." However, residents expressed outrage, claiming that the terrorist reached just meters from Israeli homes before being caught. Since March, Israel has tightened control of its side of the Gaza border – Gaza also shares a border with Egypt – due to violent riots involving tens of thousands of Gazans on a weekly, and sometimes, daily basis since March 30. International pressure has been imposed on Israel to relax the entryway to more goods, due to what they call an ongoing "humanitarian crisis" in Gaza. Israeli officials have argued that Hamas is responsible for Israeli stringencies because of its continued facilitation and encouragement of terror attacks and riots, and further argue that Hamas siphons money meant for infrastructure and basic needs to use for military purposes against Israel.

In Iran, Farrakhan warns Trump not to "trigger war in Middle East" due to Israel

Speaking in Iran, Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan warned U.S. President Donald Trump to not pull "the trigger of war in the Middle East at the insistence of Israel." The 85-year-old, known for his antisemitic vitriol, blasted Trump for reimposing sanctions on Iran earlier the week of Nov. 9. There, he led a chant of "Death to Israel" in Farsi, according to Iranian media. "[I am] begging our president and the government that supports him to be very, very careful. ...The war will trigger another kind of war which will bring China, Russia, all of the nations into a war and ... the war will end America as you know it," he said. This development comes just weeks after NOI posted a video on Facebook of Farrakhan comparing Jews to "termites."

Merkel on Kristallnacht: "We are living once again in a time of far-reaching change"

Eight decades after Kristallnacht, or the "Night of the Broken Glass," German Chancellor Angela Merkel warned about modern-day racism. "Today, we are living once again in a time of far-reaching change," she said at a Berlin synagogue. "In such times, there is always a particularly great danger of those who react with supposedly simple answers gaining support. ...We are commemorating today with the promise that we will set ourselves strongly against attacks on our open and plural society," she said. "We are commemorating in the knowledge that watching as lines are crossed and crimes are committed ultimately means going along with them." Merkel, dressed in black, noted that "Jewish life is blossoming again in Germany – an unexpected gift to us after the Shoah. But we are also witnessing a worrying antisemitism that threatens Jewish life in our country." On Nov. 9, 1938, Jews were terrorized in Germany and Austria as hundreds of synagogues and thousands of Jewish businesses were burned down. At least 91 people were murdered – some dragged by their beards into the street – and approximately 30,000 Jewish men were rounded up and deported to concentration camps. On Nov. 8, Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial and museum in Jerusalem held a memorial service and seminar to commemorate Kristallnacht. In attendance was German Ambassador to Israel Susanne Wasum-Rainer.

In Oman, Israeli minister promotes cooperation between Israel, Gulf states

Israeli Transportation and Intelligence Minister Yisrael Katz said on Nov. 8 in Oman that Israel and the Gulf states should cooperate on civilian issues such as aviation security and transportation. "In my view, cooperation ... can and should be expanded," Katz, who attended a transportation conference in the Omani capital of Muscat, told Reuters. "Israel also has a lot to offer when it comes to water desalination, irrigation, agriculture and medicine." He also said that a railway from Israel to Oman "makes sense." The trip comes two weeks after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited the country and met with its ruler, Sultan Qaboos bin Said. It is the first trip made by an Israeli prime minister since Shimon Peres in 1996. Katz said these visits to Oman by Israel officials "are part of a wider trend of strengthening ties between Israel and the Gulf countries based on common interests and a mutual recognition of the potential benefits for both sides, both in terms of contending with common challenges and threats, as well as opportunities." Israel also sees Oman as an ally to combat the Iranian regional threat.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

