

# THE REPORTER

Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton

BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK

October 23-November 5, 2020  
Volume XLIX, Number 35

## Super Safe Super Sunday

### By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton held a Super Safe Super Sunday on October 18. Rather than having volunteers gather at the Jewish Community Center, the volunteers made calls from the safety of their own homes.

"We were already planning on having a limited number of volunteers at a time in the JCC's auditorium and meeting room," said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. "But, with the uptick in COVID-19 cases, we decided at the last minute to have all the volun-



teers call from their homes. It was very important to make certain our volunteers were super safe."

Hubal and Marilyn Bell, the chairwoman of the 2021 Campaign, discussed the issue and both agreed that safety was the number one concern. "We didn't want to risk anyone getting sick," Hubal added. "The motto for

this year's Campaign is 'Socially Distant, Spirituality Connected' and, while we were unable to gather in one place, the spirit of our community was alive in each volunteer making a call. A big thank you to all our Campaign volunteers for kicking off our remote Campaign with much success. I am grateful for all the hard work everyone has put forth. To all our community members that have pledged, I want to say 'yasher koach.' I am so proud to be part of this generous community."

Hubal noted that the Campaign continues and that it's not too late to make a pledge.

"The pandemic has added an extra stress to running a successful Campaign, but you don't have to wait for a call," she said. "So we ask for your help. There are three easy ways for you to make a pledge: You can visit our website at [www.jfgeb.org](http://www.jfgeb.org) and click on 'make a pledge,' you can e-mail me at [director@jfgeb.org](mailto:director@jfgeb.org) with 'pledge' in the subject line or fill out the form in the ad on page 7 and mail it to the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850."

(See the photo collage of Super Sunday volunteers on page 7.)

## Hillel Academy announces journal honorees

Hillel Academy of Broome County announced the 2020 honorees for its 57th Annual Journal. Rabbi Moshe Shmaryahu, director of Judaic studies at Hillel, will receive the A.M. Pierson Award. The N. Theodore Sommer Community Service Award will be presented to Kathy Connerton, president and CEO of Ascension Lourdes Hospital, and John M. Carrigg, president and CEO of United Health Service. A virtual Journal fund-raiser will take place on Sunday, November 15. Details of the fund-raiser have not yet been announced. For more information about the journal, call 304-

4544 or e-mail [hillel@stny.rr.com](mailto:hillel@stny.rr.com).

Started in 1971, the A.M. Pierson Award is given to a person(s) or organization "whose tireless work and dedication enriches the lives of Hillel Academy children." Shmaryahu, this year's recipient, holds a B.A. in local geographic economics and Palestine studies from Bar-Ilan University and an M.A. in economics and business administration from the University of Derby from England. He studied at Kollel Or Tak and cantorship at the cantorship school with Dr. Mordechai Sobol. Shmaryahu first taught at Hillel Academy in 1991. He came to Binghamton

with his wife, Janet, who was finishing her doctoral work at Cornell University. Three of their children – Aaron, Moriah and Noa – are graduates of Hillel Academy; a fourth, Yona, was born in Binghamton. From 1991-2016, he was the cantor at Beth David Synagogue during the High Holidays. In 2016, he was approached by Hillel Academy to head Judaic studies.

"Even after his family returned to Israel, Rabbi Shmaryahu maintained a meaningful connection with our community, returning to lead services as *chazzan* at Beth David Synagogue," organizers said. "As director of Judaic studies

and as a teacher, Rabbi Shmaryahu has created a warm, loving and productive learning environment for the children at Hillel Academy and many across our community. He has led our students to find their voices in song and prayer, designed an innovative curriculum to help them learn about our heritage, and developed creative and innovative holiday programs to bring to life our customs and ritual practices. His students adore him, and our families appreciate and enjoy the inspiration and learning he provides our community."

See "Journal on page 5"

## TC/TI to take part in Global Day of Learning on Nov. 8

Temple Concord and Temple Israel will again join together for this year's Global Day of Jewish Learning on Sunday, November 8, from 10 am-noon. The theme of the Global Day of Jewish Learning 2020 is "Human Dignity – *K'vod Habriot*." Rabbis Geoffrey Brown and Barbara

Goldman-Wartell will lead the program. All are welcome to attend. The Zoom program can be accessed at <https://binghamton.zoom.us/j/95045435775>. (No password is need.)

"The materials developed by Jewish educators affords communities opportunities to explore Judaism's vision of human dignity,

the ethics of inclusivity and the imperative to decrease marginalization," said organizers of the event. "Come prepared to actively participate in your learning."

Organizers added, "The first year our community participated in the Day of Global Jewish Learning was through the Jewish

Federation of Greater Binghamton. Last year, Temples Concord and Israel brought the program back to our community in a two-hour format. The program is now being administered through Limmud North America."

More information will be available in the next issue of *The Reporter*.

### Spotlight

## Jenni Bank new artistic advisor for Tri-Cities Opera

### By Rabbi Rachel Esserman

Jenni Bank, the daughter of Barbara and Les Bank of Binghamton, has been named the new artistic director of the Tri-Cities Opera. Bank, a mezzo-soprano, played the role of Mrs. Lovett in the opera's 2016 version of Stephen Sondheim's "Sweeney Todd."

Her decision to take the position was due to a meeting of the minds. "I met John Rozzoni, the current general director of TCO many years ago and I happened to be in town when he was named to the position," Bank said. "We met to have a celebratory drink and started talking about opera and what we want to see happen in the industry and ideas just started flowing! Eventually he was able to ask me to be a more official part of things and I was thrilled to work with him and the rest of the amazing staff at TCO. It's my hometown company where I saw some of my first operas – anything I can do to keep opera thriving here is important."

Bank's role with TCO takes a variety of forms. "I am working in an advisory capacity on anything that needs a singer's take," Bank said. "I sat in on our auditions last year,

have helped with social media and content creation for the company's marketing, and am helping plan seasons and productions. I also hope to be a mentor and resource for the Young Artists [program] at the company when we are able to have them here full-time again. As someone currently actively working in the opera world, it helps to have my voice – no pun intended – in the mix."

That doesn't mean that Bank has given up her singing career. "I certainly plan to continue singing and performing," she said. "Currently, everything is a bit up in the air, as all of my work was postponed or cancelled for the 2020/21 season due to the pandemic. Some companies are rescheduling gigs, but it's all very uncertain. I know I am going to be singing with the Binghamton Philharmonic soon and I'm sure I'll collaborate with the musicians at TCO at some point. Right now, it's a very tough time for those of us who have careers that rely on large gatherings of people and close contact with fellow artists. Many in the arts community have been out of work since March and have no idea when they will ever be able to return



Jenni Bank as Marcellina in "Le Nozze di Figaro" at Hawaii Opera Theatre.

to work. My main message for everyone is: if you want to see any live theatre or music again, please, please, please wear your masks and distance!"

Bank believes that it's possible to hold

artistic performances during the pandemic and notes that the TCO has managed to do so in creative ways. Plus, she has great hopes for TCO's future. "I think the future looks bright!" she said. "Tri-Cities Opera has taken the challenges of being unable to produce live theatre during the pandemic and turned it into new and exciting digital opportunities. We recently collaborated with LUMA, Opera Omaha and Enhance VR to produce a live virtual reality opera called 'Miranda' that was viewable from anywhere in the world. We are in the midst of 'TCO Next: A Virtual Vocal Competition,' for which I am a judge for the first two rounds. Additionally, our educational outreach to schools, called 'Opera Go Round,' was recorded digitally and will be available along with supplemental education materials for teachers and schools to access and view online. It's called 'Monkey and Francine in the City of Tigers' and it's adorable!"

In fact, Bank thinks that smaller companies are able to be more flexible during difficult times and that going digital offers

See "Bank on page 8"

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

#### On Zoom

CJS will hold two talks on Jewish history books; Chabad's JLI class will be on "Secrets of the Bible."  
.....Page 3

#### Bahrain-Israel ties

Israel and Bahrain officially sign a joint communique to establish "peaceful, friendly" relations.  
.....Page 5

#### News in brief...

Israel OKs new settlement homes; U.N. space agency at Ben-Gurion U.; and more.  
.....Page 12

#### Special Sections

Home Improvement..... 6  
Women in Business..... 8-9  
Dine Out..... 11  
Classifieds ..... 12

## Opinion

# The metamorphosis of a nice Jewish girl from Brooklyn into the Notorious RBG

By Bill Simons

Ruth Bader Ginsburg, age 87, died on the eve of the Jewish New Year 5781. Like many others, I learned of her passing from my rabbi during the *erev* Rosh Hashanah service. Many Jews found significance in the timing of Supreme Court Associate Justice Ginsburg's death. Rabbi Richard Jacobs, president of the Union for Reform Judaism, observed, "One of the themes of Rosh Hashanah suggest that very righteous people would die at the very end of the year because they were needed until the very end." Judaism was significant to the identity and consciousness of Justice Ginsburg. Jewish heritage, the demographics of Brooklyn's Flatbush neighborhood and James Madison High School, affiliation with a Conservative synagogue and family participation in the East Midwood Jewish Center impacted her youth.

A photograph from the Supreme Court Collection reveals a poised and serious "camp rabbi" Ruth Bader, then 15 years old, giving a sermon at Camp Che-Na-Wah, a Jewish overnight youth camp in upstate New York owned by her aunt and uncle. As an adult, heritage, identity and ethical imperatives – rather than ritual observance – provided Ginsburg's primary connection to Judaism. Nevertheless, in 2003, Ginsburg was pivotal in persuading an initially reluctant Chief Justice William Rehnquist to depart from the traditional date for commencing the new session of the Supreme Court on the first Monday in October because it conflicted with Yom Kippur, the holiest day of Jewish year. And she chose a Jewish husband and life partner, Martin "Marty" Ginsburg.

Ginsburg related that a compelling attraction to Marty, whom she met as an undergraduate at Cornell University, derived from recognition that "[he] loved me for my brain." Encouraged by her mother's affirmation, Ginsburg had developed confidence in her own abilities and potential. Newly married, she and Marty attended Harvard Law School together. According to Ginsburg, she endured "indignities" at Harvard based on gender, including the insinuation that her presence took a seat from a male, as well as exclusion from the Lamont Library. In addition to gender bias and the arrival of a baby daughter, the already sleep-deprived Ruth attended both her and Marty's classes, taking notes and typing papers for him, while Marty waged an ultimately victorious battle against testicular cancer.

When Marty graduated from Harvard and joined an elite law Manhattan firm, Ginsburg followed, finishing her legal education in New York, achieving the distinction of becoming the first student named to the Law Review at both Columbia and Harvard. Despite her accomplishments, this was the 1950s and neo-Victorianism posed formidable obstacles to offers from prestigious law firms and top clerkships. In the age of the feminine mystique, Ginsburg recalled, "[T]o be a woman, a Jew and a mother to boot – that combination was a bit too much." For herself and other women, Ginsburg would ultimately play a pivotal role in the deconstruction of much of the legal basis of institutional sexism.

