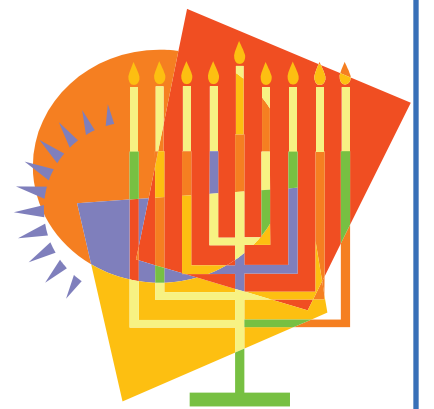
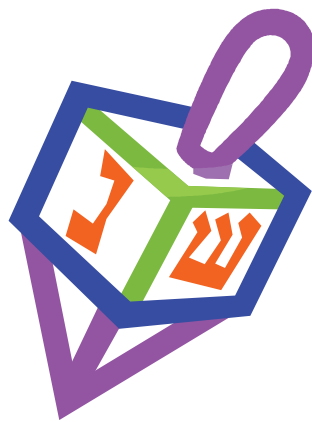
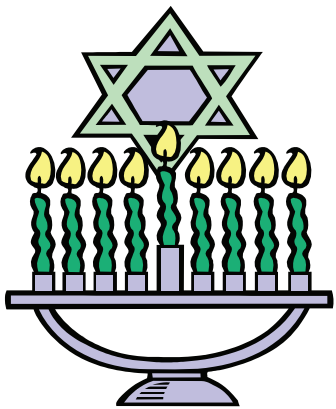
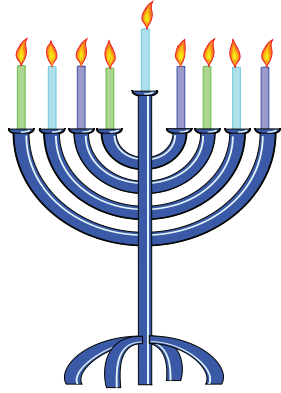


THE REPORTER

Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton

BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK

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Volume LII, Number 24





Jewish Baseball Players

Jewish baseball roundup 2023, part II

BILL SIMONS

Israel provided bookends for Jewish baseball 2023. Euphoria accompanied its beginning when Team Israel, largely composed of American Jews, won its premier World Baseball Classic game on March 12, staging a dramatic rally to top Nicaragua 3-1. Nonetheless, three consecutive losses followed, eliminating Team Israel from WBC competition. During the subsequent MLB season, no Jewish player competed for either Most Valuable Player or Cy Young awards. Yet, Jewish baseball 2023 notched a significant milestone: there were 18 Jewish major leaguers in 2023, a new high-water mark. Then, on October 7, in the midst of MLB's divisional playoffs, events in Israel provided a shocking climax to Jewish baseball 2023.

On Friday, October 6, the High Holiday cycle had just ended with the conclusion of Sukkot, a joyful festival. Then, on the Sabbath morning of the next day, a barrage of rockets presaged the invasion of southern Israel by Hamas terrorists committed to the destruction of Israel and the killing of as many Jews as possible, who inflicted the most serious threat to Israel's survival since its rebirth in 1948 and the heaviest loss of Jewish life since the end of the Shoah in 1945. Clandestine attacks on military installations, *kibbutzim* and a musical festival left approximately 1,200 Jews, mainly civilians, dead. Torture, rape and mutilation accompanied the carnage. Hamas took another 240 Jews hostage, amongst them children, the aged and the ill. Rendered vulnerable by months of rancorous political and social division, compounded by false confidence in the dominance of its military intelligence and Iron Dome, Israel reeled. Israel had failed to address dismal living conditions that

rendered some of the two million Palestinians penned in the Gaza Strip susceptible to Hamas recruitment. In the United States and other Diaspora nations, antisemitism, already ascending, reached new post-World War II peaks. American Jews had decisions to make, including those who played professional baseball.

Throwing the ceremonial pitch at game three of the American League Championship Series, Ian Kinsler donned the uniform he had worn as manager of Team Israel.

But the collective response of Jewish baseball players began with "Youk" Kevin Youkilis, a Red Sox All-Star, glove virtuoso at both infield corners, formidable hitter and Fenway fan favorite, who played on two World Series championship teams during his near decade in Boston. His shaved head, intense on-field demeanor and imposing 6'1", 220-pound physique invested Youkilis with an intimidating appearance. Although he played fiercely, Youk is by nature warm, empathetic and witty – traits that won the hand of his wife, Julie, the sister of the nonpareil NFL quarterback Tom Brady. As a Jew, the events of October 7 rendered Youk shocked, sorrowful and determined.

On an Instagram post, Youk asserted, "Antisemitism is on display for the world to see. Many have had their eyes opened while others turn a blind eye... Be proud and never let hate and evil make you hide your Jewish heritage." Youk and his close friend Josh Lamberg, a former minor leaguer and corporate CEO, came up with the idea of uniting Jewish ballplayers on a video denouncing antisemitism and supporting Israel. To jumpstart the project, they turned to a Jewish baseball friend with a background

in video production, Nate Fish.

A generation ago, Youk and Nate were University of Cincinnati baseball teammates. During Nate's junior year, Youk was co-captain of the team, a position Fish attained after Kevin's graduation. Through the years, they maintained their friendship and reunited on the diamond in 2023 as Team Israel coaches during WBC competition. The October 7 tragedy brought them together in a Jewish baseball film collaboration.

Nate is a Renaissance man – ballplayer, coach, manager, anthologized poet, featured exhibit painter, DJ, entrepreneur, promoter and video producer. Baseball has taken Fish virtually everywhere: across the U.S., Latin America, Europe, Asia and Africa. As manager of the outlandish Savannah Bananas, he melded sport and entertainment. A veteran Maccabiah participant, Israel Baseball League star, Israel Association of Baseball director, and head coach of Team Israel in fall 2021 and fall 2023, Nate whimsically assumed the sobriquet King of Jewish Baseball. During our October 27 interview, Nate reported that he responded unequivocally to the request to join Youk and Josh in the Jewish baseball video project.

Youk and Josh would serve as de facto executive producers, with Nate as producer and the Israel Association of Baseball as director and distributor of the video, "Jewish Big Leaguers Support Israel," that emerged. Past technical experience gave Nate the skill set to script and supervise film editing. Moreover, he recruited most of the ballplayers appearing in the video.

See "Baseball" on page 6

Opinion

From the Desk of the Federation Executive Director

With gratitude

SHELLEY HUBAL

"From a place of deep pain we hold strong for you, Omer. We speak in your name tirelessly, we hope and we pray and we act, and I want to believe that our prayers and actions have power." – Orna Neutra, mother of Omer Neutra, one of the 240 hostages held by Hamas.

"To demand the release of the hostages is not an act of politics, nor is it a cry for war. It is an act of love and a cry for humanity." – Alana Zeitchik, cousin of six of the hostages held by Hamas.

"Our hearts are bruised and seeping with misery, but the real souls suffering are those of the hostages." – Rachel Goldberg, mother of Hersh Goldberg-Polin, currently held as a hostage by Hamas.

On November 14, Orna Neutra, Alana Zeitchik and Rachel Goldberg stood before an estimated crowd of 250,000 people at the National Mall in Washington, DC. In the crowd were Jews and non-Jews, Democrats and Republicans, and people of all ages. All were there to demonstrate their support for these families, their love for Israel and to raise their collective voices against terrorism and the alarming rise of antisemitism. Amongst the 250,000 were six committed souls from Binghamton who boarded a bus well-before dawn to witness this historic gathering. I was honored to be one of them.

As representatives of all the families of those held

in captivity by Hamas, these women courageously opened their aching hearts and cried out demanding the release of the hostages. Their words brought the crowd to attention.

By sharing just a snippet of their messages, I hope you will understand their pain and torment because we must never forget. Never forget their names. Never forget the torture they are experiencing. Never forget how fragile life truly is. Never forget to raise our voices on behalf of those that cannot. We must act and pray for their lives and the lives of those in captivity because when one Jew has a heart that is "bruised and seeping with misery," we are all bruised and seeping with misery.

In My Own Words

Keep the lights burning

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

After a depressing Hanukkah during the first year of the pandemic, I worked hard to make certain I had a good holiday in 2021 and '22. That included getting presents all eight nights (something that never happened when I was a kid) and lighting all my menorahs the last night of the holiday. Since I bought most of the presents I was receiving (I only exchange gifts with one couple), it took planning to find gifts for eight nights of presents. Most were things I would purchase anyway (for example, the wall and daily calendars I always buy), but I tried different types of new low-sugar candy and bought one silly present each year (usually some kind of toy). Since the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel, though, I've been debating what to do this year: part of me thinks this is too frivolous; the other part believes that we need to keep

the lights burning and bring as much joy as we can into the world, even if it's silly joy.

After some thought, I decided to continue with my previous planned celebrations. That doesn't mean I'm ignoring what's happening in Israel, but, if there is one thing I've learned, it's that Judaism has faced horrific events before and continued to exist. Our history includes the destruction of two Temples, exile from too many countries to list and the all too frequent calls for our annihilation. We continue because we celebrate Shabbat and our other holidays, from the most solemn to the most joyous, regardless of what the rest of the world thinks about us.

There was a debate about how one should light Hanukkah candles. Beit Shammai said we should light eight

candles the first night and decrease the number of candles by one each day. Beit Hillel, on the other hand, felt that we should light one candle the first night and then add a candle each day until we reach eight. The ancient rabbis decided that we should follow the example of Beit Hillel because we are required to increase the amount of light in the world, not decrease it.

This year we need to balance the joy of the holiday and the sorrow we feel for those who were murdered or captured by Hamas. But to not light the lights, to not play dreidel or do whatever you usually do to have a joyous holiday is not the Jewish way. Our ancestors faced horrific times and kept the lights burning. Now, it's our turn. May the light of Judaism burn strong and fierce. May we keep those candles burning.



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of Greater Binghamton

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

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Community Hanukkah Celebration to be held on Dec. 14 at JCC

The annual Jewish Community Center's Community Hanukkah Celebration will take place at the JCC, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, on Thursday, December 14, from 5:15-7 pm. The evening will begin with the Hanukkah torch walk, during which children and teens from the community will lead a procession of lights from the entrance to Temple Israel's parking lot to the front of the JCC. There will be a brief ceremony with music and recitations. The event will then move into the JCC's auditorium and feature performances by the JCC Early Childhood Center and Hillel Academy, as

well as a showing of the annual community Hanukkah video. The torch walk will take place from 5:15-5:30 pm, followed by entertainment from 5:30-6 pm, after which the food buffet will open. Food tickets will be sold for \$8 per person and \$6 for seniors and children with a family maximum of \$28. From 6-7 pm, there will be games, face painting and arts and crafts, as well as dreidels and gelt for everyone while they last. Reservations are appreciated and can be made by calling the JCC office at 607-724-2417.

Federation to hold a "Discover Hanukkah" event on Dec. 10

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton will hold a PJ Library "Discover Hanukkah" event on Sunday, December 10, from 1-3 pm, at the Discovery Center, located next to the Ross Park Zoo, 60 Morgan Rd., Binghamton. The event is co-sponsored by the PJ Library, the Jewish Community Center and the Discovery Center. There will be a candle lighting, singing, crafts, treats and more. The event will be free for Jewish families who pre-register by visiting www.jfjb.org/ or contacting the Federation at 607-724-2332 or director@jfjb.org. The cost for those

who do not pre-register will be free for Discovery Center members and, for non-members, \$10 per person with infants under 1 year old given free admission. Security will be provided. "The goal of this event is to share the joy of Hannukah," said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton. "This event is for everyone! You don't have to be affiliated with a synagogue or Jewish organization to attend. Come and celebrate the holiday of light and share the warmth of our wonderful Jewish community."