From JTA

Stan Lee, creator of iconic Marvel comics superheroes, is dead at 95

Stan Lee, who as one of the masterminds behind Marvel Comics created such mega-popular comic book franchises as Spider-Man, the Incredible Hulk and the X-Men, died early Nov. 12 at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles. He was 95. Born Stanley Martin Lieber in 1922, the son of a Romanian-Jewish immigrant father and what he once called a “nice, rather old-fashioned Jewish lady,” Lee drew on themes of his childhood to create a series of memorable pulp heroes whose outsider status in some ways became their superpower. Lee was considered a pioneer of a comic book industry dominated at its outset by second-generation Jewish artists and writers, and one of its most iconic figures. He also lived long enough to see it transformed into a multibillion-dollar film industry that has spawned countless blockbusters based on his characters, including Black Panther, the Mighty Thor, Iron Man, the Fantastic Four, the Incredible Hulk, Daredevil and Ant-Man. Lee grew up in the Washington Heights neighborhood of Manhattan and attended DeWitt Clinton High School in the Bronx. In 1939, he was brought in to what would become Marvel – and became its interim editor at age 19 – although it wasn’t until the early 1960s that he and artist Jack Kirby (born Jacob Kurtzberg) teamed up to put their distinctive stamp on the industry then dominated by DC, which published Superman and Batman comics. According to Arie Kaplan, author of “From Krakow to Krypton: Jews and Comic Books” (JPS), Lee and Kirby created “a group of superheroes who weren’t sunny or optimistic like rival company DC’s heroes. One member of the Fantastic Four, Ben Grimm (aka The Thing) felt like a freak because cosmic rays had transformed him into an orange, granite-skinned monster. With Ben Grimm, Lee and Kirby were using a superhero as a metaphor for Jews, African-Americans, and other minorities.” In the introduction to the book “Disguised as Clark Kent: Jews, Comics and the Creation of the Superhero,” by Danny Fingeroth, Lee wondered if the antisemitism he and other young comic book writers and artists experienced played a role in their art. “[C]ould it be that there was something in our background, in our culture, that brought us together in the comic book field?” he wrote. “When we created stories about idealized superheroes, were we subconsciously trying to identify with characters who were the opposite of the Jewish stereotypes that hate propaganda had tried to instill in people’s minds?” In 1972, Lee was named publisher of Marvel, leaving the editing to others as he went about promoting the Marvel brand. He set up an animation studio in Los Angeles, and saw the company eventually grow from TV production into a multimedia giant that has dominated the movie box office. In 2002, Lee published an autobiography, “Excelsior! The Amazing Life of Stan Lee.” After Joan, his wife of 69 years, died in July 2017, Lee’s final few years were marked by a series of lawsuits over his fortune and allegations that Lee was a victim of elder abuse by a man handling his affairs. According to the Hollywood Reporter, Lee’s estate is estimated to be worth as much as \$70 million. Survivors include his daughter and a younger brother, Larry Lieber, a writer and artist for Marvel. Another daughter, Jan, died in infancy.

Miriam Adelson to receive Presidential Medal of Freedom

Miriam Adelson, a physician who has partnered with her husband, the casino magnate Sheldon Adelson, in directing donations to the Republican Party, medical research, and pro-Israel and Jewish causes, was named one of seven recipients of the Presidential Medal of Freedom. The recipients announced on Nov. 9 are the first to be honored by President Donald Trump. The announcement called Miriam Adelson “a committed doctor, philanthropist and humanitarian” who has “practiced internal and emergency medicine, studied and specialized in the disease of narcotic addiction, and founded


two research centers committed to fighting substance abuse.” It also noted that with her husband, she established the Adelson Medical Research Foundation, which supports research to prevent, reduce, or eliminate disabling and life-threatening illness. “As a committed member of the American Jewish community, she has supported Jewish schools, Holocaust memorial organizations, Friends of the Israel Defense Forces, and Birthright Israel, among other causes,” the announcement also said. The Presidential Medal of Freedom is the nation’s highest honor for a civilian. The other living recipients of the medal, which will be bestowed on Nov. 16, are Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT), who is retiring after more than four decades in the Senate; Alan Page, a retiring justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court, as well as a Pro Football Hall of Famer; and Roger Staubach, a Hall of Fame quarterback who was cited for his charitable contributions, as well as his career with the Dallas Cowboys. Posthumous honors were granted to Elvis Presley, who according to the White House “defined American culture to billions of adoring fans around the world”; Babe

Ruth, the Yankee slugger who set baseball records that stood for decades; and Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia.

