

THE REPORTER

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Federation's Campaign 2024 update

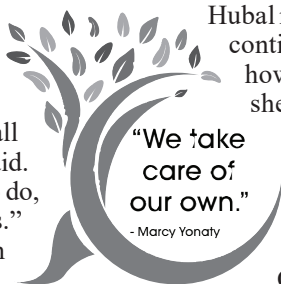
By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton decided to use a different strategy for its Campaign this year. "Since we've offered numerous events for all different ages over the past year, we decided that Super Sunday would concentrate on fund-raising, rather than offering a brunch and another program," said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. "Our focus was to get people to make their pledges as early as possible. To do that, we sent out letters to every member of the Federation before Super Sunday, used *The Reporter*

to encourage people to donate early and sent out e-mail blasts reminding people to pledge."

Hubal believes the strategy had a real impact. "I would call it a complete success," she said. "There is still plenty of work to do, but we've made good progress."

The Federation Allocation Committee has already met and approved all the allocations from community organizations for the amount of \$303,195. However, only 62 percent of that amount has been raised, so



Hubal noted the fund-raising needs to continue. "Every pledge – no matter how small – makes a difference," she said. "Every dollar counts."

Hubal added that this year has shown people the importance of community support. "Jews everywhere are feeling fragile after the October 7 attacks on Israel and the increasing amount of antisemitism occurring across the world," she said. "Our community came together for a peace rally that included rabbis from

across the different movements. That gathering showed we are all one people; we are there for each other as one people. This is just one example of how the Federation works behind the scenes to create a connected community."

To make a pledge to Campaign 2024:
◆ Visit the Federation website at www.jfgb.org and click on "make a pledge."
◆ E-mail Hubal at director@jfgb.org with "pledge" in the subject line.
◆ Fill out the form on page 5 and mail it to the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850.

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, visit www.thereporter.org/miscellaneous-features/keane-to-lead-film-fest-discussion-on-ptsd-on-jan-7.) 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.jfgb.org/film-fest.

"The Narrow Bridge" has been called "an eye-opening journey into the souls of

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



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 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 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 Jan. 13 luncheon to feature Dr. Howard Warner

Beth David Synagogue's Luncheon Speaker Series will continue with Dr. Howard Warner speaking on Saturday, January 13. Warner's talk, "A Look at the Jewish Experience in Iberia," was inspired by a trip to Spain and Portugal taken in the spring of 2019. People are encouraged to attend the morning service, which begins at 9:30 am. There is no charge for the luncheon.



Dr. Howard Warner

"Because of my daughter Shelley's study abroad architectural fellowship, sponsored by Rensselaer Polytech Institute," Warner said, "I was able to pursue my passion for history by joining her during the two-and-one-half weeks that were spent in Portugal. While there, we were able to visit two synagogues, but because of security reasons were unable to gain entrance into Lisbon's main synagogue."

Warner noted that the Sephardic experience in the Iberian Peninsula is a "complicated one," comprising a period known as "The Golden Age" in which Jews prospered

and attained high governmental positions, as well as a time when persecution of Jews was extraordinary under Christian and Muslim rule. He also said that one normally thinks only of the Spanish Jewish experience as it relates to Sephardim, without consideration of the experiences of Portuguese Jews. Warner aims to look at both Spain and Portugal as a way to better understand the survival of the Jewish heritage and religion in those areas, as well as their influence on other regions of the world. His talk will include visual materials.

Warner has practiced dentistry in Kirkwood since 1988, and in Bainbridge and Greene from 1985-88. He has served as the president of the Sixth District Dental Society of the New York State Dental Association. He presently serves as a delegate to the House of Delegates, as a member of NYSDA Governmental Council, and a member of the Executive Council of the See "Warner" on page 4

Federation held Countering Active Threat Training at TI



The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton held a Countering Active Threat Training on November 30 at Temple Israel. Mark Henderson, the director of community security for the Jewish Community Federation of Greater Rochester, led the session, which was attended by approximately 25 community members.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

In Israel

A kibbutz on the Gaza border starts to rebuild; Israeli families mark a somber Hanukkah.

Page 5

Are campuses safe?

High school yeshivas are asking college recruiters to show their campuses are safe for students.

Page 8

Deciphering the past

A rare Psalm inscription is discovered; Israel's oldest gate offers look at ancient urbanization.

Page 11

Special Sections

Book Review..... 4
Federation Honor Roll..... 6-7
Personal & Business Services 9
Classifieds 12

Opinion

The Israel-Hamas War: Susan Estrich and the American home front

By Bill Simons

As the Israel-Hamas War rages in the Mideast, the battle for public opinion is fiercely contested in the Western democracies, notably in the United States. Thus far, three stages of media coverage have emerged and overlapped. Initially, the October 7 Sabbath morning surprise attack on southern Israel by rockets and Hamas terrorists, followed by the murders of 1,200 Jews, primarily civilians, and the abduction of 240 hostages, prompted widespread media sympathy for the victims and condemnation of celebratory terrorists, as well as acknowledgment of peril to Israel's very survival.

However, after Israel declared war on Hamas, staged a massive call-up and launched a fierce military campaign in Gaza to annihilate the terrorists, much of the media turned against Israel, concentrating on Palestinian deaths and displacement. With the late November exchange of prisoners and pause in the conflict, a dominant third stage of media coverage emerged, less fixated on the sensational and more focused on the details of a rapidly changing situation.

Nonetheless, powerful resonances of earlier stages of media coverage continued and cast polarizing messages. This is a broad, complex, evolving and multifaceted topic, not subject to closure in a single column. Nonetheless, the writings of Susan Estrich provide ballast for an initial discussion.

Estrich, an influential and informed political columnist, is a Jew. Since the October 7 Hamas attack on Southern Israel, several of her syndicated commentaries have dissected canards that foster condemnation of the Jewish state and fuel resurgent antisemitism on the American home front. Estrich brings an impressive background to journalism. After graduating from Harvard Law School, where she was elected editor of the Law Review, she went on to a notable legal career as litigator and professor. A strong advocate of religious freedom, she has defended Muslim activists. A liberal Democrat, she managed the 1988 presidential campaign of Michael Dukakis. As a rape survivor, Estrich has written about the violent attack upon her from a personal and legal perspective in "Sex and Power" and other books. Although an outspoken feminist, Estrich represented former Fox News CEO Roger Ailes against charges of sexual harassment. Now, through commentaries addressing the Israel-Hamas War, Estrich has emerged as a leading proponent of a nuanced Jewish American perspective in the battle for public opinion.

Union General William Tecumseh Sherman spoke for the generations in his characterization of war: "It is only those who have neither fired a shot nor heard the shrieks and groans of the wounded who cry aloud for blood, for vengeance, for desolation. War is hell." Yet, Sherman mounted his 1864 March to the Sea against the Confederacy, bringing suffering, hunger and loss to civilians in

Georgia. Sherman's campaign also hastened the end of the Civil War, preserving a united, albeit imperfect, nation with the will to abolish the scourge of slavery and to aspire to Abraham Lincoln's vision of "government of the people, by the people, for the people." In response to terrorists determined to eradicate the Jewish state and kill as many Jews as possible, Israel is now engaged in a terrible war.

Within the context of battle, Israel has tried to minimize Palestinian civilian deaths. In its war against Hamas, Israel, unlike the terrorists who provoked the conflict, neither seeks the annihilation of a people nor takes pleasure in slaughter. However, significant media outlets moved in a trajectory that lost sight of the precipitating carnage in southern Israel and reported almost exclusively on tragic Palestinian deaths. In an Orwellian use of language, several pundits have accused Israel of genocide. Certain influencers appear more comfortable with Jews as victims than as soldiers. Even the august *New York Times*, as Estrich documents, has strayed from journalistic canons of truth and fairness.

When an explosion devastated Gaza's largest hospital, Dar al-Shifa, Estrich termed it "a terrible tragedy." Endorsing Hamas claims, the *Times* ran the following headline: "Israeli Strike Kills Hundreds in Hospital, Palestinians Say." As a result of thorough investigation, Israel presented compelling documentation, based on intercepted

See "Estrich" on page 8

Calling for genocide is antisemitic. Why couldn't the president of my alma mater say so?

By Eva Ingber

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.

"Does calling for the genocide of Jews violate Penn's rules or code of conduct? Yes or no?"

It should have been an easy answer. But somehow, it wasn't.

The president of the University of Pennsylvania, Liz Magill, recently testified before members of Congress on the alarming uptick in campus antisemitism. When questioned by Rep. Elise Stefanik, the president of my alma mater did not definitively say before the room – and the world – that "calling for the genocide of Jews" is hate speech, condemnable and won't be tolerated at the University of Pennsylvania.

Instead, she said that such sentiments are "context dependent" and only problematic when they "turn into conduct."

Understandably, Liz Magill's response has outraged the masses – members of the Penn community, Jews, non-Jews and world leaders alike. I'm relieved to see so many appalled, expressing their anger and disdain at this absolute failure in leadership, for which she later apologized.

But there's an essential question I've noticed is missing from the masses' vocalized horror: Why?

Why didn't President Magill immediately answer with an unequivocal, resounding "Yes" when asked if "calling for the genocide of Jews" is antisemitic?

This question underscores a malignant fear of making definitive statements in support of the Jewish people, and of taking an unapologetic stance against antisemitism, infecting our most esteemed universities.

