

THE REPORTER

Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton

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BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK

Federation to hold “March Into Spring Family Get-Together” on March 6

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton will hold a “March Into Spring Family Get-Together” on Sunday, March 6, at noon, at the Jewish Community Center’s playground and pavilion. (The snow date for the event will be Sunday, March 13.) The event is co-sponsored by the PJ Library program and Hillel Academy, and is open

to family members of all ages. There is no charge, but families are asked to register at www.jfgeb.org so they can be contacted if the snow date needs to be used.

There will be activities for children of all ages, including ones focusing on Purim, although the wearing of Purim costumes is optional. Rabbi



Benny Kellman will play his guitar and entertain the younger children. Rabbi Moshe Shmaryahu will also lead an activity. Hillel Academy students will sing a few songs. There will be a service project, where children of all ages can write letters or draw pictures for isolated seniors. Therapy dogs from the Therapy Dogs 607 group will

also be in attendance. Refreshments will be served, including hamentashen.

Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation, said, “After a long winter, we want to get Jewish families together for a fun celebration. Everyone will be able to enjoy the fresh air, make new friends and celebrate our Jewish roots. We hope you will be able to join us.”

Federation announces gift from Bruce Becker to Endowment Fund

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton announced that it has received “a generous donation” to the Federation’s Endowment Fund from the late Bruce Becker. Becker died in December 2020 at the age of 89.

“Bruce’s gift to the Jewish Federation Endowment Fund creates a meaningful legacy that will enhance the quality of Jewish life in Broome County for years to come,” said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. “We are honored that he remembered the Federation in his estate.”

Steven Becker and Barbara Reiff, Bruce’s children, spoke of their father’s involvement with the local Jewish community and how important its organizations were to him. “Dad was an active participant in the local Jewish community and, together with our mother, Rosalie, was deeply committed to putting his skills and savings to work to benefit the community he lived in and loved dearly,” they wrote in an e-mail. “Growing up, we don’t remember a time when he was not somehow involved in a cause. At the Jewish Federation of Broome County, he held roles as the president, chairperson of

the Federation’s Endowment Committee, and he sat on the board and the council of Jewish Federation. He was also the UJA Men’s General Campaign chairperson for the 1973 Campaign.”

They noted that Bruce was also active in other causes, both in the Jewish and secular communities. “In addition to his involvement at the Jewish Federation, he served on the boards of Temple Beth El, Israel Bonds, the United Way, Chabad, the board of the Endicott/Vestal Chamber of Commerce, the board of the County Chamber, the ARC and the Broome County Opera,” they added. “Dad was also

past president of Temple Beth El, Hillel Academy and Vestal Hills Country Club.”

His children noted that their father wasn’t one to brag about the work he did for the local Jewish community. “In contrast to his golf game, which he talked up any chance he had, our father quietly, but generously, contributed his time and charity to the local Jewish organizations for many years,” they said. “He was proud to do so and we’re sure he would be extremely pleased to see that his donation to Jewish Federation will continue to provide assistance to the community going forward.”

TC/TI Adult Ed. program with Rabbi Sally Priesand

The Temple Concord/Temple Israel Adult Education Program will hold “Reflection on my Life as a Rabbi: A Zoom Conversation with Rabbi Sally J. Priesand” on Sunday, February 13, at 10:30 am. There is no cost to attend. The program is also being sponsored by the Temple Concord Sisterhood and the Solis Cohen Fund. Participants may view the program in Temple Concord’s sanctuary. To attend in person, pre-register by contacting the Temple Concord office at 723-7355 or templeconcordaa@gmail.com.

Proof of vaccine and masks are required for the in-person program. To join via Zoom, use the link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86270719557?pwd=Z1MxN0VURWQ0K1BDZiszUDl0NG5RQT09>, meeting ID 862 7071 9557 and passcode 227843.

Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell will host Priesand from her home in New Jersey.



Rabbi Sally J. Priesand (Photo by Sue Barr)

Priesand, America’s first female rabbi, was ordained in June 1972 by Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, OH. From 1981-2006, she served as rabbi of Monmouth Reform Temple, becoming rabbi emerita upon her retirement.

Nationally, she has served on the Executive Board of both the Central Conference of

American Rabbis and the Union for Reform Judaism. She also served as a member of the Board of Governors of HUC-JIR, as president of the Rabbinic Alumni Association and as editor of the CCAR Newsletter for three years. In 2007, she invited her female rabbinic colleagues of all denominations to join her in donating their professional and personal papers to the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, OH, in order to document the history of women in the rabbinate. See “TC/TI” on page 3

Film Fest to hold virtual showing of “White Right” and “Masel Tov Cocktail”

By Reporter staff

The Binghamton Jewish Film Fest will hold a virtual showing of a documentary by Deeyah Kahn and the short film “Masel Tov Cocktail.” Stephen A. Lisman, distinguished teaching professor emeritus in psychology at Binghamton University, will



Alexander Wertmann in a scene from “Masel Tov Cocktail.” (Photo courtesy of Go2Films)

moderate a discussion of the films.

People will be able to register for links to the films and the discussion on the Federation website, www.jfgeb.org. The films can be streamed at no cost and will be available for viewing beginning Sunday, February 27. The viewing links will be viable until the discussion begins on Thursday, March 3, at 7 pm, when Lisman will facilitate the online video discussion of the film.

In “White Right: Meeting the Enemy” (55 minutes), Emmy Award-winning film-maker Deeyah Khan joins the front line of the race wars in America, sitting down face-to-face with Neo-Nazis and fascists. Speaking with racists, fascists and proponents of alt-right ideologies, Khan attempts to discover new possibilities for connections

and solutions. As she tries to see beyond the headlines to the human beings, her own prejudices are challenged and her tolerance tested.

“White Right” received a PeaceJam Special Jury Prize at the Monte Carlo Television Festival and an Emmy Award for International Current Affairs. It was also a BAFTA Award Nominee for Current Affairs. Khan received a Best Director – Documentary award from the Royal Television Society.

“Masel Tov Cocktail” (30 minutes) tells the story of Dima, a German-Jewish teenager, who gets into a fight at school. When asked to apologize to the person he punched, he notes how he doesn’t really feel sorry. Dima then talks directly to the audience about the hypocrisy he sees in his school and society.