Swastika image sent to cellphones of students at Chicago area high school

An image of a swastika was sent to the cellphones of students during an assembly at a suburban Chicago high school. The image was “air-dropped” on Nov. 9 on an Apple device to students attending the Tradition of Excellence assembly at the Oak Park and River Forest High School. The sender was later identified as a student who was in the auditorium at the time, the *Chicago Tribune* reported. The incident follows two incidents of racist and antisemitic graffiti found on the school’s campus since the beginning of the month. On Nov. 2, racist and antisemitic graffiti was discovered outside the school building on a shed near the campus tennis courts. Days later, “hate-speech graffiti,” including a swastika, and racist and antisemitic comments, including “GAS the Jews,” was discovered inside a campus bathroom.

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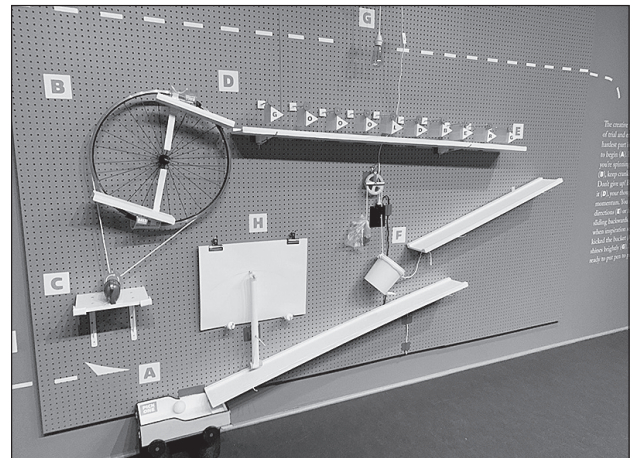
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Wacky. Continued from page 11

“We are preparing for a lot of serious and zany fun,” Ivy Barsky, the museum’s CEO, said at the press preview recently. “Which we don’t get to say a lot at a history museum.”



A wall at the exhibit at the National Museum of American Jewish History in Philadelphia. (Photo by Stephen Silver)



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Weekly Parasha

Vayetze, Genesis 28:10-32:3

Dream on

RABBI GEOFFREY BROWN, TEMPLE ISRAEL, VESTAL

Dreaming is a natural part of sleeping. Our sleeping consists of a full one-third of our lives. One-third! If we are spending one-third of our allotted time in this world in a particular activity, including one that on the surface seems to be passive, then it goes without saying that while we sleep our brains and sub-conscious thinking are quite active and potentially life changing.

Nearly every scholar, scientist, psychologist and spiritual leader has its own explanations as to why we dream. Jewish teachings do not run away from the why we dream and neither do they universally agree on the origin of dreams. Many believe in the divine origin of dreams, while others believe dreaming is grounded in human interaction. The Tanach, the Hebrew Bible [Tanach includes a total 39 books: The Torah (five), the Prophets (21) and the Writings (13)], contains multiple protagonists in Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Samuel,

Solomon, Daniel, Jeremiah and others whose dreams play central roles in their decisions and esteemed paths.

Our *parasha*, Vayetze, illuminates one of the Tanach's most vivid dreams. The back story follows Jacob leaving Beer Sheva for at least two good reasons: He may be fleeing the wrath of his brother Esau after posing as Esau to Isaac and after receiving Isaac's first born-Esau's blessing; or Jacob leaves his home seeking a wife from his father's kinsman, Uncle Laban, because his hometown marriage options are idol worshipping people. Either of the reasons are justifiable. En route, Jacob finds himself between Beer Sheva and Haran, stopping for the night. During the night, "He had a dream; a ladder was set on the ground and its top reached the sky, and angels of God were going up and down on it. And the Lord was standing beside him [or upon it]" (Gen. 28:12-13).

Within this visual of angels ascending and descending

the ladder, God speaks boldly to Jacob, standing over Jacob in the dream saying, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac; the land upon which you are lying to you I will give it and to your seed.

"And your seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and you shall gain strength westward and eastward and northward and southward; and through you shall be blessed all the families of the earth and through your seed. And behold, I am with you, and I will guard you wherever you go, and I will restore you to this land, for I will not forsake you until I have done what I have spoken concerning you."