In a recent class at Columbia University's School of Professional Studies, where I am studying for my master's degree in narrative medicine, I did a presentation on clips from the film "Shoah," Claude Lanzmann's nine-hour

documentary about the Holocaust.

We had been discussing W.E. Sebald's award-winning fictional Holocaust novel, "Austerlitz," for three weeks prior. My introduction of more Holocaust content wasn't out of the blue, but an attempt to continue the conversation. The presentation guidelines were to bring art or media that thematically related to the discussion at hand.

The clips I showed featured harrowing testimony from Filip Muller about his unfathomable experience as a sonderkommando, a gas chamber attendant, at Auschwitz. As the granddaughter of Holocaust survivors, this material felt – and feels – particularly important; as I sit in classes with people from all different walks of life, peers who did not grow up with a robust Holocaust education like I did in Jewish day school, I feel an obligation to share survivor testimonies, to share the horrors, so others can help the world "Never Forget."

See "Calling" on page 8

In My Own Words

My cultural ignorance

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

I admit it: I am not hip or in tune with current times. Actually, I've never been, but it's gotten worse. When reading novels about contemporary teens, I've had to do online searches for photos of actors/singers who are used to describe a character's looks. That's also true of abbreviations that the authors assume you'll know. (Tell me, is it really that much harder to say "to be honest," rather than "TBH.") But it's an adult activity that has truly shown how culturally ignorant I am: Connections.

If you're thinking, "Ah, but you know about Connections, so you can't be that ignorant." Sorry, I learned about it from a Facebook friend. For those who never heard of Connections, it's an online *New York Times* puzzle. Every day, Connections offers 16 words that have to be paired into related groups of four. Puzzlers are given four chances to match the words groups. Of course, since this is a *New York*

Times puzzle, the connections are not always clear. (To see an example, visit www.nytimes.com/games/connections. There is no charge to play. Only one puzzle is offered a day so you don't have to worry about wasting too much time.)

I am horrible at most word puzzles. Don't bother asking me for an answer to a crossword puzzle. My mind just doesn't work that way (although my mother was a big fan). But Connections offers a different kind of word play and it's fun once you get the hang of it. You might, as I did, kick yourself for thinking the word mouse should go with the rest of the rodents, until you realize that it belongs with the computer equipment. That's just getting used to how the puzzle works – that is, until you come to face to face with your own cultural ignorance as I did.

I mean, seriously, there are four different types of hip hop dances? I didn't know they existed. Oh, and

those are names of blogs? Really? Hmm, never heard of any of them. I might be excused for not knowing the names of current movie directors since I don't watch many films, but the last names of TV families featured older shows. My excuse? I never watched that one! (Yes, I looked it up online afterward.) Those are current magazines? Hmm, I've never seen them at the checkout of my grocery store.

My favorite puzzle was one where I got the answer correct, but for the wrong reason. Anyone who knows me knows that when I see the name Grover, I'm going to think of Sesame Street. I found the names of three other Muppets and was so pleased that I figured it out – that is, until Connections told me that the "correct" connection was that they were the first names of four American presidents. Oh, well, it still counted.



Jewish Federation
of Greater Binghamton

Shelley Hubal, Executive Director

607-724-2332 ~ www.jfgeb.org

The Reporter Editorial Committee

Rebecca Goldstein Kahn, chairwoman

Rachel Coker, Ben Kasper,

Toby Kohn, Richard Lewis,

Robert Neuberger, Ilene Pinsker

HOW TO REACH THE REPORTER

Mail ~ The Reporter, 500 Clubhouse Rd. Vestal, NY 13850

E-mail ~ TReporter@aol.com

Phone ~ 607-724-2360 or 800-779-7896

Extension#/Department ~ 1. Advertising 2. Business Office
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The views expressed in editorials and opinion pieces are those of each author and not necessarily the views of the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton.

LETTERS

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

ADS

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

DEADLINE

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

Executive Editor Rabbi Rachel Esserman

Layout Editor Diana Sochor

Advertising Kathy Brown

Bookkeeper Kathy Brown

Production Associate Julie Weber

Columnist Bill Simons

Proofreaders

Barbara Bank, Fran Ferentinos,

Rebecca Goldstein Kahn, Merri Pell-Preus,

Ilene Pinsker, Heidi Thirer



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www.thereporter.org

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.

Participants should bring an item they no longer want from home 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."

Temple Israel Sisterhood held Hanukkah program

Temple Israel Sisterhood hosted a Hanukkah brunch and gift exchange on December 3 in the temple Social hall. There was no charge for those members who have paid this year's dues. The brunch was catered by Victor Torres. "The brunch gave people a chance to visit with each

other," said organizers of the event. "A fun gift exchanged followed and everyone went home with a remembrance of the event. We were happy to see old-time friends and welcome new faces who have moved into our community. A good time was had by all."

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.

- ◆ Uri L'Tzedek will hold a virtual discussion about "Collective allyship during hard times" with Angela Hughey, the president of LGBTQ+ organization ONE Community, on Thursday, December 21, at noon. The cost to attend is \$18. For more information or to register, visit <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/918844?pwd=Z0Z4XFFgscPg#registration>.
- ◆ The American Jewish University will hold the virtual program "Nakam: The Holocaust Survivors Who Sought Full-Scale Revenge" on Wednesday, December 20, from 3-3:45 pm. Professor Dina Porat and AJU's Michael Berenbaum will discuss Porat's new book, "Nakam" (Hebrew for "vengeance"). The book tells the story of "the Avengers" (Nokmim), a group of young Holocaust survivors who sought revenge against Germany following the crimes of the Holocaust. For more information or to register, visit <https://open.aju.edu/event/nakam-the-holocaust-survivors-who-sought-full-scale-revenge/>.
- ◆ The Biblical Archeology Society's Scholars Series with William Schniedewind will take place on Wednesday, March 6, from 1-2 pm. Schniedewind will discuss "Who Really Wrote the Bible? The Story of Scribal Communities." The cost to attend is \$10. For more information or to register, visit www.biblicalarchaeology.org/travel-study/bas-scholars-series-with-william-schniedewind.
- ◆ The Biblical Archeology Society will hold the February Bible and Archaeology Fest 2024 from February 24-25. Speakers will include Gary Rendsburg. The cost to attend is \$149. For complete information or to register, visit www.biblicalarchaeology.org/travel-study/february-bible-archaeology-fest-2024.
- ◆ The American Jewish University will hold the four-week virtual course "Do Jews believe in Heaven? The Afterlife in Judaism" on Mondays, February 5-26, at 4 pm. Rabbi Pinchas Giller will discuss Jew views of the afterlife. For more information or to register, visit <https://open.aju.edu/event/do-jews-believe-in-heaven-the-afterlife-in-judaism-2/>.
- ◆ The Yiddish Book Center will hold the book talk "Murder in Manchuria: The True Story of a Jewish Virtuoso, Russian Fascists, a French Diplomat, and a Japanese Spy in Occupied China" with author Scott Seligman on Thursday, January 4, at 7 pm. Seligman's book "explores an unsolved murder set amid the chaos that reigned in China in the run-up to World War II." For more information or to register, visit <https://www.yiddishbookcenter.org/events/murder-manchuria-true-story-jewish-virtuoso-russian-fascists-french-diplomat-and-japanese>.
- ◆ The Streicker Center will hold the hybrid program "Lior Lev Sercarz on 'A Middle Eastern Pantry'" on Wednesday, January 17, at 7 pm. There is no cost to attend, but the book "A Middle Eastern Pantry: Essential Ingredients for Classic and Contemporary Recipes" may be purchased for \$30 (\$35 if shipped). Sercarz will discuss what he's learned during his travels from Israel to Tunisia, Yemen, Turkey and beyond. For more information or to register, visit <https://streicker.nyc/events/sercarz>.
- ◆ The Museum at Eldridge Street will hold the virtual program "Aging Well: Wise Aging" on Wednesday, December 20, at 11 am. The cost is "pay-as-you-wish." Rabbi Paula Drill will provide the spiritual approach to aging by analyzing Jewish texts and values to provide "an uplifting perspective rather than a declinist view on aging." For more information or to register, visit <https://fareharbor.com/embeds/book/eldridgestreet/items/492403/calendar/2023/12/?flow=918844&full-items=yes&back=https://www.eldridgestreet.org/%3F>.

