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Federation to hold "Conversation with Michael Oren" on Nov. 30

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton will hold a virtual "Conversation with Michael Oren" about his new book of short stories, "The Night Archer and Other Stories," on Monday, November 30, at noon. Dora Polachek, associate professor of romance languages and literatures at Binghamton University, will moderate. There is no cost for the event, but pre-registration is required and can be made at the Federation website, www.jfgeb.org. Additional sponsors of the event are the College of Jewish Studies, the Temple Israel/Temple Concord Adult Education Group and Beth David Synagogue.

"It's an honor to have someone as accomplished as Michael Oren speak to us,"

said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. "I look forward to learning how he came to write the many stories that appear in his book. I would also like to thank Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell for alerting us to this opportunity."

Best-selling author Daniel Silva called "The Night Archer and Other Stories" "an extraordinary collection of stories that sparkle with wit, intelligence, tenderness and penetrating honesty." According to TheJewishPress.com, "[Oren's] characters are terrifying, tragic, passionate and yes, funny as hell." A.J. Jacobs, *New York Times* bestselling author, called the book



Michael Oren

"delightful." Liel Leibovitz, an Israeli-American journalist and author, wrote that "Oren delivers a heartfelt and heartbreaking account of who we are as a species – flawed, fearful, and lonely but always open-hearted, always trusting that transcendence is possible, if not imminent." (For *The Reporter's* review of the book, see page 4.)

In addition to his collection of short stories, Oren is the author of several nonfiction works, including "Six Days of War," "Power, Faith, and Fantasy" and "Ally: My Journal Across the American-Israel Divide," all of which made *The New York Times* bestsellers list. He has also received the *Los Angeles Times* History Book of the Year Award, a National Humanities prize and the Jewish Book Award.

Oren served as Israel's ambassador to the United States for almost five years before becoming a member of Knesset and deputy minister in the Prime Minister's Office. Oren is a graduate of Princeton and Columbia universities. He has been a visiting professor at Harvard, Yale and Georgetown universities. In addition to holding four honorary doctorates, he was awarded the Statesman of the Year Medal by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Legacy Prize for International Service.

Oren was named by NPR as "one of the best college commencement speakers ever." Politico called him "one of the 50 most influential thinkers in America." *The Forward* placed him on its list of "the five most influential Jews in America," while *The Jerusalem Post* said he was "one of the 10 most influential Jews worldwide."

Campaign 2021 in full swing

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton announced that its 2021 Campaign is off to a good start, but much work still needs to be done. "The Campaign for 2021 is in full swing," said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. "Many thanks to all the community members that have already pledged. Your generosity will sustain our community for the year to come."

The pandemic has complicated fund-raising this year. Rather than gathering at the Jewish Community Center for Super Sunday, volunteers made Campaign calls from their homes. Many people have made their pledges through the Federation website and by e-mail. "Running the annual Campaign remotely has seen its challenges, but luckily there is technology that has enabled our volunteers to make calls from the safety of their home and keep the Campaign organized and moving forward," Hubal added.

"We are about halfway to our goal of \$280,000," Hubal said. "And every donation is appreciated. The need is great if we are going to keep our local organizations strong. If you have not made your pledge



yet, and want to join other community members in supporting our Jewish community, please go to www.jfgeb.org or mail in the coupon on page 7 today. Your pledge will help us to know how much funding we can allocate."

Hubal noted that the pandemic has been difficult for local Jewish organizations for a variety of reasons, including causing the loss of income due to cancelled programming, the need to purchase new technology, the increase of community members seeking financial aid and the decrease in advertising income. "Even with these problems, I believe in our community," she said. "I know we are a caring community and will make it through this pandemic. Our Campaign slogan, 'Socially Distant, Spiritually Connected,' shows the true spirit of this community. Help us make our Campaign a success and keep our community strong."

Giving Tuesday matching grant of \$500 for Reporter

By Reporter staff

The Reporter announced that it has received a \$500 matching grant for Giving Tuesday, December 1. The grant is courtesy of the David and Virginia Eisenberg Fund. Donations came be made from now through Tuesday, December 1. Donations may be made several ways:

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

"We are thrilled to receive this matching grant," said Rabbi Rachel Esserman, executive editor of The Reporter Group. "Every penny counts in this economic

climate. So many Jewish newspapers are either going under or turning into online productions only. Although *The Reporter* has gone biweekly, I am pleased we are still able to produce hard-copy newspapers for our readers. I know that I prefer to read offline. Plus, a hard copy is great for those of us who like to read the paper on Shabbat, but don't get on the computer that day."

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

Other community members have also expressed their support for the paper. Their comments can be found in the ad on page 5.

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

Beth David Synagogue, Temple Concord and Temple Israel will join together for this year's Global Day of Jewish Learning on Sunday, November 8, at 10 am. The theme of the Global Day of Jewish Learning 2020 is "Human Dignity – *K'vod Habriot*." Rabbis Geoffrey Brown, Barbara Goldman-Wartell and Zev Silber will lead the virtual program. All are welcome to attend. To participate, contact the synagogues at templeconcord-binghamton@gmail.com or 723-7355; titammy@stny.twcbc.com or 723-7461; or rabbisilber@stny.rr.com. A Zoom link will be sent in an e-mail.

"We are joining Jewish communities worldwide in this day of Jewish learning," said organizers of the event. "We will use Jewish text to explore the Jewish value of human dignity, the ethics of human dignity and apply it to marginalized Jews."

Organizers noted the importance of the learning. "The best way to build a solid and creative Jewish continuity is through a community of learning and practice," they said. "The global Jewish learning day is a concrete expression of this conception and of a sincere feeling of *klal Yisrael*, of a great global Jewish family."

The Global Day of Jewish Learning began in 2010 as a celebration of Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz's work of translating the Talmud. The late Steinsaltz left a challenge to Jews everywhere: "To take a step ahead in Jewish learning and commitment."

"Temples Concord and Israel are honored to take this step forward again this year," organizers continued. "We are glad to have Beth David join us in what is now an annual celebration, which brings Jews across the spectrum of beliefs and backgrounds together through our shared love of learning."

Organizers noted, "We were deeply saddened by the passing of Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz earlier this year. A titan of Torah learning and hero of the Jewish People, Rabbi Steinsaltz was instrumental in founding the Global Day of Jewish Learning 11 years ago. May his memory be an enduring blessing and continue to inspire our communities worldwide to come together in dedication to engagement with our sacred texts. This year's Global Day of Jewish Learning is dedicated to his enduring impact on our people."

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Sisterhood news

TC holding fund-raiser; TI program with Flora Rosefsky; BD cancels November meeting.

..... Page 3

Centenarian in town

The family of Elizabeth Rappaport reflects on her life and celebrated her 100th birthday at TC.

..... Page 5

U.S. passport changes

The U.S. has altered its stance and will now list Israel as the birthplace of its citizens born in Jerusalem.

..... Page 9

Special Sections

Book Review 4
Health and Wellness 6-7
Financial 11
Classifieds 12

Opinion

From the Desk of the Federation Executive Director

With gratitude

SHELLEY HUBAL

I am grateful the annual Campaign gives me the opportunity to reconnect with Jewish community members, both locally and those that once called Binghamton their home. One highlight on Super Sunday was speaking with a former Binghamton community member who now lives out West. After making his pledge, he said to me, "You only have one hometown." He has fond memories of growing up in Binghamton, still has family and friends here, and recognizes how his support will help our local organizations endure for years to come. This conversation lifted my spirits.

Another memorable Campaign call included a lengthy

conversation about the challenges of living in this time of COVID isolation. I spoke with the donor about the ease of connecting with others via technology and the loneliness that comes with reduced face-to-face interactions. I would guess these varied experiences are common to all in our current day. The role of Jewish Family Service during this difficult time was another topic discussed with a community member who finds it meaningful that their support is helping to put food on the tables of those in need.

We want you to feel good about your gift to the Federation, whatever your reason is for giving. Federation

has a different meaning for everyone. For some, it is the direct community outreach of Jewish Family Service; for others, it is supporting Jewish youth through the PJ Library and Hillel Academy. Perhaps you find meaning in the programming Federation does to unite our Jewish community. If you have not made your pledge yet, we hope you will go to www.jfjb.org and join your neighbors as we work together to strengthen our community. Thank you to everyone who has already made this commitment for the year to come. As always, I am sending my best wishes to all of you for good health and happiness.

Thinking of moving abroad if your candidate loses?

By Jonathan S. Tobin

(JNS) – According to one Jewish news website, a Canadian immigration lawyer's business is booming thanks to the U.S. presidential election. While talk of moving to the Great White North if the candidate you don't support wins is a staple of pre-election chatter every four years, it may very well be more than that this time around. The lawyer is quoted as saying that many of a record number of inquiries she's been fielding are coming from American Jews.

Chalk it up to the impact of a steady diet of over-the-top hysteria and fear-mongering masquerading as political commentary that Americans have been consuming for the past four years.

Most of the Jews heading for Canada or Israel believe that they are living through the moral equivalent of the last days of the Weimar Republic before President Donald Trump installs a dictatorship. But some on the other side of the political aisle are just as apocalyptic about their future if a Democratic Party, which is allied to the radicals of the Black Lives Matter movement and left-wing antisemites, seizes back the reins of power in November.

Suffice it to say that if Trump somehow wins, Democrats – Jewish or otherwise – are going to be extremely unhappy. The same is true for Republicans if former Vice President Joe Biden retains the lead he's currently holding in the polls. Many Americans are starting to think that one of the basic elements of democracy – the obligation to grin and bear it when your opponents win an election – may not be something they are willing to accept. More importantly, many on both sides are increasingly convinced that their opponents won't respect

that principle and are succumbing to dark speculations that heretofore have been limited to the imaginations of those who dwell in the fever swamps of American politics.

Ours is an era in which politics has largely replaced the role that religion once played in their lives for many, if not most, Americans. That means political opponents are now largely viewed as not so much friends, relatives and neighbors with different points of view, but as bad people without morals or ethics who want to destroy the country. As a result, the angst of the losers about what their opponents will do once in power is no longer mere partisan hyperbole, but genuine terror. The dread that so many people feel is all the more pitiable not only because their worst fears are largely unfounded, but because they are insensible, if not completely unaware, of the fact that their counterparts on the other side of the political divide are feeling just as threatened.