There is nothing like God standing over you in a dream and foretelling your future to make you take note. It would be an understatement to say that the rabbis had a heyday interpreting this dream sequence. Among the questions the See "Dream" on page 15

Congregational Notes

Temple Israel

Orientation: Conservative
 Rabbi: Geoffrey Brown
 Address: 4737 Deerfield Pl., Vestal, NY 13850
 Phone: 723-7461 and 231-3746
 Office hours: Mon.-Thurs. 8:30 am-4 pm; Fri. 8 am-3 pm
 E-mail: titammy@stny.twcbc.com
 Website: www.templeisraelvestal.org
 Service Schedule: Tuesday, 5:30 pm; Friday, 5:30 pm; Saturday, 9:30 am

On Saturday, November 17, at 9:30 am, services will be led by Rabbi Geoffrey Brown. The Torah portion will be Genesis 28:10-32:3. The haftarah will be Hosea 12:13-14:10. Beverly Rozen and Harriet Horowitz will sponsor the kiddush following services.

On Sunday, November 18, at 10 am, there will be an Adult Ed. brunch featuring BU Professor Jonathan Karp. The cost is \$5 per person.

On Tuesday, November 20, at 7 pm, there will be a Board of Trustees meeting.

On Wednesday-Friday, November 21-23, the office will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday.

On Friday, November 30, at 6:30 pm, there will be Shabbat on the Road at Brookdale Senior Living.

Temple Beth-El of Ithaca

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
 Rabbi: Scott L. Glass
 Address: 402 North Tioga St. (the corner of Court and Tioga streets), Ithaca, NY 14850-4292
 Phone: 273-5775
 E-mail: rabbi@tbeithaca.org and secretary@tbeithaca.org
 Website: www.tbeithaca.org
 President: Jerry Davis

Sisterhood President: Julie Paige
 Director of Education: Rabbi Suzanne Brody
 Administrative Assistant: Jane Griffith
 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 Midrashah (eighth-grade and high school) classes will meet at times designated by their respective teachers.
 Adult Ed.: Numerous weekly courses, several semester-long courses and a variety of mini-courses and lectures are offered throughout the year. Call the temple office for more details.

On Saturday, November 17, at 6:30 pm, Kadima and USY members will go bowling and have pizza at the Helen Newman Bowling Center. RSVP to tbeneshama@gmail.com if you are interested in attending or have any questions.

On Sunday, November 18, at 3 pm, Temple Beth-El will host ACT's Multi-Faith Thanksgiving Service honoring the 50th anniversary of Area Congregations Together. A reception will follow the service.

Rohr Chabad Center

Affiliation: Chabad-Lubavitch
 Rabbi: Aaron Slonim
 E-mail: aslonim@binghamton.edu
 Address: 420 Murray Hill Rd., Vestal, NY 13850
 Phone: 797-0015, Fax: 797-0095
 Website: www.Chabadofbinghamton.com
 Chabad on the West Side
 Rabbi: Zalman Chein
 E-mail: zchein@JewishBU.com
 Address: 27 Bennet Ave., Binghamton, NY 13905
 Phone: 722-3252

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.
 Linking Hearts for youngsters with special needs: This program connects Jewish special-needs children and teenagers, ages 5-14, who have mental, physical and/or functional disabilities, with student volunteers who will visit participating youngsters weekly in their homes.

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.

Temple Concord

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism
 Rabbi: Barbara Goldman-Wartell
 Address: 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905
 Office hours: Tues.-Fri., 10 am-2 pm
 Phone: 723-7355
 Fax: 723-0785
 Office e-mail: TempleConcordbinghamton@gmail.com
 Website: www.templeconcord.com
 Regular service times: Friday, 8 pm; Saturday, 10:35 am, when religious school is in session.

Hebrew school: Hebrew school meets at 5:15 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the school year unless otherwise noted.

On Friday, November 16, at 8 pm, there will be Shabbat services led by Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell.

On Saturday, November 17, at 9 am, there will be religious school; at 9:15 am, there will be Torah study; at 9:30 am, there will be Tot Shabbat; and, at 10:30 am, there will be Shabbat family services with November birthday blessings.

