

# THE REPORTER

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## “Chevrah Kadisha – Sacred Mitzvah” adult ed. program to be held Jan. 22

The Jewish Federation, in cooperation with Beth David, Temple Concord and Temple Israel, will hold an adult education brunch program, “Chevrah Kadisha – Sacred Mitzvah,” on Sunday, January 22, from 10 am-noon hosted at Temple Israel. The event will feature Rabbi Elchonon Zohn, director of the Vaad Harobonim of Queens, who has been called “one of New York state’s experts on all things chevrah kadisha.” The

brunch will begin at 10 am and be prepared by Victor Torres. The cost of the brunch is \$10. Zohn will begin speaking at 10:30 am. Participants may opt to join the program via Zoom at <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84097361294?pwd=dW1uM2hhMlo1UjNMcDdlDSllhU3FEQT09>, meeting ID 840 9736 1294 and passcode Minyan18. For more information, contact Temple Israel at 723-7461 or e-mail at [titammy@stny.twcbc.com](mailto:titammy@stny.twcbc.com).

“We are looking forward to hearing Rabbi Zohn teach participants about the holy task and honor associated with the chevrah kadisha,” said organizers of the event. “Among Ashkenazi Jews, the chevrah kadisha, a mutual beneficial society, was established to properly prepare a body for burial in accordance with Jewish law and custom. Chevrah kadisha from the Aramaic literally means the holy brotherhood.”

Organizers continued, “Do you have questions about the chevrah kadisha? For example, people may want to know, How do we prepare our loved one’s for burial? When did Jewish communities begin this practice? Is everyone eligible to be part of the chevrah kadisha?” Anyone with questions should send them to Rabbi Geoffrey Brown at [rabbibrownti@gmail.com](mailto:rabbibrownti@gmail.com) for the question-and-answer portion of the program.

## Film Fest to show “Greener Pastures” in January

By Reporter staff

The Binghamton Jewish Film Fest will hold a virtual showing of the Israeli comedy “Greener Pastures” in January. The film is in Hebrew with English subtitles. Registration is required prior to Thursday, January 12, which is when the link will be sent out. A discussion moderated by Neisen Luks will take place on Sunday, January 15, at 5 pm. Registration is free, but donations are welcome. To register, visit [www.jfjb.org/](http://www.jfjb.org/).

The film tells the story of 79-year-old Dov, whose family has forced him to move into a nursing home. Dov can’t remain his home because he has no money due to having lost his pension savings. He dislikes the nursing home and dreams of finding a way to make

money so he can buy back his old house. After noticing his fellow residents smoking legal medical cannabis, he decides that if he sells the weed, rather than smoking it, he may be able to raise enough money to move back home.

“Greener Pastures” was nominated for 12 awards in 2020 by the Israeli Film Academy. Alan Ng, <https://filmthreat.com>, called the film “a touching and, in a way, cathartic tale about family and loss.” In Moment magazine, Dina Gold wrote, “This is a gentle and amusing movie, wholly suitable for family viewing.”

Luks, who will moderate the discussion, has been an active member of the Jewish community since arriving in town in June, 1966. He is a past president of Temple

Concord and the Jewish Federation of Broome County (now known as the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton). “I’ve agreed to be the moderator of this film since it is a ‘light’ comedy and relatable to a person of my age,” he said. “Additionally, it appears to be fairly benign, thus not requiring any in-depth analysis or profound movie expertise.”

“A comedy is the perfect film for a dark winter night,” said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. “I’m looking forward to viewing the film and participating in the discussion.”



In “Greener Pastures,” residents of the nursing home enjoyed their legal medical cannabis.

## L’Dor v’Dor – Next Generation hockey event on Feb. 4

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton’s next L’Dor v’Dor – Next Generation event will be a Binghamton Black Bears hockey game. L’Dor v’Dor

is aimed at those in their 20s and 30s. The game will be held on Saturday, February 4, at 7 pm. Tickets are \$6 per person and must be reserved and paid for in advance. The deadline to reserve is Friday, January

27. To make a reservation, visit <https://www.jfjb.org/>.

“The Federation is excited to get a group of young Jewish adults together again,” said Shelley Hubal, executive director of

the Federation. “Our ‘Jews & Brews’ event last summer was a success. It showed us that there are lots of young Jewish people living in Binghamton and they are eager to make social connections.”

### Spotlight

## Federation 2022: the year in review

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton held 20 in-person and virtual events and programs during 2022, and began soliciting funds for a matching grant in order to increase security at local Jewish organizations. For the first time in three years, the Federation was able to hold its Campaign Kick-off in person with a brunch and speaker. It also held its first in-person film/dinner event since the pandemic began. In addition, it held its first L’Dor v’Dor – Next Generation event.

“It was wonderful to be able to hold events in person,” said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. “It’s been a rough few years with us only being able to hold programs online. However, the flexibility Zoom offered has allowed us to present programs in the winter without having to worry about the weather.”

Hubal added, “When I look back at this past year, I’m pleased and amazed at the variety of programs the Federation held. We aimed to present programs to reach people of every age – from children and families to seniors – and I think we succeeded. I am



Sixty people attended the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton’s “March into Spring Family Get-Together” on March 6 at the Jewish Community Center playground. Shown are some of those who attended.

particularly proud that we had a successful program for those in their 20s and 30s, a

group that many consider difficult to reach.” Noting that she hopes to build on her

successes, Hubal did say that help from the community is always appreciated. “The Federation board and its committees help make this possible,” she said, “but we can always use additional help and suggestions. If you are interested in volunteering, feel free to contact me at [director@jfjb.org](mailto:director@jfjb.org) or 724-2332.”

Federation events and initiatives for 2022 included:

- ◆ Alive virtual tour of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp on January 23. The program was offered in partnership with the Center for Holocaust Education of the East Valley Jewish Community Center, AZ. The tour of the death camp included historical footage, aerial photographs, drone videos and testimonies of survivors.