Deeyah Kahn in a scene from “White Right: Meeting the Enemy.” (Photo courtesy of Women Make Movies)

“Masel Tov Cocktail” has won numerous awards at film festivals, including the Atlanta Jewish Film Festival 2021, Anchorage International Film Festival 2020, Boston Jewish Film Festival 2020, Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival 2021, Cleveland International Film Festival 2021. See “Film” on page 3

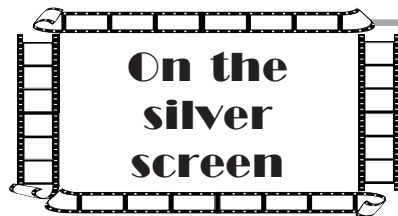
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Second *yahrzeit*: Searching for Izzy, part I

BILL SIMONS

Although the death certificate states that Kirk Douglas died on February 5, 2020, at age 103, his films, writings, family, charities, struggle to synthesize Jewish and American identities, military service and controversies continue to resonate. As his second *yahrzeit* approaches, it's time for reflection. When Robert Caro began his epic biography of Lyndon Johnson, he moved to the former president's boyhood home in the Texas Hill Country. To understand the environment and experiences that forged Douglas, I made two trips to Amsterdam, NY, an old industrial city still awaiting renewal, 29 miles northwest of Albany along the Mohawk River – and a third journey to the grave of the woman who gave Izzy life.

In the photograph accompanying this article, which was taken on October 11, 2021, Columbus Day, I stand at the intersection of East Main and Eagle streets in Amsterdam,



Bill Simon stood by a plaque commemorating Kirk Douglas. (Photo by Rob Compton)

next to a plaque honoring Douglas, dedicated in 2018, but not planted in cured concrete until 2019. The script on the sign reads, "Kirk Douglas Film Legend Born Dec. 9, 1916 to Immigrant Parents at 46 Eagle Street Rose From Poverty To Appear In Over 90 Films In Hollywood." The words perpetuate a myth. Kirk Douglas never lived on Eagle Street. However, a boy named Issur Danielovitch, whose illiterate, Russian Jewish parents informed him one day that he was now Isadore (Izzy) Demsky, grew up there. Kirk Douglas came later.

It takes less than 10 minutes to walk the length of Eagle Street. Izzy's boyhood home at 46 Eagle St. still stands, compact, but well maintained. The last house on the left of this one-way street, it was a far grimmer place during Izzy's youth. Bryna (Bertha) and Harry (Hershel) See "Izzy" on page 5

Opinion

From the Desk of the Federation Executive Director

With gratitude

SHELLEY HUBAL

Time and again Jewish communities around the world have had to dig deep and find strength. Strength in one another. Strength in Torah and tradition. In my opinion, the resilience and compassion of the Jewish people is unlike any other. The world watched recently as four members of Beth Israel Congregation in Colleyville, TX, were taken hostage. When this happened, we all held our breath and said our prayers. It renewed the fear that going to our sacred houses of worship is not safe. To know that the hostage taker was driven by the trope that Jewish people control the world added an element of lunacy to the horrific event.

On January 23, 50 members of our Jewish community gathered virtually to take a tour of Auschwitz. This virtual tour was difficult to experience, but, for so many of us, it was moving and meaningful. On January 27, we held a

discussion with Scott Richman from the New York and New Jersey Anti-Defamation League office. Scott spoke in detail about the many complexities of the rise in antisemitism.

The combination of Colleyville and these virtual events has put the persecution of the Jewish people on my mind more than ever. To be honest, as a person who came of age in the 1970s and '80s, when there was relatively little marked antisemitism in this country, hatred for the Jewish people is not something I dwell on. Is this naïve? I don't know, but I suspect it is not uncommon for most American Jews. However, we are in a new era. Neo-Nazi rallies in Florida, the banning of the Pulitzer Prize-winning graphic novel "Maus" in Tennessee, the drastic rise in antisemitic social media posts and the hostage taking in Colleyville are all very recent, sobering reminders that the Jewish people remain a target for hatred.

Rabbi Andrew Paley of Temple Shalom in Dallas wrote recently in *The Dallas Morning News*, "We will never waiver from our belief that being *rodfei shalom* – pursuers of peace and wholeness – is our calling and our mandate." So, what is the roadmap to peace and wholeness? For some, Torah illuminates the path. For others, it might be social justice work or taking care of a friend in need or a well-intended act of kindness to a stranger.

I believe it does not matter what path you choose. What matters is your commitment. Creating peace, just like any other pursuit, is something you work toward every day. It does not happen overnight and it takes all of us to make it happen. Collectively, we can rise above the hate and, if you look around, you will see there is more good than hate in this world – more light than darkness. And for that I am truly grateful.

In My Own Words

Feeling discomfort

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

I actually had to double check because I started to think, "Wait, that can't be real. She must have accidentally sent me a link to a comic/fake news site." But, unfortunately, I was wrong and, since it was on a topic I've been thinking of writing about for the past few months, I figured now was the time.

The subject: Discomfort or, rather, feeling uncomfortable when some aspect of American history is discussed. People are taking any criticism of the United States as if they are being *personally* criticized. Even worse, many of them see these comments as a personal insult.

I decided to write this after reading the article I mentioned, one that discusses the bill Florida Governor Ron DeSantis has backed called "Individual Freedom." It would allow schools and businesses to be sued if they teach students about racism or train employees about how to prevent discrimination. The actual bill says "an individual, by virtue of his or her race or sex, does not bear responsibility for actions committed in the past by other members of the same race or sex," and "an individual should not be made to feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress on account of his or her race."

Wow, that means you might not be able teach about slavery, systemic racism or the history of discrimination in our country. It's obvious this is aimed against the Black population, although Native American, Asian and other

immigrants come to mind. But then I thought, "Can't make anyone uncomfortable? Does that mean we can't talk about antisemitism? Will the Holocaust also be off the table?"

My first reaction was actually, "Are people so sensitive that they can't hear about mistakes our country has made? Do they have to believe that everything our ancestors have ever done is perfect? Are white folks so narrow-minded and scared that they can't bear to see someone else's point of view? Don't people want to change and grow? And more important, *if you don't think you personally have done anything wrong, then why would this bother you so much?*"

In addition to the fact that this bill would turn the study of American history into meaningless pap, the repercussions might be very different from what the originators expected. Just think about the school administrator in Texas who said that, since they are required to show all sides of an issue, they have to include those who think the Holocaust was OK. The recent law in Tennessee that allows religious adoption agencies to refuse adoptions to couples who offend their religious sensibilities was aimed at the LGBTQ community, but one agency is being sued after preventing a Jewish couple from being able to adopt.

One ironic result of this law could be preventing white Americans from talking about any discrimination that occurred against them in the U.S. Want to talk about the

signs that used to appear saying, "No Irish Need Apply" or the jokes against those of Polish extraction that negated their intellect? Would that be OK if they are both white? Maybe they won't be able to discuss those either. And what if white folks say something that makes Blacks uncomfortable, for example, claiming the recent protests of Black Lives Matter were riots. They could be sued because that definitely qualifies under the part of the law that says, "an individual, by virtue of his or her race or sex, does not bear responsibility for actions committed in the past by other members of the same race." You can't say they're being too sensitive if you claim to be uncomfortable when someone talks about the evils of slavery.