Film Fest discussion on Dec. 3

By Reporter staff

The Binghamton Jewish Film Fest will hold a virtual discussion of the film "Farewell, Mr. Haffmann" moderated by Dora Polachek, Ph.D., on Sunday, December 3, at 6 pm. Polachek is an associate professor of Romance languages and literature at Binghamton University. To register for the Zoom link on the Federation website, visit www.jfjb.org/film-fest. The Film Fest is sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton with the support of the Victor and Esther Rozen Foundation and the Ithaca Area United Jewish Community.



At left: François Mercier (Gilles Lellouche) in "Farewell, Mr. Haffmann" (Used with permission of Vendôme Films)

"Farewell, Mr. Haffmann" takes place during the Nazi invasion of Paris. Joseph Haffmann, a jeweler, arranges for his family to flee the city and offers one of his employees,

François Mercier, the chance to take over his store until the conflict ends. Under the German occupation, the two men are forced to strike a deal that will change their lives. The historical drama was directed by Fred Cavayé and is based on a play by Jean-Phillippe Daguerrre.

Chabad holiday toy drive underway

Building on the success of previous years, the Rohr Chabad Center for Jewish Student Life at BU, along with the SDT sorority, are once again running a holiday toy drive dubbed "Light up a Life." New toys of all kinds are being collected and will be distributed to children suffering with cancer through Chai Life Line, a New York City based organization that provides services to cancer stricken children and their families. Community members interested in participating in the drive can do so by dropping toys in the bin located in the Chabad Center lobby (only new toys in original packaging will be accepted) or by making a contribution earmarked toward the project. Checks should be mailed to Chabad Center, 420 Murray Hill Rd., Vestal, NY 13850. Contributions can also be made online at www.jewishbu.com/toydrive.

The campaign will culminate with a bash at Binghamton University in the Old Union hall on Tuesday, December 5, at 6 pm, which will feature a display of all toys collected throughout the drive and holiday treats.

"I am ecstatic and honored to be part of the annual Chabad Toy Drive with Chai Lifeline," said Meira Papier, who, together with Joe Kornblum and Noah Hochars, is in charge of the toy drive. "At the end of the fund-raiser, we will have a display of all the toys we were able to purchase with the money we raised and I'm looking forward to seeing a mountain of toys! The best part of this fund-raiser is bringing some joy and happiness to the kids who are fighting such a difficult battle, and I'm so glad that I get to be part of this."

The project is also being co-sponsored by tens of Greek groups, professional fraternities and clubs on campus.

"Social justice and charity are an integral aspect of the Chabad dynamic on campus," explained Goldie Ohana, director of programming and development "Each year, in conjunction with Chanukah, Chabad holds a charity drive thus twinning this holiday of light and joy with our need to remain sensitive to those who have less in their own lives. This is a practical way in which our students can make a big difference."

About the cover
This year's Chanukah cover was created by Julie Weber, production associate for *The Reporter*.

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The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to the family of Sylvia Horowitz

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to the family of Karen Davis Levene

DEADLINES

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

| | |
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| December 15-28..... | December 6 |
| Dec. 29-Jan. 11, 2024..... | Dec. 20 |
| January 12-25 | January 3 |
| January 26-February 8 | January 17 |

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

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Off the Shelf

Great gifts for Hanukkah: books for tweens/teens

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

It should come as no surprise that I think books make great gifts. In my mind, the perfect Hanukkah gift for a Jewish tween/teen is a book featuring – drum role here – a Jewish tween/teen! I'm just saying that if you do eight nights of gifts, at least one night should feature books. Of course, adults should feel free to read these books, too. There are a lot of good ones. Oh, and if your tween/teen is unhappy with the gift, feel free to blame me! Most likely, I'd just suggest another book they might like.

"The Do More Club"

Attending a new school is never easy. However, it's even more difficult for Josh Kline in "The Do More Club" by Dana Kramaroff (Rocky Pond Books) because he doesn't feel comfortable revealing he's Jewish – that's even before swastikas were spray painted on the school building. Josh couldn't help but notice there are very few Jews or people of color in the school, and that makes him very nervous. But the school takes the matter of the swastikas seriously and brings in specialists to work with the students. That doesn't go over well with everyone, but Josh begins to feel more at home. When he organizes a school club called the Do More Club to help bring kindness into the world, he learns not only how small actions can matter, but how prejudice works against everyone.

"The Do More Club" is written in prose poetry, with short lines and chapters, which makes it easy to read. Readers hear Josh's thoughts, something that works well because the core of the story is his learning to feel comfortable with himself. Josh also comes to realize how lucky he is to have the support of the local Jewish and non-Jewish community.

"The Gray"

Middle school can be difficult for anyone, but it's even worse if you're being bullied. In "The Gray" by Chris Baron (Feiwel and Friends), Sasha's problems are complicated by mental health issues: he's been diagnosed as having heightened sensitivity combined with social anxiety and a panic disorder. For Sasha, the words that describe his feelings are "the gray," because the world suddenly becomes drained of color. That makes his emotional responses hard to control. After an incident at school, Josh is sent to spend the summer with his Aunt Ruthie, who lives in the country: that's not a punishment, but rather gives him a chance to regain some control over his feelings. Even in a small town, there are potential friends and bullies, and lessons to be learned about friendship and regrets.

Baron notes that this well-done novel is partly based on his own experience, which explains why parts are so moving. Adult readers may understand a plot detail that is deliberately left vague due to the subject matter; however, that only makes this work more powerful.

"Two Tribes"

In the graphic novel "Two Tribes" by Emily Bowen Cohen (Heartdrum/HarperAlley), Mia is torn between two heritages: she's Jewish on her mother's side and Native American (Muscogee/Creek) on her father's. Her parents' marriage ended on a bad note and they do not communicate. Mia currently lives with her mother in California and attends a Jewish day school, where some students think she's adopted because of her skin color. Missing her father, Mia pretends to be on a school trip and travels to Oklahoma to visit him and learn more about her Native American heritage. When both parents learn what she's done, there are repercussions, but each comes to realize

that their daughter needs to learn about, and feel at home in, both cultures.

"Two Tribes" is well done and easy to read. Parts are relevant not only to tween/teens, but to adults who will also appreciate the lessons it teaches.

"The Jake Show"

Even when a child's divorced parents are both Jewish, life is not always easy. This is true for Jake Lightman, the narrator of "The Jake Show" by Joshua S. Levy (Katherine Tegen Books). After their divorce, his mother became more observant, even marrying an Orthodox rabbi. Jake's father, on the other hand, not only doesn't practice Judaism, but married someone who is not Jewish. Jake so wants to please his parents that he becomes a different person in each household: Yaakov, who dresses in Orthodox style clothes at his mother's house, and Jacob, who dresses in jeans and t-shirts, at his father's home. His parents' frequent disagreements have led him to change schools almost every year since the divorce. He likes his new school, a Modern Orthodox one that doesn't completely satisfy either parent. Jake doesn't care: he's finally made some friends and is happy. When those friends suggest Jake attend their Jewish camp, he knows that neither parent will agree. That means hatching a scheme to fool both.

Levy has created characters with real depth and lessons that will challenge adults and children. However, the best part of the novel is its humor; the scene that takes place at the airport is comic genius. Since Jake loves TV and views his life through his favorite programs, it would be appropriate, and wonderful, if someone decided to turn "The Jake Show" into a mini-series.

"Shira and Esther's Double Dream Debut"

The plot device where two characters switch places is a staple of literary fiction. In the case of "Shira and Esther's Double Dream Debut" by Anna E. Jordan (Chronicle Books), the two girls – Shira and Esther – are not only almost completely identical, but were born on the same day in the same hospital. The two have never met because, even in the small town Idylldale, not everyone Jewish runs in the same circles. Although the two girls look alike, they couldn't be more different in other ways: Shira, the rabbi's daughter, loves to tell jokes and wants to perform on the stage. Esther, the daughter of a Yiddish actress, wants to study Torah and read books. When the two girls finally meet, they decide to switch places so Esther can have the bat mitzvah she's dreamed about and Shira can perform in a talent contest to be on a TV show. The question becomes whether their parents know their children as well as they think.

Jordan's work is a light-hearted romp with some serious overtones. The owner of the town deli serves as the narrator and adds a Yiddish-style touch to the story and language. The time period in which the story takes place is not clear, although in her author's note, Jordan explains her choices. But it really doesn't matter: this delightful tale will charm readers.

"The Dubious Pranks of Shaindy Goodman"

Writing a second book can be difficult, especially if the author's first novel won a Sydney Taylor Book Award and was listed as a best book of the year by NPR and Kirkus Review. Mari Lowe's "Aviva vs. the Dybbuk" had that kind of success, but fortunately the writer has managed to avoid a sophomore slump. Her excellent new work, "The Dubious Pranks of Shaindy Goodman" (Levine

Querido), once again takes place in the Orthodox Jewish world. Shaindy is not socially adept and doesn't seem to have any friends at the Orthodox girls' school she attends. That's why when Gayil, the most popular girl in her class, wants to befriend her, Shaindy quickly falls under her spell. She doesn't mind that Gayil asks for her help in arranging pranks in their classroom, or that Shaindy is supposed to pretend they aren't friends during the school day. However, as the pranks become more mean-spirited, Shaindy begins to wonder if there is more to the pranks than Gayil is revealing and just how that will impact Shaindy's own life.

Although Lowe's novel takes place in the Orthodox world with its specific demands and pressures, all readers will be able to appreciate what Shaindy learns not only about herself, but those around her. The book lends itself to discussion and would be great for teen and adult reading groups. (*The Reporter* review of Lowe's first novel can be found at www.thereporter.org/book-reviews/off-the-shelf-romance-fantasy-or-a-combination-of-the-two-part-two?entry=405747.)

"Run and Hide"

Although the graphic nonfiction work "Run and Hide: How Jewish Youth Escaped the Holocaust" written and illustrated by Don Brown (Clarion Books) is aimed at children ages 13-17, it covers such an amazing amount of material that it could also serve as an introduction to the Holocaust for adults. Its opening history about the Nazi regime is excellent, as is its exploration of what happened to Jewish children across Europe. Included is information about the Kindertransport (where parents sent their unaccompanied Jewish children to England before World War II started) and the anti-Nazi groups that worked to save as many children as possible. But the graphic work doesn't stint in the different ways the Nazis murdered Jews across the continent. Brown ends with a serious note mentioning how hate and violence have continued, even after the cries of "never again."

Parents may want to read and discuss "Run and Hide" with their children, particularly the younger ones because much of the material is disturbing. There is a source list for the quotes of survivors that Brown shares, along with a bibliography for those interested in learning more.

"Eight Dates and Nights"

For those seeking light reading, there's "Eight Dates and Nights" by Betsy Aldredge (Underlined). Hannah Levin is not happy to be spending part of her school vacation with her grandmother in Texas, rather than remaining in New York City with her family and friends. Mucking out horse stalls is not her idea of fun, especially since she hasn't seen her grandmother in years. At least, she'll be returning in time for Hanukkah – well, that was the idea until a major snowstorm cancelled all flights East. The only consolation is her discovery of a Jewish deli in town, which is where she meets Noah, a way too cheerful, kind of annoying and attractive in a goofy way person her age who has decided that he is going to create a Hanukkah for her that she'll never forget. That gives him eight nights to convince the grumpy Hannah that the holiday doesn't only have to be serious; it can also be fun.

Fans of rom-com will find "Eight Dates and Nights" perfect holiday reading. It does include some insight into small-town Jewish Texas history, but it's the love story and **See "Books" on page 6**



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Neighbors in Your Holy Season



May Our Friendship be a Blessing for All

May We Give Our Common Voice to
the Ancient Promise of Shalom

Beth David Sisterhood and Men's Club to hold Hanukkah party on Dec. 13

The Sisterhood and Men's Club of Beth David Synagogue will hold a Hanukkah party at the synagogue on Wednesday, December 13, at 6 pm. A donation of \$5 per person is being made possible by the generosity of the Eisenberg Foundation; the donation will cover the major expenses, including security for the event. The party is open to the whole community. Reservations should be made by Sunday, December 10, by calling or texting Stacey Silber at 607-727-9738, or e-mailing her at silbercreations@gmail.com.