Ginsburg was not a radical. Indeed, she confided that the 1973 landmark *Roe v. Wade* abortion rights decision might have found more political consensus had it come after more states had embraced pro-choice. Make no mistake: as a law school professor, general counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union's Women's Rights Project, federal district court judge (1980-93) and Supreme Court associate justice (1993-2020), Ginsburg consistently advocated for social justice. Her contributions to women's rights, racial equality and civil liberties were particularly notable. Nonetheless, Ginsburg did not believe in sudden dramatic legal epiphanies. Rather, Ginsburg – persistent, pragmatic and scholarly – built upon legal precedents to further incremental and lasting change case-by-case. Citing the Fourteenth Amendment's assertion of equal protection, Ginsburg, writing for the majority, articulated the Supreme Court's 1996 decision abrogating Virginia Military Institute's ban on women cadets. Writing, once again, for the majority in *Olmstead v. LC* (1999), Ginsburg promulgated the right of individuals with mental illness to live in their own communities, rather than in institutional facilities, under the protections of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

As time passed, however, conservative appointments moved the Supreme Court to the right and Ginsburg found herself voting with a liberal minority. Her trenchant dissents, however, found resonance. Those Ginsburg dissents, asserted Rabbi Lauren Holtzblatt, "were not cries of defeat. They were blueprints for the future."

As an octogenarian, Ruth Bader Ginsburg emerged as a cultural icon.

For a brilliant, progressive, and serious jurist rendered physically frail by recurrent cancer and heart disease, and perhaps no longer topping five foot in height, the metamorphosis was improbable. This Brooklyn native and Jewish grandmother, still possessed of a certain shyness, become the Notorious RBG. Shana Knizhnik, then a student at New York University School of Law, mounted a platform for Ginsburg dissents on Tumblr, and the blog, under the sobriquet Notorious RBG, an ironic reference to the Notorious B.I.G. – an assassinated gangster rapper – soon went viral, casting the justice as a feminist heroine. A 2015 book, "Notorious RBG: The Life and Times of Ruth Bader Ginsburg," co-authored by Knizhnik and journalist Irin Carman, was followed by the 2018 film documentary "RBG."

A feature-length, factually-based, dramatic film, "On the Basis of Sex," also debuted in 2018. "On the Basis of Sex" depicts attorneys Ruth and Marty Ginsburg partnering on a case, *Moritz v. Commissioner*, representing a man denied the caregiver deduction. As the film details, Ruth and Marty deconstructed the legal assumption that men are in the workplace and women in the home.

The RBG cult came to encompass coloring books, collars that evoked the justice's jabot, tattoos, mugs, T-shirts, action figures and a potpourri of other totems. Ginsburg, impersonated by a hyperintense Kate McKinnon, repeatedly appeared in "Saturday Night Live" comedic sketches. Perhaps the sheer incongruity of it all fueled the RBG phenomena.

I had the privilege of observing Justice Ginsburg from relatively close, but non-conversational, distance. During spring 2019, my wife, Nancy, and I were invited by our son, Joe, to observe the protocols surrounding his admission, along with others, to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court. Prior to the admission ceremony in the Court chambers, the session included the reading of decisions, two of which were delivered, clearly and precisely, by Ginsburg. Following the session, the newly admitted attorneys, accompanied by their guests, were honored at a reception in a room burnished by formal portraits of former chief justices. To our surprise and delight, Ginsburg entered the room, modestly referring to herself as "the undercard": she congratulated the attorneys with warmth, respect and encouragement. See "RBG" on page 8

## In My Own Words

# Responsibility and illness

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

As a person who's faced health challenges, I dislike blaming people for the illnesses they suffer. Over the years, I've heard everything from "personality types that lead to cancer" to "we don't know what's wrong so it must be your own fault." Sometimes our bodies malfunction or medical science isn't precise enough to discover what's wrong. I've known people who waited decades for a correct diagnosis, and some who never received one.

That said, we do have a responsibility to take care of ourselves as best we can. I'm not talking about not indulging in fast food or sweets once in awhile. I believe in moderation, and that includes being moderate in your moderation. But if you know that eating something is going to make you ill and you eat it anyway, it's much harder to have sympathy for you. I'm not known for my patience with people suffering from hangovers: I've spent too much time feeling lousy when I haven't done anything to cause it to waste energy on folks who did it to themselves.

If you're thinking I'm going to connect this to the COVID-19 crisis, you are correct. It is possible to catch COVID through no fault of your own: sometimes it's a matter of luck – of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. That was especially true when the COVID crisis first began and it's heartbreaking to think of the people who died

because we knew so little about how the disease spreads. But we now know more and we have a responsibility to ourselves and our community to take precautions.

Think of it this way: What if someone knows they'll die if they eat a certain food? It's one thing if they accidentally eat it. But what if they deliberately eat it? Shouldn't they be blaming themselves for what happens? We don't legislate against this because it only affects them. But we do legislate against drunk drivers. Those drivers might say they were too drunk to know that they shouldn't be driving and are therefore not responsible for their actions. Yet, as a society, we've decided they are. The societal demand is not that they don't drink; that's up to them. But we do say that they're responsible for what happens if they get behind the wheel of a car because that affects other people.

So, if I host a big event and tell people not to wear masks, am I responsible if those attending get ill? If I take no precautions – if I go to large gatherings where no one wears a mask and no one social distances – am I responsible for my own illness? If I test positive for COVID and go out in public without a mask, am I responsible if someone else becomes sick? I would say, yes, I am. And if someone dies because of that, then I am guilty of their death – maybe not legally, but definitely morally.

Our moral responsibility to others is based on Jewish law. Deuteronomy 22:8 tells us that when we build a new house, we must build a fence around the rooftop so we don't acquire blood guilt. Rooftops in those days were flat and, if there was no fence around the edge of it, someone could fall off. Note that it is not their fault if they fall: it is our responsibility to prevent the possibility of that fall. That means that we are commanded to do everything we can to prevent people from dying. The principle of *pikuach nefesh*, of saving a life, overrides almost every other commandment, including breaking the laws of Shabbat. Wearing a mask and keeping social distance are ways of practicing this important Jewish principle.

We have a responsibility to our community. Yes, people are sick of the precautions and are tired of their lives revolving around COVID. But, as of this writing, nearly 220,000 Americans have died because of this illness. We're talking 220,000 deaths in less than 10 months and there are more to come. As a proud citizen of this country and a practicing Jew, I want to do what I can to protect my friends and neighbors. Wear a mask; social distance; take precautions. If you do get ill, I'll offer prayers for your recovery and help as best I can. But, please, for the sake of everyone, stay as safe as you can.



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**THE REPORTER**  
Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton  
BINGHAMTON, NY

### OPINIONS

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

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

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Regular weekly deadline is noon, Wednesday, for the following week's newspaper.

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"The Reporter" (USPS 096-280) is published bi-weekly for \$40 per year by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, 500 Clubhouse Road, Vestal, NY 13850-3734. Periodicals Postage Paid at Vestal, NY and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Reporter, 500 Clubhouse Road, Vestal, NY 13850-3734 or reach us by e-mail at TREPORTER@AOL.COM.

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# Fall CJS series to focus on two new Jewish history books

The fall College of Jewish Studies program will feature presentations from the authors of two new scholarly books in modern Jewish studies. The talks – presented via Zoom – are scheduled for Thursdays, October 29 and November 5, at 7:30 pm.

On October 29, Nancy Sinkoff, professor of Jewish studies and history, and the academic director of the Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life at Rutgers University, will discuss her new biography “From Left to Right: Lucy S. Dawidowicz, the New York Intellectuals, and the Politics of Jewish History” in a talk titled “From Left to Right: Lucy Dawidowicz and the Representation of the Holocaust.” Lucy Dawidowicz has been called “a crucial, but neglected figure” in the history of American Jewish politics. The Polish-born Dawidowicz immigrated with her parents to New York City between the world wars. The author of “The War Against the Jews,” she would come to be considered one of the first and most influential interpreters of the Holocaust to American Jews during the 1960s and ‘70s. As Sinkoff shows, it was Dawidowicz’s immersion in the Yiddish culture of her youth alongside her Holocaust consciousness that fueled her shift from early communist beginnings to her emergence as one of the founders of the Jewish neoconservative movement. “Sinkoff, a scholar of both Eastern European and American Jewish history, is ideally situated to treat this geographically and thematically wide-ranging topic,” said organizers of the program. “The product of a decade of archival research, her new book is the first comprehensive biography of this

brilliant, pioneering and controversial woman.”

On November 5, Professor Magda Teter of Rutgers University will discuss her book “Blood Libel: On The Trail of an Antisemitic Myth” about the history of the blood libel accusation. “Also the product of years of research in multiple languages, Teter’s monograph is the most comprehensive examination yet produced of this immensely consequential and destructive fabrication,” organizers said. The myth emerged in the Middle Ages and, while other anti-Jewish tales, like those of well-poisoning or desecration of consecrated hosts, disappeared, the blood libel has persisted even to the present day. Teter’s talk will explore the role print media and iconography played in the rooting of this “pernicious canard in the Christian European imagination.” Teter is professor of history and the Shvidler chair of Judaic Studies at Fordham University. She is a fellow of the American Academy for Jewish Research and, in addition to her most recent book, the author of “Jews and Heretics in Catholic Poland” and “Sinners on Trial.”

Both programs are open to the community. Prior registration is required. To register for one or both of these events, send an e-mail to [jkarp@binghamton.edu](mailto:jkarp@binghamton.edu) with the subject heading “fall 2020 CJS.” Registrants will be sent the



Professor Magda Teter (Photo © Chuck Fishman 2019)



Professor Nancy Sinkoff (Photo © Nan Melville 2016)

Zoom link via e-mail one day prior to the talk. Because tickets cannot be sold at the door, the organizers ask that attendees consider making a voluntary contribution to support the College of Jewish Studies. Checks should be made out to the “College of Jewish Studies” and sent to the JCC, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850.

The College of Jewish Studies was founded in 1986 as a coalition between the Judaic Studies Department at Binghamton University and several local Jewish sponsoring institutions, including the Jewish Community Center, the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, Beth David Synagogue, Temple Concord and Temple Israel. Its mission is to provide opportunities for quality adult Jewish education in Broome County. The CJS Committee strives to bring scholars from local and regional campuses for enlightening lectures; an effort is made to combine broad appeal with intellectual and stimulating content and challenge.

## Chabad to hold JLI course on “Secrets of the Bible”

Reservations will be accepted until Friday, October 30, for the six-session course from the Rohr Jewish Learning Institute titled “Secrets of the Bible: Iconic Stories, Mystical Meanings, and Their Lessons for Life.” The cost for the course that will be held via the Zoom platform is \$59 per participant, which includes the text book.

Interested parties are asked to write to [rslonim@Jewishbu.com](mailto:rslonim@Jewishbu.com) to register. Those registering after Thursday, October 29, will have to pick their textbooks up from the Chabad Center to have them on time for the start of the course. Registered participants will be able to receive a link to play back the class at a different time if Monday at 7 pm does not work for them.

“People tend to read biblical stories as they do primitive mythology,” said Rivkah Slonim, course instructor. “Our course invites participants to look deeper and discover

the underlying themes and relevant life lessons that these stories were designed to convey.”