- ◆ The 2024 YIVO-Bard Winter Program on Ashkenazi Civilization will be held online this winter from January 9-26. The program will delve into the literature, history and culture of East European Jewry, and offers a diverse lineup of international presenters. For more information or to register for individual classes, visit <https://yivo.org/Winter-Program>.
 - ◆ The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research will hold the virtual program "Holocaust Distortion in Poland and Beyond" on Monday, January 8, at 1 pm. For more information or to register, visit <https://yivo.org/WP2024-Keynote>.
 - ◆ ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal will hold the virtual "A Jewish Renewal New Year's Eve," hosted by Rabbi Geela Rayzel Raphael and friends, on Sunday, December 31, at 8 pm. The cost to attend is "pay-what-you-can" (\$18 donation suggested, but not required). For more information or to register, visit <https://aleph.org/civircrm/event/register/?reset=1&id=529>.
 - ◆ The latest issue of Jewish Fiction.net can be found at www.jewishfiction.net/index.php/current-issue/.
 - ◆ Jewish Women's Archive will hold "January 2024 Book Talks": on Thursday, January 11, at 8 pm, Jennifer Rosner's "Once We Were Home"; on Thursday, January 18, at 8 pm, Julia Watts Belser's "Loving Our Own Bones: Disability Wisdom and the Spiritual Subversiveness of Knowing Ourselves Whole"; and on Thursday, January 25, at 8 pm, Susan Kahn's "Canine Pioneer: The Extraordinary Life of Rudolphina Menzel." For more information or to register, visit <https://jwa.org/events>.
 - ◆ The Israel Law and Liberty Forum and the Institute for Jewish Ethics will present the virtual program "Israel vs. Hamas: The Ethics of War," which will compare military and talmudic perspectives, on Thursday, December 21, from noon-2 pm. The webinar is eligible for CLE credit in New York. The cost is \$49 if attending with CLE credit, or \$10 for general attendance. For more information or to register, visit <https://lawforum.org.il/israel-vs-hamas-the-ethics-of-war-2/?lang=en>.
 - ◆ The Museum of Jewish Heritage will hold the hybrid program "A Community Reading of Elie Wiesel's 'Night'" on Sunday, January 28, at 1 pm. The book will be read in its entirety throughout the day, accompanied by music and speeches. For more information or to register, visit <https://mjhny.org/events/nightreading/>.
 - ◆ The virtual YIVO-Bard Winter Program on Ashkenazi Civilization will take place January 9-26. The registration deadline is Friday, December 29. For a complete list of courses and to register, visit <https://yivo.org/Winter-Program>.
 - ◆ The American Jewish University will hold the five-part virtual class "How to Argue Like a Jew" from Tuesday, January 16-February 13, at 3 pm. Students will "study Jewish text and reveal the ways in which Jewish wisdom guides us through difficult conversations and strengthens the culture of constructive disagreement today." For more information or to register, visit www.aju.edu/events/how-argue-jew.
- For additional resources, see previous issues of *The Reporter* on its website, www.thereportergroup.org/streams/miscellaneous-features/miscellaneous-features/tag/80309?

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to Marilyn Weiner on the death of her sister,
Joan Kellett

DEADLINES

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

ISSUE	DEADLINE
Dec. 29-Jan. 11, 2024.....	Dec. 20
January 12-25.....	January 3
January 26-February 8.....	January 17
February 9-22.....	January 31

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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SUZANNE "SUE" KRAUSE
NYS Lic. Associate R.E. Broker

(C) 607-760-3366 | SUEKRAUSE@WARRENHOMES.COM
THELAURAMELVILLETEAM.WARRENHOMES.COM
33 FRONT STREET • BINGHAMTON, NY 13905

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Sima Auerbach
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"We take care of our own."
- Marcy Yonaty

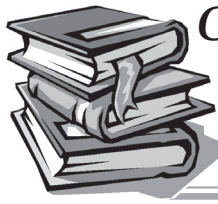
Our Bar/Bat Mitzvah Planning Guide is coming soon!

To advertise in this annual keepsake section, contact Kathy Brown at 607-724-2360, ext. 244 or advertising@thereportergroup.org

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Ad Deadline: January 18




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Off the Shelf

Criminals or heroes?

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Criminals or heroes? That's the question I pondered while reading "Gangsters vs Nazis: How Jewish Mobsters Battled Nazis in Wartime America" by Michael Benson (Citadel Press). The work proved challenging, but not because of the writing or subject matter. In fact, it tells a fascinating story of how some Jews in the U.S. fought back against American Nazis before World War II. You might be wondering, then, what debate I was having with myself. While it's not hard to cheer for someone disrupting Nazi gatherings and beating up Nazis (something that sounded more like a comic book than reality at times), it is difficult to see these gangsters as heroes because, as Benson notes, the Jewish gangsters were "the perfect warriors for the cause. They killed and hurt people for a living and didn't particularly care about the law."

Benson offers a short history of Jewish immigration in the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th to show the sociological conditions that led to the development of the Jewish mob. Focusing on the 1920s, he notes that these teenage rebels – the boys who wanted to avoid the drudgery of their parents' lives – took to the streets and formed gangs. One reason for their rebellion was that many other paths to success were off limits because they were Jewish. Prohibition offered an easy way to make money since selling liquor was profitable. After Prohibition was repealed, many of these men moved on to other rackets, including "policy banking (also known as the 'numbers,' an illegal lottery), extortion [and] murder."

The person who organized the gangsters' attacks against American Nazis might come as a surprise: Special Sessions Judge Nathan Perlman. Perlman arranged a meeting with Meyer Lansky, an organized crime boss, and brought Rabbi Stephen Wise to the meeting. His purpose was to arrange for Lansky's men to disrupt Nazi meetings, rallies and marches. According to Benson, Lansky was told that any disruption up to murder was OK with Perlman and Wise. Although they offered Lansky money for his help, he refused to be paid. What he did accept was the promise of legal assistance if any of his men were arrested. Benson writes that "Meyer thought the no-kill rule took a little bit of fun out of it, but leaving a bigmouth Kraut wailing in pain was satisfying."

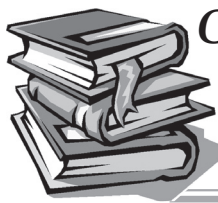
The first attacks against the Nazi groups took place in New York City, but soon spread to other areas where Nazis gathered. Benson writes about different Jewish gangsters who disrupted meetings and rallies in Chicago, Newark, Middle America and the West Coast. Brutal beatings were not unknown. The gangsters generally came out on top of these encounters and few were arrested. The Nazi groups began to meet less publicly and demanded more police protection since, at that time, it was not illegal for them to gather.

Benson notes that not every Jew was pleased by the gangsters' behavior. Some were afraid that Jewish criminals committing acts of violence would create more antisemitism. Their fear was not completely unrealistic. Antisemitism was already rife in the U.S. For example, a

chapter on Father Charles Edward Coughlin shows how he frequently preached antisemitism on his radio program, saying he was against religious persecution, but since Jews represented a Communist threat, that explained the measures taken against them in Europe. According to Benson, "Coughlin had a velvety soft voice and tenderly wrapped his hate speech in a warm security blanket of tone and comfort." His program was mainstream: at its peak, it had 30 million listeners.

The confrontations continued on and off until the bombing of Pearl Harbor, when the U.S. entered the war on the side of the Allies. The Nazi groups then came under greater scrutiny. While some of their activities were harmless, there were groups who actively spied for Germany or plotted to overthrow the U.S. government on behalf of Nazi Germany.

"Gangsters vs Nazis" is filled with interesting details about the gangsters' lives and the way Nazi ideas had taken root in the United States. Benson notes that, even though his book is a nonfiction work, he has supplemented the dialogue and adjusted some of the chronology to smooth the narrative flow. That may make readers wonder if he jazzed up some of the dialogue for the sake of making the action more exciting. However, that won't concern the general reader who wants to learn about how American Jews fought against Nazis in their backyard. For those interested in more detail, Benson does include a list of his sources. Anyone unfamiliar with this period of Jewish history will find "Gangsters vs Nazis" fun and action packed.



Off the Shelf

Literary works

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Translated Jewish stories

Nora Gold has earned just praise for the Jewish online journal, JewishFiction.net, that she edits. According to the journal's website, it is "the only English-language journal, either in print or online, devoted exclusively to the publishing of Jewish fiction." As important, it offers Jewish short stories that were originally published in languages other than English. That fact is the premise for the book Gold has edited: "18: Jewish Stories Translated from 18 Languages" (Cherry Orchard Books).

In her introduction, Gold discusses what makes a story Jewish: it has to "reflect Jewish experience, Jewish consciousness, or the Jewish condition," although she admits it can be difficult to define those terms. She notes that no matter how good a story that is submitted is, if there is nothing Jewish about it, she won't publish it. That's because her goal is larger than just publishing literature: she believes Jews of all stripes can be brought together by fiction, which offers readers insight into those with a different Jewish practice or who were raised in a different Jewish environment.

I found the stories a mixed bunch: there were some I thought were wonderful and others (mostly because of their writing style) that did not impress me. However, that's true of most anthologies and should not discourage readers, who may prefer the stories that interested me less. Some of my favorites include:

◆ "Hostage" by Elie Wiesel (translated from French), which tells of a little known American Jewish writer who becomes famous after he is kidnapped by two men looking to play a role in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. The writer's reactions to his incarceration lean toward literary thinking, which makes the story less a thriller than a meditation on life.

◆ "The Guest" by Varda Fiszbein (translated from Spanish). This gem of a story reads like a Jewish folktale, showing what occurs between a host and one of his guests at a Passover seder. While I predicted what would happen, watching it unfold was great fun.

◆ "Purchase of Goods of Dubious Origin" by Augusto Segre (translated from Italian). Is it possible to become part of non-Jewish society after emancipation? That's what Elia wants for his son. The results are different from what he hoped and dreamed.

◆ "New York" by Peter Sichrovsky (translated from German). In 1995, a couple who survived the Holocaust and now live in New York City try to decide whether they will attend an event at the Austrian embassy. While they debate their decision, they also review their lives: the bad moments and the good.

◆ "Luck" by Irena Douskova (translated from Czech). Two men – one Jewish and one not – travel together to find food for their village during World War II. They are not friends and dislike each other almost on principle. Luck or lack of luck plays a major role in their tale.

Readers interested in Jewish literature will find much to enjoy in "18." The anthology definitely shows the richness of Jewish fiction across the world.