Anyone on the Sisterhood's e-mail list will receive a flyer about the event designed by Rabbi David Serkin. Anyone who would like to be added to the e-mail list should send their e-mail address to the Beth David Synagogue office at bethdavid@stny.rr.com.

"Back by popular demand will be Jonathan Pachter, whose 'Celebration of the Festival of Lights' program last year was a major hit," said organizers of the event. "He will once again entertain us at the piano with music and songs ranging from classic oldies to contemporary originals."

Organizers added, "A party, of course, means food, and

there should be plenty of it. Thanks to Charlie Manasse and Stacey Silber, we should be serving not only the expected potato latkes with appropriate condiments, but the rarely seen locally *sufganiyot*. There will, of course, be dreidels to play with (bring your own if you like) and other games to play if you are not engaged in conversation with your friends.

"Please let us know if you plan to attend, so we can be certain to have enough food for everyone," organizers

added. "Being a Jewish event, there probably will be enough food for you, even if you show up and forgot to RSVP, but reservations are a big help."

Organizers noted, "As always, donations for CHOW will be accepted, and someone will be available to accept payment for your Sisterhood dues or for any mitzvah cards you may have requested. We hope you will join with the members and friends of Beth David Synagogue to celebrate Hanukkah with food, music and games."

Hillel Academy holding Hanukkah fund-raiser

Hillel Academy of Broome County is holding a Hanukkah candle fund-raiser. A standard box of multicolor candles costs \$5 per box and a box of deluxe candles costs \$15 per box. Orders can be placed at <https://hillelacademyofbroomecounty.org/chanukah-fundraiser> or by calling the Hillel Academy office 607-304-4544.

"Support Hillel Academy's Hanukkah fund-raiser!" said organizers. "Chanukah is right around the corner. So, what are you waiting for? Let's make this Hanukkah the most radiant one yet! Join our fund-raiser, light the way, and together we will create a Festival of Lights that's not to be missed."

TI/TC to hold adult ed. program "Bridging Old and New Worlds" on Dec. 10

The Adult Education Committee of Temple Israel and Temple Concord will hold the program "Bridging Old and New Worlds: How Contemporary Jews Draw upon the Eastern-European Hasidic Movement to Enliven Our Jewish Practice" featuring Rabbi Micah Friedman on Sunday, December 10, from 10 am-noon. Everyone is welcome to attend. There is a suggested donation range of \$5-20 per person. Refreshments, including Hanukkah food, will be offered.



Rabbi Micah Friedman

day are also welcome. There will be a Zoom option available; contact the synagogue offices for the link.

"After a joyous, uplifting gathering on November 5 as part of the Global Day of Jewish Learning, the Adult Education Committee is looking ahead to more enriching opportunities to come together," said organizers of the event. "Rabbi Micah Friedman will offer an innovative, multimedia presentation."

In July 2023, Friedman moved to Vestal to serve as the rabbi and spiritual leader of Temple Israel. Raised near Tampa, FL, Friedman was

Those interested are asked to RSVP by Wednesday, December 6, by calling or writing the synagogues' offices: TempleConcordbinghamton@gmail.com or 607-723-7355, or titammy@stny.twcbc.com or 607-723-7461 or 607-231-3746. Walk-ins on the

ordained by the faculty of Hebrew College in Boston, where he received a fellowship in contemporary Jewish mysticism. He studied with scholars in a variety of rabbinic disciplines

including Talmud, *midrash*, *halachah* and Chasidism. He also edited a biography of a Chasidic rabbi titled "Defender of the Faithful." Friedman has taught people of all ages in a wide range of Jewish communal contexts, including most recently here in the Binghamton area.

"During this difficult and challenging time throughout the world, it is important and empowering to recommit ourselves to Jewish community and Jewish practice," organizers added. "Coming together to learn allows us to assert our faith in our ability to overcome this challenging moment in our people's history. Please, join us for a joyous, thought-provoking, and community-building morning."

Film Fest to hold virtual showing of "The Narrow Bridge" in January

By Reporter staff

The Greater Binghamton Jewish Film Fest will hold a virtual showing of the documentary "The Narrow Bridge" directed by Esther Takac in January. The film won the Audience Award for Best Documentary at the Spokane Jewish Cultural Film Festival and the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival. A discussion of "The Narrow Bridge" will be moderated by Dr. Terence M. Keane, Ph.D., director of the Behavioral Science Division of the National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, on Sunday, January 7, at 6 pm. (For an interview of Keane, see page 6.) The link to the film will be sent to those who register by 5 pm on Thursday, January 4. Registration can be made on the Federation website, www.jfcb.org/film-fest.

"The Narrow Bridge" has been called "an eye-opening journey into the souls of four people who, after searing pain, develop strengths they never had before. Bushra, Rami, Meytal and Bassam, women and men who lost a child or parent in violent conflict, are creating a sacred space for change as they transform their grief into a bridge for reconciliation. Takac follows their paths from devastating trauma to courageous activism as they become part of



A session from "The Narrow Bridge" directed by Esther Takac (Used with permission of Filmoption International and Menemsha Films)

a controversial grassroots movement of broken-hearted people called Israeli Palestinian Bereaved Families, who stand side-by-side to end the violence and build a future based on dignity and equality."

"It's hard to imagine a more timely moment for this See "Film" on page 6

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from

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton

Shelley Hubal, Executive Director

Suzanne Holwitt, President

Jennifer Kakusian, Office Manager

Keane to lead Film Fest discussion on PTSD on Jan. 7

By Reporter staff

Terence M. Keane will lead the virtual discussion about the Greater Binghamton Jewish Film Fest documentary "The Narrow Bridge" on Sunday, January 7, at 6 pm. For more information about the film and how to register, see the article on page 5.

Although Terence M. Keane now works in the Boston area, he has several connections to the Binghamton area. A 1978 graduate of Binghamton University's Clinical Psychology Training Program, he later completed a clinical residency at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. His doctoral training, though, continued with Stephen A. Lisman, Ph.D., who is now a distinguished teaching professor emeritus at Binghamton University and a member of the Greater Binghamton Jewish Film Fest Committee. Although the focus of the two men's work was substance abuse, in particular alcohol abuse, it is Keane's later work with the Veteran's Administration, which focuses on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, that made Lisman recommend Keane as the moderator for the documentary "The Narrow Bridge."

Keane noted that he was pleased to be asked to lead the discussion. "I am forever grateful to Steve Lisman for the background and training he provided me some 50 years ago; the perspectives he provided me allowed me to successfully apply my graduate training to cultivate a new area in the field of mental health (i.e., PTSD)," Keane said in a e-mail interview. "It's a pleasure for me to work again with him in January to promote an understanding of the complex topic explored here in 'The Narrow Bridge.' I look forward to the discussion and to adding whatever I might from my background and experience. The tragedies and betrayals associated with October 7 loom large as we try to elucidate what are the possible next steps on this narrow bridge, and how healing might emerge."

Keane brings a great deal of experience to the discussion: he has been the director of the Behavioral Science Division of the National Center for PTSD (located at VA Boston Healthcare System) for nearly 35 years and a professor at the Boston University School of Medicine since 1985, where

he is also an assistant dean of research. His first experience with PTSD occurred after he completed a clinical residency at the University of Mississippi Medical Center and joined the faculty at the VA in Jackson, MS, in 1978. As a result to his doctoral work, he was assigned to the Substance Abuse Treatment Unit at the VA. He notes that it was there that he "began to provide clinical care to dozens, if not hundreds of veterans, most of whom were Vietnam veterans. Emerging from those experiences was an appreciation of the impact of the war on their long-term mental health. We established one of the first treatment programs specifically for people suffering the impact of war trauma. The disorder eventually became known as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in 1980."

After moving to the VA in Boston in 1985, he helped establish a treatment program for PTSD for male and female veterans that in 1989 became known as the National Center for PTSD. "In 1998, we collaborated with a group of physicians at Boston University School of Medicine to establish the Boston Center for Refugee Health and Human Rights, a program designed to provide comprehensive care for refugees of war-torn countries," Keane said. "Largely women survivors, this program continues to this day providing mental health and physical health care programming as well as social and legal services for refugees. Over my career, I've provided consultation to governments and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)," including the United Nations, Ireland (North and the Republic), Israel, Jordan, the United Kingdom, Norway, Sweden, Iraq, Kuwait, South Africa, Taiwan and China.

Keane noted that soldiers and civilians experience PTSD differently. "Conceptually, the disorder is the same (the diagnostic criteria are actually identical), yet the manifestations and concurrent conditions are different," he said. "Combatants often have strong reactions to what they are asked to do (violence), as well as what they themselves experience (high risk exposure), whereas civilians are often unarmed and untrained, and are therefore unable to protect themselves and their loved ones. Civilians are typically all ages, including children and the elderly."

Therapists must take these different variables into consideration when treating those with PTSD. "Psychotherapy takes into account many of these concurrent variables in an effort to promote recovery and rehabilitate survivors," Keane said. "Cognitive features such as uncontrollability and helplessness figure prominently among soldiers and civilians alike. Assumptions about safety and key appraisals of the malevolence/benevolence of others in the world are often damaged, and alternatives need to be considered in an effort to move people to a position of security in their lives moving forward."

Keane mentioned that PTSD is a complex diagnosis and the condition has a large number of triggers. "PTSD is a disorder that possesses features of both anxiety and depression," he added. "It also encompasses symptoms such as reliving of the traumatic experiences (e.g., nightmares, dissociative flashbacks, ruminative thinking, preoccupation with things one might have or should have done to mitigate the events), avoidance of cues of the trauma (e.g., sights, sounds, cues of the index experience) and negative alterations of cognitions and mood and withdrawal from key interpersonal relationships are key

factors. In addition, symptoms of hyperarousal and hypervigilance represent ongoing components of the condition. These symptoms collectively lead to disability and impairment in functioning across many if not all domains of life (e.g., work, marriage, family, friends, etc.). PTSD is often associated with depression, substance abuse, traumatic brain injury and other psychological conditions that add to the complexity of the clinical presentation."

According to Keane, there are currently six different types of therapy: Exposure Therapy (which includes Written Exposure Therapy, Prolonged Exposure and Direct Therapeutic Exposure); Cognitive Processing Therapy and Cognitive Therapies; Eye Movement Desensitization; and Reprocessing and Interpersonal Therapy. "Due to the high rates of PTSD worldwide, many experts feel that public health approaches are essential to the dissemination of these therapies, and that the Internet and World Wide Web must play an essential role in the distribution of therapies to those in need," he noted.

His hope is that the discussion on January 7 will leave attendees with a better understanding of the complexities of PTSD and those who suffer from the disorder.

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

"Missing cow" posters mocking Israeli hostage fliers dot Penn campus

The now well-documented trend of tearing down red-and-white posters showing civilians kidnapped by Hamas from Israel on Oct. 7 has reached a new level of disrespect as posters appeared at the University of Pennsylvania recently calling attention to a "missing cow" with the plea: "Please let us know how the cow is." The flier utilizes a similar design and color scheme used by activists calling attention to those imprisoned by Hamas. It offers a reward of "a box of chalk and a can of beer," and asks people to "please email a picture if found to: Howsthecow13@gmail.com." Penn's student newspaper contacted the listed e-mail to receive the response that the purpose of the posters was "a joke to promote veganism" and that "the format of the poster was an unintentional mistake that we now realize could be misconstrued." The group associated with the e-mail then condemned the terrorist attacks on Oct. 7 and insisted that its posters did not intend to reference Hamas' murdering 1,200 people, wounding thousands and kidnapping some 240 men, women and children.