The first to write in a serious way about this sense of panic was Michael Anton, whose pseudonymous essay "The Flight 93 Election" appeared in *The Claremont Review of Books* in September 2016. In it, he explained why so many Republicans were willing to fall in line with Donald Trump. A critical mass of conservatives believed that another four years of Democratic rule would not only be disastrous for the country. They feared that the left's continued conquest of the administrative state, as well as popular culture, would undermine individual liberty and the rights of religious believers in ways that would transform the United States into something unrecognizable and alien to basic republican principles.

Anton tapped into the metaphor of the plight of the passengers on Flight 93 on September 11, 2001, who made

the determination that they had to rush the cockpit of their hijacked plane. Simply allowing the terrorists to continue on their course to crash into the White House was unacceptable. Though their chances of success or survival were slim since they were doomed anyway, they had no choice but to fight back. Conservatives therefore embraced Trump in the same manner as the last resort in order to save the country.

Though the analogy was deeply offensive, Anton's essay explained as well as anything else that year why, despite his flaws, Trump could retain enough Republican votes in order to be elected. Anton, who subsequently briefly served in Trump's National Security Council, now sees the 2020 election in the same way since he believes that Democrats are "plotting a coup" to win in November one way or another. As one critic of his work noted, in the mind of many on the right, "Flight 93 did not end with the 2016 vote; we are forever on the plane, endlessly in danger, no matter who has seized the controls."

Liberals dismiss Anton's current views, just as they did his 2016 analysis, as conspiratorial ravings. But it's painfully obvious that most Democrats now feel the same way about the 2020 election.

They have been predicting that Trump would destroy democracy and install an authoritarian racist regime the moment he won the Electoral College. Their rage, frustration and anxiety have only grown as every magic bullet – whether it was the "myth" of Russia collusion or a partisan impeachment – that they thought would make the bad dream of 2016 go away proved a bust. Characteristically, Trump has fueled their fury with his constant **See "Abroad" on page 11**

In My Own Words

Elections and violence

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

"But what is more important was that as it happened, we did not see one tank or helmeted officer in the street. A country of over 200 million people was able to change Presidents overnight, without one bayonet being unsheathed. I believe any country that can still do that can't be all bad." – Art Buchwald writing about the resignation of President Richard M. Nixon on June 8, 1975

This column is being written before election day, so I have no idea who was elected the president of the United States. For me, there was no contest between the two candidates, but, if the one I didn't support gets elected, I will accept the will of the people. Our government and its elections are based on law. To paraphrase the Art Buchwald quote printed above: the true beauty of our country is that we change leadership without bloodshed.

There have been no violent overthrows of our presidents, no grabbing of total power by any one political party, no generals taking the White House or Congress by force and no one refusing to leave office because he won't accept the will of the people. We take this fact for granted, not realizing just how lucky we are. If you study the history

of South America, you'll not only see how many governments have changed by violent means, but the cost of that change in lives lost.

What really scares me is not who won the election that took place this week, although I would prefer the person I voted for to win. What I fear is that, for the first time in U.S. history, a candidate will not only refuse to accept the outcome of that vote, but urge his supporters to take arms to keep him in office – that American will fight American, that the army will be called out against American citizens in a struggle to keep democracy alive.

I hope and pray that the calls in the past few months to negate this election if it doesn't go the way some people want are just hyperbole – just another example of the unfortunate way social media has exacerbated the differences between us, and left us so polarized that we see each other as enemies, rather than fellow citizens with different hopes, desires and needs. A poll taken in October, though, noted that more than 55 percent of those interviewed thought there would be violence after the election. The poll was taken before the plot to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer

was revealed; the men charged with that crime are said to have disagreed with her handling of COVID-19. According to news reports, they were working with a militia in the hopes of starting a civil war. Note, they *wanted* to start a civil war – a war that would pit parent against child, sibling against sibling, friend against friend and citizen against citizen. The only war that we should be fighting right now is the one against a virus whose death toll keeps rising, leaving families devastated by the loss of their loved ones.

We had a civil war once on our land and the repercussions of that event still reverberate more than 150 years afterward. That pain should *never* happen again. I don't want to see people hurt, jailed or killed because the election was contested with violence. To take up arms to prevent an elected official being sworn in to office is to advocate the overthrow of the U.S. government, which is treasonable. The results of that action could be horrific. We all need to accept whoever wins because, if we don't, that violence may only be the beginning. Let us hope that, just as we did in 1975, we acknowledge a president – for a first or second term – with no blood spilled.



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

LETTERS

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

ADS

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

DEADLINE

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TC to mark Kristallnacht with “Let There Be Light”

Temple Concord will participate in the international campaign marking the anniversary of Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass, by leaving the lights in the synagogue on during the night of Monday, November 9, until the next morning, Tuesday, November 10. “Let There Be Light” is organized by March of the Living, the yearly teen educational travel program to Poland and Israel for Yom Hashoah and Yom Ha’atzmaut.


“Individuals, institutions and houses of worship across the world are invited to keep their lights on during the night of November 9,” said organizers of the event. “We can shine

forth light remembering a time of darkness. It is important to add additional light this November in our community, to lift up courage, hope and standing for our values against antisemitism and hatred and racism of all kinds.”

Individuals of all religions and backgrounds are also invited to write personal messages of hope in their own words on the campaign website, <https://kristallnacht.motl.org>. Frankfurt, Germany’s main synagogue will be illuminated, and personal prayers and messages from the virtual campaign will be projected onto the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem.

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to the family of **Pauline “Polly” Grenis**

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to the family of **Barry Shiffrin**



DEADLINES

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

ISSUE	DEADLINE
November 20.....	November 11
December 4.....	November 23*
December 18.....	December 9
January 1, 2021.....	December 21*

TI Sisterhood to hold virtual art event with Flora Rosefsky

Temple Israel Sisterhood will hold its first virtual meeting, “A Family Legacy Collage Workshop with Flora Rosefsky,” on Sunday, November 22, from 2-4 pm, via Zoom. Attendees will make an art project as part of the workshop. The deadline for signing up for the workshop is Friday, November 13. Supplies will be available for pick-up at Temple Israel on Monday, November 16, after noon. Supplies will be mailed to anyone out of town. The class is free for paid-up Sisterhood members. The cost for others is \$25.



Flora Rosefsky

members will have a piece of artwork that celebrates someone in their lives.

“You do not have to be in Broome County to participate,” said organizers. “Once you have paid your dues, you will receive a Zoom link from the temple office. Snowbirds, come and join your friends up north and visit with them on Zoom. We are happy to send you your ‘kit.’ It is Sisterhood’s pleasure to welcome new members as our guests for the first year and this meeting will be free for you.”

Organizers noted, “For this unique event, we ask that you think about what you may want to illustrate and start collecting flat, two-dimensional items to work/play with in creating a representation of your honoree. You might search for copies of photos, old greeting cards, wrapping paper scraps, old menus or bulletins, ribbon and/or crepe paper scraps, or magazine photos/words. Going through this process before the workshop allows you to freely associate and encourage your memories to come alive.”

For answers to questions about the event, contact Tammy Kunsman at the synagogue office at 723-7461. She will pass the message on to Co-Chairwomen Beverly Rozen and Maxine Rosenberg.

TC Sisterhood holding puzzle fund-raiser

Temple Concord Sisterhood is selling puzzles to raise funds to support Temple Concord and its religious school. The puzzles come with a frameable print of the original artwork and a puzzle stand on which to put the completed puzzle.

The 500-piece puzzles cost \$22.95 each, and the 1,000-piece puzzles cost \$29.95 each. Temple Concord Sisterhood will receive \$7 from the sale of each puzzle. The puzzles will be delivered to Temple Concord individually packed and labeled with the name of the person who ordered the puzzles. Orders must be received by Barbara Thomas no later than Friday, November 20. Puzzle orders will be delivered to Temple Concord by Monday, December 7.

To see the puzzles, go to www.artandfablepuzzlecompany.com/shop. To ensure that Temple Concord Sisterhood makes money from the sale of each puzzle, do not order from the website. For answers to questions or to receive an order form, contact Thomas at 759-2573. After the \$7 for Temple Concord Sisterhood is deducted from the sale of each puzzle, the remaining money will go to a charity selected by each puzzle artist.

The website includes the title of the puzzle and the name of the not-for profit which the artist’s puzzle supports. The 1,000-piece puzzles are “The Connoisseur” (Doctors Without Borders); “Land of Rutopia” (The Prader Willi Syndrome Association); “Summit at Iris Glen” (Smile Train); “Daphnis” (Pollinator Partnership); “Day in the

Garden” (Animal Rescue League of Boston); “The Card Players” (The National Council of Aging); “Reply of the Cossacks” (Doctors Without Borders); “The Roses of Heliogabalus” (The Honeybee Conservancy); and “The Keepsake” (Association of Women Artists).

The 500-piece puzzles include “Carnival Train” (The Mockingbird Society-Foster Care/Youth Homelessness); “Poultry Pageant” (Tiny Miracle Rescue of PA); “Still Life With Pears” (Green Peace); “Woodland Walk” (The Ronald McDonald House of Tennessee); “Pearl River Village” (UNICEF); “Tale of Two” (Autism Speaks); “Ankara and Beauty” (The Malala Fund); “Along the River” (Ontario Medical Center); “Watcher, Protector,” (Kennedy Krieger Institute); “Floral Fantasy” (Name of charity not provided); “That’s the Point” (The Human Society of America); “Love Declaration” (The Trevor Project); “The Bohemian” (Notre Dame Fire Restoration Fund); “East of the Sun West of the Moon” (Habitat for Humanity); and “Birth of a Dream” (Kennedy Krieger Institute).

Checks should be made out to Temple Concord Sisterhood in the amount of one’s total purchase. The completed form and check should be mailed to Barbara Thomas at 541 Powers Rd., Binghamton, NY 13903. The name and phone number of the person ordering must be included with the form along with the total number of puzzles ordered and the total cost of the order.