What this law really does is support censorship. It's ironic that its supporters are those who complain about "cancel culture" and "political correctness." This bill is just a different kind of political correctness, one I find offensive. To be clear, I don't support cancel culture: I believe that people can have differences of opinion. I dislike people being condemned for saying something decades ago that was not problematic then, but is now considered offensive. We need to find a balance between these views, but that won't happen unless we can have open discussions and, when necessary, admit when our country could have done better. That ability – to recognize when the U.S. didn't live up to its ideals – is what makes our nation great.



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OPINIONS

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

LETTERS

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

ADS

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

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www.thereportergroup.org

TI to present “Spiritual Strength in Challenging Times” on Feb. 20

Temple Israel will hold the presentation “Spiritual Strength in Challenging Times: Answering in Times of Trouble” featuring Dr. Wendy Love Anderson on Sunday, February 20, at 10:30 am, on Zoom. To make a reservation and receive a Zoom link, contact Tammy Kunsman at temple office at 723-7461 or titammy@stny.twcbc.com.

Anderson, who is a fourth-year rabbinical student at the Academy of Jewish Religion, received a Ph.D. in religious studies from the University of Chicago and is presently assistant director of academic programs at the Center for the Humanities at Washington University in Saint Louis.

“Approximately 850,000 Americans have perished in the past two years,” said organizers of the event. “COVID-19 has undermined the fabric of our society. Public schools

are struggling to provide a quality education in a safe environment. College students are disenchanted with their educational experience and the decision to hold virtual classes. Physicians allege that there is a growing mental health crisis among young people. The American Academy of Pediatrics warns that U.S. children and adolescents are facing a mental health crisis. In 2018, suicide was the second leading cause of death for youth ages 10-24.”

Organizers added, “There has also been an increase in violent crime in urban centers and an increase in antisemitic incidents. A current issue of Hadassah Magazine (Jan./Feb. 2022) was devoted to the increase of confrontations at colleges and universities targeting Jewish students. We were distressed by the tragic incident at the Tree of Life

synagogue in Pittsburgh. Recently, a terrorist took four hostages, including the rabbi, at a synagogue in Texas.”

Anderson spoke about what Judaism has to offer during this time of crisis. “As 2022 continues a seemingly endless cycle of crisis, the psalms of the Hebrew Bible offer a potential source of consolation, with psalm after psalm describing divine rescue and aid in a ‘time of trouble’ or a ‘day of affliction,’” said Anderson. “But can ancient religious texts really respond to the needs of the 21st century? This class will start from Psalm 20:2 (May the Lord answer you in time of trouble / the name of Jacob’s God keep you safe”) to explore Jewish liturgy, *midrash* and even folk customs around the ‘time of trouble.’ How have Jews responded to past times of troubles? How can we use the psalms to respond to the challenges of today and tomorrow?”

Rabbi Andrea L. Weiss to lead two programs at TC Feb. 26-27

Rabbi Andrea L. Weiss, Ph.D., will lead two programs for Temple Concord via Zoom. Both programs are free and everyone is invited in person or via Zoom. People who want to attend in person at the synagogue should notify the office at 723-7355. They must wear masks, provide proof of vaccinations and practice social distancing.

JCC Friendship Club

Welcome back seniors to the Jewish Community Center’s Friendship Club. Sylvia Diamond and Lynne Green have gotten together to rekindle our friendship and desire to have special times together with you at the JCC again – for us older adults, but young-at-heart individuals.

Join us to share ideas of get-togethers, exercise classes, snacks, playing cards and games, etc. The first meeting will be Wednesday, February 16, at 1:30 pm, in JCC Library.

Let us know you are coming by contacting Sylvia at sylviad32@gmail.com or 772-0726; or Lynne at lgreen816@yahoo.com or 723-7272.

Remember to wear your mask when coming to the JCC. Press the button on the wall to hear the buzzer for you to open the front door.

TC/TI Continued from page 1

Goldman-Wartell said she has known Priesand for more than 36 years and is looking forward to welcoming her to the local community. If anyone has questions they would like to ask Priesand, they should send them to Goldman-Wartell at rabbigoldmanwartell@gmail.com.

“Since there is no charge for the program, please consider making a donation to Temple Concord’s Solis-Cohen Scholarship-in-Residence Fund to ensure that we can continue to provide quality adult educational programs,” said organizers of the event. “Donations may be sent to the synagogue at 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905.”

Film Continued from page 1

Filmets-Badalona Film Festival 2020, Flickerfest International Short Film Festival 2021, Florida Film Festival 2021, International Film Festival Etiuda and Anima 2020, Jaipur International Film Festival 2021, La Cabina Valencia International Medium-Length Film Festival 2020, London Short Series Fest 2020, Moscow Jewish Film Festival 2020, San Francisco Jewish Film Festival 2020 and Unabhängiges FilmFest Osnabrück 2020.

“I am so pleased the Film Fest Committee decided to show these films,” said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton. “I was truly riveted by each of them. Each film focuses on hate, anger and antisemitism, but it in two very different ways. If you are interested in understanding why people hate, this is the event for you. The discussion is sure to be compelling.”



TRIPLE CITIES SKI CLUB

Upcoming events:

- XC Ski Trip: Feb. 28 – Mar. 2
- Killington, Vermont: Mar. 13-16
- Loon Mountain: Mar. 21-25



Monthly meeting every 1st Thursday at 177 Robinson st, Binghamton, NY 13904. For more info visit www.triplecitiesclub.com.

On Saturday, February 26, from 9:15-10:30 am, Weiss will lead Temple Concord’s Torah study with a program titled “Give us a holding among our kin’: The Inception and Reception of ‘The Torah: A Women’s Commentary.’” Weiss served as associate editor of that work. On Sunday, February 27, at 1 pm, Weiss will speak about “What can we do to create light together?” Interfaith Insights from American Values, Religious Voices.” Temple Concord Sisterhood is sponsoring the Sunday program. Invited to attend the program are WRJ Sisterhoods, including the Temple Concord Sisterhood, Temple Israel Sisterhood and Beth David Synagogue Sisterhood.



Rabbi Andrea L. Weiss, Ph.D.
(Photo by Laurie Beck Peterson)

Temple Concord Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell won Weiss’ presentation in a Women of Reform Judaism Auction held in 2021 and donated it to Temple Concord Sisterhood. “It was one program and Rabbi Weiss was gracious enough to offer to do it in two sessions,” said organizers of the event.