Books Continued from page 4

Hannah's realization that there is more to life than New York that makes the story shine.

"The Blood Years"

Sometimes it's easier to write about your family's history as a novel, rather than a nonfiction work. That's true for Elana K. Arnold's "The Blood Years" (Balzer +Bray). In her forward, Arnold explains the novel is based on her grandmother's experiences and notes that concentration camps didn't feature in the destruction of the Jews of Czernowitz (which was part of Romania during World War II). It's also the story of two sisters, the narrator Frederieke (Rieke) Teitler and her older sister Astra. The two girls and their mother have lived with their grandfather since their father deserted the family. The two

girls vow never to sacrifice their lives for a man like their mother did, but that changes when Astra falls in love. Rieke is devastated, but that problem soon pales when the Romanians decide to side with the Nazis and start their own anti-Jewish laws. Nothing seems the same or safe as foreign troops – first Russian and then German – invade their town. Now the question becomes if they will survive their precarious existence.

"The Blood Years" offers an interesting and different look at survival during the Holocaust. The novel is moving, sad and suspenseful. It also focuses on the moral dilemmas people faced during the war, something that makes it an excellent work for book clubs and discussion groups.

Baseball Continued from page 2

Nate contacted Jewish ballplayers asking them to contribute to the project – sending them a script and Youk's portion as a template. Fish requested that the players record their own presentation and transmit it to him for editing. Once Youk's segment, featuring him wearing a kippah, and that of Alex Bregman, attired in his Houston Astros uniform, were circulated, other submissions quickly followed. Absent contact information, Sandy Koufax and Max Fried did not receive invitations, and Dean Kremer, the son of sabras whose brother serves in the Israel Defense Forces, regretted that the time frame precluded his participation. Nineteen Jewish ballplayers, most active, a few retired, appear on screen in the video and are self-identified by name – Brad Ausmus, Ryan Braun, Bregman, Jake Fishman, Zack Gelof, Shawn Green, Spencer Horwitz, Rob Kaminsky, Ty Kelly, Ian Kinsler, Ryan Lavarney, Andrew Lorraine, Jon Moskot, Robbie Ross, Garrett Stubbs, Danny Valencia, Zack Weiss, Youk and Josh Zaid.

Although Jewish Big Leaguers Support Israel, <https://twitter.com/ILBaseball/sta->

tus/1715043679373565996?s=20, posted on X by the Israel Association of Baseball, has a running time of but a minute, it is impactful, already registering about 1.5 million hits. Baseball is a conservative game. Early in the 20th century, some Jewish ballplayers adopted pseudonyms to obscure their ethnic identity. Contemporary players are cautious about making political statements that might erode their fan base and endorsements. But at a time of rising antisemitism and attacks on Israel, participants in the video self-identified, denounced antisemitism and built support for Israel.

Following text reference to the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel, the video features players stating their names, looking directly into the camera, and individually and collectively exhort listeners to, "Stand against antisemitism. Stand with Israel." After Weiss acknowledges, "For years, you have supported us on the field," Bregman provides a challenge: "But now it's time to support all of us and stand up against antisemitism."

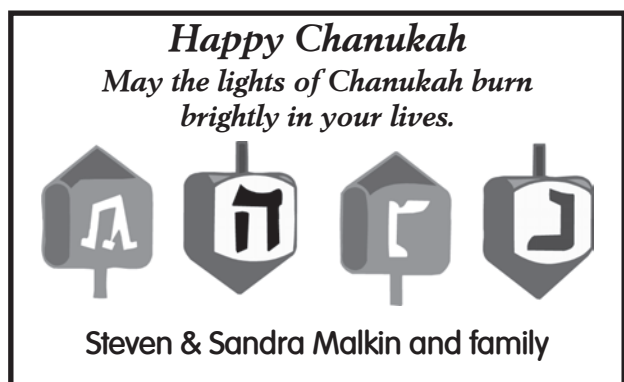
Film Continued from page 5

extraordinary documentary," said Steve Lisman, a member of the Film Fest Committee. "Some have described 'The Narrow Bridge' as depicting the transformation of grief to healing. This powerful, enlightening film is worth the challenge it will pose to watch."

"We are grateful that Terence Keane, an expert in PTSD, will lead our discussion," said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton. "I hope the film and the conversation will

be healing for our community."

On www.filmink.com.au/reviews/the-narrow-bridge, Annette Basile wrote, "This documentary about people connecting across a chasm of political and religious differences is profoundly moving." Esta Rosevear wrote that "'The Narrow Bridge' is an amazing film about what could be once people come together. It is compelling and needs to be seen by all war-torn nations" on <https://spoilerfreereviews.com/post/the-narrow-bridge/>.



BD Dec. 9 luncheon to feature Michael Weinstein

The Beth David Synagogue Luncheon Speaker Series will continue with Michael Weinstein speaking on December 9. Weinstein's talk, "The Art and Mystique of Judaic Collectibles," will focus on the history of Judaic artifacts that date back to biblical times, and will include information about modern Judaica. Hanukkah-related collectibles will also be displayed. People are encouraged to attend the morning service, which begins at 9:30 am. There is no charge for the luncheon.

Weinstein's childhood interest in history led to his full-time involvement in the world of antiques and collectibles. He will also talk about how this interest in historical artifacts led him to establish the Bundy Museum of

History and Art, on Main Street in Binghamton (bundymuseum.org).

"Michael has a wealth of knowledge that he has generously agreed to share with us to enrich our Hanukkah celebrations," said organizers of the event. "We also look forward to his increasing our appreciation of Judaica artifacts that we may have purchased, that may have been handed down to us, or that we may have seen in museums."

Beth David's Luncheon Speaker Series takes place the second Saturday of the month. Since the monthly series' continuation depends



Michael Weinstein (Photo courtesy of Michael Weinstein)

on the generosity of contributors, Beth David welcomes and appreciates donations to the Luncheon Fund in order to keep the program going. Donations as well as sponsorships can be made in honor of, or in memory of, someone, or to mark a special occasion. Those wishing an acknowledgment to be sent to the person being honored, or to the family of someone being remembered, can indicate that along with the necessary information. Donations can be sent to Beth David Synagogue, 39 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905, Attention: Luncheon Fund.

TC Sisterhood to hold White Elephant Gift Exchange on Dec. 17

The Temple Concord Sisterhood will hold a White Elephant Gift Exchange on Sunday, December 17, from noon-2 pm, at Temple Concord, 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton. Attendees should bring their own lunches. The program is free and open to all Temple Concord Sisterhood members.

There will be a \$5 fee for non-members. Reservations should be made by contacting Phyllis Kellenberger at pweinste@stny.rr.com or 607-727-8305 by Wednesday, December 13.

Participants should bring an item from home that they no longer want to exchange. The gift should be wrapped,

so it will be a surprise when exchanged. Deb Daniels, Phyllis Kellenberger and Roz Antoun, Temple Concord Sisterhood programming chairwomen, said, "We did this a few years ago and everyone had such a good time that we decided to do it again."

TC Sisterhood's Judaica Shop's new location

Temple Concord Sisterhood's Judaica Shop is in a new location at Temple Concord, 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton. Carol Herz, shop co-chairwoman, noted the shop is now easy to access because it's located on the first floor in the library. The shop is open from 10 am-2 pm, Tuesday through Friday, or by appointment. For an appointment, call Herz at 607-222-7144.

Herz stressed that the shop is the "most fully stocked in Broome County and the surrounding area. It features new

gift ideas and new distributors. The new set-up makes it easier to see the displays. We're fully stocked for Hanukkah and other occasions. We serve the whole community so stop in and see what we have to offer."

Robin Hazen and Susan High also are co-chairwomen of the Temple Concord Judaica Shop. All three encourage shoppers to visit the shop "before you make decisions about what you need for yourself and for gifts."

Moving any time soon?
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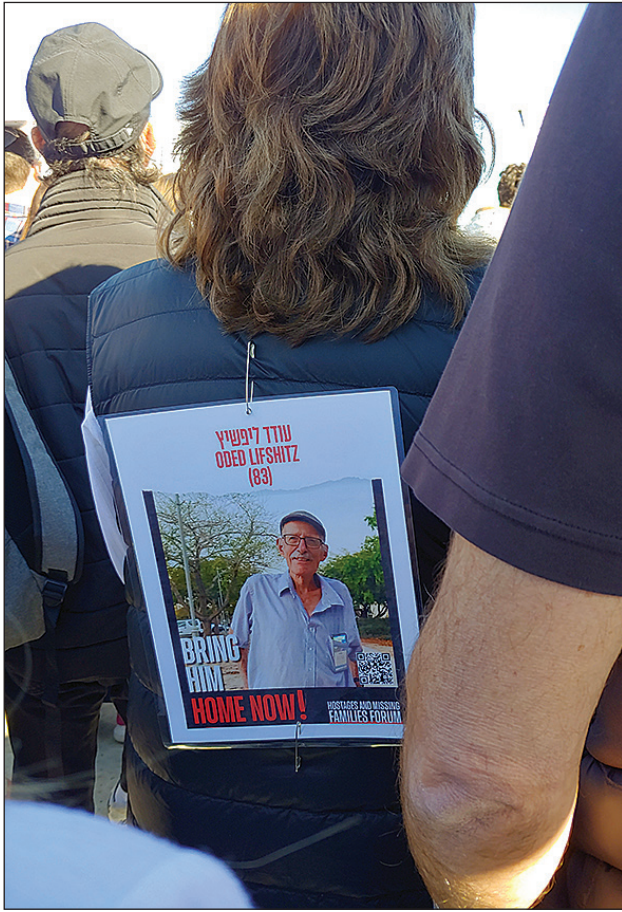
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Locals participated in the March for Israel



Attendees wore posters of the hostages taken by Hamas on October 7.



Members of the Binghamton Jewish community attended the November 14 March for Israel in Washington, DC. L-r: Art Siegel, Shelley Hubal (executive director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton), William Payes, Adam Payes and Jodi Sampey.



Some of those attending wore the Israel flag in solidarity.



Standing with the Capitol Building in the background, Jodi Sampey held a sign declaring her support for Israel.

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Poll: More than a third of Jewish students hide their identity at college

New research shows the extent to which the war provoked by Hamas' Oct. 7 terrorist attack has spilled over to university campuses. Hillel International commissioned the Benenson Strategy Group to poll 300 Jewish college students between Nov. 14-15. They found that a broad majority, 84 percent, said the war was affecting them, with 68 percent describing themselves as sad and 54 percent as scared. Statistics on Jewish students feeling a need to hide their identity (37 percent) correlate closely with those saying they know about acts of hate or violence on their campus (35 percent). "The hate that fueled Hamas' attack on Israel has rapidly spread to college campuses, leaving Jewish students feeling both unsupported and unsafe," said Adam Lehman, presiden/CEO of Hillel International.

Chanukah Greetings
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Rosenberg edits Alcott's essays on "A Strange Life"

By Rabbi Rachel Esserman

Liz Rosenberg has been a fan of Louisa May Alcott for more than 50 years. That's one of the reasons she wrote the middle grade biography of the author "Scribbles, Sorrows, and Russet Leather Boots: The Life of Louisa May Alcott," which was published in 2021. But Rosenberg was not finished with Alcott. She felt that most people only knew Alcott through her fiction, but she felt that Alcott had more to offer readers, in particular the essays she wrote. Rosenberg wanted to share those works with the world, which led her to editing "A Strange Life: Selected Essays of Louisa May Alcott" (Notting Hill Editions).



Liz Rosenberg (Photo by Lily Bosnick)

Her reason for sharing these essays was due to her belief that Alcott's work would speak to contemporary readers: "[Alcott] was so far ahead of her time that she's still ahead of ours," Rosenberg said in an e-mail interview. "She was a fierce abolitionist, an equal rights fighter, a social justice warrior, a champion of working class women and impoverished children. She was generous to a fault, brilliant, funny, inventive, progressive. She was not only an amazing writer, but an amazing human being."