- ◆ 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. Thirty-seven households tuned into the event.

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## Jewish Baseball Players

# Alex in wonderland

BILL SIMONS

The bar/bat mitzvah marks a major milestone, a coming of age in ethical and ritual responsibility. It is also a time of celebration. So it was on Saturday, April 21, 2007, at Congregation Albert, a Reform temple, in Albuquerque, NM. Rabbi Joe Black complimented 13-year-old Alex on the dedication evidenced by flawless chanting of his Torah portion, a challenging section detailing religious response to physical ills.

There is a joyous and revealing photograph of Alex standing on the *bima*, with his father, Sam, to his right and mother, Jackie, to his left. Appropriately, the parents are kvelling. Jackie has a hand on Alex's elbow. Discretely, with a right hand on the bottom of the scroll, Sam helps his son support the Torah, which can grow heavy. *Tallit* drape parents and son. Despite his modest height, several inches less than that of his 5'4" mother and dwarfed by his 6'4" father, Alex beams with happiness, purpose and a preternatural confidence.

In his bar mitzvah speech, Alex announces ambitious goals: "We all need to realize that there are people out there who may be suffering, and we all need to try to do our part to relieve that suffering when we can... I want to be able to use my love of the game of baseball to be a good example and a good person... who plays for the love of the game, never quits trying to give my best and is a good role model for all of the kids who look up to baseball players." Many bar mitzvah boys have made similar declarations. For Alex Bregman, they came true. A wonderland beckoned.

Augmenting relentless practice, tireless conditioning and natural athletic gifts, Alex had the advantage of family support. Had Alex come of age in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, immigrant parents would have probably despaired over his baseball obsession. In 1903, for example, a letter to Abraham Cahan, editor of *The Jewish Daily Forward*, from a distraught parent expressed fears held by many: "[W]hat value does a game like baseball have? Nothing more than becoming crippled comes out of it... They run after the stupid ball made of hide... I want my boy

to grow up to be a mensch, not a wild American runner. He's making me miserable; I can't take it anymore."

By the time of Alex's birth in 1994, however, assimilation, economic mobility and ethnic standard bearers had long since rendered most American Jews sport friendly. The Bregman family has a notable baseball lineage. Alex's grandfather, Stanley Bregman, a sports enthusiast and general counsel for the Washington Senators, persuaded Bob Short to buy the team, resulting in the franchise moving to Texas. Stanley frequently brought his sons, Sam and Ben, into the team clubhouse where manager Ted Williams befriended the boys. Sam and Ben later played freshman baseball at the University of Arizona. Subsequently, Sam and wife, Jackie, shared partnership of a law firm, management of an NBA developmental team and liberal Democratic activism, while raising their three children with a commitment to social justice. And they encouraged son Alex's baseball quest.

A diamond prodigy, Alex's baseball ascent was meteoric. At Albuquerque Academy, a private preparatory school, he became at age 16 the youngest recipient of the USA Baseball Player of the Year Award. Twice named an All-American at Louisiana State University, Alex was the Houston Astros' first pick in the 2015 MLB draft. After only a season and a half in the minors, the 22-year-old debuted as the Astros' starting third baseman in mid-season 2016. Alex emerged as a star on the 2017 World Series champion Astros.

In 2018, Alex's 31 home runs, 51 doubles, 103 RBIs and fielding prowess at the hot corner placed him fifth place in American League Valuable Player rankings. For an encore, Alex's .296 BA, 41 HRs and 112 RBIs propelled the Astros to another AL pennant in 2019 and Alex to a second place finish in MVP voting.

Aspiring to be the LeBron James of MLB, Alex enjoys attention and seeks to enliven baseball's staid image. Photos of his friendship with a Los Angeles Clippers cheerleader were shared. With at least two inches aspirational, Alex lists his official height as six feet. Alex added to his extensive

social media presence in 2019 by launching a comedic YouTube "reality" channel. In the tradition of Adam Sandler, the series features episodes of Alex with his buddy posse masquerading as goofy umpires at a youth baseball game, crashing the wedding of fans, tipping a waitress \$500, tailgating at an LSU football game and visiting a children's hospital. Irrepressible, Alex hopes that movies and television are in his future.

Unfortunately, another form of media was misused. In November 2019, investigative journalists discovered that the Houston Astros in their 2017 championship season and in 2018 employed electronic devices to steal pitching signs and banging on trash barrels to convey that information to batters. There was outrage by players on other teams. The Astros fired their general manager and manager. No current players were disciplined. Contrite and deflated, Alex said, "I'm really sorry about the choices that were made by my team, by the organization and by me."

Married to Ryan Howard since December 2020 and a father since the August 2020 birth of son Knox, Alex participates in philanthropic work. His Bregman Cares Charity promotes autism awareness and assists victims of COVID.

Although Alex's stats declined over the last three seasons (2020-22) due to injuries, he remains central to the continuing dominance of the Astros. Returning to form in mid-season, Alex had a .515 slugging percentage and .894 OPS during the second half of the 2022 campaign. Batting cleanup, he connected for 23 home runs and 93 runs as the Astros won another World Series championship in 2022. With four pennants and two World Series championships over the past six years, the Astros are MLB's new dynasty. If Alex, still only 28, can regain his 2019 form and notch a few more championships, a Hall of Fame plaque may await.

*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.*

## Opinion

### In My Own Words

# Poetry and revisiting the past

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

The Facebook friend request came with a message. Someone I haven't seen for more than 20 years tracked me down and discovered I was still working. What provoked this search is that the informal Zoom minyan she takes part in had recently been discussing poetry and she remembered my book of poems, "I Stand By the River." She wanted to share some of the poems with the other members of the minyan and wondered if I wanted to join them.