“During the Saturday program, Weiss will talk about how in the Book of Numbers, the five daughters of Zelophehad boldly assert their right to inherit their deceased father’s land since they have no brothers,” organizers added. “This story provides a fitting symbol for ‘The Torah: A Women’s Commentary.’ Rabbi Weiss will tell how the commentary came about and show why a women’s Torah commentary matters today more than ever.” Also to be studied will be that week’s Torah portion – Vayakel – with materials from “The Torah: A Women’s Commentary.” The program will be held in person at Temple Concord and on Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3CVxM14> or <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88298087579?pwd=eTVkMDRVVlpwTmZvMkdYTm1OK0w1Zz09>, meeting ID number 882 9808 7579 and passcode 676707.

During the Sunday program, Weiss will discuss the “American Values, Religious Voices: 100 Days, 100 Letters” campaign, which sent a letter a day to the president, vice president and members of Congress for the first 100 days of the Trump administration in 2017, and the Biden See “Weiss” on page 8

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to Arlene Osber on the death of her brother,
(Charles) Chuck Schweiger

DEADLINES

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

ISSUE	DEADLINE
February 25-March 10	February 16
March 11-24	March 2
March 25-April 7	March 16
April 8-21	March 30

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

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Save the Date

Hillel Academy Annual Journal event
Sunday, May 22
11 am-3 pm
Details coming soon...

ERNEST H. PARSONS FUNERAL HOME

Faithfully Serving Broome County Since 1928

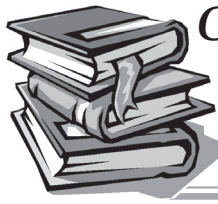
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HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE

CAMP JCC FAMILY Trivium?

at the Jewish Community Center
Sunday, February 27
1:00-4:00 pm
\$5 per person
up to 8 people per team
With hosts Nora & Katie & DJ Harry
Bring your friends, co-workers or family to join the event!
For ages 8 and up

Team Pre Registration required
Call the JCC 607-724-2417 or email us at JCCOffice@binghamtonjcc.org

500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850 www.binghamtonjcc.org
Proceeds raised from this event are going to support our Campership fund. Our scholarship program helps give all children a chance to experience an adventurous summer at CAMP JCC!
Can't attend but want to help out... Consider making a donation!
Snacks available for purchase during event. No outside food allowed



Off the Shelf

Alternate versions of reality

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Alternate reality, fantasy or a combination of both? Wikipedia defines fantasy as “a genre of speculative fiction involving magical elements, typically set in a fictional universe and sometimes inspired by mythology and folklore,” and alternate history as “a genre of speculative fiction of stories in which one or more historical events occur and are resolved differently than in real life.” The three young adult novels in this review don’t fall neatly into either of these genres. Real history is combined with a fantasy element in one, the next contains religious ideas that could be defined in a variety of ways and, while the third might be easily considered alternate history, it also has a mystical/religious aspect. That’s what made reading these works so interesting: the different elements add depth to the stories.

“The City Beautiful”

The most literary – and beautifully written – of these works is “The City Beautiful” by Aden Polydoros (Inkyard Press). Without the one fantasy element, the novel could serve as an excellent example of historical fiction. That element, though, adds even more color and drama.

Seventeen-year-old Alter Rosen lives a dull, dreary life in 1893 Chicago. He works long hours typing on a Linotype press for one of the Jewish newspapers and shares a room with four other young men. Every penny he can spare goes into a fund to bring his mother and twin sisters to the U.S. But life is difficult and Alter sometimes wonders if all the hard work is worth it. Then his roommate and friend Yaakov is murdered, although the police claim it was an accident. But the police have also ignored the recent disappearances of several other young Jewish men. When Alter helps the Chevra Kadisha prepare Yaakov’s body for burial, something odd happens. Alter sees Yaakov move and, believing he is alive, dives into the *mikvah* (ritual bath) to save him. But it is Yaakov’s dybbuk (spirit) that Alter saw, a dybbuk that now inhabits Alter’s body and threatens his health and sanity. The only way for Alter to rid himself of the spirit is to discover who murdered Yaakov.

Alter’s search for the killer reunites him with Frankie,

a fellow Jewish immigrant, who steals and gambles for a living. The sexual attraction Alter felt for Frankie remains and complicates their relationship. But Frankie is willing to help him find the murderers, as is Raizel Ackermann, whom Alter met in an unsuccessful matchmaking attempt by a neighbor.

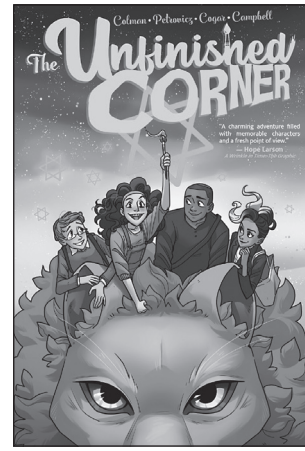
While the search for the killer is filled with action and some unexpected plot twists, the best parts of the novel are those that portray immigrant life in Chicago. Polydoros writes about the hustle and bustle of the city, and the difference between the poor sections and the rich ones. He also shows how Jews were not always made welcome. As Frankie notes about the Christians who control the city, “We’ll never be equals in their eyes. They can grit their teeth and tolerate us, but they’ll never welcome us into their white cities, because ambition becomes something ugly when it has a Jewish face.... And no amount of blood, sweat, or fine tailoring is going to change that.”

“The City Beautiful” is a powerful and moving work. While aimed at a YA audience, adult fantasy lovers will also enjoy it. It’s perfect for book clubs that discuss fantasy, and would make a terrific choice for those that include teenager and adult members.

“The Unfinished Corner”

The phrase “a picture is worth a thousand words” explains why some graphic novels are so successful, particularly when dealing with fantasy. Why use 1,000 words to describe an otherworldly character or part of the universe when you can draw it? That’s true for the fun and exciting “The Unfinished Corner” written by Dani Coleman and illustrated by Rachel “Tuna” Petrovicz (Wonderbound). It’s filled with lore from Jewish folktales, but also serves as an engaging look at Jewish identity in contemporary times.

The winners of an art contest at a Jewish day school are awarded a trip to Washington, DC. What the four students don’t realize is the rabbi accompanying them is really an angel and their bus an eagle that is flying them to an unfinished corner of God’s universe, which serves as



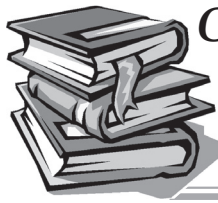
The cover of “The Unfinished Corner” (Photo use courtesy of Wonderbound)



A page from “The Unfinished Corner” (Photo use courtesy of Wonderbound)

the home of monsters and demons. The rabbi/angel wants 12-year-old Miriam to use her artistic skills to finish that corner of the world. But Miriam is more worried about her upcoming bat mitzvah and whether or not she wants to be Jewish in a world where it doesn’t feel safe to be Jewish. Two of the students – Avi and David – try to help, but are dealing with their own issues. The fourth, Judith, who is rude and obnoxious, creates a good counterpoint and another way of viewing the world.