On Sunday, November 18, at 10 am, there will be a TC/TI Adult Education brunch with Professor Jonathan Karp speaking on the Jewish 1968 at Temple Israel and, from 10 am-3 pm, there will be the Sisterhood Artisan Holiday Marketplace.

On Tuesday, November 20, at 10:30 am, the Tuesday Morning Book Club will meet at Temple Concord and, at 4:15 and 5:15 pm, there will be Hebrew school.

On Friday, November 23, the office will be closed; at 8 pm, there will be Shabbat services led by Rabbi Rachel Esserman, with an oneg sponsored by Sisterhood.

On Saturday, November 24, there will be no religious school, Torah study or service due to the Thanksgiving break.

Temple Brith Sholom

Affiliation: Unaffiliated
 Address: P.O. Box 572, 117 Madison St., Cortland, NY 13045
 Phone: 607-756-7181
 President: Bruce Fein, bfein@twcny.rr.com
 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 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.

Kol Haverim

Affiliation: Society for Humanistic Judaism
 Address: P.O. Box 4972, Ithaca, NY 14852-4972
 Phone: 607-277-3345
 E-mail: info@kolhaverim.net
 Website: www.kolhaverim.net
 Chairwoman: Abby Cohn

Kol Haverim: The Finger Lakes Community for Humanistic Judaism, is an Ithaca-based organization that brings people together to explore and celebrate Jewish identity, history, culture and ethics within a secular, humanistic framework. KH is part of an international movement for Secular Humanistic Judaism and is affiliated with the Society for Humanistic Judaism, a national association with over 30 member communities and congregations around the country. Established in the spring of 1999, it offers celebrations of Jewish holidays, monthly Shabbat pot-lucks, adult education, a twice-monthly Cultural School for children, and a bar and bat mitzvah program.

KH welcomes all individuals and families, including those from mixed religious backgrounds, who wish to strengthen the Jewish experience in their lives and provide their children with a Jewish identity and experience.

Friday, November 16, light candles 4:23 pm
 Shabbat ends Saturday, November 17 5:23 pm
 Friday, November 23, light candles 4:18 pm
 Shabbat ends Saturday, November 24 5:18 pm

Beth David Synagogue

Affiliation: Orthodox Union
 Rabbi: Zev Silber
 Address: 39 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905
 Phone: 722-1793, Rabbi's Office: 722-7514
 Fax: 722-7121
 Office hours: Mon. closed; Tues. 10 am-1 pm; Wed. closed; Thurs. 9 am-1 pm; Fri. 10 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

Shabbat Services:
 Fri., Nov. 16 4:25 pm
 Shabbat, Nov. 17 9 am
 Mincha after the kiddush
 Maariv 5:45 pm

Weekday Services:
 Mornings:
 Sun., Nov. 18 8:30 am
 Mon.-Wed., Nov. 19-21 7 am
 Thurs.-Fri., Nov. 22-23 8:30 am

Evenings:
 Sun., Nov. 18 4:25 pm
 Mon.-Wed., Nov. 19-21 7 pm
 Thurs.-Fri., Nov. 22-23 4:20 pm
 Classes: Rabbi Zev Silber will hold his weekly Talmud class every Tuesday evening after services.

Norwich Jewish Center

Orientation: Inclusive
 Rabbi: David Regenspan
 Address: 72 South Broad St., Norwich, NY 13815
 Contact: Guilia Greenberg, 336-1523
 Purpose: To maintain a Jewish identity and meet the needs of the Jewish community in the area.
 Adult Ed.: Saturday morning study is held at 10 am. Call for more information and to confirm.

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
 E-mail: info@tikunvor.org
 Website: www.tikunvor.org
 Presidents: Miranda Phillips and Shawn Murphy
 Rabbi: Brian Walt

Religious School Director/Admin. Coordinator: Naomi Wilensky
 Services: Fridays at 7:30 pm unless otherwise noted. Family services and Tot Shabbat once a month at 6:30 pm. Call for weekly schedules.
 Religious School: Preschool through seventh-grade classes meet on Sunday mornings. Sixth-grade Hebrew and seventh-grade b'nai mitzvah classes meet on Wednesday afternoons.
 Adult Ed: Mini courses throughout the year. Adult Hebrew offered regularly. Call the office for details.