BD Sisterhood cancels meeting honoring veterans

The November meeting of Beth David Sisterhood, which was scheduled for November 11, has been cancelled due to the increase locally in COVID-19 cases. “As always, the Sisterhood board places the health and safety of our membership above everything else,” said organizers of the event.

“Since the meeting was scheduled for Veterans Day, we planned to honor members of Beth David Synagogue who served in the United States military,” organizers continued. “It was hoped that some of them would speak to our group about their time in the armed forces. Even if they have

shared their experiences with the congregation in the past, there are always more tales to be told. It is important that we hear as many of their stories as possible.”

Many people affiliated with Beth David can point to at least one member of their family who was a veteran. “We salute all who have served their country, whether from our congregation or not,” organizers said. “All are due our gratitude whether they were stationed stateside, or overseas, served during wartime or peacetime.”

Organizers added, “There is a plaque in Beth David, See “BD” on page 9





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SOCIALLY DISTANT,
Spiritually Connected



Annual Campaign 2021



Off the Shelf

Stories by Oren and Schwartz

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

I read more novels than I do short story collections. There is something about sinking into a book and following its characters through time that appeals to me. Yet, a great short story is a masterwork of art in that a few pages can leave me as satisfied as a 400-page novel. If an author can distill the essence of those hundreds of pages into three, five, 10 or 15 pages, it feels like magic. And magic describes the two short story collections featured in this article: Michael Oren's "The Night Archer and Other Stories" (Wicked Son/Post Hill Press) and "Truthtelling: Stories, Fables, Glimpses" by Lynne Sharon Schwartz (Delphinium Books).

If Oren's name seems familiar, that's because he served as Israel's ambassador to the U.S., and is the author of several works of nonfiction. In the introduction to his collection, Oren notes he's written short stories throughout his years in the army and the Israeli government, but was unable to publish them due to the terms of his public service. "The Night Archer and Other Stories" features more than 50 of these stories in its almost 320 pages. I have to admit I was not expecting his works to be more than competent, but to my surprise they were wonderful. (An e-mail I sent after reading the first 100 pages noted, "Yoo-hoo, this guy can write.") Even more amazing is that his stories range from intensely personal looks at people's lives to science fiction/fantasy. A large number of them contained a surprise twist, which was then often followed by yet another unexpected turn of events. Sometimes a story made me laugh and then chilled me with its insights a few pages later. Most of the

stories are very short, although a few are slightly longer, ranging between 10-15 pages.

It is incredibly hard to pick stories to talk about because this was the rare collection in which I liked every story. However, a few stood out enough for me to take notes about them:

◆ "Liberation" is a powerful tale of a Holocaust survivor who becomes trapped in his own life after he writes a successful work about his experiences during the war.

◆ A parent's thoughts about his autistic child are found in the moving "D."

◆ Several stories include God as a character. In "Day 8," Satan cleverly manipulates God when talking about the human-like creatures that were just created. God shows a wonderful sense of humor when conversing with a prophet in "The Book of Jakiriah."

◆ Oren's army experiences inform "Beautiful Bivouac," which centers on one soldier's thoughts during battle, and "Surprise Inspection," which focuses on training soldiers.

◆ "Made to Order" looks at the loss of a loved one and a surprising recovery from that loss.

◆ In the most complex story, "Aniksht," the author manages to tie together three disparate plot lines into one fascinating tale.

"The Night Archer and Other Stories" is an amazing collection. Some of the stories contain adult content so parents should be aware that they are not for young readers. My hope is that Oren continues writing because I'm looking forward to future collections.

While Oren's stories are hard to categorize because his works cover many genres, Schwartz focuses on the psychological aspects of her characters. For example, "The Golden Rule" looks closely at a woman's feelings as she's called to help a neighbor she dislikes. The story not only explores why the character acts as she does, but her complex feelings about aging. Mother-daughter relationships are discussed in "A Lapse of Memory," whose ending caught me by surprise. Several stories focus on those who contemplate their limitations, as in "Return of the Frenchman," where a woman ponders not having acted on an attraction and whether she is being given a second chance. The same is true for the man in "Grief," but in his case, what he fears is losing his memories of his late wife.

Schwartz also writes about marriages – those that survive the decades and those that do not. "Truthtelling" shows how minor lies can keep spouses connected, while "I Want My Car" confronts the ways people punish each other after a breakup. In "A Taste of Dust," a woman views her ex-husband's new life and must decide how it will affect her. The narrator of "Tree of Porphyry" shows the imagination a writer uses in order to turn a glimpse of a stranger's life into a story.

"Truthtelling" offers 25 stories in its almost 220 pages. The author's insight into her characters' thoughts and feelings are what makes these tales work. What they may lack in breadth – they are limited to those living in New York City – they more than make up in depth.



Off the Shelf

Two sides of World War II – part 2

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Part one of this review featured novels that looked at World War II from the point of view of Jewish characters. Part two offers a different perspective: the war as seen by non-Jews. Some of the characters were alive during the fighting; others view those years through the lens of history.

"Haunting Paris"

Four different stories intertwine in Mamta Chaudhry's moving "Haunting Paris" (Anchor Books), which opens in Paris in 1989. The novel's main focus is non-Jewish Sylvie, who is heartbroken over the loss of her longtime Jewish partner, Julien. When Sylvie discovers a mysterious letter in Julien's belongings, she, with the help of her visiting American neighbors, tries to uncover what happened to Julien's extended family during World War II. Sylvia knew that Julien spent the war years in England, but he never spoke of the relatives who remained behind. What Sylvie doesn't know is that Julien's attachment to her is so great that his ghost never left the world: he watches her, carefully staying in the shadows so she won't see him. This means he also finally learns about what occurred after the Nazis conquered Paris.

At first, the novel seemed like a not particularly interesting love story, focusing on how Sylvie and Julien met, and the way he left his wife and children for her. But, as it continued and readers learn what occurred during the war, the plot became gripping, so much so that, at one point, I yelled out loud. By its end, "Haunting Paris" became a wonderful and emotionally satisfying work.

"Keep Saying Their Names"

A conversation about a memorial stone leads the non-Jewish narrator of "Keep Saying Their Names" (Alfred A. Knopf) by Simon Stranger to consider the lives of two disparate men: his son's Jewish great-great-grandfather, Hirsch Komissar, and a Norwegian Nazi, Henry Oliver Rinnan, who may have sent Hirsch to his death. The unnamed narrator tells his son that, according to Jewish tradition, people die twice: once at their physical death and a second time when people no longer speak their name. The narrator wants not only to keep Hirsch's name alive, but to describe the evil Rinnan did as a double agent for the Nazis during the war. He also tells of how those events

reverberated through several generations of his wife's family – particularly what occurred after Hirsch's son, Gerson, and his family moved into the house that Rinnan and his colleagues used as a torture chamber.

The chapters in "Keep Saying Their Names" are labeled in alphabetical order, with the letter of the alphabet representing key words used in that section. This makes the novel feel disjointed at times since it's difficult to discover any logic behind the choice of words. However, the work itself is so powerful that this doesn't ultimately detract from the story. The details of the Komissar family, especially what happened during the war, show how difficult it was for them to accept the reality of Nazi horrors. But where the author really excels is in his portrayal of Rinnan, showing how he turns from an ordinary boy into a monster who blames everyone else for his troubles.

"Villa of Delirium"

Adrien Goetz's novel "Villa of Delirium" (New Vessel Press) might have easily been called "False Paradise on See "Sides" on page 8

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One hundred years old and still going strong

By Ariel Gold and Harry Rappaport

On a recent Saturday night in the Kilmer Mansion of Temple Concord, despite a raging pandemic and a fraught election, our family came together to celebrate. It's not often that someone reaches the age of 100, but on October 23, Elizabeth Rappaport did.

Our mother/grandmother/great-grandmother is the poster child of longevity. Referred to as Lib, she lives independently in a two-story house. Although our sister/mother Glenna lives with her, it is only because Lib cannot drive anymore due to glaucoma. Lib still cooks and cleans for herself, takes a daily walk, gardens and goes up and down the slat wooden stairs to her basement to do laundry. If you ask Lib what the secret is to her health, she will frequently joke that it must be the gin and tonic she likes sometimes in the evenings.

Born in Plattsburgh, NY, to Harry and Eva Gold, Lib is the last surviving member of eight siblings. Harry emigrated to Amer-



Lib Rappaport with her great-grandson, Elijah Gold, and her birthday cake.

ica from Russia at the turn of the century and was followed shortly after by his wife, Eva, and their first two children, Rachael and Abraham. Harry and Eva settled in Plattsburg where Harry, a deeply religious man, worked as a tailor at the Army base.

Among the family stories we relayed on Saturday night was the tale of Rachael's marriage. While Rachael chose a wonderful and kind man to be her husband, he wasn't Jewish and so her father, in the Jewish tradition of the time, disowned her, going so far as to sit *shiva* as though she had died. But Lib's mother didn't feel the same way as her husband and protested. She snuck Rachel in through the back door of the house until eventually Harry relented and Rachael was brought back into the family.

Lib tells us often that her favorite childhood memories are the summers she spent in South Hero, VT, on the farm that Rachael ran with her husband, Robert DuBuque. Today, we are proud to be a family filled with interfaith relationships and multiple racial identities. These are the values that our family inherited from Rachel's experience and from the unconditional love that Lib taught us.

After Lib's father died when she 9 years old, her older brother, Abe, moved the family to Binghamton where he worked as a lawyer, later to become a New York state Supreme Court justice.

After high school, Lib attended New York University, earning her bachelor's degree in elementary education. While in college, her sister, Esther, suggested that Lib try out a date with her boyfriend's brother, Joe. The date was set up, but, when the day arrived, being shy and having only dated non-Jewish girls so far in his life, Joe got cold feet. He called Lib to cancel, but Lib told him "no way." He followed through and they soon found themselves in love.

Despite Joe being Jewish, Lib knew that her family wouldn't approve of their



The extended Rappaport family.

marriage and didn't give her their permission to marry him. However, just like Lib's mother hadn't accepted her daughter being kicked out of the family and just as Lib hadn't accepted Joe's attempt to cancel their first date, Lib followed her heart and didn't take her family's "no." Lib and Joe married in secret on September 17, 1942, in Goldsboro, NC, at the Army base where Joe was stationed. The rabbi who married them, Rabbi Alexander Goode, became famous posthumously for being one of four Army chaplains to give up their life jackets when their liner, *The Dorchester*, was sunk by a German submarine in the North Atlantic. There is a memorial in Washington, DC, to the four chaplains.