“The Unfinished Corner” is filled with fast-paced action, helped by the wonderful drawings, which add an extra dimension to the book. The many Jewish characters drawn from legend – from Lilith to the golem of Prague – work really well, even for those who are unfamiliar with them. The work does discuss serious issues, but the lessons being taught are easy to swallow because readers will be too busy enjoying the plot. Those who love fantasy and graphic novels will definitely want a copy of “The Unfinished Corner.” See “Reality” on page 8



Off the Shelf

Guidance and love for those with special needs’ families

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

“It is also to share our story... yours and mine... as I grew to appreciate that what I initially thought was a mistake on the part of our Creator, was, in fact, a gift, one that I did not fully appreciate, well, into far too long a time.” – Ahava Ehrenpreis writing about her son, Saadya

Sometimes I request a review copy of a book out of sheer curiosity. Sometimes that curiosity is connected to something personal, as was my request for “More Than Special: Perspective from the World of Special Needs” by Ahava Ehrenpreis (The Shaar Press). Ehrenpreis’ son, Saadya, and my younger brother, Lawrence (Larry), were born with Down Syndrome, although Saadya was much higher functioning than Larry. Since I also do chaplaincy for those with developmental disabilities, I was curious to read a work about how the contemporary Orthodox world approached those with special needs.

What’s clear from Ehrenpreis’ work is that Orthodox Judaism – much like the secular world – has greatly changed from the days when those with special needs were not expected to live meaningful lives. Her book does not gloss over the hardships and problems families face, but her approach is to focus on the positive by offering encouragement and validation for the emotions many of these parents experience. Sections offer “Spiritual Guidance,” “Therapeutic Guidance”

and “Legal Guidance,” in addition to the work’s conclusion that features tributes to Saadya who died of COVID-19 in 2020. The stories told in each section enlarge readers’ understanding of the joys and sorrows these families face.

Families of children with special needs may want to copy and pass out the one-page listing called “Please Don’t / Please Do” with its two columns of what not to say and the words one should say instead. For example, don’t say “that God never gives you more than you can handle,” or “that you know exactly how I feel,” or “that God must love me to have given me this challenge.” For all of these, Ehrenpreis suggests people simply say, “*Mazel tov* on your new baby.” The other comments listed are also excellent.

“More Than Special” does raise the question about the sorrows parents feel when they realize their child may not be able to perform *mitzvot* in the traditional way. Those who believe God is behind everything that happens in this world are faced with determining why this happened to them. Rabbinic authorities are quoted as noting that having a special needs child is not a punishment and suggesting that these children can bring blessings to a family. Yet, parents have to adjust their expectations about what their child will be able to do, for example, whether they will be able to attend a Jewish school, or need the therapeutic offerings of a secular one. Will boys be able to have a bar mitzvah (this is still a culture when many girls do not have a formal bat mitzvah ceremony in a synagogue), and will either sex be able to marry and fulfil the commandments of having children?

The longest section of the book focuses on individual stories, including not only from parents and siblings, but those who have created programs/schools/camps for people

with special needs or who worked in these programs. While the stories generally seek to be positive, it’s impossible to hide the pain some people feel, especially when their child is very young. The difficulty of finding appropriate education services is discussed, as are medical problems (some of which are extreme) and behavioral ones. (Ehrenpreis notes how her local police were familiar with Saadya because he often took off on his own and got lost.) There is a debate about inclusive education, something the writers generally support, and offering children the possibility of rising to their highest level of their ability. Some write of doctors who told them their children would never be able to perform general intellectual tasks. That was true for Saadya, but his mother notes the schools he attended and how his accomplishments were far beyond the specialists’ predictions.

“More Than Special” does make it clear that individuals with special needs cannot be treated as a monolithic group. Writers speak about the different options offered as their child grows older, including continuing to live at home, moving into group homes, or living in apartments with supervision. A few note that their children were able to marry, although this did not happen in the overwhelming majority of cases.

It’s clear that “More Than Special” is aimed at a specific audience. The writers use Hebrew terms in their essays, which are not translated, and the work does not contain a glossary since the assumption is that readers will be familiar with the terms. Some of the essays are very moving, especially for those whose families know these joys and sorrows personally. The tributes in the final section show how Saadya’s *neshamah* (soul) touched the many people who knew him. May his memory be for a blessing.



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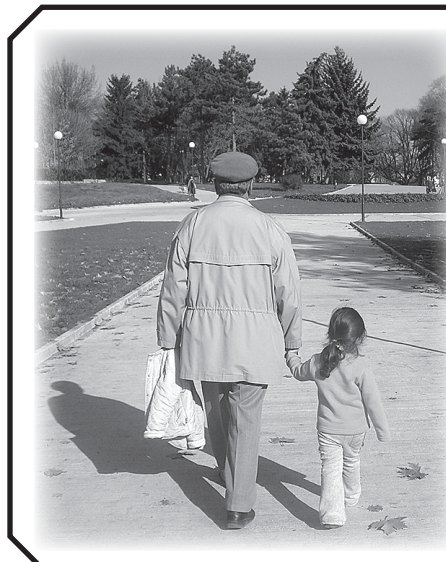
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Federation held ADL webinar



At left: The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton held a webinar with Scott Richman, the director of the Anti-Defamation League's largest regional office covering New York and New Jersey, on January 27 on Zoom. Rachel Coker, director of research advancement at Binghamton University, moderated the discussion. Shown are some of the 37 computers that were tuned into the webinar.

Izzy.....Continued from page 2

Demsky, their six daughters, and son Izzy lived in poverty. A "ragman," trading in scrap metal and other used materials, Harry stabled his horse, Bill, and wagon in back of the house. During the winter, horse manure around the structure served as insulation from the cold. Across from the Demsky residence and at the end of Eagle Street lay a cluster of factories; carpet manufacturing dominated Amsterdam. Factory shift changes, noise, smells and pollution punctuated daily rhythms.

Helping to put food on the table, young Izzy held a succession of part-time jobs. Antisemitic gangs terrorized Izzy on his way to Hebrew school, and they set fire to the backyard barn. A petrified Bill burned to death. Izzy loved that horse.

The worst bullying Izzy endured was from his father, Harry, an abusive alcoholic. Harry squandered the family's limited income on drink at neighborhood bars. Izzy witnessed little intimacy between his parents, who eventually divorced. The boy took note of his father's physical strength and triumphs over antisemites in tavern brawls. Izzy craved recognition and attention from his father: that rarely came.