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
 Rabbi: Molly Karp
 Address: 83 Chestnut St., Oneonta, NY 13820
 Mailing address: P.O. Box 383, Oneonta, NY 13820
 Phone: 607-432-5522
 Website: www.templebetheloneonta.org
 E-mail: TBEOneonta@gmail.com
 Regular service times: visit the temple website for days of services and times
 Religious School/Education: Religious School, for grades kindergarten through bar/bat mitzvah, meets Sunday mornings. Rabbi Karp conducts services and holds classes in Torah, beginning Hebrew and Maimonides.
 For the schedule of services, classes and events, see the website.

Dream. . . . Continued from page 14

great commentators throughout time asked are: What was the purpose of the dream? To whom does “angels of God” refer? What does “going up and down” signify? Was the Lord standing beside Jacob, or upon the ladder? Our *d’var Torah* will explore the first of these questions, “What was the purpose of the ladder in the dream?”

Among the wealth of Jewish books on interpreting text is the well-known interpretation Tanhumah (Va-Yetze, 2), a fifth century *midrash*. The Tanhumah views the ladder as signifying the history of mankind, its rungs representing the kingdoms that ruled the earth, one succeeding another.

Another interpretation is found in another *midrash*, Genesis Rabbah (68,12 [*Midrash Rabbah*, Genesis, II, p.627]). The great 10th century Torah commentator, Rashi, cites it writing that the ladder stood on the boundary between the Land of Israel and the Diaspora: “The angels who escorted him in the Land of Israel do not leave the Land but ascend to Heaven, and angels whose domain is outside of Israel descend to accompany him [further].”

Yet a different interpretation regards Jacob’s ladder as the ascendancy to spiritual elevation. “According to Maimonides (Guide of the Perplexed, I.15),[1] the purpose of the ladder is to explain the relationship between two realities, between existence on earth and existence in the world of heavenly spheres,” both of which are set in motion by God. Jacob sees “angels of God” on the ladder. Those “going up and down on it” are the prophets who, from studying the ladder – the connection between the two worlds, i.e., God’s providence – are elevated to a higher, heavenly level of understanding. That is why it says “going up and down,” first they ascend and become inspired, then they descend and transmit the understanding they acquired to the world. Maimonides wrote that the dream is a representation of the two worlds, and Jacob, as the person who contemplates the ladder, as in the connection between the worlds, attains an understanding of God and of His ways in our world.”⁽¹⁾

We would be remiss to not include in our study of interpretations of Jacob’s dream the commentaries of the great Chasidic leaders Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Lyady and Rabbi Hayyim of Volozhin, a disciple of the Vilna Gaon. Their explanations of the ladder symbolized the stages by which a person ascends in spirituality. The ladder has “angels of God going up and down on it,” because the entire universe, including the angels, ascends and descends along the rungs by which human beings ascend and descend, and in their wake. That is to say, everything depends on human deeds, ascending as mankind ascends, and descending as mankind descends.

Jacob’s dream may have purposefully given one of human-kinds greatest protagonists an inkling of his grandfather Abraham’s commitment to the belief of one God. Here, God is talking directly to Jacob – Abraham’s stories become Jacob’s progeny’s future. If we believe, as Rabbi Zalman, that our human good deeds are a real metaphor for humanity’s ascension to making our world better, or if your Maimonidean ascension from one rung upward to the next rung provides you with greater wisdom and understanding so that when you descend, you are sharing the wisdom, then Jacob’s ladder dream still has particular relevancy in today’s world.

Jacob’s ladder dream clearly contains God’s voice. Today, there are those who believe that in their dreams, God’s voice resonates, and that their dreams are divinely inspired. Dreams may reach out to us when our subconscious offers us healing, comfort, teaching, wisdom and help while we make decisions and try to anticipate future scenarios. Dreams may indeed be messages.

Next time you have occasion to remember your dream, write it down. Share your dream with a good friend or, if you are close to a rabbi, he/she may be adept at dream interpretation. Who knows, your dream may help you unlock a thought or an idea that helps us move closer an important decision. Maybe it is divinely inspired, calming you or showing you the way. Dream on!