To understand why my immediate reaction was yes, you have to understand the synagogue to which she belongs, Or Hadash, and what it means to me. Temple Beth of El Endicott, which had been my second home for years, closed just after the High Holidays the first year I attended rabbinical school. Not only was I losing that home base, but I was moving and going back to school in my late 30s. To say things felt unstable is an understatement.

Even though Or Hadash originally met in the same building that housed the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, it took me a few months to learn about it. I was attending other services, but none of them felt like the right fit. While the service at Or Hadash was very different than any I'd experienced before, I immediately felt at home. When leaving, someone said, "We hope to see you again." My thought was, "You won't be able to keep me away."

At that time, Friday night was the main service at Or Hadash. There were some Saturday morning ones when the Hebrew school held class services. My second year at

RRC, a few students who attended the synagogue and I began leading Saturday morning services, mostly because that was where we wanted to be on Shabbat. At one point, the congregation decided to buy a building in Fort Washington, PA. Then I was asked to be on the board, which, since Or Hadash is a Reconstructionist synagogue, was a very different experience from any other board I've been on.

Or Hadash not only became my new second home, but its rabbi, Vivian Schirn, became one of my mentors. For the minyan including my poetry, we arranged a date when Rabbi Vivian could also attend, which was early in December. The minyan runs from 8:15-9 am, and opens with a song and prayer, and closes with a healing prayer and the Mourner's *Kaddish*. In between, its attendees do a variety of things, but retain what was one of the things I loved about Or Hadash: wonderful conversation about a wide variety of topics.

It's was wonderful to see people I knew when I was at Or Hadash and those who joined after I left the area. I also enjoyed listening to their comments and questions. The current rabbi of the congregation, Alanna Sklover, spoke about a poem I wrote and read about Zilpah and Bilhah – maid servants of Jacob who gave birth to four of his children – and mentioned a *d'var* Torah given recently by one of her bar mitzvah students that opened even more thoughts about the matriarchs of Israel. I was reminded of Saturday mornings at Or Hadash when the Torah discussion

would turn and twist into different and fascinating directions.

I received an e-mail after the event suggesting we should do this again. I immediately agreed and suggested some dates in January. Whether or not that actually happens, I will cherish what occurred that morning. It brought back wonderful memories of my time there and reminded me of the days when I wrote about my experiences in poetry, rather than prose.

*Writer's note: One of the poems I was asked to read was one I wrote about Rabbi Vivian. She taught me how to transform a room into a holy place that transcends its surroundings. I still use what I learned from her. What follows is that poem:*

*"She transforms the space./ Not with the wave of a magic wand/ Or the help of incense and flames/ But with her presence, her words/ Turning the room, the time, our minds/ From the profane to the sacred./ I know we each have the power to make a Sabbath/ But how many of us still search/ For the calm that makes the day/ More than a day of rest but a day of sanctity./ To know that no matter what sorrow awaits us./ We have a time, even be it for a moment./ To feel Shabbat's shelter of peace protecting us./ Yes, we all have the power to make a Sabbath/ But sometimes it is locked away inside us/ And the Rabbi, with her words, her presence/ Has the key to open that lock and free our spirits/ So we can greet the Shabbat as our bride/ Praising her beauty/ And find her peace and glory in our hearts."*



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BINGHAMTON, NY

#### OPINIONS

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

#### 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

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

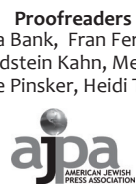
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# Chabad and Federation to hold Jan. "Tea and Talk"

Chabad of Binghamton, with co-sponsorship from the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, announced its next Tea and Talk programs will be held Thursdays,

January 5 and 19, from 11 am-noon, in Chabad's atrium lounge. "Tea and Talk" is a bi-monthly hour-long gathering for local Jewish seniors who are looking for

"a meaningful conversation."

To RSVP and for more information, visit [www.Jewish-BU.com/Tea](http://www.Jewish-BU.com/Tea) or call 797-0015.

# TC Sisterhood to hold annual book talk with Rabbi Rachel Esserman on Jan. 29

The Temple Concord Sisterhood will hold its annual book talk featuring Rabbi Rachel Esserman on Sunday, January 29, at 11 am, at the synagogue, 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton. This is an in-person event only and will take place in the mansion. Brunch will be served at no cost. The event is open to the community. Reservations must be made by Wednesday, January 25, to Phyllis Kellenberger at [pweinste@stny.rr.com](mailto:pweinste@stny.rr.com) or 607-727-8305. The snow date will be Sunday, February 5.



Rabbi Rachel Esserman

Esserman will discuss three books: "Shanda: A Memoir of Shame and Secrecy" by Letty Cottin Pogrebin, "From Dust, A Flame" by Rebecca Podos and "Village Idiot" by Steve Stern.

Esserman said, "I'm once again looking forward to one of my favorite events of the year. It's always a pleasure to talk about books and it's an extra pleasure to be doing it with members of Sisterhood. For the third year, I'm including a nonfiction work by request. As happens every year,

I have not read the books yet since I want them fresh in my mind for the review. But I'm looking forward to reading the books, writing my notes up and sharing them at this always fun event."

"Shanda: A Memoir of Shame and Secrecy" is a memoir by the noted feminist that tells of the secrets and lies kept by her family, and how they affected her life. "From Dust, A Flame" is a young adult fantasy filled with mystery and suspense that takes place in contemporary times. "Village Idiot" is a novel about Jewish artist Chaim Soutine, which has been described as both "heartbreaking and funny."

Esserman, the executive editor and book reviewer for The Reporter Group, noted this year she won three Syracuse Press Club awards and one Rockower award from the American Jewish Press Association. Last year, she won two Syracuse Press Club awards and two Rockowers.

She also serves as the Jewish chaplain for Broome Developmental Disabilities Service Office. Her work

has been published in "The Women's Torah Commentary" and "The Women's Haftarah Commentary" both by Jewish Lights Publishing. She also has had a book of poetry, "I Stand by The River," published by Keshet Press of Temple Concord. A Reconstructionist rabbi who says her first love is teaching, she sees her position at *The Reporter* as an opportunity to educate the public about Judaism.