Despite Dickensian circumstances, Bryna Demsky and others in Amsterdam instilled within Izzy a fervent belief in the American Dream; that and a ferocious anger fueled his rise from the ragman's son to the celebrated Kirk Douglas.

Contemporaneous with its 100th anniversary celebration of incorporation as a city, Amsterdam proclaimed June 1, 1985, as Kirk Douglas Day. And Amsterdam's most famous native returned as grand marshal of the centennial parade to receive a key to the city and participate in the dedication of a park named for him. It was a glorious day. The enthusiasm of the crowd of 28,000 – more than the 1985 population of Amsterdam – and of Douglas, then 68 but still ruggedly handsome and robust, are palpable in Bob Cudmore's contemporary radio coverage of the event. Izzy's sisters were there and so were boyhood friends. The newly named Kirk Douglas Park is an oasis of beauty graced by waterfalls. New York Governor Mario Cuomo eloquently praised Amsterdam's hero as emblematic of the best of America.

I visited places significant to Izzy Demsky, amongst them: 46 Eagle St., hulks of old factories, the former high school building, ruins of O'Shaughnessy's Tavern, the lodgings of his high school mentor, Kirk Douglas Park, exteriors of a former and contemporary synagogue, and a cemetery. My friends and SUNY colleagues Rob Compton and Fred Bucalos participated in on-site research. By phone and e-mail, I communicated with several people – some passionate, two requesting anonymity – who facilitated the search for Izzy. Columnist/radio personality/historian Bob Cudmore and Jerry Snyder, retired engineer, former president of the Historic Amsterdam League, and leader of community walking tours, generously shared of their extensive knowledge. At the Walter Elwood Museum, Executive Director Ann Peconie graciously accessed extensive primary sources that connected me to Izzy's transformative high school years. My wife Nancy scoured censuses, city directories and other primary records.

Three years after Amsterdam's love feast for Douglas, publication of his 1988 autobiography, "The Ragman's Son," contained revelations about the actor's Amsterdam coming of age that strained his hometown standing. Part II of "Second *yahrzeit*: Searching for Izzy" will return to Amsterdam, drilling deeper into the making of Kirk Douglas.

Bill Simons is a professor emeritus at SUNY Oneonta where he continues to teach courses in American 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.

At right: Scott Richman, the director of the Anti-Defamation League's largest regional office covering New York and New Jersey, spoke about a variety of issues during the webinar held on January 27.



TC Religious School service



Students from the Temple Concord Religious School led the Shabbat morning service on January 29. Shown are the students and their teachers.

Women in Business

A paid advertising section.

The Cat Doctor

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 Owner: Darcy Sobel, D. V. M.
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Tri-City Hearing is a woman owned and operated practice, dedicated to providing audiology and hearing-related services to patients of all ages. Suzette Pace, Au.D. and owner of Tri-City Hearing, has been practicing clinical audiology since 1999. Under her leadership, Amanda Levy, Doctor of Audiology, and Amanda VanFossen, a NYS Licensed Hearing Instrument Specialist, provide specialized expertise in hearing assessments and fitting and fine-tuning of hearing aids for a variety of hearing losses. Suzette Pace and her team of hearing professionals have demonstrated their dedication to patient care for over 25 years. They are proud to be a woman-owned business and appreciate their patients' continued support. As part of its Hearing Wellness Program, Tri-City Hearing provides free comprehensive annual hearing screenings, which are especially important for those ages 55 and older. Call Tri-City Hearing today at 888-318-2789 to schedule your appointment.

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Community Calendar

The Community Calendar can be found on the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton's website, www.jfgb.org, by clicking on "calendar." Updates or additions of events for the calendar can be made by contacting the Federation through its website or by calling 724-2332.





Weekly Parasha

Tetzaveh, Exodus 27:20-30:10

Torah as the fiber of life

RABBI RACHEL SAFMAN, TEMPLE BETH-EL, ITHACA

The book of Exodus opens with some of the most heady narratives in the entire Tanach: the burning bush, the plagues, the opening of the Sea of Reeds and the revelation at Sinai (just to name a few). Following *matan* Torah (the “giving of the Torah”), though, the text devolves into an almost tortuously prosaic set of guidelines for the establishment of a civil society and the construction of the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle). It’s as if

the Divine Author has lost the plot. Or is it?

Our commentators tell us that in the detailed set of edicts that comprise *parashat* Mishpatim, the portion immediately following the giving of the law, is found the substance of what it means to lead a life of Torah. They claim that the various statutes regarding our treatment of our neighbors, our livestock, indeed, even in the keeping of our calendar, translate God’s moral prescriptions into

concrete principles for leading a life of sanctity (known collectively as *halachah*). And this, too, I would claim is the purpose of the *parashiyot* (Torah portions) that follow: Terumah, Tetzaveh, Ki Tisa, Vayakel and Pekudai, all of which deal in some way with the creation of the Tabernacle and its use.

Parashat Tetzaveh, with which we are concerned this See “Life” on page 7

Congregational Notes

Temple Israel

Orientation: Conservative
 Rabbi: Geoffrey Brown
 Address: 4737 Deerfield Pl., Vestal, NY 13850
 Phone: 723-7461 and 231-3746
 Office hours: Mon.-Thurs., 8:30 am-3:30 pm; Fri., 8 am-3 pm
 E-mail: titammy@stny.twcbc.com
 Website: www.templeisraelvestal.org
 Service schedule: Tues., 5:30 pm; Fri., 5:30 pm; Sat., 9:30 am
 On Fridays and Tuesdays at 5:30 pm, services will be led by Rabbi Geoffrey Brown via Zoom and in-person (masks are required).

On Saturday, February 12, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person (masks are required). The Torah portion is Exodus 27:20-30:10 and the haftarah is Ezekiel 43:10-27. At 6:15 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom.

On Tuesday, February 15, at 7 pm, there will be Board of Trustees meeting on Zoom.

On Wednesday, February 16, there will be Torah study from 4-5 pm on Zoom only.

On Saturday, February 19, at 9:30 am, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person (masks are required). The Torah portion is Exodus 30:11-34:35 and the haftarah is I Kings 18:1-39. At 6:30 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom.

On Monday, February 21, the office will be closed for Presidents’ Day.

On Wednesday, February 23, Torah study will be held from 4-5 pm on Zoom only.

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.

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.

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
 Website: templebrithsholomcortland.org
 Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Temple-Brith-Sholom-114006981962930/
 Service leaders: Lay leadership
 Shabbat services: Either Friday evening at 7:30 pm or Saturday at 10 am from Rosh Hashanah to Shavuot. Holiday services are also held. Check the Facebook page or weekly e-mail for upcoming services. Contact the president to get on the e-mail list.
 Religious School: Students are educated on an individual basis.