Known for her chutzpah (audacity), Lib once locked Joe out of the house when he failed to bring her flowers as she had asked. Joe attempted to go sleep at his mother's house, but she chased him away with a broom, insisting that he go buy his wife the flowers. Having learned his lesson, Joe returned home with both flowers and three pounds of See's candies! Joe died in 2011 after 69 wonderful, loving years of marriage. Though he has been gone for almost 10 years, Lib frequently

still talks to him at night, telling him how much she misses him and how lucky she was to have him.

Lib's core beliefs are to love and stay close with family. At various times during her married life, family members – her mother, sister, nephew and several grandchildren (including co-author Ariel Gold) – came to live with her. For many years, Lib used to take several younger friends grocery shopping.

As Lib got closer and closer to her 100th birthday, she became more and more excited that she would get to celebrate with her two children, five grandchildren, six great-grandkids, her favorite nephew, David, and his wife, Carla, and more. Many more family members were able to join through Zoom. Lib said that she was so lucky to have us celebrate her, but by having her in our lives – 100 years old and still going strong – it is really us who are the lucky ones!

Harry Rappaport is Elizabeth's son. He lives in Weatogue, CT, with his wife, Karyl. Ariel Gold, Elizabeth's granddaughter, lives in Ithaca with her teenage children, Elijah and Isabella. They are members of Congregation Tikkun v'Or.

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-Rebecca Kahn

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Despite shrinking to a bi weekly 8 page paper, The Reporter continues to connect readers to the local community in familiar and new ways. My favorite feature is "Off the Page", Rabbi Rachel Esserman's book reviews. New since the pandemic, I always look at the list of numerous programs available online—what a time saver when looking to participate in Jewish events near and far—highly recommended.

-Merri Pell-Preus



I support The Reporter because it's a vital part of Greater Binghamton media. It lets us see beyond the boundaries of our synagogues or other groups we belong to and recognize the challenges and accomplishments of our community. I appreciate the paper's local coverage and Rabbi Rachel Esserman's book reviews as well as articles related to issues of national importance.

-Rachel Coker, subscriber, donor and chair of The Reporter editorial committee

Play Ball! Jews in the outfield (and the infield, too)

A Jewish perspective on baseball's most unique season

By Bill Simons

The 2020 Major League Baseball season was the most unique in the game's venerable history. Like medical care, education, shopping, political campaigns and almost everything else, baseball was dramatically impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. Still, despite myriad vicissitudes, the truncated 60-game baseball season proceeded, and World Series drama provided the game's aging fan base with a temporary oasis of normalcy. A distinct Jewish presence animated baseball's 2020 season.

A Jewish sports guru, Andrew Friedman, is the Los Angeles Dodgers president of baseball operations, and he constructed the team that won the 2020 World Series. As ESPN's Jeff Passan aptly stated, Friedman's Dodgers were "leviathan in payroll and talent." Melding together players developed from within the Los Angeles farm system, including Jewish outfielder Joc Pederson, with those acquired through transactions, notably Mookie Betts, Friedman built a powerhouse Dodgers team.

Besides Friedman, other notable Jewish baseball executives at the helm in 2020 merit comment. Chaim Bloom, chief baseball officer of the Boston Red Sox, is a Friedman protégé. The Red Sox had a disastrous 2020 season, and Bloom will initiate a major rebuilding program over the winter. As Cubs president of baseball operations, the redoubtable Theo Epstein, who in previous seasons broke long-standing World Series championship famines in both Chicago and Boston, fashioned a Cubs team that had the best record in the National League Central Division in 2020. Once more, the long-suffering New York Mets stumbled under Chief Operating Officer Jeff Wilpon. As majority owners of the Mets, Jeff Wilpon and his father, Fred, lacked the resources and acumen to compete successfully, and their reputation suffered by association with disgraced financier Bernie Madoff. Mets fans look to another Jewish businessman, Steve Cohen, to reverse the franchise's fortunes. Cohen's purchase of the Mets from the Wilpon family is in its final stages.

San Francisco manager Gabe Kapler, a former player noted for his muscular physique, maneuvered his weak-roster

team to a 29-31 won-loss record. Kapler "took the knee," kneeling at the opening of a televised exhibition game as the national anthem played, providing support for the Black Lives Matter movement. The example of Kapler's parents, Jewish liberals and 1960s participants in the Civil Rights movement, influenced his decision.

The 2020 season probably marked the last campaign of the most accomplished Jewish player of the last generation, Ryan Braun, a five-tool star back in the day. Braun's 352 career home runs are the most by a Jewish ballplayer or by a Milwaukee Brewer. Burnished by a lifetime .296 batting average, 1154 RBIs, 408 doubles and 216 stolen bases, as well as Rookie of the Year (2007) and Most Valuable Player (2011) awards, the left fielder is a borderline candidate for the Hall of Fame, a prospect dimmed by his mid-career suspension after testing positive for performance-enhancing drugs. The 36-year-old Braun hit a disappointing .233 in 2020. Now injury-prone and vulnerable to back pain, Braun appears poised to depart from the playing field.

Houston Astros third baseman Alex Bregman also underperformed in 2020. A year ago, Bregman, then 25 years old, was the superstar of a team that came within one game of winning a second World Series championship within a three-season span. Boasting a .296 batting average, 41 home runs and 119 RBIs, Bregman finished second in voting for the 2019 AL MVP award. Then, revelations came that Bregman's Astros stole opposing catcher signs and conveyed that information to Houston hitters by banging on trash cans. Impacted by the bizarre trash-can scandal, the Astros lost (31) more games than they won (29), while Bregman's batting average plummeted to .242 in 2020. However, Bregman and the Astros remain young and talented: look for Houston and their cocky cleanup hitter to come back strong in 2021.

Other 2020 MLB Jewish players to note include Miami Marlins relief pitcher Dick Bleier, who posted a 2.63 earned run average over 19 games. St. Louis Cardinal relief pitcher Rob Kaminsky showed potential, recording a 1.93 ERA during his five rookie season appearances.

Splitting the 2020 season between the Red Sox and the

Colorado Rockies, outfielder Kevin Pillar hit a solid .288. Garrett Stubbs, Bregman's Astros teammate, demonstrated defensive versatility as both a catcher and outfielder, although his 2020 average (.125) underlines that he is still a work in progress at the plate. Toronto Blue Jays' Rowdy Tellez, a robust 6'4", 255 pounds, was an offensive presence in 2020 with a .283 batting average, .540 slugging percentage and eight HRs in only 113 at bats. During the World Series, Ryan Sheriff, a veteran of Team Israel and the grandson of Holocaust survivors, took the mound for the Tampa Bay Rays.

In 2020, for the first time, an Israeli citizen, Dean Kremer, appeared in an MLB game. Kremer is actually a dual Israeli-U.S. citizen, who was born, raised and attended college in the U.S. However, his *sabra* parents are both veterans of the Israeli army, and Kremer grew up speaking Hebrew at home. The right-handed, 24-year old, 6'3" starting pitcher made his debut for the Baltimore Orioles on September 6. Finishing his limited season with one win, one loss and inflated 4.82 ERA, Kremer will hopefully find his stride on the mound next year.

Max Fried, who wore #32 in high school in homage to Sandy Koufax, emerged as one of baseball's pre-eminent pitchers in 2020 and had the best season of any Jewish player. Although he registered a stellar 17-6 won-lost record in 2019, his 4.02 ERA was less impressive. In 2020, however, the 6'4", Atlanta Braves lefty was dominant. Despite lumbar muscle spasms that limited Fried's September play, he finished the abbreviated campaign with seven wins, no losses and a spectacular 2.25 ERA. Complimenting his mid-90s four-seam fastball, Fried's pitching repertoire also includes a change-up, sinker, curveball and slider. Moreover, opposition runners take leads at their own peril; Fried has a deadly pick-off motion.

Assisted by its Jewish contingent, the 2020 baseball season, albeit idiosyncratic, made its distinctive mark.

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.

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THE REPORTER
 Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton

Jewish resources to occupy your family during social distancing – part 24

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 Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU will hold the virtual program “Black Lives in a Jewish Context.” Professor Tudor Parfitt will talk about his book “Hybrid Hate: Conflations of Anti-Black Racism and

Anti-Semitism from the Renaissance to the Third Reich.” The event will take place on Monday, November 9, from 7-8:30 pm. For more information or to register, visit <https://secure.qgiv.com/for/jmoffiu/event/820800>.

◆ Kane Street Synagogue presents a free virtual book launch to celebrate publication of Julia Mayer’s “Painting Resilience: The Life and Art of Fred Terna.” Mayer’s book is the first full-length biography of the 97-year-old Holocaust survivor and artist. To register for the event, visit www.juliamayer.com/event-details/painting-resilience-launch-celebration/form.

◆ Those Who Were There: Voices from the Holocaust is a podcast dedicated that shares the history of the Holocaust through the testimonies of survivors and witnesses. Season Two of the series is a joint production between the Fortunoff Video Archive and the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust. For more information or to listen to the podcasts, visit <https://fortunoff.library.yale.edu/education/podcasts/>.