The course presents readings of the stories of Adam and Eve and the Tree of Knowledge; Noah and the great flood; the lifelong feud between Jacob and Esau; Joseph’s multicolored coat; the golden calf; and Korach’s rebellion. For each of these stories, it seeks to answer the questions: What is the deeper meaning behind the story? How does it shape the Jewish worldview? And what wisdom does it hold for us today?

Throughout its six sessions, “Secrets of the Bible” explores major life themes, including human subjectivity and bias, the underpinnings of relationships, negotiating spiritual growth with practical impact, why inspiration is fleeting and how to make it last, understanding equality **See “JLI” on page 12**

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to **Sandra Gutman** on the death of her mother,  
**Louise Binns**

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to **Roz Antoun** on the death of her brother,  
**Bob Rothstein**

### DEADLINES

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

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- **Real World Experience:** Like a lot of you this year, I found myself working as an essential employee in a pandemic while remote schooling my three children. My career as a medical laboratory scientist in the midst of a public health crisis proved my resiliency, hard work, and leadership.
- **Fiscal Responsibility:** Your property taxes keep Broome County running. COVID-19 will impact the County budget for years to come. I will work tirelessly to ensure we keep critical services running without burdening you, Broome County residents.
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Off the Shelf

# Two sides of World War II – part 1

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

I've written so many reviews of novels about World War II and its aftermath that I sometimes wonder if there is anything new to say. However, there are as many aspects of the war to explore as there were people affected by what occurred, and each offers something different. These stories might be compared to kaleidoscopes that present a new vision with each rotation or a diamond whose facets reflect different colors with each turn of the gem. The four novels in this review look at the war through the eyes of Jewish characters.

## “Eli’s Promise”

It's difficult to say whether or not Ronald H. Balson writes beautiful prose, but it's clear that he's a master storyteller. On reading the first chapter of “Eli’s Promise” (St. Martin’s Press), I thought his writing was a bit stilted. However, I soon became so wrapped up in his novel that there was no time to pause and consider anything but character and plot.

Balson cleverly moves between three time periods – Poland before the war, a displaced persons camp in Germany in 1946 and Chicago in 1965 – to tell the story of Eli Rosen and his family. This allows the author to create the maximum amount of suspense as to what happened to Eli, his wife, Esther, and his son, Izaak. In Poland, Eli makes a deal with an employee, Maximilian Poleski, who, in return for being given ownership of the Rosen family business, promised to keep all members of the family safe. The question becomes whether Poleski is concerned with the Rosens' safety or only his own.

In 1946, Eli and his son are waiting to learn whether Esther survived the war. Eli learns that a man named Max is selling visas to the United States and wonders if it is Poleski, who might have knowledge of Esther's whereabouts. In Chicago, an older Eli is befriended by his landlady's daughter, Mimi, who is also a reporter. Mimi believes there is a reason behind Eli's mysterious comings and goings,

but doesn't realize just how dangerous it might be to learn the true reason he is in Chicago.

“Eli’s Promise” is exciting and easy to read. The suspense builds, although I'm happy to say that I did guess part of the ending. Balson's fans will immediately want to get their hands on his latest work. This novel is also a good place to start for those unfamiliar with the author.

## “Exile Music”

What makes a place feel like home? That's just one of the questions asked in “Exile Music” by Jennifer Steil (Viking). Orly, the narrator of the novel, is born in Vienna, a city of light, music and love. At least that's how it appears in her memory. It's an idealized place where she and her beloved friend, Anneliese, created an imaginary world that contained no war or strife. Unfortunately, Vienna in the 1930s was not a safe place for a Jewish family and Orly's parents lost their employment as a musician (her father) and an opera singer (her mother). Even worse, Anneliese's parents will no longer allow the two of them to play together, with Anneliese's father beating her if she disobeys.

Orly and her parents are lucky to get visas for Bolivia, but while Orly comes to love La Paz, the city where they settle, it never feels quite like home to her parents – particularly her mother who feels lost and without hope. Orly does come to understand that Bolivia is far from perfect and contains its own brand of prejudice. Does she need to uproot her life again once the war is over or can she embrace her new home, even with its imperfections?

“Exile Music” is well written and the prose is easy to read. The story is complex – looking not only at what happened to European refugees, but exploring the role music can play in a person's life. Some sections were less convincing than others: at times, Orly sounds more like she belongs to the 21<sup>st</sup> century than the 20<sup>th</sup>, but that didn't detract from the story. Those looking to discover a different

type of refugee tale – one that shows what happened in South America – will enjoy this fine work.

## “The Takeaway Men”

Family secrets have a way of being revealed at inconvenient times while adjustment to a new land can create problems between different generations. That's true in Meryl Ain's “The Takeaway Men” (Spark Press), which tells the story of the Lubinski family. Neither of the elder Lubinskis, Aron and Dyta, were in a concentration camp, but they both suffered during the war. However, life takes a better turn when they and their twin daughters – Bronka and Johanna – come to live with Aron's cousin in the U.S.

Aron, however, can't escape what occurred during the war and worries the U.S. might not be a safe place after all. His daughters do a better job adjusting, although Johanna wants to be fully American and scorns her father's accent and way of dressing. Bronka sees it as her responsibility to make everyone happy, an impossible task, especially since her parents have a difficult and complex relationship. Dyta would like to share her experiences in Europe since she knows her daughters will learn about the war at some point, but Aron refuses to talk about the past. However, when the twins learn what happened in Europe from a teacher, their parents are forced to tell their story.

“The Takeaway Men” is well done, but not particularly exciting. The prose is plain and blunt, but easy to read. The novel would work well for book clubs, though, since readers can debate the choices made by its characters, particularly whether parents should reveal their past – heartaches and all – to the next generation.

## “A Ritchie Boy”

Some Jewish German/Austrian immigrants who escaped the Nazis were able to serve their new country by joining the U.S. armed forces. One example is Eli Stoff, whose story is told in “A Ritchie Boy” by Linda Kass (She Writes Press). Readers learn of Eli's life from his secondary school years in Austria through his high school and college years in Ohio to his work as a Ritchie boy, a member of the Allies' Intelligence Teams in Europe during World War II and after.

“A Ritchie Boy” feels less like a novel than a series of short stories, many featuring different main characters who view Eli's life from the outside. This style was not always successful because, at times, I wanted to know what Eli was thinking. Several stories do feature him, including the excellent “The Interrogation,” where Eli interviews a German soldier who was relieved to be captured by the Allies. Eli wonders about the friend he left behind in Austria: was he also forced to fight in a war he didn't support?

The striking “Meeting John Brandeis” offers a look at one American whose financial guarantees allowed Jews to move to the U.S. before the war began. A photographer's point of view creates a moving tale in “The Wedding,” when Eli marries Tess, another refugee from Europe and the subject of Kass' first novel “Tasa's Song.” This means the stories in the latter part of “A Ritchie Boy” redeemed some of its less interesting early ones and allows readers to close the work on a high note.



## On the Jewish food scene

# Tomatoes and cucumbers

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

My family performed a community service every year. Rather than planting our own garden, we offered to take the extra produce from our neighbors. Many times, people harvested far more food than they could eat. (Think about people trying to give away their excess zucchini. In fact, Google Marge Piercy's great poem “Attack of the Squash People” to learn how she handled that.) My favorite gift was vine-ripened tomatoes. Sometimes I ate them plain like an apple, but they were also wonderful with just a little bit of salad dressing and a touch of fresh onion.

When thinking about how no one gave me any fresh tomatoes this year. I began to ponder tomatoes from years past. Since my mind tends to hop, skip and jump around,

that led me to memories of tomatoes and cucumbers, which, at least in the apartment I shared in Beer Sheva, was the Israeli national dish.

First, let me give you some background. I was required to spend a year in Israel when I was in rabbinical school. Unlike some schools, which have their own buildings, students from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College went to a variety of programs based on the year they chose to study. I was at Ben Gurion University during the 1996-97 school year to study modern Jewish history. I organized my studies through the school's exchange student program and, as a result, shared a dorm apartment with three 24-year-old Israelis.

See **Tomatoes** on page 8

## 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](mailto:director@jfgb.org)

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# Israel and Bahrain officially seal “diplomatic, peaceful, friendly” relations

By JNS Staff

(JNS) – Israeli National Security Council head Meir Ben-Shabbat and Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani signed a joint communique on the establishment of “diplomatic, peaceful and friendly” relations between Jerusalem and Manama on October 18.

According to the Israeli Prime Minister’s Office, at the ceremony in the Bahraini capital, the directors general of the two countries’ relevant ministries simultaneously signed eight Memoranda of Understanding relating to economics, trade, finance, commerce, civil aviation, telecommunications, IT, postal services, agriculture and the easing of visa requirements for diplomats and holders of service passports.

Ahead of the signing of the joint communique and MoUs, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke on the phone with Al Zayani and U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, head of the U.S. delegation to Bahrain. During the conversation, Netanyahu welcomed the signing and said that “giant steps toward peace” were being made in Manama that day.

Netanyahu also pointed to the first flight from Israel to Bahrain – it transported the U.S. delegation, headed by Mnuchin, and the Israeli delegation, led by Ben-Shabbat, on El Al Airlines flight 973 (a nod to Bahrain’s telephone country code) – calling it a “continuation of the breakthrough toward peace.”

The burgeoning ties between Jerusalem and Manama formally began with Israel’s signing of the U.S.-brokered Abraham Accords with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain in Washington on September 15.

During that ceremony, Al Zayani signed the “Declaration of Peace, Cooperation, and Constructive Diplomatic and Friendly Relations Between the State of Israel and the Kingdom of Bahrain.”

U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, the head of the American delegation, which included U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman, said he hoped that the United States would soon be able to announce more agreements between Israel and Arab states.

Israeli National Security Adviser Meir Ben-Shabbat, who led the Israeli delegation, said at the greeting ceremony that “Israel has an outstretched hand for real peace, and we look forward to hosting you, too.”

The delegations’ visit comes a month after the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain signed the historic Abraham Accords on the White House lawn. Experts believe that both Gulf countries got the blessing of Saudi Arabia to normalize ties with Jerusalem, a theory supported by Riyadh’s recent decision to grant Israeli carriers the right to fly over Saudi airspace.

Trump has repeatedly said that more countries are expected to join this initiative with Israel. Netanyahu has claimed the new thaw in relations between Israel and Arab countries is proof that Israel can make peace without making territorial concessions and that normalization is not contingent on progress in Israeli-Palestinian talks. Both Israel and the Sunni Gulf states share a concern over Iran’s “malign influence and meddling” in the region, and the newly announced ties reflect this de facto alliance.



Israeli National Security Adviser Meir Ben-Shabbat (left) signed a joint communique with Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani in Manama, Bahrain, on October 18. (Photo by Haim Zach/GPO)

## TC Sisterhood cancels Whale of a Sale

The Temple Concord Sisterhood Fundraising Task Group has canceled the 2020 Whale of a Sale based on the need to protect the health and safety of volunteers, customers and Temple Concord staff. The decision was based on several factors:

- ◆ On October 9, Governor Andrew Cuomo issued an executive order labeling certain areas of Broome County in the “Yellow Zone.” This restricts the number of people at nonessential gatherings until at least October 23. Also, Broome County Executive Jason Garnar asked people to stay home during this two-week period.
- ◆ A number of volunteers indicated their

agreeing to help set up, sell and take down Whale was predicated on the status of COVID-19 during late October and early November. A number of individuals who usually volunteered for Whale said they have risk factors that precluded them from being in places, even when there are mask wearing and social distance requirements.