An award-winning novel

The novel features only around 190 pages of text, but, by the halfway mark, I was tempted to stop. What kept me reading was that "Study for Obedience" by Sarah Bernstein (Alfred A. Knopf Canada) was not only short-listed for the Booker Award, but won the Scotiabank Giller Prize for fiction. After finishing, I did something I never do before writing a review: I read what other reviewers said, which led me to some interesting thoughts about what I now see

as an intriguing, if flawed, novel.

In stream-of-thought, meandering prose, an unnamed narrator moves to an unnamed country to help her brother after his wife leaves him. The narrator is Jewish, although she never uses that term: it is her mention of prayer, school and community that shows her heritage, although it's also clear that she doesn't feel part of the Jewish world. Clues to her new home are offered, again in a vague way, but enough for readers understand that, decades ago, something awful happened to her ancestors who used to live there.

It's clear from the opening chapter that the narrator is not welcomed by her neighbors and blamed for several odd events. Yet, it was difficult not to see that part of the problem stems from her own behavior: she created odd talismans and delivered them to her neighbors' houses during the dead of night when no one could see her. It's not surprising that people viewed this with suspicion. Her family relationships also seem odd. She notes that she has devoted her life to her siblings and molded herself into the person she thinks they want her to be. Unable to keep a satisfactory job, she quickly agreed to join her brother in a foreign country and claims she does everything for him.

None of the reviews I read suggested something that came to me as I neared the end of the book: does the main character qualify as an unreliable narrator? Is she just incredibly, almost mind-numbingly introspective, or does she suffer from some sort of mental illness or disability? Could her family be trying to keep her safe? It's impossible to tell, but the last section of the book left me wondering something no one else suggested, something I don't want to share here in case someone wants to read the novel. (However, if you do read the book, please let me know so I can share my suspicions with you.)

I can't help but wonder why "Study for Obedience" received such critical praise, including its award nominations. Is the book so popular among critics because it's possible to interpret its words to fit your prejudice? Maybe they are just fond of literary writing that contains little to no plot. However, this is not a book I can recommend, as much as I'd like to discuss my thoughts with another reader.

Warner. . . . Continued from page 1

Sixth District Dental Society. He is past president of the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, a past president of Temple Israel and a Temple Israel board member. "I am a proud alumnus of the Me'ah Program," Warner added, "which was subsidized by Jewish Federation."

Beth David's Luncheon Speaker Series takes place the second Saturday of the month. Since the monthly series' continuation depends on the generosity of contributors, Beth David welcomes and appreciates donations to the Luncheon Fund in order to keep the program going. Donations 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.

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THE REPORTER

Israeli families absent loved ones mark a somber Hanukkah

By Amelie Bothol

(JNS) – “We always celebrated Hanukkah as a family,” Eyal Waldman, 63, from Tel Aviv, explained to JNS. “We went skiing in Courchevel [in France]. Now, wherever we go, at every celebration and every family event, Danielle will be missing.”

Hamas terrorists murdered Waldman’s daughter Danielle, 24, along with her boyfriend of six years, Noam, on October 7, as they attended the Supernova Music Festival near Kibbutz Re’im.

“I taught her how to surf, snowboard, scuba dive. Danielle truly loved life,” said Waldman, who was on vacation in Indonesia when he received a call to catch a plane back to Israel.

“The Monday morning after the attack, I went down to the south and found the car she was murdered in. The bodies had already been taken away by first responders. I also got a hold of a video call from the girl sitting next to Danielle when she was hit,” said Waldman.

Danielle, who was born in California and moved to Israel when she was 3 years old, would have turned 25 on November 21. “It’s extremely difficult for my two other children, Sharon and Guy. They miss their little sister. It will never be the same without her,” added Waldman.

Hamas terrorists murdered more than 360 mostly young revelers in and around the



The Moses family (Photo courtesy of Yair Moses)

festival. Another estimated 40 partygoers were taken hostage to Gaza.

Ela Ben Ami, 23, from Kibbutz Be’eri, is spending Hanukkah without her father, Ohad, 55, who was kidnapped along with her mother, Raz, 57, on October 7. Raz was freed on November 29 as part of the hostages-for-ceasefire deal agreed to by Israel and Hamas.

“At 7 am, my dad heard gunshots and screaming in Arabic. My mom texted from the safe room that she was terrified. At 9:30, he wrote that he could hear them rampaging

about inside the house from inside,” Ela Ben Ami told JNS. “At 10, my parents texted me that they had been captured. An hour later, a picture of my father, barefoot and in his undergarments, was posted to Telegram on a Hamas channel.”

Of the approximately 240 Israelis and foreign nationals abducted on October 7, some 138 remain in Gaza, including Ohad.

“On Hanukkah, my dad would call the entire family and ask them to gather at our house. He would read the blessings and light the candles. He loves it,” Ela Ben Ami said.

“On the fourth day of Hanukkah, there would be a ceremony in the dining room of Kibbutz Be’eri. Kids would sing and everyone would dance. Except now, my dad is not here and there is no kibbutz to celebrate at,” she added.

Ben Ami participated in the Menorah in the D lighting event in downtown Detroit to

bring attention to the plight of the remaining hostages. “My younger sister Natalie is sleeping with my mom in her bed until my dad comes back,” Ben Ami said of Raz, who is recovering from 50 days in captivity.

“Hanukkah is a holiday of miracles and I hope that he will return before the last day of the eight days to light the candles with us,” she added.

Also attending the Menorah in the D event was Yair Moses, whose divorced parents were kidnapped by Hamas from Kibbutz Nir Oz from separate houses on October 7. His mother, Margalit, 77, was released on November 24. She recently appeared in a video describing the difficulties of life as a captive and the urgency of the situation. Yair’s father, Gadi, 79, is still in Gaza.

“I feel happy to be reunited with my mother but at the same time, I am extremely worried for my father. So you could say that I am half happy, half worried,” Moses told JNS.

“I found out that my father was being held by terrorists in Gaza via a picture in *The New York Times*. There were lots of details including his name. There was no doubt,” he said.

Yair, whose name Yair translates into “the one who shines,” is still hopeful that Israel’s light will emerge victorious over the darkness that befell his family and the country on October 7.

“Hanukkah is a very important holiday for us. My parents were with us at every candle-lighting gathering,” Moses said.

“Yesterday, we managed to find a video of my father in which he was lighting the fourth candle of the holiday. We hope that this will somehow turn into reality and that he will come back,” said Moses.

Border kibbutz rebuilds from the ashes

By Etgar Lefkovits

(JNS) – KIBBUTZ BE’ERI – Autumn leaves felled by rain and wind are being raked. The grass has grown green. The mammoth printing press is working full steam. But down the bucolic pathways that became killing fields on October 7 when hundreds of Hamas terrorists overran this southern Israel agricultural community, the devastation is still in full view.

Two months after the deadly attack, signs of life are slowly returning to this Gaza border community, one of the hardest hit on that holiday weekend. Nearly 10 percent of the kibbutz’s 1,300 residents were murdered on that fall Saturday morning.

The printing press, which is the kibbutz’s main source of income and which escaped damage due to being nearly empty at the time of the attack, is abuzz with activity. Managers were determined to reopen the press—where drivers’ licenses, credit cards, bank checks and shopping gift cards are printed—the very week after the attack.

“The opening of the printing press was a very symbolic move to show residents of the community and the whole border area that there is a rebirth,” said Ben Sochman, 47, manager of the site, whose 77-year-old mother, Tamar, was shot dead outside her home by the terrorists on the morning of the attack. “Our hope is that out of all this pain, there can be some growth.”

Deputy marketing manager Naor Pakciarz, 45, whose father-in-law was also murdered in the attack, said, “It will take years to rehabilitate the kibbutz,” but added that “we understood that the kibbutz would not be resettled if the printing press was not first running.”

Today, 300 of the 350 printing press workers are already back at their jobs—many commuting to their temporary homes in Dead Sea hotels or elsewhere for work.

A hardcore group of scores of young kibbutz members have returned home, braving the thunderous booms of artillery explosions from the IDF tanks fighting nearby, and the continuing if dwindling number of rockets attacks from Gaza as the war entered its third month.

At the entrance to the building, a makeshift memorial honors the 13 press workers who were among the roughly 100 kibbutz members killed or abducted by Hamas.

Tatiana Koszykovec, 52, of Netivot, who was working at the reception on the morning of the attack, is back at her desk. When she heard the sirens and saw the Hamas gunmen burst through the kibbutz gate she took cover in a small technicians’ room hidden behind the lobby, taking her belongings with her so that the terrorists would not realize anyone was in the building.

“They came to murder,” she told JNS. They sprayed the entryway with bullets, she recalled, and then, thinking no one was inside, exited to carry out their rampage in the kibbutz. The Belarus native, who immigrated to Israel two decades ago, remained hidden in the tiny room for 24 hours, losing contact with her family as her phone battery died. The electricity was out on the kibbutz until the all-clear was sounded. In the afternoon, Mai, a kibbutz dog, suddenly was at the door and whimpered to come in. At first, she thought it was a trick by the terrorists to have her open the door, only to realize the four-legged friend was on her own, so the See “*Kibbutz*” on page 11



At right: Members of a family whose father was murdered by Hamas terrorists on October 7 searched the rubble of his home in Kibbutz Be’eri on November 30. (Photo by Chen Schimmel/Flash90)

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Yeshiva high schools ask college recruiters to prove campuses are safe

By Faygie Holt

(JNS) – Universities have allowed a “toxic ideology to fester” that “manifests as aggressive and overt antisemitism,” more than 30 heads of yeshiva high schools wrote in a letter earlier this fall. The leaders added that “sometimes even with outright and overt support of administrators and professors,” Jew-hatred is “ignored at best, and increasingly,

as we’ve seen, openly cheered and promoted.”