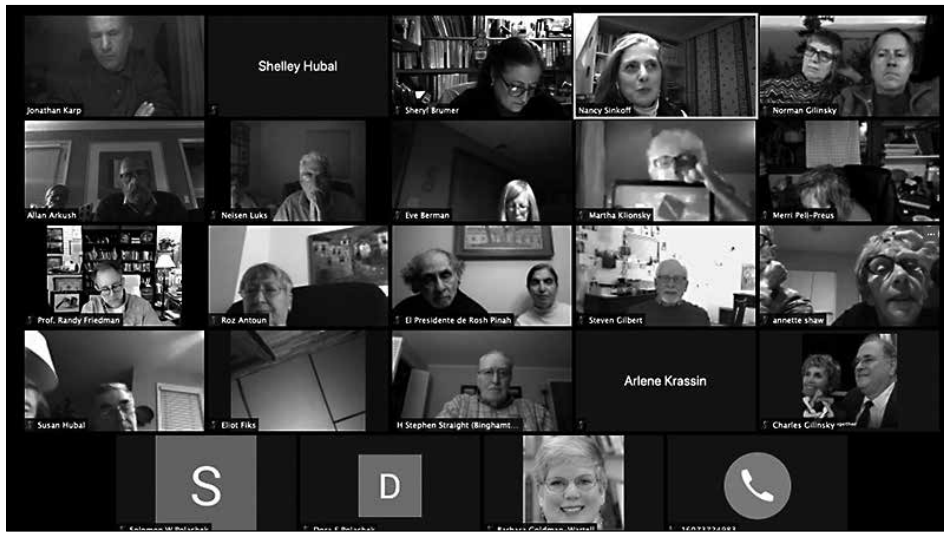
◆ OHR Torah Stone offers weekly “Torah for our Time” lectures at noon on Wednesdays. For information about each weeks instructors, topics and Zoom information, visit <https://ots.org.il/torah-for-our-time-upcoming-shiurim/>.

◆ The Cantors Assembly, in partnership with Milken Archive of Jewish Music and the Lowell Milken Fund for American Jewish Music, presents “Cantors on Record.”

The program will feature live interviews with the artists and the music they recorded, along with archival photos. For more information or to register for programs, visit www.milkenarchive.org/articles/view/cantors-on-record-guide/.

◆ Columbia University will hold several free virtual programs: “The Storm Within: Yiddish Children’s Literature and the Invention of Childhood” on Tuesday, November 10, from noon-1 pm, when Miriam Udel will discuss how during the first decades of the 20th century, Yiddish writers produced literature specifically aimed at children; “Salo Baron: Celebrating 90 Years of Jewish Studies at Columbia” on Sunday, November 15, from 5-6:30 pm, which will celebrate Salo Baron’s legacy and impact on Jewish studies; “Mystics, Music, and Microscopes: Celebrating Ten Years of Research in the Norman E. Alexander Library of Jewish See “Resources” on page 11

CJS held Zoom talk on Lucy Dawidowicz biography



On October 29, the College of Jewish Studies hosted a Zoom lecture for community members, who listened to Professor Nancy Sinkoff discuss her new biography “From Left to Right: Lucy S. Dawidowicz, the New York Intellectuals, and the Politics of Jewish History.” Sinkoff is a 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.

TC-TI help at CHOW pantry

At right: The Temple Israel Caring Community Committee is partnering with Temple Concord to provide food to the CHOW pantry located at Temple Concord. L-r: Temple Israel members Marcia Hofstein, Barbara Zelter and Julie Piaker unloaded groceries at the Temple Concord CHOW pantry.



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Annual Campaign 2021

Sides.....Continued from page 4

the French Riviera.” Kerylos, the villa built by Jewish Theodore Reinach, stands empty when visited by 70-year-old non-Jewish Achilles Lecia in 1956. Achilles not only worked for the family before World War II, but was mentored by Theodore and became close friends with Adolphe, Theodore’s nephew. Theodore and his brothers were a type of scholar that no longer exists: not professionals, but rather skilled amateurs who studied and wrote for the love of learning. Theodore’s specialty was ancient Greece and his glamorous home reflected that world. The Reinachs’ love of culture changed Achilles’ life, turning him from a servant to a painter who left Kerylos in order to discover his own artistic vision. Kerylos was also where Achilles met the love of his life, the loss of whom still haunts him.

The Holocaust plays a minor role in the story, but had a major role in what occurred to the Reinach family. Achilles notes how all of Theodore’s culture and knowledge was of no help when the Nazis conquered his home. And the German love of art and culture did not prevent the Nazis from exterminating the family. The tone of the novel feels

nostalgic in both positive and negative ways. Achilles is looking for something during his visit and what plot there is centers on his search and a mysterious postcard that led him back to the villa. Readers should note the work contains far more descriptions of people and places than it does plot. Fortunately, the writing is beautiful and it’s easy to be swept along, although some readers may be impatient with its slow pace. At first, it didn’t seem as if the novel was moving toward any conclusion, but the end tied its many parts together. It also left this reader wondering what Achilles’ future will hold.

“Cesare”

Not everyone in Germany supported Hitler’s policies about the Jewish population, even those who otherwise supported the war. One such person is the hero of Jerome Charyn’s unusual and chaotic “Cesare” (Bellevue Literary Press). Erik Holdermann (also known as Cesare) is not Jewish, but, as a child, was helped by Jewish prostitutes who arranged for him to live safely in a Jewish orphanage. A fluke meeting allows him become a member of the Abwehr, a German intelligence organization run by real-life Wilhelm

Canaris, who despised Hitler and worked against him.

Cesare is brutal and, at times, murderous. He acts as an assassin for the Abwehr, while also helping Canaris save German Jews from the clutches of the Gestapo. To complicate matters, Cesare is in love with a half-Jewish woman who is married to a Nazi, but their relationship reeks of sadism more than it does of love. The plot becomes more and more complicated before reaching a dramatic climax at Theresienstadt, a fake village created to fool the Red Cross into thinking the Nazis were not persecuting the Jewish population. After almost 250 pages, I was tempted to stop reading because of one particularly brutal section. I’m glad I finished the final 100 pages, though, because the last section of the novel was the best.

“Cesare” is off-putting and absorbing at the same time. The writing feels like it’s on steroids; hectic and heart-pounding prose that pushes the reader through the pages. This novel is not for everyone: a willingness to see past its brutality is needed. Yet, it also captures the terror of non-Jews living in Nazi Germany, at least those who did not agree with Hitler’s policies and tactics.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Jerusalem researcher participates in groundbreaking brain-imaging research at Cornell University

By JNS staff

(JNS) – Israeli researcher and Jerusalem College of Technology professor Dr. David Sinefeld and a group of interdisciplinary scientists at Cornell University have made a new breakthrough in brain imaging thanks to the mapping of a zebrafish’s brain.

The team, working in the university’s labs, used advanced microscopy methods in order to image the fine structure and activity of an adult zebrafish brain, which resulted in opening a new horizon of neurological research.

“This is a problem that everyone dreams of solving,” said Sinefeld, referring to the difficulty in successfully examining thick brain tissue, especially through adult fish scales.

Experimenting on zebrafish is a useful stepping stone to understanding the human brain because all vertebrate brains are similar in nature. Although scientists usually use mice and monkeys as models for the human brain, zebrafish are another viable option.

“All vertebrate brains are, to a first approximation, the same, with nearly all brain regions [present] in nearly every vertebrate,” said Joseph Fetcho, professor of neurobiology and behavior and director of Cornell Neurotech in the College of Arts and Sciences told the *Cornell Chronicle*. “This is not surprising because they all, even the simplest ones, have to do the same things to survive and reproduce.”

“In order to solve this problem, we used a novel microscopy method which was invented in Professor Chris Xu’s lab [at Cornell]. In this method, we use special lasers with extremely short pulses that interact with the molecules in the brain in a way that allows separation between this interaction and the scattered light from other tissue layers. This means that we can shine a laser beam through fish scales and still see the neurons behind them, allowing us to image specific neurons deep in the brain with very high resolution,” said Sinefeld, who spent five years working as a postdoctoral researcher Mong Fellow at Cornell Neurotech Center.



Dr. David Sinefeld
(Photo by Jerusalem College of Technology)



Experimenting on zebrafish is a stepping stone to understanding the human brain. (Photo by Pixabay)

The “innovative, precise method” delivers 1,300 nm wavelength photons to a certain point in the brain, activating a specific fluorescent protein. The laser then repeatedly scans a certain section of the brain, garnering a 3-D image of its structure. To date, all other methods of looking inside the brain, like an MRI, don’t yield the resolution needed to see the neurons and structure inside.

“This method opens a new horizon for animal brain research. We can now see better how the brain works,” said Sinefeld. “This research allows us to monitor a full zebrafish brain over time. For instance, after applying this tool to fish engineered to have certain brain disorders the images can then decipher how the brain changes as the fish mature. Likewise, the images can then also see how the fish respond to treatment over time and can lead to dramatic implications in how we understand brain functions and their disorders.”

Sinefeld hopes to continue his efforts in the field of microscopy at the Jerusalem College of Technology. He is in the process of applying for grants and funding to build a new lab dedicated to this discipline at the school.

“This could be a game-changer in the field of neuroscience,” he said. “I am excited for the opportunity to establish these novel methods in Israel, and specifically, in JCT.”

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U.S. issues first passport with “Israel” listed to Jerusalem-born U.S. citizen

By JNS staff

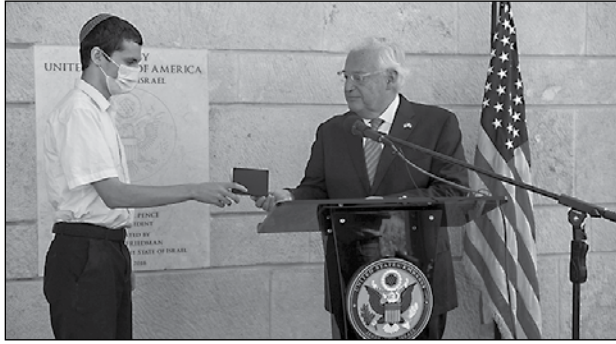
(JNS) – The United States has issued its first passport with Israel listed as the place of birth to a U.S. citizen born in Jerusalem – in fact, to the person who was at the center of a case litigated twice at the U.S. Supreme Court that sought to allow U.S. citizens born in Jerusalem to list Israel as their place of birth on their U.S. passport.

Menachem Zivotofsky was the first to get such a passport, handed to him by U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman at a brief ceremony at the U.S. embassy in Jerusalem on October 30.

“I am honored to receive this passport as a representative of the many American citizens who were born in Israel, who can now have their official government documents reflect the fact that they were born in Israel. I want to thank my parents who started this process, long before I understood anything,” said Zivotofsky, whose parents first applied 18 years ago to have his U.S. passport reflect that, as someone who was born in Jerusalem, his U.S. passport should show that he was born in Israel.