Finding the right publisher was very important. "I approached Rosalind Porter, editor and publisher of Notting Hill Editions in the UK, about doing this book of Alcott essays together, because I knew she published only essays, and I was already an enormous fan of several of the books on her list," Rosenberg noted. "I've long felt that Alcott's essays are too little known and too widely overlooked. I'd argue that she created some of her best, funniest, more delightful and moving writing in her essays – and the range of topics is astonishing. Everything from being a war night nurse during the Civil War to going 'out to service' as a paid servant to a diatribe on the rewards of staying single."

Choosing which essays to place in the book was easy: Rosenberg just picked her favorites. "Then among my favorites (some are very long; one is book-length!) I chose the best excerpts," she added. "I really just want to shine a light on her non-fiction and say, 'Look! Look over here! Look at this treasure lying right out in the open, and nobody knows it's there.' Well, the die-hard Alcott fans do know the essays, of course, and the scholars. But that's about it."

Rosenberg was unable to pick a favorite among the essays. That's because she finds it impossible to choose between three of them. One favorite is Alcott's Civil War essay, "Hospital Sketches," which brought Alcott her first taste of fame. Rosenberg noted that the work "was New Journalism before anyone ever invented the term: close up

and personal eye-witness reportage. Nothing like it had ever been done before. Then 'How I Went Out to Service,' [which is] about her six miserable weeks working for a dishonest, creepy, comical man in fancy black kid gloves – doesn't that sound creepy already? – who tried to take advantage of her in more ways than one. And 'Transcendental Wild Oats' [is] the hilarious but heartbreaking story of living on a failed farm commune with her idealistic parents, watching it all fall apart. It's comic genius. But also so pitiable.

"[Alcott] lived a remarkable life," Rosenberg concluded, "and her essays leave us a beautiful recording of that life. 'A Strange Life,' like the title says – strange but glorious."

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Model Gigi Hadid pushes blood libel of Palestinian organ-harvesting

In a since-deleted social-media posting, supermodel Gigi Hadid leveled several false charges against Israel. Hadid claimed that Israel had engaged in "abduction, rape, humiliation, torture, murder of Palestinians years and years before Oct. 7, 2023." She also shared a video making the now commonplace, modern blood-libel claim that Israel harvests the organs of dead Palestinians. Hadid said that Israel was "the only country in the world that keeps children as prisoners of war." On Nov. 27, Hamas released 11 hostages, eight of whom were children. Hadid's example of a Palestinian minor held by Israel as a "prisoner-of-war" was Ahmed Mansara, who was caught on video engaging in a stabbing rampage and sentenced to 12 years in prison, later reduced to nine-and-a-half years. Mansara has repeatedly been in solitary confinement for his violent behavior against himself and others. Israeli supermodel Bar Refaeli responded on her own Instagram that the youth Hadid championed had said, "I came with my cousin to stab Jews."

Meditative Music at TC



Temple Concord's Meditative Music program was held on November 10 in honor of Veterans Day and in memory of Brendan Byrnes, husband of Hollie Levine. L-r: Sarah Gerk (clarinet), Pej Reitz, (piano) and Hakan Tayga (cello). (Photo by Merri Pell-Preus)

Chanukah Greetings

Wishing the community a Happy Chanukah!

Rabbi Rachel Esserman

Wishing The Entire Community A Happy Chanukah

Rebecca Kahn

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On the Jewish food scene

Chocolate: a traditional Hanukkah food?

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

When we think about the traditional foods usually eaten on Hanukkah, we mostly concentrate on fried foods. After all, the miracle of the holiday – the vial of oil lasting eight days – focuses on oil. While fried foods might not be considered healthy, they are a wonderful holiday treat. I mean, latkes or sufganiyot (Israeli doughnuts): what's not to like? But there is another food tradition that's developed that we don't talk about: eating chocolate.

No, I don't mean the products you can buy that offer you eight nights of candy treats, although they are wonderful. (I've been lucky enough to be given two different kinds as presents.) I'm talking about gelt: the chocolate coins that

are usually given to children, but which adults have been known to swipe for their own pleasure.

The original gelt was not chocolate, but real coins. Several reasons have been suggested for the custom: Some historians believe the gelt represents the treasures – including coins – given out to the population after the success of the Maccabean revolt. Others say that gelt symbolizes the coinage made by the ruling descendants of the Maccabees. There are legends that the original gelt was used for gambling when Syrian Greek soldiers tried to stop Torah study: it was OK for Jews to gamble, but not to practice their religion, so when soldiers approached, they switched from study to games.

A large part of the holiday – really any Jewish holiday – is the giving of funds to the poor, in this case, to make certain that people could afford the oil or candles needed to perform the mitzvah of creating light for the holiday. Money was also needed for food so the holiday would be a joyous one. Others give funds to schools so children can learn about Judaism, something the Syrian Greeks forbade. Food and chocolate given to children after their studies help them learn the joy of studying Torah.

Whatever the reason behind gelt, it's wonderful to share food and chocolate. It's also an excellent reminder that we need to help those in need so they, too, can celebrate. Wishing everyone a Hanukkah as sweet as milk chocolate.

Four secrets for making great homemade latkes for Hanukkah

By Beth Harpaz

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

(Forward) – I'm always surprised when friends say they can't be bothered to make homemade latkes for Hanukkah. Takeout latkes or latkes from the frozen foods section or a mix never taste as good as latkes made from scratch. There's nothing like a golden potato pancake served hot and crispy right out of the frying pan.

Besides, what's so complicated? You shred 2½ pounds of potatoes (Idaho russet potatoes are ideal) and a yellow onion or two; combine with three eggs, a teaspoon or more of salt, pepper and ¼ cup of matzo meal or flour, then form the patties and fry.

But the prep and frying are time-consuming, and there are many pitfalls on the path to latke perfection. I should know: I learned the hard way – by screwing up. My mistakes also led me to discover four secrets to making great latkes. Here they are.

◆ The worst latke mistake of all time

◆ Pro tip No. 1: Don't peel or shred those potatoes until you are ready to cook them.

Once when the first night of Hanukkah fell on a week-

night, I did my latke prep in advance. I figured that would make it faster to get dinner on the table for my hungry family when I got home from work. So I grated the potatoes the night before and refrigerated them overnight.

Unfortunately, once you peel, shred and expose a potato to air, it oxidizes and turns a sickly gray. My prepped potatoes were completely discolored! But I didn't have time to start over, so I cooked what I had. Then I turned out the lights and we ate by the dim light of two menorah candles so nobody could see what the latkes looked like.

By the way, if you alternate grating the potatoes with grating the onions, mixing together as you go along, the onions slow down the oxidation of the potatoes.

◆ Preventing a common latke problem

Pro tip No. 2: Squeeze the moisture out of your potatoes and onions to keep them from falling apart.

The first time or two I made latkes, it was hard to keep them in one piece in the frying pan. But there's an easy solution. Just wring the potatoes and onions out.

That's right – after shredding them, but before adding other ingredients, take the potatoes and onions a handful at a time and squeeze them over the sink, as if you were wringing out a wet sponge. You won't believe how much liquid comes out. Some recipes say you need cheesecloth

or a fancy bag or gadget to do this. You don't. Just use your hands. Put a colander in the sink to catch any bits of potato that pop out as you squeeze.

The eggs and matzo meal also help keep the latkes from falling apart. So after you've squeezed out the liquid and added the other ingredients, give the mixture a couple of minutes to bind.

By the way, there's no secret to peeling and grating; not much room for blunder there. Most people use a peeler, but I'm faster with a small, sharp paring knife. (Some cooks don't peel at all, but I don't like dirty potato skins.)

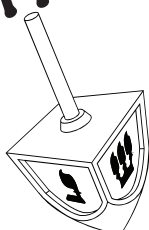
As for shredding: box grater or food processor? If the potatoes are hand-grated, the shreds are coarser and the latkes will be lacier. (Perhaps you've heard it said that latkes aren't authentic unless the cook nicks a knuckle or grates a fingernail along with the potatoes. OK, gross! But it happens.)

Using a food processor takes less time than grating by hand. I often use my Cuisinart (with the shredding disk), especially if I'm making a double batch of latkes for a party. If you have folks offering to help, slicing the potatoes and putting them in the machine is an easily delegated chore. Food-processed latkes turn out denser than hand-shredded, but I like them just as much.

See "Latkes" on page 12

Chanukah Greetings

Happy Chanukah



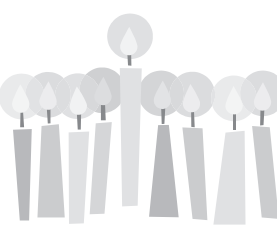
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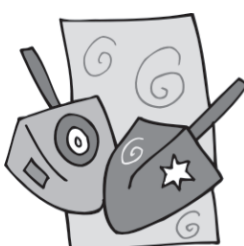
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Jewish online resources

By Reporter staff

A variety of Jewish groups are offering educational and recreational online resources. Below is a sampling of those. *The Reporter* will publish additional listings as they become available.

◆ The Hadassah-Brandeis Institute will hold the hybrid program “Jewish Women’s Organizing in Support of Reproductive Rights: Past and Present” on Thursday, December 7, at 12:30 pm. A panel will explore the history of Jewish women’s activism for reproductive rights and the various forms that advocacy is taking in the present moment. For more information or to register, visit www.brandeis.edu/hbi/events/index.html.

◆ Uri L’Tzedek will hold the virtual program “If God Had Not Redeemed Us, We Would Still Be Slaves: What Is Slavery Today?” with Rabbi Shlomo Levin on Wednesday, March 27, at 1 pm. The cost to attend is \$18. Levin will use “Jewish and secular sources to discuss what modern slavery is, what it looks like, and what we can do to stop it.” For more information or to register, visit https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_uWiGBNRsR428-5gHb-VNNAw#/registration.

◆ The Hadassah-Brandeis Institute will hold the hybrid event of Sandra Seltzer Silberman HBI Conversations Series featuring Julia Watts Belser, author of “Loving Our Own Bones: Disability Wisdom and the Spiritual Subversiveness of Knowing Ourselves Whole” on Wednesday, January 24, at 7 pm. The program will be ASL interpreted/Zoom captioned. Watts Belser will offer a portrait of what it means “to be disabled and one of God’s beloved.” For more information or to register, visit www.brandeis.edu/hbi/events/index.html.

◆ The Yiddish Book Center will hold the virtual Bossie Dubowick YiddishSchool Online from Sunday-Friday, January 14-19. The cost to attend is \$450 for Yiddish Book Center members and \$525 for nonmembers. There are two different sections available depending on previous knowledge of Yiddish. For more information or to register, visit www.yiddishbookcenter.org/educational-programs/yiddishschool/yiddishschool-online/register-bossie-dubowick-yiddishschool.

◆ The Roundtable at the 92nd St. Y will hold “War Brides: Creating Jewish Homes After the Holocaust” on Wednesday, January 17, from 5-6 pm. The cost to attend is \$45. Historian and Jewish Studies scholar Robin Judd will discuss the lives of Jewish war brides following World War II. For more information or to register, visit <https://roundtable.org/live-courses/history/war-brides-creating-jewish-homes-after-the-holocaust>.

◆ The Yetzirah Reading Series will feature the virtual readings about “Trees/Nature” with poets Susan Aizenberg, Lauren Camp and Taije Silverman on Sunday, January 14, from 5-6:30 pm. For more information or to register, visit <https://yetzirahpoets.org>.

[org/yprograms/1-14-24-aizenberg-camp-silverman/](https://www.cjh.org/yprograms/1-14-24-aizenberg-camp-silverman/).

◆ The Center for Women’s Justice has launched “Voices of Women at Wartime” an Israeli podcast that examines how women affect war and how war affects women. For more information, visit <https://pod.link/1715496443>.