In addition to committing themselves to further educating students and to lobbying local, state and federal officials, the leaders of schools in California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and in Toronto, Canada, said that they would also push back against college recruiters.

“We will directly communicate with colleges or universities that seek to recruit at our schools and expect them to communicate their policies, training protocols and security commitments that will assure Jewish students’ safety and the support of a pro-Israel community on campus,” the school leaders wrote. They added that they would meet **See “College” on page 9**

Estrich

Continued from page 2

audio communications and video of the drone path, that the destruction resulted from misfire of a terrorist rocket. Independently, U.S. intelligence and CNN corroborated Israel’s findings. In response to evidence that contradicted its initial coverage, *Times* headline revisions ultimately morphed into “At Least 500 Dead in Blast at Gaza Hospital, Palestinians Say.” The *Times*, however, failed to acknowledge its earlier mistake and left responsibility for the blast enigmatic. Another elite news organization, NPR, engaged in obscurantism, alluding to conflicting accounts by Israel and Hamas. Without flinching before powerbrokers, Estrich wrote, “Israel will be blamed not only for what it does, but for what it does not do.” As to the motivation for such media distortions, Estrich concluded, “Antisemitism? What else?”

In recent years, American antisemitism has been as-

endant, and the Israel-Hamas conflict has brought it to a post-World War II peak. Asserting that “random acts of violence... random expressions of antisemitism... are everywhere,” Estrich noted, “Jewish Americans, all of 2.4 percent of the American population, are the targets of 60 percent of religious-based hate.” Concerning Representative Rashida Tlaib, whom the House censured for demanding Palestinian hegemony “from the river to the sea,” Estrich made clear that freedom of speech does not mean exemption from consequences. Talib endorsed Islamic Jihad’s cry for the obliteration of Israel, whose modest boundary markings run from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea.

Estrich emphasizes that an unyielding commitment to the survival of Israel and the defeat of American antisemitism is consistent with opposition to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Reflecting on the anti-Netanyahu

protests by Israeli and American Jews prior to the war, Estrich writes, “In his desperation to protect himself, he was willing to divide the country by undercutting the independence of the judiciary, and he clung to office thanks to allying himself with the far right, which increased the tensions on the West Bank (at the expense of a stronger military presence in Gaza?).” After Hamas is eradicated, Israelis must and will, by democratic and legal processes, remove Netanyahu from office and hold him responsible for misdeeds and malfeasance.

Jews are argumentative. Bring two Jews together and three opinions emerge. However, as the death sentence imposed on the Tree of Life murderer this past summer and the unrelenting pursuit of Hamas terrorists demonstrates, those who take an innocent Jewish life will pay a heavy price. As Estrich writes, “Never again is now.”

Calling

Continued from page 2

You can imagine my surprise when my professor, someone whom I look up to, made their discomfort with my choice of material known to my class. They announced that this might not be the right place for such disturbing material because of how hard it is to hear and process such atrocities.

I was stunned. The footage included no gore, no blood, no death – just vivid descriptions from Muller as the camera panned over crematorium ruins in Auschwitz. How could that not be allowed in a classroom, a place where we are supposed to teach and learn?

I met with this professor outside of class to discuss their reaction. It turns out their reasoning was even worse than I imagined.

They told me that the material was inappropriate because of “all the death and dying in Gaza,” the fact that some of my classmates are out at “the protests,” and that they don’t want to make those students feel “uncomfortable or unsafe” in the classroom.

To their credit, my professor emphasized that they were not trying to censor conversation around the Holocaust. They were just concerned about the implications of having such conversations in our classroom “at this difficult time.” They added that, for better or for worse, “This is a particular moment where Jewish suffering is not what people want to hear about.”

Again, I was stunned. I understand and agree with the importance of fostering class environments that are warm,

encouraging and open-minded, places where students can share their thoughts safely and freely. But when did talking about the Holocaust become controversial? When did talking about Jewish suffering become controversial? How is it threatening to anyone?

President Magill’s blubbing “context dependent” answer felt rooted in the same logic as that of my professor. Both responses reflect a fear of making people uncomfortable, and a fear of not leaving enough space for all perspectives to safely dwell in an academic setting – even when those perspectives are truly genocidal.

These are the same reasons that most of my classmates and non-Jewish peers haven’t spoken up in support of the Jewish community: They don’t want to say anything controversial, anything that will get them “canceled.”

And I get it. There’s a lot of gray area when it comes to talking about Israel and its politics, especially as they pertain to the Palestinian people. By all means, engage in rigorous debate. Ask critical, probing questions. Press on the status quo. Disagree with Israeli governmental policies.

But do not let the fraught and complicated nature of these conversations – around Israel, Palestinians, the current Israel-Hamas War, the tragic loss of innocent life in Gaza – impair your ability to stand up against what is clearly beyond the pale.

Both the Jewish and Palestinian communities are undeniably suffering and grieving. And one can be both a

Zionist and supportive of Palestinian self-determination.

But the fact that many truths can coexist does not, and should not, make acknowledging only one of those truths at a moment in time controversial. There are certain statements that should be unequivocal: Calling for the genocide of Jews is antisemitic. Acknowledging the atrocities of the Holocaust shouldn’t be controversial. Antisemitism shouldn’t be tolerated in any way, shape or form. Hamas is a terrorist organization, and their heinous acts on October 7 are not justified. Jews have a right to self-determination in their ancestral homeland, Israel – even if one may not agree with all the policies of the Israeli state – and to deny this right is antisemitic.

The principal “context” that should be considered when discussing the experiences of the Jewish people is the consequences to Jewish people themselves, not the potential discomfort or hurt feelings of those who oppose us. People-pleasing shouldn’t matter when the people you’re trying to please want Jews dead.

Eva Ingber graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 2023 with a B.A. in English and on the pre-med track. She is currently a student at Columbia University, where she is a candidate for an M.S. in narrative medicine while she applies to medical school.

The views and opinions expressed in this article are the author’s own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Forward.

Quick Reference Guide to Planned Giving

Use this planned giving quick reference guide to help determine the best strategy for achieving your philanthropic and financial goals.

For further information or assistance, please contact Shelley Hubal at 724-2332 or director@jfgb.org

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Make a large gift with little cost to you

Reduce taxable income from IRA Required Minimum Distributions

Then You Can:

Simply write a check now or use a credit card

Contribute long-term appreciated stock or other securities

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

Create a charitable gift annuity

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

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

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

Your Benefits May Include:

An income tax deduction and immediate charitable impact

A charitable deduction plus no capital gains tax

Exemption from federal estate tax on donations

Current and future savings on income taxes plus fixed stable payments

Tax relief to your family on inherited assets

Current and possible future income tax deductions

Reducing taxable income



Jewish Federation
of Greater Binghamton

Egyptian Jews halt public Hanukkah celebration, two Jews robbed in NYC, more Hillcrest High School hate

By David Swindle

(JNS) – A 40-year-old Jewish man, Joshua Merinfeld, was beaten, robbed and called a “dirty Jew” in Brooklyn, NY, on the first night of Hanukkah. On Shabbat, another assailant stole a Chasidic Jewish man’s *shtrimmel* and rode off on a moped. (The traditional fur hats can cost thousands of dollars.)

A synagogue in Cairo, Egypt, reportedly won’t be celebrating Hanukkah publicly as a community, fearing rising antisemitism since October 7. “No one is preventing us from celebrating. It’s just that the mood in Cairo is pretty bad because of the war,” a member of the community said.

The supreme court in Finland blocked the extradition of a neo-Nazi to Ukraine, where it said the accused terrorist Jan Petrovsky, who is Russian, would face “degrading” conditions in a Ukrainian prison.

Rep. Cori Bush (D-MO), a member of the so-called “Squad,” joined progressive St. Louis groups, including the anti-Israel Jewish Voice for Peace, for a “Hanukkah for ceasefire” event. “Hanukkah is the most overtly Zionist holiday on the Jewish calendar,” wrote a prominent pro-Israel social-media account, which called the congresswoman “a clown.” (JVP also held a ceasefire candle-lighting event in Detroit.)

A jury found Brian Dennison, a U.S. Marine who posted online in 2021 that “I’m going to kill jews with my AR-15 tomorrow,” guilty of “transmitting a threatening interstate communication.” The FBI found 1,700 ammunition rounds that could be used in that kind of rifle at his home. He

faces up to five years in prison and up to \$250,000 in fines.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police said that two Ontario men face terrorism charges “after allegedly participating in the creation of manifestos and recruiting videos in support of far-right extremism and the neo-Nazi terrorist movement,” CBC reported.

In Arizona, police arrested Jaifeng Chen, 27, for allegedly vandalizing the Chabad of Kalamazoo in Michigan.

A swastika and “offensive language” were found on a cafeteria wall at Hillcrest High School in Queens, NY, where a Jewish teacher had to hide in her locked office to escape an antisemitic riot.

Andrea Campbell, the Massachusetts attorney general, filed a civil lawsuit against the “self-described neo-Nazi organization” Nationalist Social Club, or NSC-131.

Three workers are out of a job at an Oakland café after they were caught on camera having an antisemitic interaction with a customer. The café, Farley’s East, had apologized.