- ◆ The COVID-19 situation may continue to be a health issue that requires strict adherence to official limits on gatherings and stay at home requests during Whale of a Sale set-up and sale times, which was scheduled for October 25-November 8.

## Journal.....Continued from page 1

This year’s N. Theodore Sommer Community Service Award recognizes the work of two local leading health care executives. “Both Ms. Connerton and Mr. Carrigg have deep roots in Binghamton, and have dedicated their professional careers to expanding and improving health care,” organizers said. “In addition to being two of the region’s largest employers and health care providers, UHS and Ascension Lourdes are the front line in the fight against COVID-19 in the Southern Tier. Ms. Connerton and Mr. Carrigg have steered their organizations through this extremely difficult year, and worked tirelessly to help protect our community’s well-being, by securing multiple testing platforms and developing critical procedures to ensure that all who need it receive the best possible healthcare and treatment.”

Carrigg graduated from St. Andrew’s College in North Carolina, and earned a master of business administration degree from Binghamton University. He has

served in a number of executive positions at UHS, including vice president for operations and director of UHS Binghamton General Hospital, senior vice president and COO of UHS Hospitals, and executive vice president and COO of the UHS System. The UHS System is composed of UHS Hospitals (UHS Wilson Medical Center and UHS Binghamton General Hospital), UHS Chenango Memorial Hospital, UHS Delaware Valley Hospital, UHS Senior Living at Ideal, UHS Home Care, the UHS Medical Group and the UHS Foundation.

Connerton worked as general counsel for Lourdes in the 1990s, and returned to Binghamton in 2014 after spending 20 years in senior leadership positions with Bons Secours Health Care System. She earned her B.A., M.B.A. and M.P.A. from Binghamton University, and her J.D. from the New England School of Law. She was the 2018-19 chairwoman of Southern Tier Heart Walk on its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

### ANTHONY BRINDISI FOR CONGRESS

A husband and father of two, Anthony Brindisi is an outspoken advocate for the Southern Tier, getting four of his bills signed into law by President Trump.

As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, Anthony is a staunch supporter of a strong United States-Israel relationship. Anthony was a special guest at the White House signing ceremony for the historic Abraham Accords, the peace agreements between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, as well as between Israel and Bahrain.

Anthony passed a law to help make sure our veterans and active service members have the care and counseling they need to prevent suicide and strengthen their mental healthcare options.

When the pandemic hit, Anthony pushed for immediate grants and forgivable loans for family farms and small businesses so they can reopen and get the economy moving again, including more than \$186 million in PPP loans – saving 26,054 local jobs in our community.

Anthony is working to strengthen manufacturing in upstate New York and passed a law to require the Department of Defense to purchase more American made goods. He also delivered \$1.6 million in emergency grants to help Southern Tier communities respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Anthony has years of experience in public service, having served on his local school board and then in the New York State Assembly, where he earned a reputation for his principled bipartisanship. He works with both parties to get real results for the Southern Tier.

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# Jewish resources to occupy your family during social distancing – part 23

**By Reporter staff**

A variety of Jewish groups are offering online resources – educational and recreational – for those who are not allowed out of the house. Below is a sampling of those. *The Reporter* will publish additional listings as they become available.

◆ The Orthodox Union Women’s Initiative announced it will offer “Torat Imecha: Parsha,” a weekly 10-15 minute audio lesson. For more information or to subscribe, visit [www.ou.org/women/parsha/](http://www.ou.org/women/parsha/).

◆ On Wednesday, October 28, at 8 pm, author Lila Corwin Berman joins host Yehuda Kurtzer for a live taping of Identity/Crisis podcast, where they will delve into the complicated relationship between private philanthropy, tax policy and Jewish nonprofits, the topic of her new book, “The American Jewish Philanthropic Complex.” The episode can be listened to on Apple Podcasts or Stopify. Previous episodes of the podcast can accessed at [www.hartman.org.il/program/identity-crisis-podcast/#episodes-2](http://www.hartman.org.il/program/identity-crisis-podcast/#episodes-2).

◆ The Museum of Jewish Heritage-A Living Memorial to the Holocaust will present “You Will Not Play Wagner,” a reading and discussion about the play by South African playwright Victor Gordon about a young Israeli conductor who chooses to perform the music of Richard Wagner, on

Thursday, October 29, at 2 pm. A pre-recorded reading of an excerpt from the play will be followed by a scholarly talk with Gordon, director Roy Horovitz, and Tel Aviv University professor Moshe Zuckermann on Wagner’s influence after the Holocaust and the broader implications of censorship in Israel. For more information or to register, visit <https://jewishweek.timesofisrael.com/event/you-will-not-play-wagner-reading-and-discussion/>.

◆ The Jewish Museum will hold a series of virtual tours called “Scenes from the Collection: Exploring Identity at the Jewish Museum” on Tuesdays, November 10, 17 and 24, at 2 pm. The tours will look at 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century paintings, contemporary photography and sculptures, and broader themes of immigration and identity within the Jewish community. There is a cost to attend. For more information or to register, visit <https://thejewishmuseum.org/calendar/events/2020/11/10/art-in-context-111020>.

◆ The Lower East Side Jewish Conservancy will hold the virtual program “Radical Housewives: Jewish Women’s Activism on the Lower East Side” on Tuesday, October 27, from 7-8:30 pm. For more information or to register, visit [www.nycjewishtours.org/event-log/radical-housewives-zoom-presentation](http://www.nycjewishtours.org/event-log/radical-housewives-zoom-presentation).

◆ The Institute for Religious Liberty at the Thomas More

University will hold the virtual program “Beyond Dialogue: The Power of Interfaith Collaboration” featuring James P. Buchanan, Ph.D., on Wednesday, October 28, at 7 pm. Buchanan is the director of the Brueggeman Center for Dialogue at Xavier University. To register for the event, visit [tmuky.us/irlbuchanan](http://tmuky.us/irlbuchanan).

◆ The Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh will hold a virtual program with David Marwell, a former U.S. Department of Justice official and author of “Mengele: Unmasking the Angel of Death,” a biography of the Nazi doctor, on Sunday, November 8, from 7-8:30 pm. For more information or to register, visit <https://jewishpgh.org/event/lecture-with-david-marwell-author-of-mengele-unmasking-the-angel-of-death/>.

◆ Valley Beit Midrash will hold the virtual program “Politics and Torah: What Should We Learn From One About The Other?” with Rabbi David Wolpe on Tuesday, November 10, from 1-2 pm. Wolpe was called “one of the 500 Most Influential People in Los Angeles” in 2016 and 2017; the “Most Influential Rabbi in America” by Newsweek; and one of the “50 Most Influential Jews in the World” by *The Jerusalem Post*. For more information or to register, visit [www.valleybeitmidrash.org/event/politics-and-torah-what-should-we-learn-from-one-about-the-other/](http://www.valleybeitmidrash.org/event/politics-and-torah-what-should-we-learn-from-one-about-the-other/).

See “Resources” on page 11



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## Four winter home projects

(NAPSI) - WINTER IS COMING! THE COLD WEATHER IS NOT IDEAL FOR WORKING ON OUTSIDE HOME MAINTENANCE PROJECTS, SO FOCUS ON SPRUCING THINGS UP INDOORS. THESE FOUR WINTER TUNE-UPS WILL GIVE YOUR HOME A PICK-ME-UP JUST IN TIME FOR SPRING.

- 1. REVAMP THE DOORS** - LOOKING FOR AN INEXPENSIVE WAY TO UPDATE YOUR HOME? GIVE THE DOORS IN YOUR HOME A MAKEOVER. SOURCE DOORKNOBS FROM AN ANTIQUE OR HARDWARE STORE, THEN PAINT YOUR DOORS A DIFFERENT COLOR TO GIVE YOUR HOME A WHOLE NEW LOOK.
- 2. PAINT A ROOM** - FRESHEN UP THE LOOK OF YOUR WALLS AND CABINETS. WINTER IS THE PERFECT TIME TO PAINT YOUR WALLS BECAUSE THE DRY WINTER AIR WILL HELP YOUR PAINT SET MORE QUICKLY THAN IN THE HUMIDITY OF SUMMER. BE SURE TO CRACK A WINDOW OR HAVE PROPER VENTILATION.
- 3. LUBRICATE SQUEAKY MOVING PARTS** - LUBRICATING MOVING PARTS PREVENTS THEM FROM WEARING OUT, ACCORDING TO WD40.COM. LUBRICATE MOVING PARTS, SUCH AS KITCHEN CABINETS OR DOOR HINGES, WHEELS ON A DISHWASHER RACK, AND THE EXHAUST FAN OVER THE STOVE.
- 4. REPLACE FURNACE FILTERS AND CLEAN VENTS** - AIR FILTERS IN YOUR FURNACE SHOULD BE REPLACED ONCE EVERY THREE MONTHS TO KEEP IT WORKING PROPERLY. REFERENCE THE INSTRUCTIONS ON YOUR HVAC SYSTEM TO HELP YOU THROUGH THE PROCESS. WINTER IS ALSO A GOOD TIME TO VACUUM YOUR DRYER AND KITCHEN VENTS TO REMOVE LINT AND GREASE BUILDUP.

WITH THESE FOUR TIPS, TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE TIME SPENT IN THE WARM INDOORS AND SPRUCE UP YOUR HOME TO HAVE IT IN TIP-TOP SHAPE FOR SPRING.

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429 Commerce Road Vestal, New York 13850 [blanding-electric.com](http://blanding-electric.com)

# Super Safe Super Sunday callers volunteered at home

Members of the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton Board of Directors made phone calls from their homes on Super Safe Super Sunday, October 18.



Rachel Coker made a phone call to a donor during Super Sunday.



Arieh Ullmann chatted with a donor during Super Sunday on October 18.



Shelley Hubal, Federation executive director, spoke with a donor during Super Sunday.



Rebecca Goldstein Kahn talked to a donor during Super Sunday.



Neisen Luks made phone calls during the Super Sunday phonathon.



Dennis and Sandy Foreman also called donors for the Super Sunday phonathon.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

### New York charges vandal of Brooklyn Jewish center with hate crimes

A man was arrested and charged on Oct. 5 for allegedly vandalizing a Jewish center in Brooklyn, NY. Osman Butt, 25, was charged with burglary and criminal mischief, both as a hate crime, for allegedly breaking windows of the Shore Parkway Jewish Center on the night of Oct. 4. Butt used a flagpole to "break numerous windows," entering the building and then "continued to damage property," reported Hamodia, citing the New York Police Department. Following his arrest, Butt made antisemitic remarks, according to the outlet.



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### Moving any time soon?

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# Annual Campaign 2021

## KEEP OUR VOLUNTEERS SAFE. MAKE YOUR PLEDGE EARLY!

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You can make your pledge 3 ways:

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

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Amount of pledge: \_\_\_\_\_

# SOCIALLY DISTANT, Spiritually Connected



Annual Campaign 2021

# Yad Vashem, U. of Notre Dame to advance Holocaust studies

By JNS staff

(JNS) – Yad Vashem in Jerusalem is scheduled to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Indiana-based University of Notre Dame and its global network to increase and encourage advanced Holocaust education and research across the world, announced the institutions on September 8.