In addition, Esserman is a freelance rabbi who performs lifecycle events, hospital visits and chaplaincy. She is rabbi-on-call when needed by local Reform and Conservative synagogues. Her education includes a bachelor of arts degree in sociology from the University of Pennsylvania, and rabbinic ordination and master of arts in Hebrew letters from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, Wyncote, PA.

# Dead Sea Scrolls Scholar to speak to BD Sisterhood on Jan. 11

Beth David Sisterhood will host a Zoom meeting from Israel on Wednesday, January 11, at 1pm, which will feature Dead Sea Scrolls scholar Dr. Miryam Brand. Her topic for the afternoon will be "Sin in the Second Temple Period: Free Will and Determinism in the Dead Sea Scrolls."



Dr. Miryam Brand (Photo by Ronnie Sugarman)

Brand is the author of "Evil Within and Without: The Source of Sin and Its Nature as Portrayed in Second Temple Literature," which was published in 2013. Her commentary on the Book of Enoch has also been published as part of "Outside the Bible."

Brand holds a Ph.D. in Bible and Second Temple literature from New York University.

She has taught at Brown University, New York University and Stern College, and has spoken at Hebrew University, Cambridge University and the University of Kiel. She is currently an associate fellow at the Albright Institute of Archaeological Research.

Brand's lecture is open to the community. Zoom link information will be sent to Beth David Sisterhood members and friends who are on the Sisterhood mailing list, and will also be included in Rabbi Zev Silber's weekly e-mail from Beth David Synagogue. All others may request the link from the Beth David Synagogue office by e-mailing Silber at [rabbisilber@stny.rr.com](mailto:rabbisilber@stny.rr.com).

# BD January luncheon talk on "Mobile Menschen"

Beth David's Luncheon Speaker Series will continue in person on Saturday, January 14, with guest speaker Rabbi Benny Kellman. Kellman will speak on "Mobile Menschen: Mapping the Social Mobility of Jews in Binghamton, NY, 1890-1975."



Rabbi Benny Kellman

"Where did Jews in Binghamton live in 1890, 1948 and 1975, and what can this tell us about the growth of the community?" said organizers of the event. "How does geographic mobility of Binghamton Jews fit into larger contexts with regard to 20th century American history? These questions will be addressed by Benny Kellman at Beth David's luncheon on January 14."

Kellman and his family moved to Binghamton from Monsey in 2015. He serves on the board of Beth David Synagogue and the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton. He is the *mashgiach* of the Kosher Korner at Binghamton University. He is also a board member of the soon-to-be announced Southern Tier Museum of Jewish Life. He obtained his undergraduate degree with a major in

history from SUNY-New Paltz, and is currently in his fourth year of a doctoral program in the Department of History at Binghamton University with Professor Jonathan Karp as his advisor.

His research on the Binghamton community is the first case study he is undertaking as part of his Ph.D. project, which will focus on small town Jewish communities and what can be learned about migration to and from these communities. "There are definite challenges," Kellman said, "In gathering addresses from the past, but with the help of BU's Professor Bradley Skopyk, my research is designed to be statistically quantifiable. I am using a sophisticated computer program whose tools store, analyze and interpret geographical data, and which enable us to visualize the findings. I am looking forward to sharing my work in progress, and if anyone in the Jewish community has stories and artifacts they would like to share with me, they can reach me at [bkellma2@binghamton.edu](mailto:bkellma2@binghamton.edu)."

Beth David's Luncheon Speaker Series takes place the second Saturday of the month after Shabbat morning services, and is open to the community. People are encouraged to attend the morning service, which begins at 9:30 am. There is no charge for the luncheon. Since the monthly series' continuation depends on the generosity of contributors, Beth David welcomes and appreciates donations to the Luncheon Fund in order to keep the program going. Donations as well as sponsorships can be made in honor of or in memory of someone, or to mark a special occasion. Those wishing an acknowledgment to be sent to the person being honored or to the family of someone being remembered can indicate that along with the necessary information. Donations can be sent to Beth David Synagogue, 39 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905, Attention: Luncheon Fund.

## Bar/Bat photos needed

Can we have your mug? Kids mugging for the camera and formal photos, that is. For *The Reporter's* annual Bar/Bat Mitzvah issue (coming January 27), we need photos of all teens who became bar/bat mitzvah during the calendar year of 2022.

Please e-mail these photos with identification, including name, date and place of the bar/bat mitzvah ceremony. Please send them by Tuesday, January 17. Photos can be e-mailed, in TIF or JPG format, to [TReporter@aol.com](mailto:TReporter@aol.com); please note in the subject line that a bar/bat photo for *The Reporter* is attached and include the necessary information in the message.

## YOUR AD COULD BE HERE!

For information on advertising, please contact Kathy Brown at 724-2360, ext. 244 or [advertising@thereportergroup.org](mailto:advertising@thereportergroup.org)

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to the family of **Morton Ira Hofstein**

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to **Debra Martinez** on the death of her father, **Joseph Marcal**

### DEADLINES

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

ISSUE	DEADLINE
January 13-26.....	January 4
January 27-February 9 .....	January 18
February 10-23.....	February 1
February 24-March 9 .....	February 15

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

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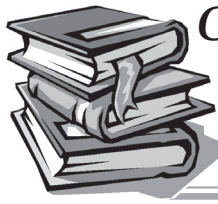
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Off the Shelf

# A novel translated from...

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

## Hebrew: "Victorious"

What purpose should a psychologist's work serve? This question forms the basis for Yishai Sarid's intriguing novel "Victorious" (Restless Books). Abigail, the first-person narrator, used to work as a military psychologist for the Israeli army. She was so good at her job that she helped design programs to better enable soldiers to do their jobs more efficiently and safely. She was also able to weed out those unable to handle the most difficult and dangerous assignments. Now, retired, she works with soldiers who suffer from post-traumatic distress syndrome.