On campus

“I have always been proud of being a faculty member at Rice University,” wrote Moshe Vardi, distinguished service professor in computational engineering and university professor, who has taught at the Houston school for 30 years, in the *Houston Chronicle*. “With deep chagrin, I have to admit that I can no longer say that.”

Vari, who detailed a host of antisemitism on the campus, added: “Rice colleagues and students, I hear your message

loud and clear. I am a second-generation Holocaust survivor. I recognize antisemitism when I see it. You do not need to be a user of derogatory epithets to be antisemitic; using double standards qualifies.” He summed up: “This is a profoundly bitter lesson for me. I am not quite sure how to cope with it.”

“Hostility toward Jewish students on American college and university campuses has rightly been in the news,” wrote Andrew Srulevitch, director of European affairs at the ADL. “Less known, but no less worrying, this same phenomenon plagues Jewish students at universities around the world.”

United Kingdom

Two girls, ages 13 and 14, were arrested in London on suspicion of having attacked and robbed a 20-year-old Jewish woman. Although the victim later declined medical attention, witnesses said the attackers left her for dead as she lay motionless in the street.

Police in Glasgow, Scotland, arrested two people for “disorder offenses” at an anti-Israel protest near a fund-raiser attended by Labour Party leader Sir Keir Starmer. “Keir, how many more children in Palestine have to die before you call for a ceasefire?” one protester yelled. Another shouted: “Keir Starmer you are facilitating Israel’s genocide in Gaza. Stop the massacre of over 7,000 babies.”

Anti-Israel protesters also blocked a Glasgow BAE Systems shipyard. Some held a banner stating “Stop arming Israel.”

College

with college administrators to demand, among other things, for “anti-discrimination and diversity training for all students and faculty on campuses to include training on antisemitism.”

In so doing, Jewish day schools say they plan to take aggressive stances with the very institutions, particularly elite ones, which they have long touted as destinations for their alumni post-graduation.

Ari Levitt, an Orthodox rabbi and head of school at the Atlanta Jewish Academy, was one of the leaders to sign the letter. “Just because free speech is guaranteed by the Bill of Rights does not mean you can yell ‘fire’ in a crowded theater,” he told JNS. “It does not mean you can use it to intimidate or harass people on campus.”

Mark Shpall, head of the de Toledo High School, a Jewish community school in West Hills, CA, told JNS that alumni have told him that they don’t feel safe on college campuses and are scared to do anything or to wear anything identifiably Jewish. “I’ve never heard a kid say this before. If it’s even one kid – and it’s way more than one kid – it’s upsetting,” he said. “That these schools can’t call out evil and immorality, I just don’t understand.”

None of the 90 seniors at the school has pulled an application due to the way that a college or university has handled antisemitism on campus, according to Shpall. “I know it will be a very different conversation once students receive their admittance letters, and parents will have a lot of questions about whether a school is the right place to send their Jewish teenager,” he said.

He plans to release a letter from a range of Jewish

day schools, which is similar to the one that 30 heads of Orthodox schools signed. “It is important that our voice be heard and for everyone to know that we demand the same kind of protections for our students who may not be Orthodox, but who are Jewish on campus,” he said. “We are in a moment in time when you are judged by your words and your actions.”

The letter will impress upon people “that we will push our universities to protect our students against antisemitism and physical safety, which is not being protected on many campuses,” he said.

Concerns about the safety of Jewish students on college campuses prompted the Talmudical Academy of Bergen County) in northern New Jersey to change its policies on having college representatives speak to students. “We feel strongly that we cannot continue to invite college representatives to speak to our students as they have in the past. Your son’s physical and emotional welfare is too important to us,” the school wrote.

“Before college representatives can enter our building, they must bring a statement from their university leadership detailing their plans to protect and maintain the safety and security of our graduates on their campuses as Jews,” the school added. “Those who cannot or will not accede to our valid and just request will not be welcome here at TABC.”

In “unprecedented” circumstances, the future remains uncertain with respect to antisemitism on college campuses, according to Paul Bernstein, founding

Continued from page 8

chief executive officer of Prizmah: Center for Jewish Day Schools.

It’s too soon to tell what the implications of antisemitism on campus – and pushback from Jewish day schools – will be for short- and long-term enrollments, Bernstein told JNS. “We don’t know if there will be a shift in where Jewish students will go,” he said. “The good news is that there are some colleges that are doing a good job.”

“Hopefully,” he said, “they’ll receive the interest that comes from it.”

Bar/Bat photos needed

Can we have your mug? Kids mugging for the camera, that is. For *The Reporter’s* annual Bar/Bat Mitzvah issue (coming January 26), we need photos of all teens who became bar/bat mitzvah during the calendar year of 2023.

Please e-mail these photos with identification, including name, date and place of the bar/bat mitzvah ceremony. Please send them by Tuesday, January 16. Photos can be e-mailed, in TIF or JPG format, to TReporter@aol.com; please note in the subject line that a bar/bat photo for *The Reporter* is attached and include the necessary information in the message.



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Weekly Parasha

Miketz, Genesis 41:1-44:17

A light in the darkness

RIVKAH SLONIM, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF THE ROHR CHABAD CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDENT LIFE

“A light unto the nations.” For most of us, it’s a familiar theme, referred to without too much thought to if, or how, that mandate is reflected in our personal lives. For the biblical Joseph, however, this was no slogan: it was, quite literally, the story of his life.

In *parashat* Miketz, we read the story of Joseph’s meteoric rise to the position of second in command in Egypt. From the beginning of this colorful saga, Joseph’s life is punctuated by crisis; time and time again he is mistreated and maligned. Yet even in his lowly state, cast in the role of a young immigrant servant, those around him come to recognize his uniqueness. “His master realized that God was with Joseph and God granted success to everything he did.” (Genesis 39:3) The Egyptians discern that he enjoys Divine accompaniment and thus inordinate fortune and achievement. Despite the many challenges that come his

way, he retains his dignity and, more importantly, a determination not to veer from what is right, come what may. One case in point is Joseph’s refusal to be seduced by his master’s wife. He resists her many overtures, knowing full well that the consequences will be dire, as indeed they are.

Because of his unyielding position he is confined to prison. There again, surrounded by criminals of all sorts, Joseph draws on his reservoir of spiritual strength to rise above his circumstance. Again, the fact that God is with him is apparent to those around him: “God was with Joseph and God granted him success in everything he did.” (Genesis 39:24).

Through a series of events related in this *parasha*, Joseph’s greatness becomes known to the King Pharaoh, who crowns him as viceroy. But Joseph’s rise to greatness did not take a conventional course. Despite all odds stacked

against him, it was perceived by those around him that he is a man of God, catapulted to greatness through supernal vision and energy. Through his convictions, he has a profound effect on Egyptian society, bringing the masses to a realization of a higher power that guides all.

It’s interesting that of all our biblical characters, only Joseph enjoys the distinction of being called a *tzadik*. Perhaps this is because only Joseph achieves greatness specifically in a dark, immoral place. While his brothers live together in Canaan, it is he who sheds the light of God in Egypt. Joseph, thus, becomes the model for Jewish behavior in the exile: unwavering, unflinching devotion to God’s word keeps the Jew alive and earns him not only recognition, but respect. More than that, it is the way in which the world around us comes to recognize

See “Light” on page 11

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.twcbc.com
Website: www.templeisraelvestal.org
Service schedule: Tues., 5:30 pm; Fri., 5:30 pm; Sat., 9:30 am

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

On Saturday, December 16, 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 41:1-44:17 and the haftarah is I Kings 3:15-4:1. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 5:30 pm.

The temple office will be closed Friday-Tuesday, December 22-26, and Monday, January 1.

On Saturday, December 23, 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 44:18-47:27 and the haftarah is Ezekiel 37:15-28. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 5:30 pm.

On Tuesday, December 26, at 6 pm, Rabbi Micah Friedman will offer his new class “Jewish Quest for Wisdom.” All are welcome to attend.

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 15, light candles before..... 4:14 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, December 16 5:15 pm
Friday, December 22, light candles before..... 4:17 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, December 23 5:18 pm
Friday, December 29, light candles before..... 4:21 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, December 30 5:23 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 15: At 7:30 pm, Shabbat services with Eve Berman 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 16: At 9 am, Religious School; at 9:15 am, Torah study in person and on Zoom (<http://bit.ly/3XDnVRE>, meeting ID 825 1226 2831 and passcode 743892); and at 10:35 am, a Shabbat family service.

Sunday, December 17: From noon-2 pm, Temple Concord Sisterhood’s White Elephant Gift Exchange and BYO lunch. For more information, see the article on page 3.

December 19-January 2: The Religious School will be on winter break.

Tuesday, December 19: At 8 pm, general board meeting; for the meeting link contact the office at 607-723-7355 or at templeconcordaa@gmail.com.

Friday, December 22: At 7:30 pm, Shabbat services with Rachel Coker, her daughters 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 23: At 9:15 am, Torah study in person and on Zoom (<http://bit.ly/3XDnVRE>, meeting ID 825 1226 2831 and passcode 743892).

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.

Deciphering the past

Rare Psalm inscription uncovered in Judean Desert

By Yori Yalon

(JNS – Originally published by *Israel Hayom*) – An inscription written in Koine Greek, the language of the New Testament, was unearthed by Hebrew University archaeologists during excavations at the Hyrcania Fortress, about three miles west of Qumran in the Judean Desert.