“A great honor to present the very first passport issued to an American citizen born in Jerusalem with the place of birth designated as “Israel” to Menachem Zivotofsky, who first applied 18 years ago and litigated twice before the US Supreme Court. Mazal Tov!” Friedman tweeted on October 30.

The ceremony came the day after U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced that American citizens born in Jerusalem are now allowed to list Israel as their place of birth on their American passport. “Consistent with [U.S.] President [Donald] Trump’s Jerusalem Proclamation of



U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman handed the first U.S. passport with “Israel” listed to Jerusalem-born American citizen Menachem Zivotofsky at the U.S. embassy in Jerusalem on October 30. (Photo from David M. Friedman/Twitter)

December 6, 2017, and the historic opening of the U.S. embassy in Jerusalem on May 14, 2018, today I am announcing updates to the Department’s guidance on passports and other consular documents issued to U.S. citizens,” said Pompeo in a statement on October 29.

“U.S. citizens born in Jerusalem who do not specify their place of birth on applications for consular services as ‘Israel’ will continue to be issued documents that indicate their place of birth as ‘Jerusalem,’” said Pompeo.

For American citizens born outside the United States, U.S. passports usually list countries, not cities, under place of birth. Therefore, there is no third option to list “Jerusalem,

Israel” as one’s place of birth. U.S. passports for citizens born in America include the state or territory of birth.

In 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Zivotofsky v. Kerry* that the executive branch has the sole power to grant recognition to sovereign states, striking down a move by Congress to command the executive to change its position on Jerusalem. While at the time the ruling was a victory for the Obama administration, which had been upholding a policy recognizing no state as having sovereignty over Jerusalem, it now has allowed the Trump administration to change course on the issue.

BD Continued from page 3

which is probably overlooked more often than not, that honors our members who perished during World War II. We had hoped to pay our respects to them at our meeting, but, since the meeting has been cancelled, we will do it now in print. Some of the men no longer have families living in the area, but others have relatives who are still very active in both the congregation and the community.”

The plaque reads: “Dedicated to the Memory of: Lt. Donald B. Rubin, PFC Max Melamed, PFC Laurence Slutzker, PFC Alan M. Levy Who have made the Supreme Sacrifice in World War II.”

“May the sacrifices of these men, and thousands of other men and women like them who have served our country over the years, be acknowledged,” organizers said. “Their bravery has made the lives we live today possible, and they deserve to be remembered at the very least on Veterans Day.”

HEALTH & WELLNESS

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(NAPS) – The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention wants patients and families to remember that prescription antiviral drugs, not antibiotics, are the treatment for influenza (the flu). Visit www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use for information on antibiotic prescribing and use, and www.cdc.gov/flu for information about the flu.

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Weekly Parasha

Vayera, Genesis 18:1-22:24

Priorities

RABBI ZEV SILBER, BETH DAVID SYNAGOGUE

There is an intriguing phrase in this week's *parasha*, and it is used three times. At the beginning we find God appearing to Abraham and suddenly "*vayisa Avraham et einav, vaya'ar*" – and Abraham lifts his eyes and sees." He sees the three people/angels who are passing by his tent. In the last section, Abraham is ordered to take his son and go to the place that God will show him. And on the third day "Abraham lifts his eyes and sees." He sees

his destination from afar. Finally, after the angel stops him from sacrificing Isaac, "Abraham lifts his eyes and he sees." He notices a ram stuck in the brush and offers it as a sacrifice in place of Isaac.

What does this phrase mean, and what can we learn from its use in these three places.

Let us review the first few sentences of this week's reading. God appears to Abraham. He sees the guests,

he bows down and says, "Adonai, if I have found favor in your eyes, please do not leave your servant." Who is Abraham addressing?

Most commentators seem to say that Abraham is talking to the guests. He calls them "my master" because he realizes they are angels, or because he recognizes that they are special people, or because of his humbleness he lowers himself in See "Priorities" on page 11

Congregational Notes

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 November. There will be a new Zoom link for Friday night services for November.

Friday, November 6: at 7 pm, Shabbat services with Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell, at <https://bit.ly/2H-ljuE2>, meeting ID 841 4523 3909 and passcode 086513.

Saturday, November 7: at 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, Geoffrey Brown and Zev Silber, which will explore Judaism's vision of human dignity, the ethics of inclusivity and the imperative to decrease marginalization, at <https://binghamton.zoom.us/j/95045435775>.

Friday, November 13: at 7 pm, Shabbat service honoring Veterans Day with Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell and Jason Flatt at <https://bit.ly/31009vw>.

Saturday, November 14: at 9 am, religious school; 9:15 am, Torah study at <https://binghamton.zoom.us/j/342411102>; and 6:30 pm, Havdalah at <https://binghamton.zoom.us/j/526246866>.

Saturday, November 14: Music in the Kilmer Mansion at 7 pm, "Music Heard in Trips Not Taken" with Pej Reitz and Tim Perry. The concert may be watched on the Temple Concord Facebook page or by contacting the synagogue office for the Zoom link.

Friday, November 20: at 7 pm, Shabbat services with Rabbi Barbara and Jason Flatt at <https://bit.ly/31009vw>.

Saturday, November 21: at 9 am, religious school. No Torah study or Havdalah.

Sunday, November 22: 7-8 pm, Sisterhood Tea and Schmooze.

Thursday, November 26: Thanksgiving, office closed.

Friday, November 27: at 7 pm, Shabbat services, with Rabbi Rachel Esserman and Jason Flatt <https://bit.ly/31009vw>.

Saturday, November 28: No religious school or Torah study. At 7 pm, "Havdalah with a Bonus" at <https://binghamton.zoom.us/j/526246866>.

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
 E-mail: TBEOneonta@gmail.com
 Regular service times: visit the temple website for days of services and times
 Religious School/Education: Religious School, for grades kindergarten through bar/bat mitzvah, meets Sunday mornings. For the schedule of services, classes and events, see the website.

Congregation Tikun v'Or

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism
 Address: PO Box 3981, Ithaca, NY 14852; 2550 Triphammer Rd. (corner of Triphammer and Burdick Hill), Lansing, NY
 Phone: 607-256-1471
 Website: www.tikkunvor.org
 E-mail: info@tikkunvor.org
 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.

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 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: rabbi@tbeithaca.org and 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.

Penn-York Jewish Community

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

Beth David Synagogue

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

Norwich Jewish Center

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

Kol Haverim

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

Friday, November 6, light candles before 4:32 pm
 Saturday, November 7, Shabbat ends 5:32 pm
 Friday, November 13, light candles before 4:25 pm
 Saturday, November 14, Shabbat ends 5:25 pm
 Friday, November 20, light candles before 4:19 pm
 Saturday, November 21, Shabbat ends 5:19 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
 Website: 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, November 7, Shacharit services will be held at 10:30 am via Zoom. The Torah portion is Genesis 18:1-22:24 and the haftarah is II Kings 4:1-37. At 5:30 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom. Both will be led by Rabbi Geoffrey Brown.

On Sunday, November 8, from 10 am-noon, the Global Day of Jewish Learning 2020 with Rabbis Geoffrey Brown, Barbara Goldman-Wartell and Zev Silber on Zoom. For more information, see the article on page 1.

On Sunday, November 8, at 12:30 pm, Rabbi Geoffrey Brown will lead Torah study services via Zoom.

On Saturday, November 14, Shacharit services will be held at 10:30 am via Zoom. The Torah portion is Genesis 23:1-25:18 and the haftarah is I Kings 1:1-31. At 5:30 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom. Both will be led by Rabbi Geoffrey Brown.

On Sunday, November 15, at 12:30 pm, Rabbi Geoffrey Brown will lead Torah study services via Zoom.

A Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 17, at 7 pm, on Zoom.

The Sisterhood opening program, "Family Legacy Collage Workshop with Flora Rosefsky," will be held on Sunday, November 22, from 2-4 pm, on Zoom. Reservations are required and may be made by contacting the temple office. More information can be found in the article on page 3.

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.

Rohr Chabad Center

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

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

Resources Continued from page 7

Studies” on Wednesday, December 2, from 1:30-2:30 pm; and “Nostalgia: Remembering the Jewish Community in Egypt” on Wednesday, December 9, from 4:30-5:30 pm. For more information or to register, visit www.iijc.columbia.edu/upcoming-events?tabletk.

◆ ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal plans to launch the second cohort of its Earth-Based Judaism Certification Program through our virtual seminary. A planning/taster session will be held on Thursday, November 5, at 7 pm, and led by Rabbi Natan Margalit, Rabbi Zelig Golden, ALEPH Executive Director SooJi Min-Maranda and Rabbi Marcia Prager. For information about the program’s content, e-mail Margalit@aleph-ordination.org. To register, visit <https://aleph.org/civcrm/event/register?reset=1&id=311>.

◆ A video of the Center for Jewish History’s program “Midwives, Musicians, Soldiers, Rabbis: Whose stories will become Jewish history?” can be found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=aN6rJy209Lg&feature=youtu.be. Elisheva Carlebach, Deborah Dash Moore, Dara Horn and Itamar Borochoy had a discussion about “Confronting Modernity, 1750–1880, Vol. 6 of The Posen Library of Jewish Culture

and Civilization,” edited by Elisheva Carlebach.

◆ The Center for Jewish History offers several virtual programs: “New Works Wednesdays – Don Isaac Abravanel: An Intellectual Biography” on Wednesday, November 25, at noon, when Cedric Cohen-Skalli will discuss his new book “Don Isaac Abravanel: An Intellectual Biography”; a Book Talk look at “In The Great Kasher Meat War of 1902: Immigrant Housewives and the Riots That Shook New York City” by writer and historian Scott D. Seligman on Tuesday, December 1, at 4 pm. For more information or to register, visit <https://programs.cjh.org/>.

◆ The Tenement Museum will hold several virtual programs: “Rogarshevsky Family, 1910s” on Wednesday, November 11, from 11 am-noon (\$10/device), explores the life of the Rogarshevsky family, a Jewish American family from Lithuania who lived in 97 Orchard Street in the 1910s; and “Virtual Book Talk: Jewish Cooking” on YouTubeLive on Tuesday, December 1, from 7-8 pm (cost: donations requested) with Leah Koenig, author of “Little Book of Jewish Appetizers, Little Book of Jewish Feasts” and “Little Book of Jewish Sweets,” presenting 25 modern recipes drawn from global

Jewish influences. For more information, links or to register, visit www.tenement.org/events/.