Two events return her thoughts to the army: she's asked by the new Army chief of staff to help his soldiers prepare for the next war, one he believes will greatly challenge them. At the same time, her only child, her son Shauli, is set to begin his army service and has chosen to take part in an elite force. At first, Abigail's purpose seems to be helping the soldiers, but that comes into question as readers learn exactly what she does: is Abigail's job to keep them sane, or is she molding them into better killing machines? Abigail might say that the two purposes are the same: the only way to help these soldiers is to keep them alive and that means teaching them better ways to kill before being killed. Will this change, though, if it's her own son who is in danger?

"Victorious" offers an absorbing and challenging look at the Israeli army and Israeli military culture. The work offers no firm answers, just Abigail's ability to see the complexities of life or, at times, her desire to simplify them. Readers and book clubs will find much to ponder and discuss.

## Spanish: "Canción"

When the narrator of "Canción" by Eduardo Halfon (Bellevue Literary Press) is invited to a conference in Japan featuring Lebanese writers, he begins to review his Lebanese grandfather's life, particularly the time his grandfather was kidnapped by Guatemalan guerillas in 1967. However, that is a deceptively simple description of this novel because the author and narrator are one and the same, which means

the line between fact and fiction is blurred.

That is not the only identity conundrum: the narrator and his family are Jewish, which means that some at the conference don't see him as Lebanese. Plus, when his grandfather left the Middle East in 1917, Lebanon did not exist as a country: it was still part of Syria. However, what will impress readers are the narrator's descriptions of life in Guatemala. Readers may be shocked at the massacres that took place by government soldiers and the tactics used by the guerillas in response.

"Canción" meanders backward and forward in time, forcing readers to piece together what happened in the past and what is occurring in the present day. Those looking for straight narrative won't find it here. However, those able to follow Halfon's non-linear train of thought will have much to enjoy.

## French: "The Ghetto Within"

Why write a novel about your grandfather, rather than a biography? Fiction permits an author to imagine thoughts and feelings he otherwise couldn't relate. That's true for "The Ghetto Within" by Santiago H. Amigorena (HarperVia). Vicente Rosenberg, Amigorena's grandfather, left Poland for Argentina in 1928 in order to escape his family and become his own person. However, by the time the 1940s arrive, he fears for his mother and siblings who remain in Poland. Although he mentioned to his mother in a letter that she should move to Argentina, he never insisted or thought of returning to Poland to bring her to live with him, his wife and his children. His happy, separate world seemed to be enough, that is until he truly begins to understand what is really happening in Europe.

Amigorena juxtaposes Rosenberg's increasing despair about what might be happening to his family in Poland with factual reports of what was really occurring at the time. Although Rosenberg tries to learn the truth, the reality is often far worse than he can imagine. As he discovers more, his life becomes to fray, as does his connection to his

wife and children. The question becomes whether he will be able to come to terms with his guilt or if his life will be defined by it.

"The Ghetto Within" is well done, but difficult to read – not because of its prose, but its subject matter. Amigorena was young when his grandfather died, but he did read, at least in the novel, the letters his great-grandmother wrote to Rosenberg. The author succeeds in painting a portrait of a man divided by his desire to form his own life and his obligations to his mother and siblings. It is also a portrayal of how the agony of one decision informed his life until its end.

On the Jewish food scene



## Winter foods

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

I sat down to write this column just after the first real snow of the winter and all I could think about was having something warm to drink. During the winter, the number of cups of tea I drink a day greatly increases. (That's a mixture of caffeinated and herbal teas over the course of the day.) I also drink plenty of warm or boiling water with no flavoring: I know some people think that's odd, but it's better than being cold. Not only does it warm my insides, but also my hands, if I hold the mug correctly. (Cold hands and cold feet make me really uncomfortable.)

This season also makes me think of soup and that makes me think of my mom and our friend, Sandy Shapiro, who moved Oregon to live near her daughter a few years ago. The three of us used to gather for dinner on Saturday nights and Sandy always made soup during the winter months because my mother loved soup. That's partly because as she got older, my mom had more difficulty staying warm and soup was a great help.

Our meals together started, though, when my father and little brother Larry were still alive. As my dad began to decline, we invited Sandy to join us when Larry was home for his weekly visit. As some of you may know, Larry had Down Syndrome and lived in a group home not far from our house. Toward the end of his life, his weekly visits usually consisted of his watching (and rewatching...) the Jeff Bridges/Jessica Lange version of "King Kong" (which, except for the special effects, qualifies as one of the worst films of all time) and eating lunch and dinner with us. One of those meals always included soup, even during the summer.

After my father and Larry passed away, we rotated weeks for making a meal. When my mom went in the nursing home, Sandy would come with me to visit every Saturday. About once a month, we would take my mom out to dinner. The rest of the time we returned to Sandy's house for dinner because she loved to cook. I still miss seeing and having dinner with her since she moved away. If I had to come up with one favorite thing she cooked, it would be her squash and bean soup. It was vegetarian, so my mom would eat it. I ate it, though, because it was so good. While I'm not sure it qualifies as a Jewish soup, it was a perfect winter soup.

That does raise a question: if someone Jewish makes a dish and all the ingredients are kosher, does that mean it qualifies as Jewish food? However, there really is no one Jewish cuisine, even though Ashkenazic-centric folks think of their foods as real Jewish food. But Jewish cuisine varies depending on the locale, so there is no one Jewish food style. That means that almost any soup or dish can be Jewish as long as the ingredients are kosher, and meat and dairy aren't used together in the recipe.