◆ Hadassah will hold “One Book, One Hadassah Live With Meryl Frank” on Thursday, December 21, at 7 pm. Meryl Frank will discuss her memoir “Unearthed: A Lost Actress, a Forbidden Book, and a Search for Life in the Shadow of the Holocaust.” For more information or to register, visit <https://events.blackthorn.io/en/8c4sgS87/g/tws32mT8YD/one-book-one-hadassah-live-with-meryl-frank-4a3d8cm7Vm/overview>.

◆ Literary Modiin will hold a virtual author event on Sunday, January 7, at 1 pm featuring Adam Mansbach, author of “The Golem of Brooklyn”; Annie Kantar, author of “Means to be Lucky”; and Nancy Ludmerer, author of “Sarrah Cobia: A Locked-in Life.” For more information or to register, visit www.juliezuckerman.com/event-info/literary-modiin-january-2024-author-event.

◆ The Center for Jewish History will hold “Fascism in America: Past and Present” live on YouTube on Tuesday, December 12, at 6:30 pm. The cost is “pay what you please.” Gavriel Rosenfeld and Janet Ward will lead a panel discussion with writers for the book they edited “Fascism in America: Past and Present.” For more information or to register, visit <https://programs.cjh.org/stream-tickets/fascism-in-america-2023-12-12>.

◆ The Center for Jewish Life will hold the 10-part virtual course “All in the Mishpocheh: Intro to Jewish Genealogy at the CJH” on Fridays, January 12-March 15, from 1-2:15 pm. The cost to attend is \$295 or \$255 for CJH members. For more information or to register, visit <https://programs.cjh.org>.

[cjh.org/event/mishpocheh-2024-01-12/](https://www.cjh.org/event/mishpocheh-2024-01-12/).

◆ The Yiddish Book Center will hold the virtual talk “Yiddish Theater as a Cultural Lifeline during the Holocaust” with Debra Caplan on Thursday, December 7, at 7 pm. Caplan will explore “how Yiddish theater offered a cultural lifeline and psychological escape hatch for Jews during the Holocaust and in the DP camps after the war. For more information or to register, visit www.yiddishbookcenter.org/events/yiddish-theater-cultural-lifeline-during.

◆ The Blue Dove Foundation, which helps those with mental health issues and their families, has resources for Hanukkah, which can be found at https://thebluedovefoundation.org/resource_category/hanukkah/.

◆ Qesher will hold “The Jewish Community of Lebanon: Erasure and Memories” on Sunday, December 10, at 3 pm. The cost to attend is \$18. Leslie Hakim-Dowek will discuss the Lebanese Jewish community and her family history. For more information or to register, visit www.qesher.com/the-jewish-community-of-lebanon/.

◆ Siegal Lifelong Learning will hold the virtual lecture “Jews and the American Labor Movement” on Friday, February 2, from 10-11:30 am. The cost for non-members is \$5. The lecture will “survey the individuals and organizations involved in these historic movements and explain how Judaism itself inspired reforms in the secular world.” For more information or to register, visit <https://case.edu/lifelonglearning/lectures/jews-and-american-labor-movement-remote>.

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

Latkes.....Continued from page 11

◆ Frying the perfect latke
Pro tip No. 3: Getting the oil and the heat right matters – a lot.

I can’t say that I ever fried latkes in olive oil, but that’s because I’d already made that mistake frying chicken cutlets, so I knew it was a bad idea. Olive oil smokes and burns food at a lower temperature than other oils, and you don’t want to trigger the smoke alarm. (Been there.) So, use canola, corn or some other vegetable oil, and turn the heat up to moderately high. The oil must be hot enough to crisp and brown the latke exterior while at the same time cooking the inside through.

Once you get going and you’ve got all the latkes in the pan, that oil should be so hot that it bubbles.

You’ll also have better, faster results in a stainless steel or coated fry pan than a heavy cast-iron pan. Again, I know this from experience: I often have one batch going in my cast-iron pan and another in my trusty old Farberware pan. The results taste the same to me; it’s just trickier with cast iron because the pan is heavier and takes longer to heat up.

Heat the pan on high for a few seconds (count to 10) before you pour the oil. And don’t just coat the pan. Put in enough oil – maybe a quarter-inch deep – so that your latkes are about halfway immersed. The oil is hot enough when a droplet of water flicked into the pan sizzles.

If the oil isn’t hot enough, the latkes will take too long to cook, becoming greasy instead of crispy. (Yup, I’ve done that, too.)

Don’t flip until they’re golden brown on the bottom. If you can’t see the edges browning, they’re probably not ready; take a peek before you turn them over. Flip them too soon, and they could fall apart. And don’t crowd them. You might also have to notch the heat up a tad once the pan is full. Give yourself room to slide the spatula under each pancake without disturbing the others.

To shape the latkes and get them in the pan in one piece, I use a big serving spoon to scoop the mixture from the bowl. Sometimes I pat them with my hands before carefully sliding them into the hot oil.

◆ From stove to table: Every minute counts
Pro tip No. 4: Degrease and serve those latkes as fast as you can.

Set up a degreasing station in advance. Spread newspaper or a brown paper bag out on a counter, then cover with a layer of paper towels. As each hot, cooked latke comes out of the pan, lay it carefully on the paper towels. Press another paper towel on the top of each latke to sop up grease from that side, too.

Set the table (or have someone else do it) before you start cooking so you can serve the latkes immediately. You don’t want to be running back and forth for drinks, plates, applesauce and sour cream at this point. Trust me: Latkes taste better piping hot than when they’ve been sitting around for 15 minutes.

But there have been times when I couldn’t serve the latkes right away; guests were running late or some other problem needed tending. So I always preheat the oven to 375 and have a cookie sheet ready in case I need to keep them warm.

If I’m making more than one batch, I try to serve the first batch and make the second batch while the first batch is being eaten, rather than waiting until both batches are done. I usually have enough time to enjoy one latke myself at the table before that second round needs flipping.

By the way, I love latkes so much that I make them year-round, often with recipes that use sweet potatoes or other vegetables. There are vegan (eggless) versions as well. Putting latkes into your regular meal rotation is also a great way to practice your technique. That way, when Hanukkah rolls around, you’ll have mastered all the secrets to potato pancake perfection.

Beth Harpaz is the *Forward’s* senior copy editor. She’s a licensed New York City tour guide, a Big Apple Greeter and former AP Travel editor. Follow her @literarydj or e-mail harpaz@forward.com

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“For someone who’s been a hostage, it’s not easy to come back”

By Amelie Botbol

(JNS) – “I was 6 years old when I was captured by terrorists during the Entebbe hostage crisis, and Emilia Aloni, who was just released, is the same age. I can’t get her out of my head,” Shay Gross told JNS.

Aloni, 5, was freed from Hamas captivity on November 24, along with her mother Danielle, as part of the ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas.

The Palestinian terror group took captive some 240 people during its October 7 attack on southern Israel, which left 1,200 Israelis dead and thousands more wounded.

Gross was among 246 civilians taken hostage by Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine terrorists on June 27, 1976, when they hijacked an Air France flight from Tel Aviv to Paris and landed in Entebbe, Uganda.

Gross, who spent a week in captivity, stressed the difficulty of reintegrating into normal life. “I’m one of the few people capable of understanding what they are going through. For someone who’s been a hostage, it’s not easy to come back,” he said.

When this was written, 51 Israelis, all women and children except for one man, had been released during the ceasefire, along with 18 foreign nationals, which took effect the week of November 24.

“We can’t find the words to describe our emotions after 50 challenging and complicated days,” said Tom Hand, the father of Emily Hand, a 9-year-old who was among the 13 Israeli hostages freed on November 25. “We are overjoyed to embrace Emily again, but at the same time, we remember all the hostages who have yet to return. We will persist in doing everything in our power to bring them back home.”

Gross was freed on June 4, 1976, during “Operation Entebbe,” the Israeli rescue mission during which then-Sayeret Matkal commander Yonatan Netanyahu, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s brother, perished. “When



An Israeli military helicopter carrying released Israeli hostages arrived at the Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Center on November 27. (Photo by Avshalom Sassoni/Flash90)

I was released, I went through a lot,” Gross told JNS. “My mother took care of me. I had trouble sleeping, I couldn’t listen to words in Arabic or voices over megaphones. It lasted for many years.”

Professor Hagai Levine, head of the medical team at the Hostages and Missing Families Forum, echoed Gross’ concern regarding the captives’ physical and emotional status, saying they would likely require a lengthy rehabilitation process. “The issue at stake is control. They need to take back control over their lives,” Levine told JNS.

“The longer they are in captivity, the longer the recovery takes. That is why it is so urgent for everyone around the world to do everything in their power for us to bring all hostages back now,” he added.

On November 27, Pvt. Ori Megidish, who was captured by Hamas on October 7 and freed by Israeli forces during a raid in the Gaza Strip on October 30, issued her first public message since being rescued. “Hi, I’m Ori Megidish. I re-

turned home nearly a month ago, and first of all I’m happy to see the moving videos of hostages who are returning to their families. I hope and wish that all the families still waiting for captives reunite with them and experience moments like I did,” she said in a video posted to social media.

“I hope everyone comes back, and they will come back, God willing. I’m OK, and I’m at home with my family, and I’m happy I got my life back,” she said.

Her story has provided encouragement to the hostages’ families, who have already spoken of negative effects linked to their relatives’ captivity.

Eyal Nouri, nephew of Adina Moshe, who was released on November 24, told Israeli media his aunt “had to adjust to the sunlight” after weeks of darkness in the tunnels under Gaza. Yair Rotem, uncle of Hila Rotem Shoshani, who was freed on November 25, said his niece was fine, but only communicated in whispers.

“It’s the first time we’ve smiled since October 7,” Abbey Onn, a cousin of the Kalderons, told JNS. “Relief and joy mixed with sadness and grief. We are still fighting for Ofer and every hostage to come home.”

Tali Amano slammed the Red Cross over its failure to provide hostages with medical care; her 84-year old mother, Elma Avraham, was freed on November 26 and remains hospitalized in critical condition. Amano said her mother had been “medically neglected” and returned with “a heart rate of 40 [beats per minute] and a body temperature of 28 degrees Celsius, on the verge of losing consciousness and injured all over.”

While Israel holds its collective breath over the prospective return of additional hostages, Gross’ survival story offers hope, including to those who have already come home. “Rely on your loved ones, be strong and think positive,” he said. “Time will heal you the way it healed me and allowed me to build a family.”

Despite antisemitic vandalism of billboards, JewBelong’s not giving up

By Izzy Salant

(JNS) – “Can a billboard end antisemitism? No. But you’re not a billboard.” So reads a giant pink sign with white letters that drivers can see along the highway in Oakland, CA. On November 15 or November 16, someone spray-painted a different sort of message on the sign: “Free Palestine.”

A vandal who threw a rock at a billboard truck on the George Washington University campus in downtown Washington on November 14 yelled the same thing: “Free Palestine.” That truck had the same pink background and white lettering, which stated, “Let’s be clear. Hamas is your problem too.”

Archie Gottesman founded the nonprofit JewBelong, which is behind the white-on-pink campaigns, in 2017. The goal initially was focused on helping Jews engage more with Judaism. But fighting antisemitism has become a larger part of its mission, Gottesman told JNS.

When her husband, Gary DeBode, converted to Judaism, she was interested in how the religion looked to an outsider, Archie Gottesman told JNS. That vantage is important both to converts and “to people who are Jewish who were brought up with very little Jewish education,” she said.

Gottesman, who had worked in branding for nearly 30 years, and for Edison Properties and Manhattan Mini Storage, brought her expertise to bear on JewBelong’s often edgy messaging. Reaching disengaged Jews required a



A billboard in Chicago associated with the nonprofit JewBelong, aiming to teach the public about antisemitism. (Photo courtesy of JewBelong)

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Rabbi Micah Friedman
Executive Board & Trustees,
and the entire congregation of Temple Israel

different approach since the people she wanted to reach by definition weren’t found on the mailing lists of synagogues, Federations or other Jewish nonprofit organizations.