Paraphrasing Psalm 86, the inscription reads, “Jesus Christ, guard me, for I am poor and needy. Guard my life, for I am faithful to you.” The first section of the original psalm reads “Lord” instead of “Jesus Christ.” It was found on the side of a large building stone painted in red under a cross, most likely created by a monk from the Kastellion, a small Byzantine monastery that was built on the ruins of the Hasmonean fortress at the end of the 5th century C.E.

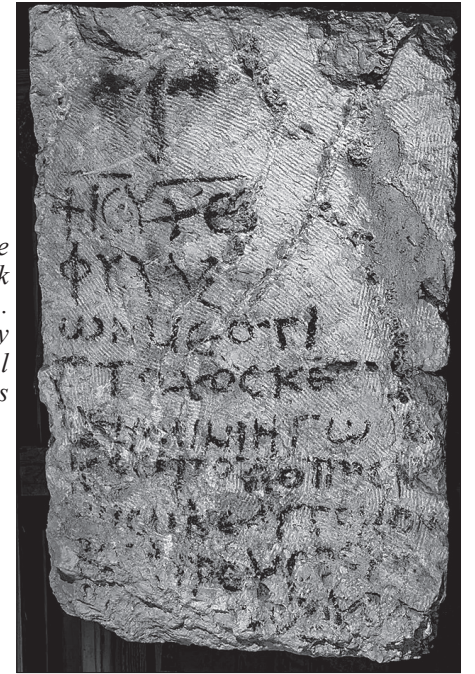
Oren Gutfeld and Michal Haber of the Hebrew University directed the excavation in cooperation with Tennessee’s Carson-Newman University and the American Veterans Archaeological Recovery that helps veterans transition back to civilian life through archaeology.

Avner Ecker, of Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan, who helped to decipher the inscription, said, “This is one of the most common psalms used in the ancient Christian liturgy. It appears that one of the monks drew a graffiti



The Hyrcania Fortress excavations. (Photo by Michael Haber/The Hebrew University)

of the cross on the wall and underneath it, he penned a prayer he knew well. Based on the style of the script, the inscription dates back to the first half of the 6th century C.E. Several grammatical errors in the transcription suggest that the writer did not speak Greek as his native tongue, but rather, he might have been a local, perhaps even a native of the region, and spoke Aramaic or another local language.”



At right: The Koine Greek inscription. (Photo by Shay Halevi/Israel Antiquities Authority)

Israel’s oldest gate offers glimpse into ancient urbanization

By Pesach Benson

(JNS) – Israeli archaeologists excavating near Kiryat Gat’s industrial zone prior to the laying of a water pipe have uncovered a city gate dating back more than five millennia, the Israel Antiquities Authority announced recently.

The discovery “adds another important piece ... to our archaeological knowledge,” said IAA Director-General Eli Eskosido. “Together with the cooperation of the Mekorot Water Company, it was decided to move the water pipe in order to preserve the ancient gate.”

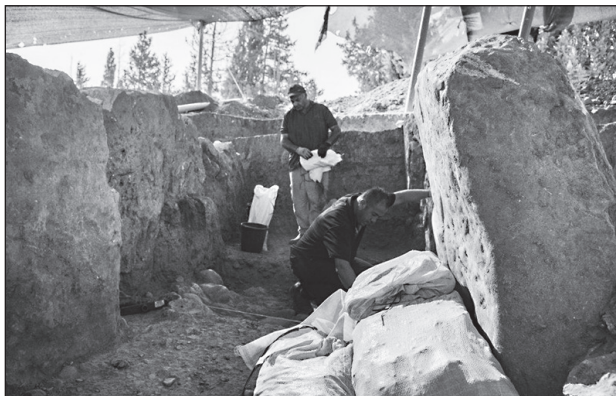
The excavation at Tel Erani unveiled not only the gate, but also a portion of a fortification system dating to the Early Bronze Age. According to the IAA, the discovery provides valuable insights into the development of urban centers and their strategic defense in ancient times.

“This is the first time that such a large gate dating to the Early Bronze Age has been uncovered,” said excavation director Emily Bischoff. “In order to construct the gate and the fortification walls, stones had to be brought from a distance, mud bricks had to be manufactured and the fortification walls had to be constructed. This was not achieved by one or a few individuals. The fortification system is evidence of social organization that represents the beginning of urbanization.”

Tel Erani is a 150 dunam (37 acre) site whose origins are associated with the ancient Philistines. The city, located on the present day outskirts of Kiryat Gat, was destroyed in the sixth century B.C.E., presumably by the Babylonians.

“The tel site was part of a large and important settlement system in the southwestern area of the country in this period,” explained Yitzhak Paz, a IAA specialist in the Early Bronze Age. “Within this system we can identify the first signs of the urbanization process, including settlement planning, social stratification, and public building. The newly uncovered gate is an important discovery that affects the dating of the beginning of the urbanization process in the country.”

Paz said that previous excavations suggested urbanization began at the end of the fourth millennium B.C.E., “but the excavations carried out at Tel Erani have now shown that this process began even earlier, in the last third of the fourth millennium B.C.E.”



The 5,500-year-old gate at Tel Erani, near the Kiryat Gat industrial zone, on August 15. (Photo by Yoli Schwartz/Israel Antiquities Authority)

Kibbutz Continued from page 5

two huddled together in safety until the next day.

Inside the printing press, the most vivid signs of damage are the bullet holes on the TV in the “nostalgia room,” which houses a collection of technological antiques including Apple computers, printers, a rotary phone and a 1956 military flier printed here which reads, “The desire to be victorious is the first condition for victory.” (An LD representative offered to give the kibbutz 10 free TVs to replace the damaged one. The kibbutz politely declined and is keeping the broken one as a sign of rebirth.)

“We are here,” reads the huge sign on the water tower opposite the newly reopened kibbutz secretariat and the dining hall. Even the laundry is being serviced.

“I couldn’t sit back and see the kibbutz laying desolate like a museum or a safari,” said Noam Gold, 25, a kibbutz native who had been living in Tel Aviv but has been staying at the community with her father for the last month. “That we are here and together – it gives one a lot of hope for the future,” she said. “They thought they would kill us out, but here we are. We are back.”

As the sun set on the kibbutz, Hanukkah candles were lit on some of the window frames of the demolished, blackened homes, their light shining in the dark night.

Light Continued from page 10

the Divine and bring His word into their lives. And that brings us to Chanukah.

Chanukah is unique among our festivals in that a formalized rabbinic dictum urges us to publicize the miracle and share its message with the world at large. Originally, Jews lit their menorah outside the entrance of their homes. It was only later, for fear of religious persecution, that menorahs were moved inside, but still lit with the intention of maximum publicity, at doors or windows. Additionally, the Hanukkah lights are lit specifically at night, when the contrast of the flames against the darkness is most clear.

Like Joseph in Egypt, the Hanukkah lights bring God’s eternal message into the dark night. Their radiance illuminates the “outside” so that it no longer looms as a threat, but rather beckons as an opportunity, another part of the world we can bring “inside.”

Each one of us is Joseph with a message to project and share. Each one of us is a menorah with a unique glow to cast and, like we do on Hanukkah, we must add constantly to our luminescence.

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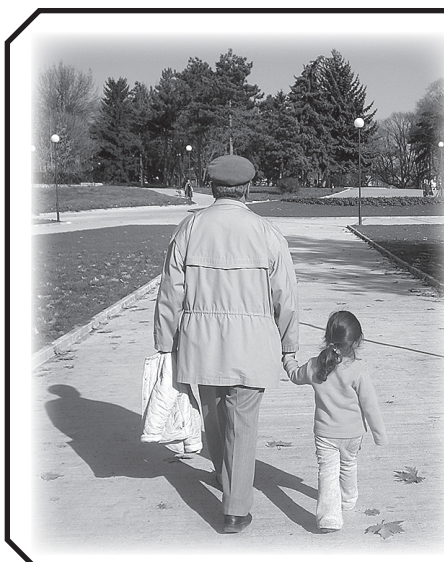
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Spielberg to document Hamas massacre survivors' stories

By Pesach Benson

(JNS) – The Shoah Foundation of the University of Southern California, founded by Academy Award-winning director Steven Spielberg, has begun collecting the testimonies of Israeli survivors of Hamas' October 7 massacre. The foundation is best known for its work documenting the stories of more than 56,000 Holocaust survivors

since its founding in 1994.

"I never imagined I would see such unspeakable barbarity against Jews in my lifetime," Spielberg said in an announcement issued by the foundation on December 8.

"Both initiatives – recording interviews with survivors of the October 7 attacks and the ongoing collection of Holocaust testimony – seek to fulfill our promise to survivors: that

their stories would be recorded and shared in the effort to preserve history and to work toward a world without antisemitism or hate of any kind. We must remain united and steadfast in these efforts," said Spielberg.

The foundation has already posted on its site videos of 68 October 7 survivors sharing their stories. Videos range in length from nine minutes to just over one hour. Many of the

videos are in Hebrew with English subtitles.

At least 1,200 people were killed in Hamas' attacks on Israeli communities near the Gaza border on October 7. Hamas currently holds 135 men, women and children captive in Gaza. Some people remain unaccounted for as Israeli authorities continue to identify bodies and search for human remains.