◆ The Jewish National Fund is holding virtual events in November, including a “Virtual Annual Women for Israel Event” on Sunday, November 8, from 11 am-noon, with Jamie Geller; “R&D Speaker Series: U.S. & Israeli Innovations in the Life Sciences” on Tuesday, November 10, from noon-1:15 pm; “The True Story Behind Netflix’s ‘The Red Sea Diving Resort’” on Thursday, November 12, at 7:30 pm, with Naftali Aklum; “Funny You Should Say That: In Conversation with Alan Zweibel” on Sunday, November 15, at 10:30 am; and “Fall Reading Series – November” on Wednesday, November 18, at 8 pm, with Joan Nathan. To see more events and to register for programs, visit www.jnf.org/menu-3/videos/ondemand.

◆ Loyola Marymount University will hold a virtual Kristallnacht commemoration “Voices of Hope, Acts of Kindness: Mutual Assistance in the Holocaust” on Monday, November 9, at 5 pm. For more information or to register, visit <https://bellarmine.lmu.edu/jewishstudies/events/annualkristallnachtcommemoration>.

◆ Lilith Magazine will hold a virtual “Lilith Fall 2020 Launch Party” on Thursday, November 19, at 8 pm. The event will feature the writers and artists whose works appeared in that issue. To register, visit <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9123456789>.

◆ JINSA will hold the virtual webinar “Natan Sharansky and Gil Troy: ‘Never Alone: Prison, Politics, and My People’” on Tuesday, November 10, at 1 pm. Sharansky and Troy will discuss their new book, which tells details of Sharansky’s years in prison and how it prepared him for a very public life after his release. For more information or to register, visit <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/joinMeeting?meetingId=9123456789>.

◆ The National Museum of Jewish American History will hold a virtual live concert with Asher Shasho Levy on Tuesday, November 24, at 1 pm. The concert is free, with suggested \$5 donation. Levy is a Syrian Jewish musician and scholar of Sephardic heritage and culture, who seeks to spread the beauty of the Sephardic tradition through his writing, recording, research and concerts. View the concert on the museum’s Facebook page or at www.nmajh.org/livestream-concert-with-asher-shasho-levy/.

◆ The Yiddish Book Center is offering a radiocast of Klara Klebanova’s “The Last Maximalist” translated and voiced by Caraid O’ Brien. The 12-part audio series is based on Klebanova’s memoir, which tells the story of a middle-class Jewish teenager who became a Maximalist revolutionary fighting for the rights of peasants and factory workers during the first Russian Revolution of 1905. To listen to the episode or sign up to receive via e-mail, visit www.yiddishbookcenter.org/language-literature-culture/translation-initiative/last-maximalist.

◆ The Other Israel Film Festival will take place virtually this year and run from December 3-10. The festival is sponsored by the Marlene Myerson JCC in Manhattan. For information about films and events, or to sign up for the festival’s newsletter, visit <https://www.otherisrael.org/>.

For additional resources, see previous issues of *The Reporter* on its website, www.thereporter.org.

Abroad Continued from page 2

trolling and inappropriate statements, even though in terms of actual governance, the policies that his administration has pursued have been largely normative conservatism, as well as unprecedented support for Israel.

Though their rights are still very much intact, that hasn’t stopped many liberal Jews from continuing to engage in hysterics about Trump. His opponents blame him for everything terrible that has happened on his watch, like the coronavirus pandemic, which goes with the territory for any president. They have also striven ceaselessly to link him to every act of extremist violence on the far-right. And despite his many condemnations of such extremism, they seize on every time that he refuses to be cajoled into yet another such pronouncement as proof that he is plotting tyranny or worse. While some of this is his own fault, it still doesn’t excuse the over-the-top calumnies that are now flowing.

In any normal year, Jews who understand that the Holocaust is not a political football would condemn Biden’s analogizing of Trump to Nazi propaganda minister Josef Goebbels. Sadly, even otherwise sober observers like Holocaust historian Deborah Lipstadt approved of this calumny because it fits in with her liberal political worldview. Lipstadt and even former ADL Director Abe Foxman appear to think there’s nothing wrong with an ad from the Jewish Democratic Council of America comparing the Trump administration to the rise of the Nazis. While there is plenty of room to criticize Trump, the Jewish Dems, as well as Lipstadt and Foxman, should be ashamed of themselves for cynically playing the Holocaust card in this manner.

At the same time, many conservatives look at the Black Lives Matter riots, the willingness of Democrats to wink at

the violence and those extremists taking part, as well as threat of court-packing, in the same way liberals view Trump and the right. The open threats of violence in the streets from the left if Trump wins or the outcome of the election is in doubt from even respected outlets like The Atlantic is triggering the same sort of Flight 93 fears on the right.

The stakes in this election are very high. But, neither four more years of Trump, or of Biden and Kamala Harris, are going to turn America into either Hitler’s Germany or Stalin’s Soviet Union. That’s why responsible people—even those with strong convictions about the outcome – ought to be discouraging the storm of fear-mongering about the election, which is starting to resemble an exercise in mass hysteria, rather than encouraging it.

As bad as Trump or Biden may seem to you, we are not passengers on Flight 93 or, for that matter, German Jews who were insufficiently alarmed about the rise of the Nazis. No matter how fervent your political opinions, now is the time to stop “unfriending” people who disagree with you on Facebook. And unless you are really interested in making your future in either the Jewish state via *aliyah* or are so enamored of cold weather and ice hockey that you feel impelled to move to Canada, stop talking about moving there next year.

Let us instead listen to rather than demonize each other. And let’s realize that if we care about the country’s future, the way to save it is to not succumb to the siren calls of tribal culture war that – no matter where their origin – are a greater threat to democracy than either political party.

Jonathan S. Tobin is editor in chief of JNS-Jewish News Syndicate. Follow him on Twitter at: @jonathans_tobin.

Priorities Continued from page 10

comparison to them. He speaks to one, the most prominent of the three, or he addresses each individually with this request.

The textual difficulty with this explanation is that the title he uses should have been “*adoni*,” the singular form. So another interpretation appears saying that Abraham is addressing God himself. Abraham’s bowing is not to the guests, rather to God who has just appeared to him. And he says “*Adonai*” – God, wait a minute and don’t leave while I attend to the guests. I will get back to you as soon as I finish caring for them. He bathes them, he feeds them and he escorts them as they continue their trip, and then turns back to God. As if to say, OK, now I have some time for you.

These two interpretations result in a disagreement in the Talmud. We know that the entire Torah is holy and must be cared for in a special way. The name of God written in the Torah is even holier and requires extraordinary care. Is this “*Adonai*” holy, or just a regular word? One opinion is that it is regular, resulting in the interpretation that Abraham is addressing the guests. The second opinion is that it is holy, meaning that Abraham is talking to God. The Talmud deduces from this that welcoming guests is greater and takes precedence over the spiritual pursuit of God.

Abraham is faced with a quandary at the opening of this *parasha*. God just appeared to him and so have guests. What does he do? He concludes that God must wait while he tends to the mundane needs of the weary travelers. Spirituality, hearing God’s message, must be put aside and is secondary to the dignity and needs of human beings. Abraham, ever sensitive to the rights and needs of his fellow human traveler in this world, even those of complete strangers, makes the decision that God will have to wait for him. And God does!

In the final incident where the phrase is found, Abraham “lifts his eyes and sees” the ram, and he offers it as a sacrifice to God. This super-sensitive Abraham – ever concerned for the rights of the other, the one of whom the Torah testifies that he was selected by God “in order to teach his children to do righteousness, kindness, and justice” – takes this ram that he chances to find, even though it is most likely the property of some unknown herdsman or Bedouin, and steals it in order to offer it as a sacrifice.

This is so uncharacteristic of him.

The Radak suggests that Abraham will, of course, pay for the ram as soon as he locates the owner. Rashi comments that this ram was created during the six days of creation, referring to the Mishnah in the “Ethics of the Fathers” that lists the 10 items created on Friday at sunset. To understand Rashi, we must say that he is attempting to answer this question by stating that the ram was ownerless, and created specifically for the purpose of being offered in place of Isaac.

I wish to suggest that the phrase “*vayisa einav*” does not mean literally lift up the eyes and see. This is a case where seeing isn’t looking. Lifting the eyes means a spiritual kind of sight, it means insight, understanding, having a vision and a clear understanding of what is happening and its ramifications.

Abraham understands the priorities when confronted with two conflicting responsibilities. He also has a keen sense of vision and realizes that this ram is not lost from its shepherd. Rather, it was deliberately placed here at this time to teach his son and the rest of the world that God abhors human sacrifice, so common in that time and locale. This insight is not due to human understanding, but rather due to prophecy and spirituality.

Similarly, the second usage of this phrase, in which Abraham “sees” his destination, also means that Abraham senses the holiness of the place. He notices Mount Moriah, but his insight and his vision allows him to understand that this is *the place*. This is the site of the future Holy Temple; this is the place that will house the tablets of law and the Torah scroll written by Moses himself. This place is the source of the insight, the understanding, the vision, that will teach us that human needs take precedent over speaking to God (although we must not forget that he is waiting for us and we must get back to him immediately), and that will allow us to understand the significance of finding the ram that was specially created for this moment in history.