Temple Brith Sholom is a small equalitarian congregation serving the greater Cortland community. Congregants span the gamut of observance and services are largely dependent on the service leader. The Friday night siddur is “Likrat Shabbat,” while the Saturday morning siddur is “Gates of Prayer.” The community extends a warm welcome to the Jewish student population of SUNY Cortland, as well as the residents of local adult residences.

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

Synagogues limit face-to-face gatherings

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

Beth David Synagogue

Affiliation: Orthodox Union
 Rabbi: Zev Silber
 Address: 39 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905
 Phone: 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

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.

Temple Beth El of Oneonta

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
 Rabbi: Amelia F. Wolf
 Address: 83 Chestnut St., Oneonta, NY 13820
 Mailing address: P.O. Box 383, Oneonta, NY 13820
 Phone: 607-432-5522
 E-mail: TBEOneonta@gmail.com
 Regular service times: Contact the temple for days of services and times.
 Religious School/Education: Religious School, for grades kindergarten through bar/bat mitzvah, meets Sunday mornings. For the schedule of services, classes and events, contact the temple.
 Friday night services will be held on March 4; April 1; May 6 and Saturday morning, May 7; and June 3.

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-safman@tbeithaca.org and secretary@tbeithaca.org
 Website: www.tbeithaca.org
 Presidents: David Weiner and Linda Aigen
 Sisterhood President: Gail Zussman
 Director of Education: Rabbi Suzanne Brody
 Services: Fri. 8 pm; Sat. 10 am, unless otherwise announced.
 Weekday morning minyan 7:30 am (9 am on Sun. and legal holidays).
 Religious School/Education: September-May: Classes meet on Sunday, 9 am-12:30 pm and Wednesday, 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.

Friday, February 11, light candles before 5:13 pm
 Saturday, February 12, Shabbat ends 6:15 pm
 Friday, February 18, light candles before 5:22 pm
 Saturday, February 19, Shabbat ends 6:24 pm
 Friday, February 25, light candles before 5:31 pm
 Saturday, February 26, Shabbat ends 6:33 pm

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: Fri., 7:30 pm; Sat., 10:35 am, when religious school is in session.
 Hebrew school: Hebrew school meets at 4:15 pm and 5:15 pm on Tues. and Thurs. during the school year unless otherwise noted.

Some services and programs are online only.
 Friday, February 11: at 7:30 pm, Shabbat service led by Rabbi Goldman-Wartell. To attend in person, all must show proof of COVID-19 vaccinations, wear a mask and physically distance. Join via Zoom at https://bit.ly/37UQSpK, meeting ID 829 9450 3102 and passcode 708450, or on the Temple Concord Facebook page.

Saturday, February 12: Shabbat school at 9 am; Torah study at 9:15 am on Zoom at https://bit.ly/3CVxM14, meeting ID 88298087579 and passcode 676707; Shabbat family service at 10:30 am; and “Havdalah with a Bonus” at 7 pm on Zoom at https://bit.ly/3zd0atv, meeting ID 897 4179 1260 and passcode 408279.

Sunday, February 13: at 10:30 am, Temple Concord/Temple Israel Joint Adult Education Program: “Reflection on my Life as a Rabbi: A Zoom Conversation with Rabbi Sally J. Priesand.” The event is sponsored by Temple Concord, Temple Israel, the Temple Concord Sisterhood and the Solis Cohen Fund. The program is free of charge. For more information on how to take part, see the article on page 1.

Wednesday, February 16: at 8 pm, “A Talk with Professor Jonathan Boyarin,” author of “Yeshiva Days.” “Yeshiva Days” is Boyarin’s account of the year he spent as both student and observer at Mesivtha Tifereth Jerusalem of Manhattan’s Lower East Side, and a chronicle of a side of Jewish life that outsiders rarely see. To register in advance, visit https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYkcOCgrz0qE93eeSE-qGH70S-I3nTN02WrL. After registering, a confirmation e-mail containing information about joining the meeting will be sent.

Friday, February 18: at 7:30 pm, Shabbat service with Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell. To attend in person, all must show proof of COVID-19 vaccinations, wear a mask and physically distance. Via Zoom at https://bit.ly/37UQSpK, meeting ID 829 9450 3102 and passcode 708450, or on the Temple Concord Facebook page.

See “Concord” on page 7

Norwich Jewish Center

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

Congregation 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: Nomi Talmi and Shawn Murphy
 Rabbi: Shifrah Tobacman, rabbishifrah@tikkunvor.org
 Education Director/Administrative Coordinator: Naomi Wilensky
 Bnai Mitzvah Coordinator: Michael Margolin
 Services: All services currently on Zoom. E-mail info@tikkunvor.org for the times and links. Contemplative morning services every Tuesday from 8:30-9:30 am. Saturday mornings, Gan Shabbat and other special services at least once a month. Call for the weekly schedule.
 Jewish Learning Experiences (JLE) for second through seventh grade classes meet on Sunday mornings. Sixth and seventh grades also meet on Wednesday afternoons. Family programs for kindergarten and first grade held monthly.
 Adult Education: Offered regularly throughout the year. Check the website for details.

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Israel launches \$70M plan to help propel more Arabs into tech industry

Israel launched a \$70 million plan to promote the Arab sector in the high-tech industry. "We see a change in Arab employment in high-tech in the past years, but it's not enough," Karina Rubinstein, director of business development for the Startup Division of the Israel Innovation Authority, told i24News. "[Arab-Israelis] have to compete with other workers, and they sometimes lack the knowledge of how to pass an interview or how to have these 'soft skills,'" she said. To that end, innovation centers will be established in Israel-Arab communities to foster communication and consultation, including "investors clubs" to encourage funding for Arab startups, said Rubinstein. Arab Israelis make up about 20 percent of the population, though only 3.5 percent of workers in high-tech.

Dozens of Jewish groups blast anti-Israel U.N. probe, urge secretary general to end it

Forty-one Jewish organizations wrote to U.N. Security General António Guterres and U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Michele Bachelet demanding an end to the "one-sided farce" of a probe by the U.N. Human Rights Council's International Commission of Inquiry into Israel. The letter, spearheaded by the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, notes that the COI, which was established by

Concord.Continued from page 6

Saturday, February 19: Shabbat school at 9 am; Torah study at 9:15 am on Zoom at https://bit.ly/3CVxM14, meeting ID 882 9808 7579 and passcode 676707; Shabbat family service at 10:30 am; and "Havdalah with a Bonus" at 7 pm on Zoom at https://bit.ly/3zd0atv, meeting ID 897 4179 1260 and passcode 408279. Sunday, February 6: from 10 am-2

pm, Sisterhood's Rummage Sale: Buy one coat or jacket, get one free. Shoppers should use the Oak Street door and wear their mask.