The agreement was scheduled to be signed on September 9 by Yad Vashem Director-General Dorit Novak and Michael Pippenger, University of Notre Dame vice president and associate provost for internationalization.

Scholars from both institutions will offer remarks that explore how millions of people were allowed to be systematically dehumanized and murdered, which is the

focus of a new online educational tool recently uploaded to the Yad Vashem website. Based on its Center for Major Questions Arising from the Holocaust, this resource raises open issues about the Holocaust to encourage thoughtful discussion and writings.

“Yad Vashem is committed to ensuring that the history of the Holocaust continues to be relevant today and for future generations, and is not relegated to yet another chapter in human history,” said Novak in a statement. “Our efforts aim to equip students and teachers alike with the necessary tools and materials to address the topic of the Holocaust and engage young scholars in the need for further research into its multifaceted nature and relevance today.”

The memorandum of understanding will create a basis for ongoing cooperation between the institutions: Yad Vashem’s International Institute for Holocaust Research and International School for Holocaust Studies will work together with members of the faculty, staff and students at the university.

The agreement also includes fostering a connection with Notre Dame’s Alliance for Catholic Education to strengthen and transform Holocaust education in Catholic schools and in its professional development programming.

“For our students who study abroad in Jerusalem, the collaboration will allow for greater access to Yad Vashem’s extraordinary resources – its world-renowned experts and its unparalleled archives – to pursue their research and become a part of the global conversation on Holocaust studies,” said Pippenger in a statement. “For our students on campus, we hope that the partnership will lead to a better understanding of the history and legacy of the Holocaust and what that understanding calls us to study and act on today.”



## Howard Hanna – Suzanne (Sue) Krause

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Sue Krause is a licensed associate real estate broker with Howard Hanna in Vestal, NY. After working in real estate in California and Massachusetts, Sue returned to real estate in the Greater Binghamton area in 2007, after spending many years as a successful healthcare consultant. She is a consistent multi-million dollar producer and President’s Council member, and would love to help you with any of your real estate needs!

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 Hours: see online calendar at www.jablonstudios.com

Jablon Studios offers fun, easy, creative, out-of-the-box studio projects for all ages and abilities. Mosaics, garden ornamentation, soap making, fusing glass classes, birthday parties, girls’ night out parties – you name it, Jablon Studios can do it! Projects are also perfect for intergenerational family gatherings and also for people with disabilities. Be careful – it’s addictive!

## Kristys Imagination Photography

Specialty: Weddings, portraits, special events, seniors, pets  
 Name: Kristy Johnston  
 Phone: 607-221-1225  
 E-mail: kristyphotography@gmail.com  
 Website: www.kristysphoto.com  
 Hours: By appointment only

Kristys Imagination Photography is a locally owned business in the Binghamton region providing on-location photography services for any occasion, such as weddings, portraits or other special events. Sessions are done on location by appointment only, and provide you with quality photography services in the comfort of your own home or the location of your choice.

“I have always had a passion for photography and therefore decided to pursue it as a career,” says owner Kristy Johnston. “I truly enjoy what I do as a photographer. I get to capture some of life’s most important and precious moments.”

Offering a variety of products and photography services, Kristys Imagination Photography is your professional on-location photographer.

For more information, call 607-221-1225 or e-mail kristyphotography@gmail.com. You can also see a portfolio and more information at www.kristysphoto.com.

## Bank. . . . .Continued from page 1

them great opportunities. “The beauty of going digital has been expanding our reach and being able to showcase to people outside of the Broome County area what we have always known here: that a small company and community like ours has great art to offer to the world,” she added. “While major institutions like Broadway and The Metropolitan Opera have fully cancelled their seasons despite significantly larger budgets, it is small companies like ours that are creating and innovating to fit the current reality. Nothing can replace the thrill of a live performance – we can’t wait to provide that for the community again and I can’t wait to perform again! – but we feel proud of how we have shifted gears.

The pandemic has also affected Bank in a personal way. “I was in the middle of a rehearsal period for a gig in Orlando when we were sent home due to COVID-19 shutdowns,” she said. “I’d previously happened to meet my boyfriend here in Broome County when I was visiting between gigs and decided to come and quarantine with him. During that time, my lease on my New York City apartment ended, I officially moved in with him, and we got engaged soooooo...I think I’ll be sticking around!”

## RBG. . . . .Continued from page 2

At the Glimmerglass Festival, just north of Cooperstown, NY, Nancy and I attended operas with Ginsburg in attendance. On one occasion, as I waited for Nancy during intermission, Ginsburg, a few feet away, examined Glimmerglass souvenirs while a woman, whom I had never encountered before, whispered to me, “I would give my vital organs to keep her on the Court.” In 2017, Nancy and I enjoyed the Glimmerglass production of the comic opera “Scalia/Ginsburg.” Ginsburg was also there and, following the performance, she stood on the stage to discuss the opera and her deep professional and personal friendship with the late Justice Antonin Scalia, who had died the year before. Amidst the toxic turmoil of our polarized present, the warm relationship between the liberal Ginsburg and the conservative Scalia reminds us that in our democracy vigorous debate between conflicting viewpoints can flourish amidst civility and respect.

Bill Simons is a professor of history at SUNY Oneonta, whose course offerings include sport and ethnic history. He is also the co-director of The Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture, and served as a speaker for the New York Council on the Humanities.

## Tomatoes. . .Continued from page 4

The kitchen in our apartment was almost non-existent, but somehow we managed. What struck me, though, was that my roommates ate tomato and cucumber salads with almost every meal. That sometimes included breakfast. This in itself might not have seemed strange except that they cut the tomatoes and cucumbers differently depending on the meal. I could never get them to explain why one cut was better for this meal and a different one for another meal. I don’t think they could have: they just automatically knew what cut went with what dish.

Misunderstandings about foodstuff went both ways. One roommate in particular was the least adventurous eater I ever met. I once brought bagels back from Jerusalem and she refused to try them, even though I told her they were just bread. Although she used mint leaves to make tea, my herbal teas (which were the only teas I drank at the time) made her shudder.

I was much better at trying Israeli dishes, from the numerous styles of falafel offered in the stands located in the Old City of Beer Sheva (I’ve only had one falafel in the U.S. that was anywhere near as good) to an Egyptian bean dish called fool (which reminded me a bit of refried beans, although you smashed a hard-boiled egg into the beans) to an awesome type of fried potato (I never did learn the name) that definitely was not good for your arteries. But if you looked at what was eaten in my dorm apartment, tomatoes and cucumbers qualified as the number one food of Israel.

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# Jewish MMA, kickboxing champion from India to make aliyah with his family

By JNS staff

(JNS) – Obed Hrangchal, 26, a Mixed Martial Arts (or MMA) and kickboxing champion from India who has already won two gold, seven silver and two bronze national medals in Wushu (Chinese Kungfu), kickboxing, Muay Thai (“Thai boxing”) and karate, is making *aliyah* with his family.

Hrangchal is religiously observant and a member of the Bnei Menashe Jewish community from northeastern India, descendants of one of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel.

Together with his parents, Gabriel and Ruth Hrangchal, and his sister, Lucy, he plans to arrive after the High Holidays. Obed and his family are heading to the city of Nof HaGalil, after they complete their absorption process in Shavei Israel’s absorption center in Kfar Hasidim.

“I have always dreamt of making *aliyah* to the land of Israel, and I am very excited at the prospect of doing so. If possible, I would certainly like to join the Israel Defense Forces, and I would be honored to represent Israel in MMA and kickboxing competitions,” said Obed.

Originally from the village of Thinghlun in the Indian



Obed Hrangchal, 26, of India (center) has won two gold, seven silver and two bronze national medals in Wushu (Chinese Kungfu), kickboxing, Muay Thai (“Thai boxing”) and karate. (Photo courtesy of Shavei Israel)

state of Mizoram, the Hrangchals were the only Jewish family in town. In 2013, they sold their home and farmlands to move to the capital city of Aizawl to join the local Jewish community while awaiting the opportunity to make *aliyah*.

Without the family farm, Obed’s father has been left without a profession. Being Jewish makes it more difficult

to find steady work since they do not work on Shabbat and Jewish holidays. While taking leave on these days, they often find that they are replaced.

Despite these difficulties, Obed has succeeded in garnering widespread recognition and has won awards in martial arts from the Mizoram State Sports Council and the Wushu KungFu Association of Mizoram, which are affiliated with the Indian Olympic Association, as well as the International Olympic Committee.

“I started practicing martial arts from a very young age, about 6 years old, but without proper instruction,” recounts Obed. “As I grew up, I steadily improved and then began to compete at the state level in 2014, when I competed in Chinese kickboxing or Wushu and won second place. That same year, I began to study MMA under an instructor.”

More than 4,000 Bnei Menashe have immigrated to Israel in the past two decades, largely due to Shavei Israel. Another 6,500 remain in India. At a meeting in August, Israel’s Minister of Aliyah and Integration Penina Tamanu-Shata said that in cooperation with the Interior Ministry, she was moving ahead with the *aliyah* of 722 Bnei Menashe.

## Women in Business A paid advertising section.

### Phantom Chef LLC

Specialty: Off-premises catering, drop-off catering, small on-premises events, culinary classes  
 Location: 49 Washington Ave. Endicott, NY 13760  
 Name: Michelle (Bank) McIlroy  
 Phone: 607-765-2408  
 E-mail: info@phantomchefcatering.com  
 Website: www.phantomchefcatering.com  
 Facebook: Phantom Chef LLC  
 Hours: Variable

Phantom Chef is owned and operated by Chef Michelle (Bank) McIlroy, who trained at the prestigious Culinary Institute of America. A native of South Africa, Chef Michelle has tasted her way around the world, sampling the foods and flavors of many cultures.

Phantom Chef, established in 2009, specializes in off-premise catering, drop-off catering and small on-premise events, as well as classes at a newly renovated culinary studio in Endicott. Chef Michelle focuses on personalized events and catering for Jewish occasions, as well as customizing menus for special diets, such as kosher, gluten-free and vegetarian.

“Whether you are planning an intimate dinner for two in your home, a corporate luncheon, or a special occasion for 200, we will tailor the menu to meet your culinary tastes and your budget,” says Chef Michelle. “Fresh, local, farm-to-table, seasonal food is our specialty.”

### Southern Tier Women’s Health Services, LLC

Specialty: Well woman care and abortion  
 Location: 149 Vestal Parkway W. Vestal, NY 13850  
 Names: Amy R. Cousins, M.D. and Peg Johnston  
 Phone: 607-785-4171 or 1-800-676-9011  
 Website: www.southerntierwomenshealth.com  
 Hours: Mon.-Fri. 9 am-5 pm, Sat. by appointment only

New York state has designated Southern Tier Women’s Health Services, the former office of Dr. Amy Cousins, as a licensed clinic. “This culminates a two-year process of renovations, adoption of stringent standards and reporting requirements to qualify as a diagnostic and treatment center. Our philosophy of compassionate abortion and well woman care is unchanged,” according to Executive Director Peg Johnston. The office opened in 1981 as Southern Tier Women’s Services, operated as Dr. Amy Cousins’ office starting in 1989 and became locally managed in 2009 by an employee-owned company led by Johnston. Both Johnston and Dr. Cousins will own the new entity. “We have created a more sustainable practice that will continue to offer services well into the future,” states Johnston.