I keep thinking of making my own soup and have plenty of recipe books (some of which Sandy gave to my mom and me, not that we ever used them). I'm supposed to watch my sodium so that makes buying vegetable soup stock or soup mixes problematic. I know there are ways to make sodium-free soups, but I just haven't had the energy to try them. To be honest, I've had this same discussion with myself just about every winter since Sandy moved. Only once – for Passover – did I make soup (from a mix), but that was before the doctor suggested I watch my sodium. That doesn't mean I don't eat soup, though. A perfect meal for me is soup and salad. (I adore salad and eat all different kinds. I'm also a big fan of salad dressing.)

In case this column has made you long for a great bowl of soup, the links below offer several from Jewish websites for you to try. And if you want someone to sample your initial efforts, I'd be more than happy to volunteer.

- ◆ [www.myjewishlearning.com/the-nosher/the-ultimate-ranking-of-jewish-soups/](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/the-nosher/the-ultimate-ranking-of-jewish-soups/).
- ◆ [www.chabad.org/recipes/recipe\\_cdo/aid/1704980/jewish/Soup.htm](http://www.chabad.org/recipes/recipe_cdo/aid/1704980/jewish/Soup.htm).
- ◆ <https://reformjudaism.org/15-jewish-recipes-soup-er-cozy-winter>.
- ◆ <https://www.thekosherchannel.com/jewish-soups.html>.

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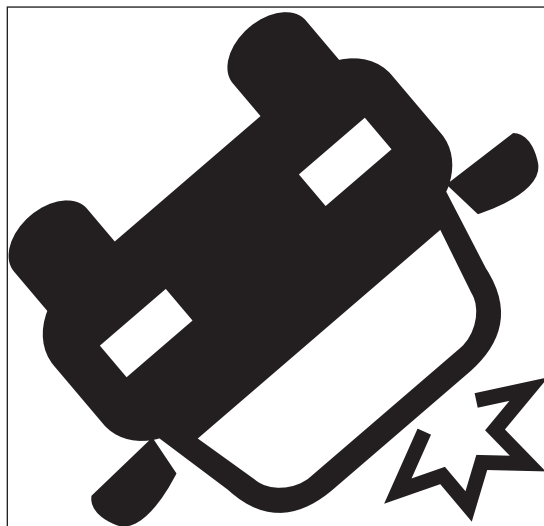
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## DON'T DRINK & DRIVE

A community service message from

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# Temple Israel to hold 2023 lottery fund-raiser

Temple Israel will once again hold its lottery fund-raiser. Winners are based on the New York state daily lottery drawings. The number/numbers selected are good throughout all of 2023. The amount won depends on which day's drawing matches the numbers. Sundays pay \$40; Wednesdays pay \$30; and Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays pay \$25. There is no payout for Saturday. There are also four days throughout the year, which pay \$50 each (January 1, February 14, July 4 and November 23.)

"It's time to purchase your numbers for Temple Israel's 2023 lottery fund-raiser," said organizers of the fund-raiser. "Participation is simple: just choose a three-digit number or numbers (you can purchase as many as you would like) from 000 through 999 (for example, 015 or 733) and send the numbers to Temple Israel, 4737 Deerfield Place, Vestal, NY 13850, along with your name, address, phone number and a donation of \$25 per number. The more numbers you choose, the more chances you have to win. Payments will be mailed directly to the winners.

Previous winners have said, 'It's a nice surprise to receive an unexpected check in the mail.'

Organizers added, "Chances to win make great gifts for anyone on your list. It's a gift that gives all year long. You can check the evening daily numbers (drawn nightly at 10:30 pm) on the New York state lottery website [www.nylottery.org](http://www.nylottery.org)."

More information and ordering forms are available from the Temple Israel office by calling 723-7461 or e-mailing [titammy@stny.twcbc.com](mailto:titammy@stny.twcbc.com).

## Film Fest showed "The Automat"



Lisa Hurwitz, the producer and director of "The Automat," spoke during the discussion of her film.

The Binghamton Film Fest's December film was "The Automat." Close to 160 people watched the film. Forty-nine people attended the discussion, which was held on December 11. Shown at left and right are some of those who attended.



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## Weekly Parasha

Vayigash, Genesis 44:18-47:27

# A vision and a promise

RIVKAH SLONIM, EDUCATION DIRECTOR,  
THE ROHR CHABAD CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDENT LIFE AT BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY

In this week's *parasha*, after 22 years of painful separation from his son, Joseph, Jacob learns that Joseph, who was alleged to have been dead, was indeed alive. Rashi, the foremost biblical expositor, taught that for the entire time that the two were separated, Jacob suffered a unique form of bereavement. Not only did he lose a son, but he failed to experience the normal comfort brought on by passage of time. That solace, Rashi asserts, is granted by God only in the case of death, whereas Joseph was still alive.

This terribly painful era comes to an abrupt end when Jacob's sons tell him: "Joseph is alive, and he is ruler of all the land of Egypt." (45: 26) The Torah records, "Yaakov's heart stood still, for he could not believe them." After the brothers imparted an encrypted message from Joseph to their father, Jacob was convinced that Joseph was alive

and resolved to go see him before his death. Jacob was, however, filled with trepidation at the thought of leaving the Holy Land of Canaan and began the perilous trip to Egypt in a state of distress.

On the way, God appeared to Jacob in a night vision, and in response to his deep anxiety told Jacob: "I am the Almighty, God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation. I will surely go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again." (45:3-4) While this vision included God's promise to Jacob that he would be laid to rest eternally in the Holy Land – as opposed to in Egypt – there is much more in this powerful and poignant promise.

Indeed, Jacob had heard from his father Isaac, who had heard from his father Abraham, that the children of Israel

were destined to be strangers in a strange land, after which they would emerge as a nation and return to their homeland. However, he did not have knowledge of exactly when this was to take place or to which land his children were to be exiled. Thus, while overwhelmed with a desire to see Joseph, he was filled with worry that he might be taking his family in the wrong direction. After God's assurance, however, it was clear to Jacob that the entire saga of Joseph's descent into Egypt and his subsequent ascendancy to viceroy of that country was for the express purpose of "pulling" Jacob and his household down to Egypt.