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Diaspora Ministry, Mosaic United invest \$1 million in Israel volunteer missions

Mosaic United and the Israeli Ministry for Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism are investing \$1 million to help bring 2,000 young Jewish volunteers to Israel. With Israel recovering from Hamas' Oct. 7 terrorist attacks and in the midst of war in the Gaza Strip, solidarity and mutual responsibility between Jews in Israel and around the world remains critical. To that end, Mosaic United's Shalom Corps has joined Birthright Israel in the effort to bring thousands of Jews from around the world ages 18-40 to Israel for two-week volunteering missions. Participants will engage in agricultural work and pack supplies for those in need in partnership with Israeli nonprofits, such as Leket Israel, the country's national food bank; and Hashomer HaChadash. Birthright provides accommodations, daily stipends and connection with Israeli peers throughout the program. The opportunity is being offered to all Jews in the above age bracket, including Birthright Israel alumni, regardless of past Israel experience. Taking part in the volunteering missions does not affect future eligibility for Birthright Israel. Birthright Israel CEO Gidi Mark said that the response so far has been overwhelming with more than 3,300 individuals expressing interest. Two-week tracks are currently available through January. To learn more or apply, visit <https://israeloutdoors.com/volunteering/>.

Netanyahu: Post-war, P.A. won't gain control of Gaza Strip

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated that there is no way the Palestinian Authority would be allowed to rule the Gaza Strip in a post-Hamas world during a "stormy discussion" on Dec. 11 in the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Security Committee. "Oslo was the mother of all sins. The difference between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority is only that Hamas wants to destroy us here and now, and the P.A. wants to do it in stages," the prime minister said. "We cooperate with them against Hamas when it serves their interest and ours up to a certain limit. We decided a few months ago that we don't want them to collapse so that Hamas does not rise up in Judea and Samaria as well," he added. Netanyahu's stance against a P.A.-controlled Gaza Strip is at odds with the Biden administration, which has taken the position that the P.A. is the best alternative. According to *Israel Hayom*, Netanyahu defended himself against accusations that he too closely followed American dictates in the conduct of the war. He defended letting in humanitarian aid, saying a civilian disaster would have made it impossible to continue the fighting. Netanyahu promised that the war "will end in a knockout."

Freed hostage says three women told her they were sexually abused

An Israeli woman who was released from Gaza on Nov. 26 after 51 days in Hamas captivity says that three hostages told her that they were sexually abused. "We heard three stories from a first-hand source and another story that was told to us. Things that happened a few weeks after the stay in Gaza [began]. They are physically injured. With the way they sexually assaulted them and desecrated their bodies – they don't know how they will cope," Chen Goldstein-Almog, 48, told Kan Bet in an interview that aired on Dec. 11. "If they had released them earlier it would have spared them. We also saw a guy who was beaten," she added. Goldstein-Almog and her children Tal, 9, Gal, 11, and Agam, 17, were kidnapped from their home in Kibbutz Kfar Aza during the Oct. 7 massacre. Chen's husband, Nadav, 48, and their daughter Yam, 20, were murdered on that day. Israel is investigating many accounts of rapes and sexual abuse that occurred during the Oct. 7 assault on the northwestern Negev, when thousands of heavily armed Hamas gunmen stormed the border, killing 1,200 people, wounding more than 5,000 others and taking approximately 240 hostages back to Gaza. At least 10 of the hostages released during the temporary cease-fire were sexually assaulted or abused, a doctor who treated some of the 110 persons released from captivity told the Associated Press.

Since Oct. 7, 1,300-plus terror attacks in Judea and Samaria

Palestinian terrorists in Judea, Samaria and the Jordan Valley have escalated their campaign against Israeli civilians and security forces in the wake of Hamas' Oct. 7 massacre in the northwestern Negev, data published by Channel 14 News on Dec. 11 shows. In the nine weeks since Hamas launched its cross-border attack from the Gaza Strip, the broadcaster counted 1,388 attacks in the disputed territories, including 569 cases of rock-throwing, 287 attacks with explosives, 143 Molotov cocktail assaults and 70 terrorist shootings. Three Israelis – a civilian, a soldier and a Border Police officer – have been murdered in Judea and Samaria since Oct. 7. In addition, at least 52 Israelis sustained injuries, according to Channel 14. In the first six months of 2023, Rescuers Without Borders (Hatzalah Judea and Samaria) recorded a total of 3,640 acts of terrorism throughout all of Israel. Palestinian terrorists killed 28 people and wounded 362 others between Jan. 1 and July 1, 2023, the emergency service said. According to a recent survey, 83 percent of Palestinians in Judea and Samaria support the crimes against humanity committed by Hamas terrorists on Oct. 7.

Israel says U.N. "must do better" in delivering Gaza aid

The United Nations needs to do more to facilitate the entry of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip, Israel said on Dec. 11, posting to X a picture of dozens of trucks waiting on the Egyptian side of the Rafah Crossing. "We have expanded our capabilities to conduct inspections for the aid delivered into Gaza. Kerem Shalom [Crossing] is to be opened, so the amount of inspections will double. But the aid keeps waiting at the entrance of Rafah," the Defense Ministry's Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (or COGAT) unit wrote on the social media platform on Dec. 11. "The U.N. must do better – the aid is there, and the people need it." Israel announced the week of Dec. 8 that it will open the Kerem Shalom Crossing to inspect humanitarian aid trucks in the coming days. However, the trucks must still enter Gaza via the Rafah crossing from Sinai. The Kerem Shalom Crossing, located at the junction of the Gaza Strip-Israel border and the Gaza-Egypt border, has been closed since the start of the war on Oct. 7, which followed a bloody mass assault on southern Israel by Hamas terrorists. This move is meant to facilitate an increase in aid trucks entering the Strip. Israel currently inspects the trucks at the smaller Nitzana Crossing with Egypt before they make their way to Rafah. The Biden administration is pressuring Israel to reopen Kerem Shalom fully but Jerusalem is rebuffing the requests, Politico reported.

Gov't approves plan to rehabilitate Gaza-border towns

Israel's Cabinet on Dec. 10 approved the outline for a strategic multi-year plan to rehabilitate and develop the Gaza Strip-adjacent "Tekuma" region and its population. The plan constitutes a broad budgetary framework for five years (2024-28) of up to 18 billion shekels (\$4.9 billion) intended to lead to the rehabilitation of the region. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, "In the area adjacent to the Gaza Strip at the start of the war, we established the Tekuma Authority." (Tekuma means "revival" in Hebrew.) "We provided a massive budget to rebuild the communities and to ensure that nobody will be left behind," he added. The outline, formulated in cooperation with the local authorities and communities, is designed to lead to the renewal and development of the region with significant demographic growth. With the framework's approval, the Tekuma Authority will now produce a detailed multi-year, long-term roof plan to be published within 100 days. Netanyahu said that Israel will ensure that the cities, rural communities and various councils "will flourish and prosper for generations and surpass what was."

Israeli ministers: no more Palestinian workers in Israel

Israel's Socioeconomic Cabinet on Dec. 10 voted to recommend not reintroducing tens and thousands of Palestinian workers from Judea and Samaria into the country's pre-1967 lines. The measure was reportedly opposed by almost all 15 members of the Socioeconomic Cabinet, which is smaller than the full government but includes the finance and economy ministers. Only Agriculture Minister Avi Dichter and Labor Minister Yoav Ben-Tzur abstained, according to Ynet. The decision will now be put to a vote in the Security Cabinet, which has the final say in the matter. Following the Dec. 10 meeting, Minister of Economy and Industry Nir Barkat called on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to convene the full Cabinet and have all 30-plus ministers weigh in. "The reality changed on 7/10 and unfortunately there are those who don't realize it. The days that Israel will rely on the labor of Palestinian workers are over," wrote Barkat in a post on X (formerly Twitter). "Whoever thinks that peace with the Palestinians can be bought with money has not learned lessons from the Black Sabbath [of Oct. 7]. We can't give any gift to the Palestinians," said the Likud Party minister. Before the Oct. 7 attacks, Israel provided work permits for some 17,000 Palestinians from Gaza to enter Israel. Some of them carried out reconnaissance for Hamas in preparation for the terrorist onslaught. In addition, thousands of foreign workers have fled Israel since the start of the war, and many Israelis have been called up for reserve duty as the IDF works to destroy Hamas' terror capabilities in Gaza.

Israel having trouble with forensics from Nova massacre

The Israel Police is finding it challenging to obtain forensic findings from items collected at the site of the Oct. 7 Supernova music festival massacre. Ynet reported on Dec. 10 that it obtained an internal document stating that the forensic laboratories at National Police Headquarters in Jerusalem are having difficulties extracting fingerprints from axes, knives, cartridges and other objects taken from the murder scenes. This could complicate prosecuting the Hamas terrorists who committed the atrocities at the festival grounds near Kibbutz Re'im in southern Israel, where at least 350 people were murdered. "The laboratory's capacity is very limited in developing fingerprints on bullets and cartridges in particular, and on metal surfaces such as knives and pipe bombs. The main method used in the laboratory is 'super-glue' and colorants. This method has a very limited ability on cartridges and pipebombs, and its success rates approach zero," a senior Defense Ministry explained in the document. According to the document, "the laboratory conducted in-depth research in order to find a solution for developing fingerprints on cartridges and bullets, but the method that was tried has very low success rates in real cases." Lahav 433, known as the "Israeli FBI," is conducting the most complex criminal investigation in the history of the Israel Police. According to the Ynet report, the Israel Police recently reached out to labs abroad and a British manufacturer of systems for producing forensic findings to provide the police with advanced equipment capable of extracting forensic evidence from the belongings of the terrorists.

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