### Swags and Slipcovers

Specialty: Custom window treatments and slipcovers  
 Location: 45 Clark Ave. Binghamton, NY 13901  
 Name: Kathy Ritter  
 Phone: 607-648-3358  
 E-mail: kathy@swagsandslipcovers.com  
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 Hours: Mon.-Fri. by appointment

Swags and Slipcovers will help you beautify your home by providing custom window treatments, slipcovers, upholstery and accessories, such as pillows, cushions and bedding. There are many styles of window treatments, such as swags, panels, valances and shades. Manufactured cellular and pleated shades are also available. Kathy will assist you in choosing the right treatment depending on your need for privacy, light control or just to beautify your home.

Slipcovers are custom fit and add new life to your furniture. Decorative trims can be incorporated to create a unique look. Swags and Slipcovers offers a free one hour, in-home consultation, with a large selection of quality fabrics to choose from. View projects created by Swags and Slipcovers at www.swagsandslipcovers.com.

### Taylor Rental/Celebrations of Binghamton

Specialty: Party Rental and Balloon Decorations  
 Location: 1043 Front St. (½ mile north of BCC) Binghamton, NY  
 Name: Emily Gaudinier  
 Phone: 607-773-1462  
 Website: www.taylorrentalofbinghamton.com  
 E-mail: emily@trbinghamton.com  
 Hours: Mon.-Fri. 9 am-6 pm, Sat. 9 am-3 pm, Sun. 9 am-3 pm (closed on Sundays November-May)

Remember driving your child home from a friend’s birthday party that reminded you more of a carnival rather than a birthday party? He had a smile from ear to ear the whole way home, a smile that you couldn’t forget.

Turning an ordinary birthday party into a memory that will last a lifetime is what Emily from Taylor Rental of Binghamton has been doing for more than 20 years. “When people think of Taylor Rental, they immediately think about tools, tables, tents and chairs. Many customers are surprised to hear we also carry costumes, concession equipment, games and inflatable bounces,” says Emily. From balloon décor to a frozen drink machine, Taylor Rental of Binghamton’s party inventory is large and varied.

Visit Emily to start renting your way to your next memory, or call the party professionals at 773-1462.

### The Cat Doctor

Specialty: A full service veterinary hospital providing medical, surgical, dental and behavioral care for cats of all ages.  
 Location: 423 East Main St. Endicott, NY 13760  
 Owner: Darcy Sobel, D. V. M.  
 Phone: 754-7221  
 Hours: Mon. and Fri. 8 am-5 pm, Tues. and Thurs. 12:30-8 pm, Wed. 8 am-3 pm, Sat. 9 am-1 pm

The Cat Doctor is celebrating 26 years of caring for cats and their people. Dr. Susan M. Szcotka and Dr. Darcy Sobel and staff at The Cat Doctor recognize that cats are important family members and treat each individual with special attention to their age, temperament and health conditions. Preventive medicine is practiced by providing complete physical examinations, behavioral counseling, dental care, diet management and appropriate vaccinations. The hospital has advanced radiology capabilities, providing instant, superior quality, digital x-rays as well as digital dental x-rays for the detection of early tooth disease below the gumline. The hospital now offers abdominal ultrasound for early detection of organ problems. When illness does occur, thorough and caring medical and surgical treatment is tailored to each patient.

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# Noah's flood

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Our *parasha* contains the well-known biblical classic, the story of Noah and the flood.

Occurring only 1,500 years after the creation of the world, civilization had descended to a level of unprecedented immorality and degradation. Thievery, idolatry, murder and other acts of subhuman behavior had prompted God to rethink His creation.

In a completely radical move, God decided to go for a fresh start, to unleash a huge flood that will wipe out the entire world, save for Noah and his immediate family. Unlike the other members of society, Noah was completely righteous. In spite of the depravity

and moral decadence all around him, Noah was able to counter the trends of his times, and he, his wife, Na'ama, and their sons, Sheim, Cham and Yafet, remained steadfast in their commitment to God and His code of moral behavior.

As the story goes, God commanded Noah to build an ark, which would carry and protect him and his family, as well as a selection of each animal and bird species which were to survive this terrible flood.

For 120 years, Noah is consumed with building this enormous floating zoo. One reason for the extraordinary amount of time necessary to build it was that God wanted to give the

people of the generation ample time to change their evil ways.

This huge task, assembling a structure that was approximately 600 feet long, attracted worldwide attention and when people inquired why he was building this gigantic ship, Noah informed them of God's plan and warned them to change their ways. Unfortunately, they did not heed his warning and, as the famed story goes, the flood did indeed wipe out the rest of earth's population.

It's curious to note though, that in the *haftarah* reading the prophet Isaiah refers to the flood as "*mei Noach*," "the flood-waters of Noah."

See "Flood" on page 11

## Congregational Notes

### 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.

#### Temple Concord

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism  
 Rabbi: Barbara Goldman-Wartell  
 Address: 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905  
 Office hours: Tues.-Fri., 10 am-2 pm  
 Phone: 723-7355  
 Fax: 723-0785  
 Office e-mail: TempleConcordbinghamton@gmail.com  
 Website: www.templeconcord.com  
 Regular service times: Friday, 8 pm; Saturday, 10:35 am, when religious school is in session.  
 Hebrew school: Hebrew school meets at 4:15 pm and 5:15 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the school year unless otherwise noted.

All services and programs are online only. Friday night Shabbat services will start at 7 pm for October and November. There will be a new Zoom link for Friday night services for November.

Friday, October 23: Shabbat services at 7 pm with Rabbi Goldman-Wartell and Jason Flatt at <https://bit.ly/2Ev0Ovc>.

Saturday, October 24: Religious school at 9 am; Torah study at 9:15 am at <https://binghamton.zoom.us/j/342411102>; and "Havdalah with a Bonus" at 7 pm at <https://binghamton.zoom.us/j/526246866>.

Friday, October 30: Shabbat services at 7 pm with Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell at <https://bit.ly/2Ev0Ovc>.

Saturday, October 31: Religious school at 9 am; Torah study at 9:15 am at <https://binghamton.zoom.us/j/342411102>; and "Havdalah with a Bonus" at 7 pm at <https://binghamton.zoom.us/j/526246866>.

Friday, October 30: Shabbat services at 7 pm with Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell at <https://bit.ly/2Ev0Ovc>, meeting ID 835 3838 9273 and passcode 819355.

Saturday, October 31: 9 am religious school; 9:15 am, Torah study at <https://binghamton.zoom.us/j/342411102>; and 7 pm, "Havdalah with a Bonus" at <https://binghamton.zoom.us/j/526246866>.

Friday, November 6: at 7 pm, Shabbat services with Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell, at <https://bit.ly/2H1juE2>, meeting ID 841 4523 3909 and passcode 086513.

Saturday, November 7: 9 am, religious school; 9:15 am, Torah study at <https://binghamton.zoom.us/j/342411102>; and 7 pm, "Havdalah with a Bonus" at <https://binghamton.zoom.us/j/526246866>.

Sunday, November 8: from 10 am-noon, Global Day of Jewish Learning with Rabbis Barbara Goldman-Wartell and Geoffrey Brown, at <https://binghamton.zoom.us/j/95045435775>. (See article on page 1.)

#### Rohr Chabad Center

Affiliation: Chabad-Lubavitch  
 Rabbi Aaron and Rivkah Slonim, Directors  
 E-mail: [aslonim@binghamton.edu](mailto:aslonim@binghamton.edu)  
[rslonim@chabadofbinghamton.com](mailto:rslonim@chabadofbinghamton.com)  
 Address: 420 Murray Hill Rd., Vestal, NY 13850  
 Phone: 797-0015, Fax: 797-0095  
 Website: www.Chabadofbinghamton.com  
 Rabbi Zalman and Rochel Chein, Education  
 E-mail: [zchein@Jewishbu.com](mailto:zchein@Jewishbu.com), [rchein@Jewishbu.com](mailto:rchein@Jewishbu.com)  
 Rabbi Levi and Hadasa Slonim, Downtown and Development  
 Chabad Downtown Center: 60 Henry St., Binghamton  
 E-mail: [lslonim@Jewishbu.com](mailto:lslonim@Jewishbu.com), [hslonim@Jewishbu.com](mailto:hslonim@Jewishbu.com)  
 Rabbi Yisroel and Goldie Ohana, Programming  
 E-mail: [yohana@Jewishbu.com](mailto:yohana@Jewishbu.com), [gohana@Jewishbu.com](mailto: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, Mondays 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](http://www.JewishBU.com/S2020Partnership).

#### Temple Beth-El of Ithaca

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism  
 Rabbi: Rachel Safman  
 Rabbi Emeritus: Scott L. Glass  
 Address: 402 North Tioga St. (the corner of Court and Tioga streets), Ithaca, NY 14850-4292  
 Phone: 273-5775  
 E-mail: [rabbib@tbeithaca.org](mailto:rabbib@tbeithaca.org) and [secretary@tbeithaca.org](mailto:secretary@tbeithaca.org)  
 Website: www.tbeithaca.org  
 Presidents: David Weiner and Linda Aigen  
 Sisterhood President: Julie Paige  
 Director of Education: Rabbi Suzanne Brody  
 Administrative Assistant: Jane Griffith  
 Services: Fri. 8 pm; Sat. 10 am, unless otherwise announced.  
 Weekday morning minyan 7:30 am (9 am on Sundays and legal holidays).  
 Religious School/Education: September-May: Classes meet on Sunday, 9 am-12:30 pm and Wednesday afternoons, 3:45-5:45 pm. The Midrashah (eighth grade and high school) classes will meet at times designated by their respective teachers.  
 Adult Ed.: Numerous weekly courses, several semester-long courses and a variety of mini-courses and lectures are offered throughout the year. Call the temple office for more details.  
 For upcoming services and events on Zoom, visit [www.tinyurl.com/HappeningAtTBE](http://www.tinyurl.com/HappeningAtTBE).

#### Penn-York Jewish Community

President-Treasurer-Secretary: Harvey Chermosky, 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.