JewBelong’s “Joyous Judaism” campaign sought to connect with both Jewish and non-Jewish audiences, Gottesman said. The aim was to “talk about Judaism that See “Billboards” on page 16

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Esau's covenant with God

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR, THE REPORTER GROUP

Jewish tradition demonizes Esau, the son of Isaac and the brother of Jacob. Anyone reading the story of Esau in the Torah might wonder why the rabbis so despised him. The text clearly shows how deeply he loved his father, hunting to bring Isaac the food he loved. Esau did marry two Canaanite women; however, when he learned that his parents were displeased with his marriages, he quickly took a wife from the family of his father's half brother, Ishmael. While he may have sold his birthright to his brother, Jacob, he did so only when he was faint and ready to die from hunger. Indeed, Esau longs for his father's blessing, crying "a very great and bitter cry" (Genesis 27:34) when he learns that Jacob has stolen the blessing that belongs to him.

Yet, the ancient rabbis still treat him as if he were evil incarnate. Instead of a balanced portrait showing the good

and bad sides of both brothers, the rabbis brag about Jacob's supposedly wonderful habits, saying that he spent days studying Torah, while Esau worshiped at the shrine of idols. They even claim that on the day Esau sold his birthright to Jacob, Esau had committed cold-blooded murder.

However, the reason that Esau was so despised by the rabbis has less to do with the biblical character himself and more to do with the fact that rabbis lived during a time of Roman rule. The rabbis despised the Romans, but, because of the danger of spies, they were unable to openly criticize the government. Esau became their code word for Rome. When the rabbis told stories of Roman misdeeds, they substituted the name of Esau for Rome. Those in the know understood what was being said. Anyone outside of the rabbinic circle was unaware of the hidden meaning. This protected the rabbis from being punished for their

declarations against the state. In later generations, when thoughts of Roman rule were forgotten, Esau still was treated as the evil offspring, unworthy of God's covenant.

Yet, does the biblical text support this point of view? Certainly the rabbis believed that Isaac's heritage, his covenant with God, passed to Jacob. However, did the blessing that Isaac managed to give Esau mean nothing? Was he cut off from the God of his ancestors? This week's *parasha* gives us part of the answer.

In Vayishlach, Jacob returns to the land of Canaan after a 20-year absence and is afraid of the reception he will receive from his brother. He is right to worry: Esau was so hurt by the trick Jacob played on their father that he threatened to kill him. Yet, at the dramatic meeting between the two brothers, Esau behaves like a mensch. When he **See "Covenant" on page 15**

Congregational Notes

Temple Israel

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

On Fridays and Tuesdays at 5:30 pm, services will be led by Rabbi Micah Friedman via Zoom and in-person (masks are required for unvaccinated participants).

On Saturday, December 2, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person (masks are required for unvaccinated participants). The Torah portion is Genesis 32:4-36:43 and the haftarah is Obadiah 1:1-21. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 5:30 pm.

A Sisterhood Hanukkah paid-up event will take place on Sunday, December 3, at 11 am. RSVPs are needed. (For information, see the article on page 7.)

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

On Saturday, December 9, at 9:30 am, Shacharit services will be held via Zoom and in-person (masks are required for unvaccinated participants). The Torah portion is Genesis 37:1-40:23 and the haftarah is Zechariah 2:14-4:7. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 5:30 pm.

There will be an adult education program with a brunch on Sunday, December 10, at 10 am. The suggested donation \$5-\$20. (For more information, see the article on page 5.)

Penn-York Jewish Community

President-Treasurer-Secretary: Harvey Chernosky, 570-265-3869
 B'nai B'rith: William H. Seigel Lodge
 Purpose: To promote Jewish identity through religious, cultural, educational and social activities in the Southern Tier of New York and the Northern Tier of Pennsylvania, including Waverly, NY; Sayre, Athens and Towanda, PA, and surrounding communities.

Norwich Jewish Center

Orientation: Inclusive
 Address: 72 South Broad St., Norwich, NY 13815
 Phone: 334-2691
 E-mail: fertigj@roadrunner.com
 Contact: Guilia Greenberg, 373-5087
 Purpose: To maintain a Jewish identity and meet the needs of the Jewish community in the area.
 Adult Ed.: Shabbat study sessions are held on designated Saturday mornings at 10 am. Call ahead, text or e-mail to confirm dates.

Temple Brith Sholom

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

Services and programs are held by Zoom on the first and second Fridays of the month.

Synagogues limit face-to-face gatherings

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

Beth David Synagogue

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

Rohr Chabad Center

Affiliation: Chabad-Lubavitch
 Rabbi Aaron and Rivkah Slonim, Directors
 E-mail: aslonim@binghamton.edu
 rslonim@chabadofbinghamton.com
 Address: 420 Murray Hill Rd., Vestal, NY 13850
 Phone: 607-797-0015, Fax: 607-797-0095
 Website: www.Chabadofbinghamton.com
 Rabbi Zalman and Rochel Chein, Education
 E-mail: zchein@Jewishbu.com, rchein@Jewishbu.com
 Rabbi Levi and Hadasa Slonim, Downtown and Development
 Chabad Downtown Center: 60 Henry St., Binghamton
 E-mail: lslonim@Jewishbu.com, hslonim@Jewishbu.com
 Rabbi Yisroel and Goldie Ohana, Programming
 E-mail: yohana@Jewishbu.com, gohana@Jewishbu.com
 Regular service times: Daily 7:30 am, Friday evening 6 pm, Shabbat morning 9:30 am, Maariv and Havdalah one hour after candle-lighting time, Sundays 9:30 am.
 To join the mailing list, for up-to-date information on adult education offerings or to arrange for a private tutorial, for details concerning the Judaica shop and resource center, or for assistance through the Piaker Free Loan Society or Raff Maasim Tovim Foundation, call Chabad's office at 797-0015.
 Chabad will be holding pre-Shabbat virtual programs. For more information, visit www.JewishBU.com/S2020Partnership.

Temple Beth-El of Ithaca

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
 Rabbi: TBA
 Rabbi Emeritus: Scott L. Glass
 Address: 402 North Tioga St. (the corner of Court and Tioga streets), Ithaca, NY 14850-4292
 Phone: 607-273-5775
 E-mail: president@tbeithaca.org, secretary@tbeithaca.org
 Website: www.tbeithaca.org
 Presidents: Melanie Kalman and Alexis Siemon
 Sisterhood President: Gail Zussman
 Director of Education: TBA
 Services: Friday 8 pm; Saturday 10 am, unless otherwise announced. Weekday morning minyan 7:30 am (9 am on Sundays and legal holidays).
 Religious School/Education: September-May: Classes meet on Sunday, 9 am-12:30 pm and Wednesday afternoons, 3:45-5:45 pm. The teen No'ar program meets twice per month (every other Sunday from 5-7 pm) and is designed with the flexibility to accommodate busy student schedules.
 Adult Ed.: Numerous weekly courses, several semester-long courses and a variety of mini-courses and lectures are offered throughout the year. Call the temple office for more details.

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

Friday, December 1, light candles before..... 4:14 pm
 Shabbat ends Saturday, December 2 5:15 pm
 Friday, December 8, light candles before..... 4:13 pm
 Shabbat ends Saturday, December 9 5:14 pm
 Friday, December 15, light candles before..... 4:14 pm
 Shabbat ends Saturday, December 16 5:15 pm

Temple Concord

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism
 Rabbi: TBA
 Address: 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905
 Office hours: Tues.-Fri., 10 am-2 pm
 Phone: 607-723-7355
 Fax: 607-723-0785
 Office e-mail: TempleConcordbinghamton@gmail.com
 Website: www.templeconcord.com
 Regular service times: Fri., 7:30 pm; Sat., 10:35 am, when religious school is in session.
 Hebrew school: Hebrew school meets at 4:15 pm and 5:15 pm on Tues. and Thurs. during the school year unless otherwise noted.

Some services and programs are online only.

Friday, December 1: At 7:30 pm, Shabbat services with Suzanne Holwitt and Robin Hazen. Join via Zoom at https://bit.ly/3hRmW2Y, meeting ID 869 9699 8146 and passcode 826330, or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/templeconcord/.

Saturday, December 2: At 9 am, religious school; at 9:15 am, Torah study in person and Zoom (http://bit.ly/3XDnvRE, meeting ID 825 1226 2831 and passcode 743892); and at 10:35 am, a Shabbat family service.

Sunday, December 3: From 10 am-2 pm, Sisterhood Rummage Sale. Shoppers are asked to use the Oak Street entrance.

Tuesday, December 5: At 10:30 am, Tuesday Morning Book Club: "Bread Givers" by Anzia Yezierska in person or on Zoom (Zoom: https://bit.ly/3CXVd9b, meeting ID 881 6469 4206 and passcode: 653272). For more information, contact Merri Pell-Preus at 607-222-2875 or merrypell.preus@gmail.com.

Friday, December 8: At 6 pm, a vegetarian/dairy pot-luck dinner, including candle lighting for both Hanukkah and Shabbat, wine blessing and Kaddish in the social hall. People are asked to bring hanukkiot (menorahs), three candles and a vegetarian/dairy dish to share. Latkes will be provided. This will be an in-person only event. **See "TC" on page 16**

Temple Beth El of Oneonta

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

Congregation Tikun v'Or

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

U.S. trade group helps Israeli wine industry at peak harvest time

By Jessamyn Dodd

(JNS)—A trade organization called the Israel Wine Producers Association has been asking supporters of the Jewish state to “take a sip for solidarity.” It plans to donate 10 percent of sales from U.S. distributors to Israeli relief efforts.

Since Hamas’s October 7 terror attacks in Israel, Israel’s wine businesses, which are a very large part of its economy and tourism, have been on hold, with grape growers and pickers called up to serve in the Israel Defense Forces during peak harvest season, Joshua Greenstein, vice president of the IWPA, told JNS.

“Lots are having friends and family help through the process,” Greenstein told JNS. “It’s a lot quieter and a lot slower.”

Unlike other industries that don’t have rigid schedules, wine production can’t be paused or run with limited staff, according to Greenstein. “Grapes grow and ripen when they do,” he said. “The wine-making process is very hands-on.



Joshua Greenstein, vice president of the Israel Wine Producers Association (Photo courtesy of JNS)

Without staff, many wineries face an impending crisis.”

Greenstein told JNS that it is tough to say how much money has been raised so far since so many stores are selling Israeli wines. He said that the trade group’s awareness campaign is growing, and stores are sending in photographs of their Israeli wine displays. Despite the wine industry – kosher and not – going through the same challenges during COVID-19 as others did and wine sales being down due to “the financial market and the economy in general,” Greenstein said

that “everyone is doing their part to help Israel.”

Most of the 400 Israeli wine brands are available at major U.S. wine retailers, and many of the Israeli wineries have been established in regions with religious and historical significance, Greenstein said.

Herzog Wine Cellars is one of several kosher California winemakers and distributors that is participating

in fund-raising efforts to aid Israeli colleagues. In recent years, California wineries have recognized a growing demand for kosher wine, both from Jewish consumers and a broader customer base, which seeks high-quality, well-crafted wines. (Herzog referred questions from JNS back to Greenstein.)

Herzog is one of the largest distributors and importers of Israeli wine in the United States, Greenstein told JNS. The kosher companies Hagafen Cellars, Covenant and One Hope also operate in Napa Valley, the top U.S. region for wine.

“People that own a business, Jewish or not, why not give a bottle of wine from Israel? Everyone likes wine,” Greenstein told JNS. He also urged diners to think about Israeli wines when they eat out, saying “if you go to a restaurant, it’s important to ask for it.”