Tuesday, February 8: at 6:30 pm, Executive Board meeting and at 7:30 pm, General Board meeting. The general meeting is open to members; contact the temple for the meeting link.

Life.Continued from page 6

week, is emblematic of this. The portion deals with the outfitting of the Mishkan itself and also with the details of the priestly vestments, the uniform that the priests would wear during their divine service. Lest you think this aspect of their work was but an obscure detail, the Torah spells out (Ex 28: 43) that those serving at the altar should wear the specified garments "when they enter the Tent of Meeting or when they approach the altar to officiate... so they do not incur punishment and die!" (emphasis is mine).

The key to retting, though the ancients may not have been aware of it at the time, lies in the Clostridium bacteria that colonize the retting pools or pits. These bacteria secrete an enzyme that breaks down the pectin in the stalks, leaving behind the silky fibers that can be twisted, spun and woven. Alas though, if the retting is done improperly – the stalks left for too long or short a time – the integrity of the fibers themselves will be diminished. So, an expert eye is required to determine just when the stalks should be removed from their soak.

The Talmud similarly asserts, with respect to the descendants of Aaron, that "when they wear their priestly garments, their priesthood is upon them, and when they are not wearing these garments, their priesthood is not upon them." (Zevahim 17b) The same sugya (talmudic discussion) then goes on to question the nature of the fabric from which the priestly vestments were made. It makes much of the fact that the priestly vestments are to be made from the finest linen, a fiber that was highly prized both for its comfort and elegance, even after extended periods of wear, but also because its production was a highly involved process, far more demanding than that of say cotton or wool. In particular, the production of linen requires that the stalks of flax (the plants from which linen is derived) be harvested and then transported to a pool in which the dried stalks would then be soaked, a process known as retting that would render the initially rigid fibers malleable.

Herein lies a useful metaphor for all of us in translating the Toraitic precepts received at Sinai into the "fabric" of a moral life. For like our ancestors who had to weigh when the natural fibers that they had received were sufficiently retted, appropriately transformed through exposure to the ambient environment to make them useful for human purposes, we, too, are charged with taking the unrefined words of Torah, premises too idealized in their original state to be readily incorporated into our daily lives, and to rework them just enough that they can serve as the canvas – indeed, the warp and weft – of a Godly existence. "Work" them too little and we are left with a substrate that is excessively rigid and ill-suited to the fluidity and dynamism of our world. Transform them too much and some element of their sanctity is lost. It is up to us to achieve the desired bad, the much sought-after linen fabric in which to drape our existence.

the Human Rights Council as a result of a special session in Resolution S-30/1 of May 27, 2021, is designed to "provoke disproportionate criticism of Israel and to drive the commission it creates to conclude that Israel has violated international law." Additionally, the letter denounces the resolution for not naming Hamas – the Palestinian terror group that launched 4,000-plus rockets from the Gaza Strip into Israeli population centers for 11 days last May – arguing that it encourages "commission members to determine that Israel is engaged in 'systematic discrimination and repression based on national, ethnic, racial or religious identity.'" It also slammed the COI's open-ended mandate, which it says will provide an opportunity for nations to "engage in repeated denunciations of Israel at the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly."

Wedding and engagement photos wanted

The Reporter is looking for photos of couples who became engaged or married in 2021 for the annual Wedding, Prom and Party Guide issue (coming March 11).



Please e-mail these photos with identification, including maiden names. Please do so by Tuesday, March 1. Photos can be dropped off Monday-Thursday 8:30 am-5 pm; and Friday 8:30 am-4 pm. They can be e-mailed, in TIF or JPG format, to TReporter@aol.com; please note in the subject line that a wedding/engagement photo for The Reporter is attached and include the necessary information in the message.

Moving any time soon?



Whether you're moving across town or across the country, please let The Reporter know so you can stay up to date on community news! E-mail treporter@aol.com with "Reporter Address change" in the subject line to let The Reporter know about your new address.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Erdogan: Turkey, Israel to discuss energy cooperation, transporting gas to Europe

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said a discussion over energy cooperation with Israel would take place in March and that on the table for discussion is a plan to work together to transport natural gas to Europe.

Israel appoints first female attorney general

The Israeli Cabinet approved the appointment on Feb. 7 of Gali Baharav-Miara as attorney general, according to a statement from the Prime Minister's Office.

Weiss.Continued from page 3

administration in 2021. Weiss explained, "The letters were written by a multi-faith group of scholars who connected core American values to our different religious traditions.

register at https://bit.ly/3rbAQkw; once registered, a Zoom link will be sent out.

Weiss is the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel provost and associate professor of Bible at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. She is the founder of the American Values, Religious Voices campaign, co-editor of "American Values, Religious Voices: 100 Days, 100 Letters"

Looking for this issue's "Jewish Resources"? Visit www.thereportergroup.org, click on Features and then Miscellaneous Feature to find out what's happening online.

JFS Accepting Purim Donations. Jewish Family Service will once again be collecting funds to fulfill the Purim mitzvah of matanot l'evyonim (gifts for the poor).

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maintained and to correct what needs to be corrected," added Bennett, who, along with Justice Minister Gideon Sa'ar, recommended Baharav-Miara for the post. Hers had been among three names submitted by the selection committee, chaired by former Supreme Court president Asher Grunis.

Israel's justice minister OKs sanctions against Ben & Jerry's

Israeli Justice Minister Gideon Sa'ar approved on Feb. 5 the sanctioning of ice-cream manufacturer Ben & Jerry's and its parent company, Unilever Global, for its decision to sever its licensing agreement with Ben & Jerry's Israel.

Israeli tourism minister: Allow unvaccinated kids into Israel by Passover

Israel should aim to let unvaccinated individuals under the age of 18 into Israel, accompanied by their vaccinated parents, by March 1, Israeli Tourism Minister Yoel Razvozov tweeted on Feb. 6.

Congressional Israel Allies Caucus co-chairs criticize Amnesty report on Israel

The co-chairs of the Congressional Israel Allies Caucus condemned on Feb. 4 a recent report by Amnesty International criticized worldwide for its inaccuracy and flagrant anti-Israel bias.

Tel Aviv, Dubai hold online seminar, partner on women's health

Sheba Medical Center in Tel Hashomer and Medcare Women & Children Hospital in Dubai hosted a first-ever joint educational online seminar on Feb. 3 to enhance learning on women's care.

NY launches contest for Israeli startups to tackle clean-energy challenge

New York is holding a competition for Israeli startup technology companies to help solve the state's utility challenges as it works to transform itself into a fully clean-energy user.

Reality.Continued from page 4

"The Papercutter" Some alternative histories are really commentaries on contemporary times. That's certainly true of "The Papercutter: Book 1 of The Split Series" by Cindy Rizzo (Bella Books).