#### Beth David Synagogue

Affiliation: Orthodox Union  
 Rabbi: Zev Silber  
 Address: 39 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905  
 Phone: 722-1793, Rabbi's Office: 722-7514  
 Fax: 722-7121  
 Office hours: Mon. closed; Tues. 10 am-1 pm; Wed. closed; Thurs. 9 am-1 pm; Fri. 10 am-1 pm  
 Beth David e-mail address: [bethdavid@stny.rr.com](mailto:bethdavid@stny.rr.com)  
 Rabbi's e-mail: [rabbisilber@stny.rr.com](mailto:rabbisilber@stny.rr.com)  
 Website: www.bethdavid.org  
 Facebook: [www.facebook.com/bethdavidbinghamton](http://www.facebook.com/bethdavidbinghamton)

#### Norwich Jewish Center

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

#### Kol Haverim

Affiliation: Society for Humanistic Judaism  
 Address: P.O. Box 4972, Ithaca, NY 14852-4972  
 Phone: 607-277-3345, E-mail: [info@kolhaverim.net](mailto:info@kolhaverim.net)  
 Website: www.kolhaverim.net  
 Chairwoman: Abby Cohn  
 Kol Haverim: The Finger Lakes Community for Humanistic Judaism, is an Ithaca-based organization that brings people together to explore and celebrate Jewish identity, history, culture and ethics within a secular, humanistic framework. KH is part of an international movement for Secular Humanistic Judaism and is affiliated with the Society for Humanistic Judaism, a national association with over 30 member communities and congregations around the country. Established in the spring of 1999, it offers celebrations of Jewish holidays, monthly Shabbat pot-lucks, adult education, a twice-monthly Cultural School for children, and a bar and bat mitzvah program.  
 KH welcomes all individuals and families, including those from mixed religious backgrounds, who wish to strengthen the Jewish experience in their lives and provide their children with a Jewish identity and experience.

Friday, October 23, light candles before ..... 5:50 pm  
 Saturday, October 24, Shabbat ends ..... 6:50 pm  
 Friday, October 30, light candles before ..... 5:41 pm  
 Saturday, October 31, Shabbat ends ..... 6:40 pm  
 Friday, November 6, light candles before ..... 4:32 pm  
 Saturday, November 7, Shabbat ends ..... 5:32 pm

#### Temple Israel

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

On Fridays and Tuesdays at 5:30 pm, services will be led by Rabbi Geoffrey Brown via Zoom.

On Saturday, October 24, Shacharit services will be held at 10:30 am via Zoom. The Torah portion is Genesis 6:9-11:32 and the haftarah is Isaiah 54:1-55:5. At 7 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom. Both will be led by Rabbi Geoffrey Brown.

On Sunday, October 25, at 12:30 pm, Rabbi Geoffrey Brown will lead Torah study services via Zoom.

On Saturday, October 31, Shacharit services will be held at 10:30 am via Zoom. The bar mitzvah of Michael Martinez will take place during the service. The Torah portion is Genesis 12:1-17:27 and the haftarah is Isaiah 40:27-41:16. At 6:30 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom. Both will be led by Rabbi Geoffrey Brown.

On Sunday, November 1, at 12:30 pm, Rabbi Geoffrey Brown will lead Torah study services via Zoom.

An Executive Board meeting will take place on Tuesday, November 3, at 7 pm, on Zoom.

#### Temple Beth El of Oneonta

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism  
 Rabbi-Cantor: George Hirschfeld  
 Address: 83 Chestnut St., Oneonta, NY 13820  
 Mailing address: P.O. Box 383, Oneonta, NY 13820  
 Phone: 607-432-5522  
 Website: [www.templebetheloneonta.org](http://www.templebetheloneonta.org)  
 E-mail: [TBEOneonta@gmail.com](mailto:TBEOneonta@gmail.com)  
 Regular service times: visit the temple website for days of services and times  
 Religious School/Education: Religious School, for grades kindergarten through bar/bat mitzvah, meets Sunday mornings. For the schedule of services, classes and events, see the website.

#### Temple Brith Sholom

Affiliation: Unaffiliated  
 Address: P.O. Box 572, 117 Madison St., Cortland, NY 13045  
 Phone: 607-756-7181  
 President: Carol Levine, 315-696-5744  
 Cemetery Committee, 315-696-5744  
 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.

#### 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](http://www.tikkunvor.org)  
 E-mail: [info@tikkunvor.org](mailto:info@tikkunvor.org)  
 Presidents: Lauren Korfine and Shira Reisman  
 Rabbi: Brian Walt  
 Religious School Director/Admin. Coordinator: Naomi Wilensky  
 Services: Fridays at 7:30 pm unless otherwise noted. Intergenerational Shabbat, music services, and other special services. Call for the weekly schedule.  
 Religious School: Preschool through seventh-grade classes meet on Sunday mornings.  
 Sixth-grade Hebrew and seventh-grade b'nai mitzvah classes meet on Wednesday afternoons.  
 Adult Ed: Mini courses throughout the year. Adult Hebrew offered regularly. Call the office for details.

# Ancient two-shekel weight unearthed near Kotel

By JNS staff

(JNS)—An ancient two-shekel weight has been unearthed beneath Wilson’s Arch, adjacent to the Western Wall in Jerusalem, the Israel Antiquities Authority announced on October 13.

The limestone weight, dating back to the Iron Age/First Temple period, was discovered during an archaeological dig conducted by the IAA in conjunction with the Western Wall Heritage Foundation. It was revealed during the sifting of earthen fills at the site, which is soon to be included in the tour of the Western Wall Tunnels.

IAA excavation directors Barak Monnickendam-Givon and Tehillah Lieberman described the weight as “dome-shaped with a flat base ... on top of which is an incised Egyptian symbol resembling a Greek gamma (ã), representing the abbreviated unit ‘shekel,’ [making the] two incised lines indicate ... double [that amount].”

According to the directors, “One of the uses of the shekel weight system during the First Temple period was to collect an annual tax of half a shekel dedicated to the sacrifices and upkeep of the Temple.”

The weight of a single shekel – 11.5 grams – is known from earlier finds, they said, and thus a double shekel should weigh 23 grams, “exactly as this weight does. ...[The] accuracy of the weight attests to advanced technological skills, as well as to the weight given to precise trade and

commerce in ancient Jerusalem. Coins were not yet in use during this period; therefore, accuracy of the weights played a significant role in business,” they said.

“Year-round and especially during the times of pilgrimage, the area at the foot of the Temple Mount was sure to be busy. Locals and pilgrims would have traded for sacrifices and offerings as well as for food, souvenirs and other commodities. A weight such as the one discovered would have See “Weight” on page 12

## Flood. . . . Continued from page 10

Wouldn’t it be more appropriate to call it the “flood-waters of the wicked”? Why is Noah getting some undeserved association with this awful act of divine retribution? He was the only one in his generation who wasn’t wicked, who was worthy enough to merit being saved from the flood. In fact, the Torah calls Noah a *tzadik*, a righteous man!

Why, then, does he deserve this unflattering association when his actions were meritorious? Everything God commanded him to do, he did faithfully! He built the ark as instructed; he gathered all of the animals as instructed; he even warned the people to mend their ways! Why would the prophet call the flood “the flood waters of Noah”?

The Zohar, the fundamental *kabbalistic* text authored by Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai in the second century, explains that although personally righteous, Noah failed to pray for his contemporaries, or successfully influence even a single person to change his or her ways.

Unlike Abraham, who argued with God when informed that Sodom and Gomorah were doomed for destruction, and unlike Moses, who beseeched God not to wipe out the Jews for worshipping the golden calf, Noah didn’t intercede on behalf of the people in his generation.

Like Abraham, who inspired thousands to abandon idolatry and instead worship the one God, Noah should have done more to try to influence his contemporaries to abandon their evil ways. Like Moses, who challenged God to erase his name from the Torah should God carry out his intention to destroy the Jewish people, Noah could have and should have used his favorable standing to implore that God reconsider his plan to unleash the great flood, and instead give the world another chance. Thus, the prophet refers to it as “the flood waters of Noah.”

The famed Arizal, the 16<sup>th</sup> century *kabbalist* who lived in Tzfat, in northern Israel, adds that Moses, who lived many generations later, contained within him a spark of Noah’s soul and his life’s mission was to rectify Noah’s error by completely devoting his life to the welfare of others. Indeed, Moses is known as the “*raya meheimna*,” the faithful shepherd who loyally tended to his flock, the children of Israel.

The 120 years that Noah spent absorbed in ensuring his own personal salvation through the building of the ark were perfectly rectified during the 120 years that Moses lived devoted to the needs of others.

Interestingly, the Hebrew letters in the words “*mei Noach*” (the floodwaters of Noah) also spell “*micheini*,” “erase me,” the words Moses spoke to God in defense of his people, representing the ultimate correction of Noah’s missed opportunity.

The Torah’s lesson for us is crystal clear. We are being taught that man is not an island unto himself. We mustn’t be completely focused on our own personal actions and achievements. No matter how noble and exemplary they are rather, we learn that we must make every effort to positively impact the world around us and to concern ourselves with the needs and deficiencies of our friends and neighbors.

God expects us to do all in our power to improve the well-being—both material and spiritual—of our fellow man.

## Resources . . . . . Continued from page 6

◆ The Center for Jewish History will hold several virtual programs in November: “New Works Wednesday with Shalva Weil” on Wednesday, November 4, at noon, during which Weil will discuss her new book “The Baghdadi Jews in India: Maintaining Communities, Negotiating Identities and Creating Super-Diversity”; “New Works Wednesday with Stanley Mirvis” on Wednesday, November 11, at noon, when Mirvis will discuss his new book “The Jews of Eighteenth-Century Jamaica: A Testamentary History of a Diaspora in Transition”; and “Family Affairs: Ashkenazi and Sephardi Personal Histories” on Wednesday, November 11, at 4 pm, with Meri-Jane Rochelson and Devin E. Naar discussing their projects and personal histories in Ashkenazi and Sephardi contexts. For more information or to register, visit <https://programs.cjh.org/>.

◆ The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research will hold the virtual concert “Joel Engel’s ‘Jewish Folksongs’ Volumes I and II” on Tuesday, November 10, at 1 pm. The 20 songs by Joel Engel will be performed by singer Lucy Fitz Gibbon with pianist Ryan MacEvoy McCullough and a guest appearance by Yurie Mitsuhashi. For more information or to register, visit [www.yivo.org/Engel-Jewish-Folksongs](http://www.yivo.org/Engel-Jewish-Folksongs).

◆ The group Our Common Destiny was founded as an attempt to connect the Jewish world through a crowdsourced online movement in order to develop a collective vision for the Jewish people and its shared future. The group is a joint initiative of the Genesis Philanthropy Group and the Israeli Ministry of Diaspora Affairs, under the auspices of the Office of the President of Israel. To offer thoughts on the “Declaration of Our Common Destiny,” visit the group’s website at <https://ourcommondestiny.org/>.

◆ The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives will hold the virtual program “You Have Nothing to Lose But Your Trains: Jewish Leaders in the Salvation of America’s Railroads” with Henry Posner III, chairman of Railroad Development Corporation, on Thursday, November 12, from 4-5:15 pm. For more information or to register, visit [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_SRA2778MRVW4lw0KEvEWJA](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_SRA2778MRVW4lw0KEvEWJA).

◆ The Jewish Book Council will hold the “69<sup>th</sup> National

Jewish Book Awards Virtual Celebration” on Thursday, November 12, from 7-8 pm. The celebration will feature remarks from the 2019 National Jewish Book Award winners live from their homes. For more information or to register, visit [www.jewishbookcouncil.org/events/69th-national-jewish-book-awards-virtual-celebration](http://www.jewishbookcouncil.org/events/69th-national-jewish-book-awards-virtual-celebration)

◆ Jewish Culture 101’s most popular subject so far, Mel Brooks, will return on Thursday, November 5, at noon, for “a second look.” This 75-minute class will use a different set of clips and discussions than the prior class in August. Tuition is \$1. To register, visit [bitly.com/BenkofBrooks](http://bitly.com/BenkofBrooks). Other upcoming classes will focus on Bob Dylan (November 2), Simon and Garfunkel (November 9), Peter, Paul, and Mary (November 16), Carole King (November 23) and Billy Joel (November 30). For more information or to register, visit <https://davidbenkof.substack.com/p/mel-brooks-returns-thursday-november>.