(1) Bar Alon University, Basic Jewish Studies Unit, Sponsored by Dr. Ruth Borchard Shores Charitable Fund, Parashat Vayetze-5758 (1997), *The Meaning of Jacob’s Dream*, Rabbi Jacob Charlap, Department of Talmud: www.biu.ac.il/JH/Parasha/eng/vayetze/harlap.html.

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For more information or to register, contact the JCC Office at 607-2417 or BrendanD@binghamtonjcc.org
www.binghamtonjcc.org



Jewish Community Center

Family Movie Night at JCC to feature “Incredibles 2” on Dec. 1

The Jewish Community Center will hold a Family Movie Night on Saturday, December 1, at 6 pm. The cost is \$2 per person, with a \$10 maximum per family. The entire community is welcome.

The featured movie will be Disney and Pixar’s “Incredibles 2.” Attendees are asked to bring a blanket, pillow or

chair to use during the movie. The first 25 children to attend will receive a free popcorn cup, and other light refreshments will be available. All proceeds generated from the event will go to benefit Camp JCC in the upcoming summer.

For more information about the movie night, Camp JCC or the JCC, contact the JCC office at 724-2417.

JCC Friendship Club

The JCC Friendship Club met on November 7 and watched the first half of the movie “Fly Away Home.” It is about a 13 year old girl, named Amy, who lived with her mother in New Zealand. Her parents were separated. When her mother was killed in an automobile accident, her father came from Canada to the hospital to take Amy home to live with him. Needless to say, she was not happy with this arrangement. She hadn’t seen her father since she was 3 years old and did not remember much about him. He lived on a plot of land with a house and a barn. He was an artist and was making a large metal statue of an animal for a museum. He was also building a light glider that he could fly.

One day a wrecking company came and bulldozed the forest of trees in the adjoining property. He could not stop them. Amy was walking between the tree stumps. When she sat down she found unhatched goose eggs in the grass. She took the eggs home and put them in a drawer with blankets and a portable light to keep them warm. She checked on them frequently. When the eggs hatched, she watched them come out of their shells. She was the first

one they saw and later she was told that they thought of her as their mother. They were told by a ranger that the geese learn by following what the mother does. When the mother flies they fly after her. When she migrates south for the winter, they learn the route from her. It was interesting to see how they handled this problem.

Next week, we will see the other half of the movie. Everyone was so engrossed in the film that we didn’t notice the time. Bruce Orden brought the video to the meeting and connected his computer to the TV in the room. We are looking forward to seeing how the story ends.

The meeting was called to order by Sylvia Diamond. Ann Brilliant said the blessing over the cookies after the Pledge of Allegiance. Sue Herzog gave the treasurer’s report. There will be no meeting on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. Come join us on Wednesday, November 28, to hear Roz Antoun tell about a trip she took. We will meet at 1:30 pm at the JCC.

Sylvia Diamond
 President

Jacobs. Continued from page 10

To the contrary, “it’s inspiring and energizing to focus on the hundreds of things that go right every day instead of the three or four that go wrong,” he said.

Jewish teachings can help us move the needle on gratitude. In research for his book – as well as for his past best-seller, “The Year of Living Biblically,” in which Jacobs embarked on a quest to live according to every precept in the Bible for a year – he learned that much wisdom on gratitude comes from Judaism. “To be Jewish is to be thankful,” one rabbi told Jacobs.

In fact, the very word “Jew,” derived from the tribe

of Judah, means thanksgiving. Jews deliver prayers of thanks from the time they wake up to the time they go to bed. There is a catchphrase in Judaism that Jacobs learned during his research called “creed before deed.”

At first, Jacobs said it was hard to feel gratitude, but if he went through the motions of acting with compassion and gratitude, eventually he would feel them. “One of the best ways to go about life is to ‘fake it til you feel it,’ and it’s an extremely Jewish way to live,” he said. “If you act a certain way and follow the *mitzvot*, your mind will eventually catch up.”