Amid rising antisemitism, wine importers and distributors have faced many of the same pressures as other industries. Some stores that carry IWPA wines, for example, even in prime Jewish neighborhoods, fear putting up Israeli flags. “We’re so afraid of antisemitism,” he said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Hamis forced 12-year-old hostage to watch Oct. 7 attack videos

The aunt of an Israeli boy who was held hostage by Hamas in Gaza said on Nov. 28 that while in captivity he was forced to watch videos of the terror group’s Oct. 7 massacre, and that he and the other child hostages were threatened at gunpoint when they cried. Eitan Yahalomi, 12, a dual Israeli-French citizen, was released on Nov. 27, 52 days after his abduction. His father, Ohad, who was shot during a gun battle with the Hamas terrorists, is still being held in Gaza. “Every time one of the children cried, they threatened him at gunpoint in order to silence him,” Dvora Cohen told France’s BFM TV. “The Hamas terrorists forced him to watch films of the horrors, the kind that no one wants to see, they forced him to watch them.” She also revealed that when he was brought to Gaza, Yahalomi was beaten by Palestinian civilians. “He is a 12-year-old boy,” she said. “We’re talking about a child of 12.” Her comments came after Hamas has repeatedly distributed video to the international media showing them waving good-bye to the released hostages and escorting them to the buses waiting to take them to freedom. Israel has warned that such images are psychological warfare. “Maybe I was naïve, but I wanted to hope that they [Hamas] were treating him well,” said Cohen. “I was wrong. They are monsters.” Meanwhile, the father of a 9-year-old girl released by Hamas on Nov. 25 says she thought she had been in captivity for a year and now cries herself to sleep.

“The most shocking, disturbing part of meeting her was she was just whispering. You couldn’t hear her. I had to put my ear on her lips,” Thomas Hand told CNN of his daughter Emily. “She’d been conditioned not to make any noise.” He says he asked her how long she thought she had been a hostage and she replied “a year.” “Apart from the whispering, that was a punch in the guts. A year,” he said. “Last night she cried until her face was red and blotchy, she couldn’t stop. She didn’t want any comfort, I guess she’s forgotten how to be comforted. She went under the covers of the bed, the quilt, covered herself up and quietly cried.” Emily was at a sleepover at a friend’s house at the time of the Hamas assault on Oct. 7. She was initially reported killed, but it was later announced that she was among the hostages. Emily’s mother died of cancer several years ago.

EU, Switzerland reassess Palestinian NGO funding post-Oct. 7

The European Union and Switzerland both took restrictive measures after internal reviews of their Palestinian aid portfolios completed the week of Nov. 24 found there was reason for concern over incitement. Switzerland raised questions about the “political neutrality of some NGOs” and announced it would cancel contracts with three of them receiving grants totaling a combined 600,000 euros (\$657,000), over breach of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs’ Code of Conduct. This comes after Switzerland announced on Oct. 25 the suspension of funds to 11 NGOs (five Palestinian; five Israeli; 1 one U.S.-based) pending an internal review.

Covenant Continued from page 14

sees Jacob, he is overcome with emotion. The text tells us that “Esau ran to greet him and fell on his neck and kissed him; and they [the brothers] wept.” He welcomes his brother and invites him to live with him, an offer that Jacob accepts, although he never acts on his promise to join his brother’s household.

What might have changed Esau’s mind about killing his brother? Perhaps Esau felt that, in the end, his brother has stolen nothing from him. After all, he was Isaac’s major heir: All of his father’s flocks, servants and wealth belong to him. All that Jacob has comes from the father-in-law; he received nothing from his parents’ estate. Esau can afford to treat his brother well and to welcome him back into the fold of the family.

However, the rabbis weren’t concerned with the physical property that Esau received from his father; in their minds, the covenant with God, the true birthright,

was what mattered – and that belonged to Jacob. It was he who received God’s blessing, and was Abraham and Isaac’s *only* spiritual heir. Yet, in saying this, they ignore a section in Deuteronomy that suggests otherwise. Several verses in Deuteronomy (2:5, 2:9 and 2:18) say that the Israelites, who have been released from slavery in Egypt, are not allowed to harm three specific groups during their conquest of Canaan. One of these is called Seir, the group known to be the descendants of Esau. All three groups are members of the extended family of Abraham and, like the Israelites, they, too, have conquered the land they lived in with God’s blessing. Therefore, it follows that all these groups, including the descendants of Esau, had their own special relationship with God. So, although Esau is not the ancestor of the Jewish people, he never completely lost his birthright: the covenant with the God of his father and grandfather.

Jewish Community Center

JCC Friendship Club

The JCC Friendship Club met on November 18. We started the meeting by reciting “The Pledge of Allegiance” and singing “Hatikvah.” Sue Herzog gave the treasurer’s report and talked about future programs. Bernice Zelman will take over programming while Sue is away. She has planned the next two months. On December 20, Rabbi Michah Friedman from Temple Israel will be the guest speaker. On January 17, Brenda Cave-James will talk about the Underground Railroad. She may even tell us how African Road, in Vestal, got its name.

Babs Putzel Bischoff selected a joke and Sylvia Horowitz read it to the group. Sue introduced Ron Hirt, who spoke about public transportation. It was very interesting to hear how transportation was provided after the Civil War through the 1840s. He talked about the progression after the Industrial Revolution. In the 1940s and 1950s people began using subways. He gave out pamphlets that explained how to use BC Transit, BC Lift and the Office of the Aging Minibus. Several people present expressed an interest in applying for these services.

Join us on Wednesday, December 20, at 1:30 pm, at the JCC.

Sylvia Diamond
President

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rachel@thereportergroup.org.

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Hamas gravely miscalculated how Israel would react

By Yossi Kuperwasser (Israel Hayom via JNS) – While the IDF is engaged in Gaza, in what is becoming

ANALYSIS

but Hamas then quickly recovered and again posed a threat to the area near Gaza and to Israel as a whole.

a protracted war, aiming to weaken Hamas and secure the release of captives, the main effort by Hamas and its backers has been focused on reaching as prolonged a ceasefire as possible.

Such a ceasefire has operational and tactical importance for Hamas. However, its main significance lies in the strategic arena. Hamas hopes a ceasefire will compel Israel to change its war objectives and revert to the softer approach that the Islamist group initially believed Israel would follow right after the October 7 massacre.

I believe that Hamas leaders, despite the severe blow inflicted on Israel, were convinced that the Israeli response would focus on targeted airstrikes that would extract a significant price from the Palestinians and perhaps even a limited ground maneuver. However, they never anticipated that Israel would launch an all-out undertaking to eliminate the terrorist organization and deprive it of its military-terrorist capabilities along with retaking the Gaza Strip.

Hamas likely believed that had Israel subscribed to a small-scale approach, they could build on the success of October 7 and effect a change that would result in a new “equation” between the organization and the Jewish state. Meaning, the release of the terrorists imprisoned in Israel, lifting the blockade, and stopping the normalization process between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Hamas assessed that Israel’s weakness and its problematic relations with the U.S., coupled with its inherent reluctance to pay the high price involved in a broad military operation to remove Hamas from Gaza, would ultimately prevent it from completely defeating Hamas, just like in previous flare-ups.

In previous rounds, whenever the fighting ended, both sides licked their wounds,

This time Israel adopted, to the surprise of Hamas, a different approach that could strategically weaken the organization to an unprecedented extent, thereby also affecting both radical factions associated with the organization; the radical axis led by Iran on the one hand, and the Muslim Brotherhood axis, which includes Qatar and Turkey, on the other.

All actions by Hamas, Iran and its proxies (Hezbollah, the Houthis and Shi’ite militias in Iraq), as well as Qatar and Turkey, should be seen in the context of the attempt to persuade U.S. President Joe Biden to pressure Israel to stop the fighting and eventually adopt an alternative approach.

This effort motivates them to create the impression that there is a severe humanitarian crisis in Gaza. It is what made Hamas play a cynical game with the captives, and this is also what has prompted the Shi’ite militias in Iraq to step up their attacks on U.S. forces. Likewise, this explains the gradual escalation by Hezbollah in the north and the missile launches from the Houthis

in Yemen, and the potential expansion of the conflict by Iran and its allies.

This is also the context through which we must treat the numerous protests in Western capitals calling for a ceasefire. Even Jordan and Egypt are joining the chorus for various reasons, primarily due to the concern about a flow of Palestinian refugees into their territories. The Palestinian Authority calls for a ceasefire, but it is unclear if it is genuinely interested in one.

So far, Hamas and its allies’ efforts have been unsuccessful. Biden is under pressure, along with most Western leaders. They understand the importance of Israel’s success in undermining Hamas and the moral justification for it. Israel’s recent moves, such as advancing on the ground, exposing the illicit Hamas activity at the Rantisi and Shifa hospitals, and continued close coordination with the U.S. regarding the management of the conflict against Hezbollah, contribute to Biden’s ability to withstand pressure.



Materiel found by Israeli forces in Gaza, next to an Israeli flag. (Photo courtesy of the IDF Spokesperson’s Unit)

As the fighting continues, Israel will need to remind Western leaders, led by Biden, that letting Hamas stay in power is beyond the pale and that Israel can bring about the organization’s demise within a reasonable time without causing a humanitarian disaster in Gaza or leading to actions that would escalate the conflict into a regional war.

This is how Israel would be able to ensure room to act and the time needed to achieve its strategic goals, even if it agrees to short ceasefires/pauses to free the captives.

This was originally published by Israel Hayom.

Billboards.

people can connect to.”

When Hamas attacked Israel in May 2021 – and when Israel responded with the 11-day “Operation Guardian of the Walls” – Gottesman saw a “real shift in online antisemitism.” JewBelong had to find a way to use its platform differently. “You can’t talk about a great Passover with a target on your back,” she told JNS.

JewBelong’s campaign against antisemitism takes place online and outdoors. Digital campaigns can reach a wider range of people, but outdoor advertising can “catch people that you can’t digitally,” she said.

The nonprofit began outdoor billboards

to test messages and see what resonated with non-Jewish audiences, but the signage quickly became a successful awareness campaign. JewBelong has dispatched about 500 of these billboards, reaching more than 250 million people, according to the nonprofit’s internal documentation.

To reach an audience that the billboards don’t – college students – JewBelong enlisted portable billboards on trucks.

Antisemitic vandals have come after both kinds of advertisements since Hamas’ October 7 terror attacks on Israel. “It was awful,” Gottesman said of the Oakland billboard, which had nothing to do with

Continued from page 13

Israel or the region. “It was 100 percent about antisemitism, and for people to go and paint ‘Free Palestine’ over that, it is such a horrible example of where this conversation has gone in this country.”

It has become hard to call out antisemitism in America without someone bringing up Palestine, she said. She believes that means people aren’t open to listening or understanding. “It’s frustrating. It’s angering,” she said. “But we’re not going to stop.”

She hopes that people will “get off the sidelines and fight more,” when it comes to antisemitism, stating: “I wish people would stop being silent.”

TC. . .Continued from page 14

Saturday, December 9: Hanukkah celebration for parents and students, from 9:15-10:15 am, a Shabbat morning service followed by class presentations. From 10:15-11:15 am, there will be arts and crafts, games, dreidels, stories, snack and Hanukkah refreshments.

Sunday, December 10: From 10 am-noon, the Joint Adult Education Committee (Temple Israel and Temple Concord) will hold “Bridging Old and New Worlds: How Contemporary Jews Draw upon the Eastern-European Hasidic Movement to Enliven Our Jewish Practice” with Rabbi Micah Friedman at Temple Israel. For more information, see the article on page 5.

December 12 and 14: The hanukkah will be lit during school hours.



The back glass panel of a truck associated with the nonprofit JewBelong, aiming to teach the public about antisemitism, was broken by someone who threw a rock at it on November 14. (Photo courtesy of JewBelong)

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