And yet, despite God's promise of eventual deliverance from Egypt, Jacob still takes very specific steps to ensure the spiritual safety of his household. Toward the end of this See "Vision" on page 8

## Congregational Notes

### 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

### 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, December 31, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person (masks are required). The Torah portion is Genesis 44:18-47:27 and the haftarah is Ezekiel 37:15-28. At 6 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom.

The temple office will be closed on Monday, January 2.

There will be an Executive Board meeting on Tuesday, January 3, at 7 pm on Zoom.

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

On Saturday, January 7, at 9:30 am, Shacharit services will be held via Zoom and in-person (masks are required). The Torah portion is Genesis 47:28-50:26 and the haftarah is Kings 2:1-12. At 6 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom.

On Wednesday, January 11, there will be a Ritual Committee meeting at 10 am on Zoom and Torah study from 4-5 pm on Zoom.

### 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, 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](http://www.tinyurl.com/HappeningAtTBE).

### 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.

### 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.

### 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](http://www.JewishBU.com/S2020Partnership).

### Congregation Tikkun v'Or

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

E-mail: info@tikkunvor.org  
Rabbi: Shifrah Tobacman, rabbishifrah@tikkunvor.org  
Presidents: Sue Merkel and Laurie Willick, presidents\_22@tikkunvor.org

Education Director/Administrative Coordinator: Naomi Wilensky  
Bnai Mitzvah Coordinator: Michael Margolin  
Services: All services currently on Zoom. E-mail info@tikkunvor.org for the times and links. Contemplative morning services every Tuesday from 8:30-9:30 am. Saturday mornings, Gan Shabbat and other special services at least once a month. Call for the weekly schedule.

Jewish Learning Experiences (JLE) for second through seventh grade classes meet on Sunday mornings. Sixth and seventh grades also meet on Wednesday afternoons. Family programs for kindergarten and first grade held monthly.

Adult Education: Offered regularly throughout the year. Check the website for details.

### Norwich Jewish Center

Orientation: Inclusive  
Rabbi: David Regenspan  
Address: 72 South Broad St., Norwich, NY 13815  
Phone: 334-2691  
E-mail: fertigj@roadrunner.com

Contact: Guilia Greenberg, 373-5087  
Purpose: To maintain a Jewish identity and meet the needs of the Jewish community in the area.

Adult Ed.: Shabbat study sessions are held on designated Saturday mornings at 10 am. Call ahead, text or e-mail to confirm dates.



Friday, December 30, light candles before..... 4:22 pm  
Shabbat ends Saturday, December 31 ..... 5:24 pm  
Friday, January 6, light candles before..... 4:29 pm  
Shabbat ends Saturday, January 7 ..... 5:30 pm  
Friday, January 13, light candles before..... 4:36 pm  
Shabbat ends Saturday, January 14 ..... 5:38 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, December 30: At 7:30 pm, Shabbat service with Anne Bussard and Robin Hazen. Masks are optional for those attending in person. Join via Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3hRmW2Y>, meeting ID 869 9699 8146 and passcode 826330, or on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/templeconcord/](http://www.facebook.com/templeconcord/).

Saturday, December 31: There will be no religious school, Torah study or family service.

Wednesday, January 4: At 10:30 am, TC Book Club: "This is not a Love Story," a memoir by Judy Brown. For more information or the Zoom link, contact Merri Pell-Preus at 222-2875 or [merrypell.preus@gmail.com](mailto:merrypell.preus@gmail.com).

Friday, January 6: At 7:30 pm, Shabbat service with Carol Bernstein and Robin Hazen. Masks are optional for those attending in person. Join via Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3hRmW2Y>, meeting ID 869 9699 8146 and passcode 826330, or on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/templeconcord/](http://www.facebook.com/templeconcord/).

Saturday, January 7: At 9 am, Shabbat School; 9:15 am, Torah study (join via Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3CVxM14>, meeting ID 882 9808 7579 and passcode: 676707); and 10:35 am, Shabbat family service.

Sunday, January 8: From 10 am-2 pm, Sisterhood Rummage Sale in Temple Concord's basement. Shoppers are asked to use the Oak Street entrance. Masks are optional, but encouraged.

### 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.

### 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](http://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.

# Federation. . . . . Continued from page 1

- ◆ A virtual showing of the drama “Neighbours,” a film by writer/director Mano Khalil. The discussion of “Neighbours” was moderated by Dr. Dina Danon, associate professor of Judaic studies and Middle East and North Africa studies. Fifty people signed up to view the film and 22 households tuned into the discussion.
- ◆ A virtual showing of a documentary “White Right” and the short film “Masel Tov Cocktail.” Stephen A. Lisman, distinguished teaching professor emeritus in psychology at Binghamton University, moderated a discussion of the films on March 3. Thirty-seven people signed up to view the films and 15 households tuned into the discussion.
- ◆ A “March Into Spring Family Get-Together” on March 6. The event was co-sponsored by the PJ Library program and Hillel Academy, and was open to family members of all ages.
- ◆ A vigil for peace in support of Ukraine at the Jewish Community Center on March 9 in conjunction with the Broome County Council of Churches. Ten clergy members from the Broome County area participated.
- ◆ A virtual showing of the film “Here We Are.” Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, and Dr. Jennifer Gillis, professor of psychology at Binghamton University, who studies autism spectrum disorders, moderated an online discussion on April 10. Thirty-two households registered to view the film and there were 16 households online during the discussion.
- ◆ A virtual Yom Hashoah event on April 26. The virtual event included a live Zoom session with Holocaust survivor Aliza Erber. In addition, there were readings by local rabbis. Twenty-seven households tuned into the events; others viewed the event from a screen in the Temple Concord sanctuary.
- ◆ An in-person security seminar for faith-based organizations in conjunction with the Broome County Council of Churches on May 12. Representatives from public safety agencies discussed ways the faith-based community can protect its houses of worship and keep its members safe while sustaining an open and welcoming environment. More than 30 people attended.
- ◆ AL’Dor v’Dor – Next Generation event at the Beer Tree Factory on June 16. Twenty-four people attended the event.
- ◆ An active shooter training on June 23 at Temple Israel. More than 75 people attended the event.