A.J. Jacobs (right) picked coffee cherries, which contain coffee beans, in Colombia. (Photo courtesy of Jacobs)

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NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Hundreds of rockets fired from Gaza at southern Israel

Hundreds of rockets have been fired from the Gaza Strip at southern Israel on Nov. 12 amid renewed tensions following the death of an Israeli special-forces soldier earlier in the day. According to the Israeli Defense Forces, more than 200 rockets have been fired from Gaza, with the Iron Dome missile-defense system intercepting several dozen of them, while others have struck Israeli homes and buildings near the border, or have landed in open areas. In response, the Israel Defense Forces said it has hit 20-plus Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad targets in Gaza, including terror compounds, observation posts and rocket-launching squads. Early reports indicate that several Israelis have been injured as a result of the rocket fire. According to United Hatzalah, 10 people have been treated by medical volunteers in Sderot and the Sha'ar HaNegev region due to injuries relating to the rocket fire from Gaza. The latest barrage of rockets comes following the death of an Israeli special-forces soldier who was killed during a covert mission in the Gaza Strip during the Nov. 11 late night/Nov. 12 early morning hours. The soldier, identified only as Lt. Col. M, was purportedly on an intelligence-gathering mission that went awry. The IDF stressed that the mission was not intended to kidnap or assassinate any Hamas targets. At the same time, the flare up along Gaza also comes just after a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas was reportedly reached through Egyptian and Qatari-backed negotiations.

Teens build connections in FSU

For thousands of Jewish teens and young adult leaders in the former Soviet Union, building Jewish life, connecting with one another and serving their communities have become central tenants to their Jewish identity. That achievement – a generation after the fall of communism, upending a legacy of Soviet oppression of Judaism and volunteerism – was celebrated when more than 400 Jewish teens gathered at the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee's Active Jewish Teens Conference in Kiev, Ukraine, from Nov. 8-11. Created and run by AJT teens, the fifth annual conference included young Jews from Ukraine, Russia, Moldova, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Israel and America. The group also honored the 11 victims of the antisemitic shooting on Oct. 27 at the Tree of Life*Or L'Simcha Synagogue in

Pittsburgh. This year's conference theme was Jewish history, with more than 200 workshops focusing on topics like the development of Jewish music; Yiddish-speaking culture and art; the different streams of Judaism, from Orthodoxy to Reform; volunteerism best practices; and Jewish text study. It coalesced in the creation of a mural according to a timeline of the Jewish people's development around the globe. The gathering is among many year-long activities boosted through a new JDC partnership with the Genesis Philanthropy Group. AJT is JDC's "rapidly expanding" Jewish teen program that emerged from grass-roots efforts by Jewish youth in the former Soviet Union to build their Jewish identity and connectivity. In just five years, it has connected more than 3,000 teens through local chapters in 57 cities in seven counties in the former Soviet Union.

Hate crimes against Jews in France have surged in 2018

French Jews are facing a massive uptick in antisemitic attacks, with French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe revealing that the number of documented hate crimes targeting Jews increased by more than 69 percent in the first nine months of 2018. The figures were published by Philippe on Facebook on Nov. 8, the same day he commemorated the Kristallnacht pogroms of 1938. "Every assault perpetrated against one of our fellow citizens because they are Jewish resonates like a new Kristallnacht," he wrote. The CRIF umbrella group of French Jewish communities replied that the "most violent incidents... reflect the perseverance of anti-Semitism and its development into a daily occurrence."

Self-driving cars to reach Israel as early as 2019

A new proposal by three major car-related companies will bring self-driving vehicles to Israel as early as 2019. A proposal submitted during the Smart Mobility Summit in Tel Aviv by Volkswagen Group, Champion Motors and Mobileye is expected to bring Level 4 autonomous vehicles to Israel by next year, with Volkswagen supplying electric cars, Mobileye installing self-driving capabilities and Champion Motors running the control center and fleet operations. Level 4 vehicles drive in specific, fully mapped areas and require a driver to be present, but not to drive except in emergency situations. The initiative secured a commitment from the Israeli government to provide legal and regulatory support, and to share data and access to infrastructure. The project is expected to begin tests in early 2019, with full commercialization as early as 2022.

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