If we look toward Jerusalem, focus on the Holy Temple, as we do during prayer, delve into the Torah that emanates from there, we will merit to have insight and understanding, and capable of choosing priorities and actions based on the greatest strengths of Abraham – justice, kindness and righteousness.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

UAE official: Hamas, P.A. are “corrupt” and “murderers”

Dehrah Belhoul Al Falasi, a member of the Federal Council of the United Arab Emirates, told i24 News in an interview that Hamas and the Palestinian Authority are “corrupt” and “murderer[s].” “The UAE is committed to the cause, to the Palestinian people ... Hamas and the [P.A.] Authority – both of them are corrupt, both of them are murderer[s],” he said. “Now the anger ... on the UAE from both of them [is] because the UAE stopped paying anything. If we want to pay, we pay the people,” not the leaders. Falasi went to call Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas “a common traitor,” and that when he visited the UAE, his son came with and tried to do business deals. “Now you came to help the Palestinians or you came to sell yourself or your companies,” accused Falasi. “So now, the UAE had enough and Saudi Arabia had enough. Every time, they miss a chance by refusing to negotiate and they lose more.” Falasi added that to stop terrorism, it is necessary to cut off the financing coming from Qatar. “We know Hamas is a terrorist, but if you cut the money from it, it cannot continue,” he said. “They will start fighting and will kill each other.”

UConn investigates antisemitic incidents on main campus

The University of Connecticut has been investigating multiple reports of antisemitic incidents on its main campus in Storrs, including swastika vandalism and other kinds of property damage. “These recent reports were all acts of physical damage to property, including swastika graffiti. These are undeniable symbols of antisemitism that elicit painful reminders of the Holocaust among our Jewish students, faculty, and staff,” said school administrators in an email to students. “These acts and other discriminatory acts this semester are deeply upsetting and leave a scar on members of our community whose beliefs or identities are targeted,” they added. Following each incident, the Residential Life staff reached out to impacted parties to offer support, according to school officials. The university said it’s working with members of the Hillel on campus to organize an event regarding concerns and working toward healing.

Israeli court rules P.A. must compensate terror victim’s family

The Jerusalem District Court ruled on Nov. 2 that the Palestinian Authority must pay NIS 13 million (\$3.8 million) in compensation to the family of Tzipi and Gadi Shemesh, who were murdered in a suicide bombing in Jerusalem in 2002. The ruling followed another two years ago that held the P.A. directly responsible for their murder and that of their unborn twins, Ynet reported. Suicide bomber Muhammad Hashika carried out the attack, which also killed Yizhak Cohen, a father of six from Modi’in, and wounded 80 other people. “This evening we finally have closure after many years of struggles in court,” said Shahar and Shoval, the murdered couple’s daughters, according to the report. “From the first moment what was most important to us is that justice be served.” The P.A.’s argument in court was that the claim for compensation was irrelevant, and that it related to complex historical issues that should not be argued in court.

Gunmen open fire near JCC, synagogue in Vienna

Gunmen opened fire near a synagogue and Jewish community center in Vienna on Nov. 2, allegedly targeting two restaurants, according to official reports, videos and photos circulating on social media. The head of Austria’s Jewish community, Oskar Deutch, said the shooting occurred on the street where the synagogue is located, though none of the city’s Jewish institutions appeared to be attacked. “While it remains unclear if the Stadttempel was one of the targets, we’ve confirmed that both the synagogue and the synagogue office building at the same address were closed at the time of the shots were fired,” Deutch wrote on Twitter in German. At least several people, including a police officer, were killed as an unspecified number of other people were injured, according to Vienna police, which has been conducting a manhunt in the city center near the Danube River for those behind the attacks. Two of the alleged perpetrators have reportedly been killed; one blew himself up with an explosive belt and another suspect was detained, while others are currently on the run. According to Rabbi Jacob Biderman, executive director of Chabad-Lubavitch of Austria, all of the city’s synagogues have been accounted for with no known injuries or loss of life in the Jewish community. “I checked with all five of Vienna’s Chabad Houses, as well as our educational institutions, and thank God, everyone is fine,” Biderman told Chabad.org. Another shooting took place at a Hilton hotel in Vienna. Details were not immediately available. Moreover, at a sushi restaurant, hostages have been taken by suspects behind the other attacks, according to Vienna police. Public transportation in Vienna was halted, and people were advised to avoid the area.

Florida school board reverses decision to reinstate principal fired for Holocaust denial

The principal of a high school in the heavily Jewish city of Boca Raton, FL, who was initially reinstated earlier in October after being fired last year after he declined to recognize that the Holocaust occurred has again been fired. Following weeks of outrage, including from the Jewish and pro-Israel community, the Palm Beach County School Board voted unanimously on Nov. 2 to rescind its decision to rehire Spanish River High School Principal William Latson. The previous week, Latson released a video apologizing for his comments about the Holocaust. “When I wrote to a parent in 2018 that as a school district employee I could not state that the Holocaust was a historical fact, I was wrong,” said Latson. “I apologize to the Palm Beach County community, the school board and school administrators, the teachers of Palm Beach County, the parents, the students, the Jewish community and everyone offended by my mistake. ... I am not a Holocaust denier. I have never been a Holocaust denier,” he continued. “I am sorry that my comment caused people to think that. Palm Beach County Schools has an exemplary Holocaust education which I ensured was taught to every students while I was principal at Spanish River High School.” StandWithUs supported the Nov. 2 vote. “The board’s decision communicates clearly the importance it places on ensuring that its employees value accuracy in history education, including the Holocaust,” said the organization’s executive director of its Southeast chapter, Sara Gold Rafel, in a statement. “Antisemitism is allowed to fester when we fail to expose lies and misinformation and replace them with the truth.”

America plans to sell 50 F-35 fighter jets to UAE

The U.S. State Department informally notified Congress on Oct. 29 that it intends to sell 50 F-35 fighter jets to the United Arab Emirates, announced U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Eliot Engel (D-NY). The deal, which must be approved by Congress, would reportedly be worth \$10.4 billion. If the sale is completed, the UAE would be the second country in the Middle East after Israel to have the advanced fighter jets. The pending deal comes in the wake of the Abraham Accords, signed on Sept. 15, which officially normalizes relations with Israel, the UAE and Bahrain. Israel initially expressed objections to such a sale due to Israel’s Qualitative Military Edge in the Middle East as required by U.S. law. Following recent assurances by the Trump administration and a trip in September to Washington by Defense Minister Benny Gantz to discuss the matter, Israel approved America going through with the sale. “This technology would significantly change the military balance in the Gulf and affect Israel’s military edge. The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter is a game-changing stealth platform boasting advanced strike capability and unique sensor technology,” said Engel in a statement. “The export of this aircraft requires very careful consideration, and Congress must analyze all of the ramifications. Rushing these sales is not in anyone’s interest.”

GoFundMe blocks BDS group from withdrawing funds on its platform

GoFundMe has stopped Palestine Action, a pro-BDS group, from withdrawing further funds via its fund-raising platform. UK Lawyers for Israel (or UKLFI), a legal watchdog group, said it contacted GoFundMe and notified the platform that it could be held liable as accessories to criminal activity if it permits Palestine Action to raise money via its site. According to its GoFundMe page, Palestine Action is seeking to raise 10,000 pounds to “support direct action against Israeli apartheid.” Palestine Action’s fund-raising page stated, “Donations will be used to pay for costs associated with running our campaigns.” Such campaigns consist of criminal actions seeking to disrupt businesses of which they disapprove. They explain that “activists have taken direct action 15 times against arms manufacturer Elbit Systems, with a view to shutting them down. Palestine Action have targeted sites in London, Oldham and on 14 September staged a dramatic 3 day occupation of Elbit’s Shenstone site, culminating in the arrest of 5 activists.” “This action clearly constitutes aggravated trespass: see the decision of the U.K. Supreme Court in Richardson v DPP [2014] UKSC 8,” UKLFI said in a statement. “Their actions also include criminal damage. They boast in a video on their Facebook page that they will throw paint on them, smash their batteries, go there, continue to cause damage until Elbit Systems f*** off and leave this country.” The Palestine Action fund-raising page on GoFundMe now contains a message warning donors that GoFundMe has currently stopped withdrawals from its fund-raiser. It says, “If you want to donate, do not do it here as we will not receive the funds.” “Palestine Action carry out blatantly criminal actions to promote their aims, which they seek to justify on the basis of utterly false allegations,” said Jonathan Turner, chief executive of UK Lawyers for Israel. “We are pleased that GoFundMe has now disabled Palestine Action’s fund-raising on their site.”

Haifa researchers discover documentation of dolphin attacked by shark

For the first time in Israel, a dolphin has been photographed with scars after it was attacked by a shark, spotted off the coast of Ashdod by researchers from the University of Haifa. “For 20 years in which I have been researching the dolphin population in Israel, I have not seen any evidence of a dolphin being attacked by a shark,” said Aviad Scheinin, top predator project manager at the Morris Khan Marine Research Station at the University of Haifa. “We will continue to monitor the dolphin population in order to understand whether this is an unusual incident of assault or a new phenomenon.” The dolphin was originally identified and tagged by researchers in November of last year and found again a few weeks ago, in mid-October, with scars on the side of his body. Based on an analysis of the scars, Scheinin believes that the shark involved in the attack was either a dusky shark or a bluntnose sixgill shark, although he stressed that it is not possible to determine with certainty which species of shark was involved. While studies around the world have found that these two species of shark attack dolphins, Scheinin has not seen any evidence of this in his 20 years of research. “In areas where large sharks live, such as great whites or tiger sharks, we see many dolphins with scar marks. Since here in Israel we had not yet identified a single dolphin with scars, it had led us to think that there are no such attacks in Israel or at least that they are very infrequent,” said Scheinin. “The new evidence requires us to examine whether this is an isolated case or a new phenomenon.”

U.S. to extend bilateral agreements with Israel into Judea and Samaria, Golan

The United States and Israel eliminated territorial restrictions for bilateral agreements in a ceremony on Oct. 28. The move will build upon a policy shift made by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo this past November, in which America no longer recognizes Israeli settlements in Judea and Samaria as illegal under international law. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman were slated to participate in a signing ceremony at Ariel University in Samaria. The agreement will immediately expand scientific and academic cooperation to include projects within Judea and Samaria, and the Golan Heights – disputed territories under Israeli control. The United States recognized Israel’s full sovereignty over the Golan Heights in March 2019. Israel captured Judea and Samaria, in addition to the Golan, from Jordan and Syria, respectively, during the defensive Six-Day War in 1967. Israel formally annexed the Golan Heights in 1981. Judea and Samaria remain disputed territories and were divided into non-contiguous zones (“Area A,” “Area B” and “Area C”) of varying Israeli or Palestinian administrative and security control under the 1993 Oslo Accords.

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