◆ The Hadassah-Brandeis Institute will hold several virtual programs: “Bezalel’s Daughters: Crafting a Judaism of Feeling, Stitch by Stitch” on Monday, November 9, from 12:30-1:30 pm; “Anthropological View on Jewish Liturgy for Female Victims of Sexual Assault” on Monday, November 16, from 12:30-1:30 pm; “The World Split Open: Redefining Sexual Harm in Halakhah” with Rachel Adler on Wednesday, November 18, at 7:30 pm; “Ruby of Cochin: A Malayali Jewish Woman of Kerala, India” on Monday, November 30, from 12:30-1:30 pm; and “HBI Virtual Conversations with Anna Solomon,” author of “The Book of V,” on Wednesday, December 2, from 2-3 pm. For more information or to register, visit [www.brandeis.edu/hbi/events/index.html](http://www.brandeis.edu/hbi/events/index.html).

◆ The Klezmer Company Jazz Orchestra will hold a Hanukkah concert featuring American jazz, blues and spirituals all mixed with old world klezmer. Joining the KCIJO will be Clal’s Rabbi Irwin Kula. The event will take place on Monday, December 14, at 7:30 pm, and the cost is \$18 per household. To register, visit <https://form.jotform.com/202864915355158>.

For additional resources, see previous issues of *The Reporter* on its website, [www.thereporter.org](http://www.thereporter.org).

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NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Jewish Journal of L.A. ends print edition, plans to go online

The Los Angeles-based Jewish Journal has halted its print edition as of Oct. 16 and is planning to move its news operations online. In an Oct. 7 editor's note, publisher and Editor-in-Chief David Suissa expressed hope that the print version of the outlet will resume once synagogues reopen. Synagogues are currently closed or operating on a limited basis due to the global coronavirus pandemic. "Because the Journal is a nonprofit, we distribute the paper for free across the community. Readers can pick it up at various locations, especially synagogues," he wrote. "When those synagogues and other locations began closing in March as part of the national lockdown, we pushed our way through, found some new locations and posted a PDF version of the paper online, always hoping that the lockdown would soon end and synagogues would reopen." Suissa wrote that the Journal will have new features, including "a Jewish Streaming Guide that will curate the most interesting streaming events in the Jewish world." The outlet aims to expand its "global reach and continue to look for diverse voices across the ideological spectrum to provide insightful commentary." Before the pandemic, the Journal had a circulation of 50,000 printed copies, shared by around 150,000 readers, according to recent figures.

JDC names Ariel Zwang as agency's new CEO

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee announced Ariel Zwang as its next CEO, the first woman to hold this position in the organization's history. Zwang currently serves as CEO of Safe Horizon, one of America's leading social-service agencies. She will take the helm of JDC on Jan. 2, 2021. "We know that her dynamic skillset and lifelong dedication to improving lives and building Jewish life - at the heart of JDC's mission - will be critical to her success in leading an organization that's played a key role in the history of the Jewish people for more than a century," said JDC President Mark Sisisky and interim CEO Darrell Friedman. "Our world faces unprecedented challenges, and JDC's support of Jews, Jewish communities, Israelis and others in dire need is more critical than ever before." The JDC was founded in 1914 to provide assistance to Jews living in Palestine under Turkish rule. "I've spent my career working on behalf of those who don't have all the basics that every human being deserves. And I have also lived my life knowing that we Jews are all responsible for each other, no matter the circumstances," said Zwang. "So it is a tremendous privilege to join JDC, which has saved countless lives over the past century, and unite my professional and personal passions," she explained. "Today's work - building the future of the Jewish people; support for those in economic distress, including the elderly and Holocaust survivors; and working with Israel to provide opportunities for its vulnerable - is profoundly meaningful to me." Zwang holds an undergraduate degree from Harvard College and an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School. She lives in New York City with her husband, Gordon Mehler, and their young adult daughters.

First commercial passenger flight from UAE to Israel touches down at Ben-Gurion Airport

The first commercial passenger flight from the United Arab Emirates to Israel's Ben-Gurion International Airport touched down on Oct. 19. The Etihad 787-10 Dreamliner had 58 passengers aboard and was welcomed with a ceremony. On its return flight to Abu Dhabi, the plane will carry business people, tourism industry executives and journalists, reported Ynet. "We are very excited to be here," said the flight's captain, Saleh Abdullah. "Hopefully, this is the beginning of a good relationship between UAE and Israel - and if someone had asked me a few months ago if I would be here making a speech in Tel Aviv, I would have said this

JLI.....Continued from page 3

and privilege, and navigating parallel spiritual and material life paths.

"Secrets of the Bible" presents wonderful ancient biblical stories in fresh and modern ways that deal with universal human dilemmas" explained Dr. Erica Brown, director of the Mayberg Center for Jewish Education and Leadership at George Washington University. "The wisdom it shares should not remain a secret."

"Secrets of the Bible" brings to an intelligent

lay readership texts so formative to so many cultures worldwide that they cannot be ignored even by cultures looking on from without," commented Dr. Joel Rosenberg, a professor of biblical literature at Tufts University. "By embracing post-biblical Jewish tradition, the course recognizes an interpretative process that begins with the Bible itself (interpreting its own past) and goes on to awaken the interpretive impulse in later readers exploring the experience of their own era."

is impossible." Separately, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Transportation Minister Miri Regev toured the Haifa Port on Oct. 19, where a vessel bearing the first cargo shipped directly from the UAE to Israel is currently anchored. "We are on the deck of the ship that arrived from the United Arab Emirates, with very many containers. I asked what is in the containers and they explained to me: washing machines. This is now lowering the price of washing machines, electric devices and food. Everything that arrives here simply lowers the cost of living, and every citizen of Israel will feel the impact of it," said Netanyahu.

Senior PLO official Saeb Erekat in critical condition after contracting COVID-19

Palestine Liberation Organization Secretary General Saeb Erekat's condition has been listed as critical, Jerusalem's Hadassah Medical Center-Ein Kerem announced on Oct. 19. Erekat, 65, was diagnosed with COVID-19 some 10 days ago, and evacuated to the Israeli hospital from his home in Jericho on Oct. 18. He is currently in an induced coma, according to the hospital. "Mr. Erekat had a quiet night but this morning his condition deteriorated," the hospital said in a statement, according to Channel 12. According to the hospital, Erekat, who underwent a lung transplant in the United States in 2017, is at high risk for complications due his suppressed immune system. In addition to being infected with coronavirus, he is also suffering from a bacterial infection. Hadassah's top doctors were consulting with colleagues overseas regarding Erekat's case, which was "complex," the statement added. Erekat, one of the main architects of the 1993 Oslo Accords and a close associate of former PLO leader Yasser Arafat for many years, led the Palestinian Authority in its negotiations with Israel until resigning in 2003. According to Channel 12, Erekat rejected his doctors' offer to fly him to Amman, Jordan for treatment.

Israel approves plan for 3,000-plus settlement homes

Israel approved plans for more than 3,000 settlement homes in Judea and Samaria on Oct. 15, a day after approving 2,000 additional homes, the AP reported. The number of settlement homes approved in 2020 is more than 12,150, making it by far the most home approvals since U.S. President Donald Trump took office, according to Peace Now, a left-wing anti-settlement group. The Israeli settlement of Gush Etzion celebrated the approval of about 1,100 housing units as part of construction plans for Pnei Kedem, Kfar Eldad, Metzad and Har Gilo. Shlomo Ne'eman, head of the Gush Etzion Regional Council, said in a statement on Oct. 14: "The mission of developing the communities in Judea and Samaria continues to be one of the key issues for the State of Israel and the entire nation in this era, and we are grateful for the right to be at the forefront here in Gush Etzion. ... Sometimes, we take our prime minister [Benjamin Netanyahu] to task, which we feel is justified, as a result of our disappointment in postponing the application of sovereignty over our country. But now something tangible is happening - we are building and developing our communities, and of course, the highlight of today is the full registration in the Land Authority of the young community of Pnei Kedem, 20 years since it was established."

Holocaust Claims Conference says Germany agrees to give \$662 million to survivors

The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany announced on Oct. 14 that after negotiations with the German government on behalf of Holocaust survivors, it has agreed to give \$662 million in aid to an estimated 240,000 survivors. "These increased benefits achieved by the hard work of our negotiation's delegation during these unprecedented times will help our efforts to ensure dignity and stability in survivors' final years," said Gideon Taylor, president of the Claims Conference, in a statement on the website of the New York-based organization. "We must meet the challenges of the increasing needs of survivors as they age, coupled with the new and urgent necessities caused by the global pandemic," he added. The funds will go to survivors - those eligible for the additional payments - who mostly live in Israel, North America, the former Soviet Union and Western Europe, according to the statement. Ambassador Stuart E. Eizenstat, Claims Conference Special Negotiator, stated: "These additional Hardship Fund payments, along with the global allocation of over \$653 million for social-welfare services, will impact Holocaust survivors globally." As a result of the negotiations, Germany also agreed to expand the categories of survivors eligible for payments by including the results of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum regarding "open ghettos" in Bulgaria. The expanded eligibility also includes such ghettos in Romania as a result of a report by Yad Vashem.

U.N. space agency to establish regional support office at Ben-Gurion University

The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev have signed a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the creation of a regional support office for UNOOSA's UN-SPIDER program, the United Nations announced in a statement on Oct. 12. The program, the full name of which is "United Nations Platform for Space-Based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response," is, as its name suggests, geared toward leveraging space for disaster management and risk reduction. Regional support offices (or RSOs) for the program collaborate with UN-SPIDER on "technical advisory support, capacity building and outreach," according to the statement. The new RSO, bringing the total number to 25, is to be located in BGU's Earth and Planetary Image Facility, which conducts research on advancing satellite and airborne remote sensing applications for a variety of uses. The RSO at BGU "adds precious expertise on satellite technology to the network," said the statement. According to the MoU, UNOOSA and BGU will collaborate, among other things, on emergency-response management, capacity-building on space-based technologies for disaster management and the dissemination of methods and results from Earth observation.

Weight.....Continued from page 11

been used to measure accurate amounts of products at the market," they added.

"How exciting, in the month of Tishrei, whose symbol is the scales of justice, to find a souvenir from the First Temple period," said Western Wall Heritage Foundation Director

Mordechai (Suli) Eliav. "Actually now, when coming to the Western Wall is so restricted due to the coronavirus pandemic, this finding strengthens the eternal connection between the Jewish nation, Jerusalem, and the Western Wall while offering us all encouragement."

At right: A limestone "two-shekel" weight, dating back to the Iron Age/First Temple period, discovered during excavations conducted by the Israel Antiquities Authority in conjunction with the Western Wall Heritage Foundation. It is seen here next to a modern two-shekel coin. (Photo by Israel Antiquities Authority)



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