- ◆ Sponsoring a day at the Rumble Ponies on July 10. More than 30 people attended the event.
- ◆ Beginning to solicit funds for a LiveSecure matching grant for security funding that will continue over several years.
- ◆ A Campaign 2023 Kick-off Brunch on September 18. Rivkah Slonim, associate director of the Rohr Chabad Center for Jewish Student Life at Binghamton University, spoke on how “Giving tzedakah is a sacred duty.”
- ◆ A “Stop the Bleed” program on September 19 in conjunction with Temple Israel’s Safety and Security Committee.
- ◆ A memorial service at the Holocaust Memorial Monument in the Temple Israel Cemetery on October 2. The service was led by area rabbis.
- ◆ The in-person showing of the documentary “Fiddler: A Miracle of Miracles” on November 6 at Temple Israel. The evening included a kosher dairy dinner. Larry Kassan, who has directed productions of the musical, facilitated the film discussion.
- ◆ Sponsoring the local Global Day of Jewish Learning program with Temple Concord, Temple Israel and Beth David Synagogue in person and on Zoom on November 13. This year’s learning theme was “Rebuilding” and the rabbis from the three synagogues spoke.
- ◆ “Tea and Talk” meetings for seniors, held in conjunction with Chabad of Binghamton. “Tea and Talk” began as a monthly hour-long gathering for local Jewish seniors who are looking for “a meaningful conversation.” The program has been so successful that it will now be held twice a month.
- ◆ A virtual showing of the documentary film “The Automat” in conjunction with the Ithaca Area United Jewish Community. A discussion with the film’s director and producer, Lisa Hurwitz, took place on Zoom on December 11.
- ◆ The Community Hanukkah Celebration, co-sponsored with Jewish Community Center on December 22.

At right: The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton held a Holocaust memorial service in the Temple Israel Cemetery on October 2. Shown are some of the approximately 20 people who attended the event.



At left: The Jewish Federation 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. Shown are some of the 37 people who tuned into the event.

At right: The Federation held a security seminar for faith-based organizations in conjunction with the Broome County Council of Churches on May 12. Shown are representatives from public safety agencies who spoke. More than 30 people attended the event.



At right: The Jewish Federation held an active shooter event on June 23 at Temple Israel. More than 75 people attended the event.



Members of the Jewish community attended the Jewish Federation’s vigil for peace in support of Ukraine, which was held on March 9. L-r: Eileen Miller, secretary of the Federation’s Board of Directors; Sima Auberbach, former executive director of the Federation; Howard Warner, immediate past president of the Federation; Neil Auerbach; and Gerald Hubal.



The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton held its Campaign Kick-off on September 18. L-r: Marilyn Bell, Campaign chairwoman; Suzanne Holwitt, Federation president; Shelley Hubal, Federation executive director; and guest speaker Rivkah Slonim, associate director of the Rohr Chabad Center for Jewish Student Life at Binghamton University.



The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton sponsored a day at the Rumble Ponies on July 10. More than 30 people attended. Shown are some of the attendees.



The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton held a L’Dor v’Dor – Next Generation “Brews and Jews” event on June 16 at the Beer Tree Factory. L-r: Rose Shapiro-Rause, Caryn Gusefski and Carla Gusefski were among those who attended the event.



On September 19, the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton held a Stop the Bleed program presented by United Health Services Trauma Services. More than 40 people attended.

## Annual Campaign 2023

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**Support your Jewish Federation! Your gift is more important than ever.**

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- 1) Visit the Federation website at <https://www.jfgeb.org/campaign-for-2023> to either pay your pledge or click on “Make Your 2023 Pledge Now!”
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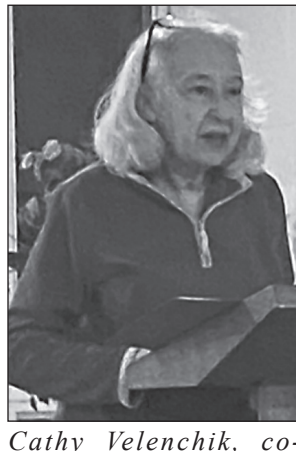


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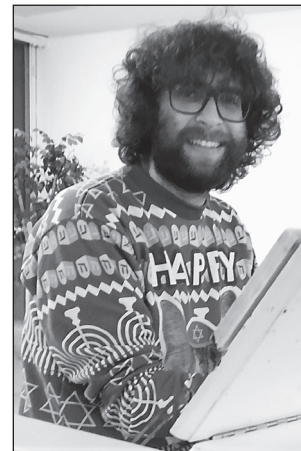
# BD Sisterhood held Hanukkah party



On December 14, the Beth David Sisterhood and Beth David Men's Club co-sponsored a Hanukkah party. Holiday foods were served and dreidels were available to play with. Organizers called the party "a great success." (Photos by Cathy Velenchik and Gina Santiago)



Cathy Velenchik, co-president of Beth David Sisterhood, greeted the attendees and conducted a short business meeting.



Jonny Pachter entertained at the piano with Hanukkah songs.



Susan Hubal read the minutes from the previous Sisterhood meeting.



People enjoyed the Hanukkah party. Clockwise from front left: Ilana Segal (back to the camera); Stacey Silber, Elie Silber, Judy Silber and Rabbi Zev Silber.



At left, l-r: Judy Silber, and Harold and Toby Kohn prepared latkes for the Hanukkah party.

Looking for this issue's "Jewish Resources"? Visit [www.thereporter.org/streams/miscellaneous-features/miscellaneous-features/tag/80309](http://www.thereporter.org/streams/miscellaneous-features/miscellaneous-features/tag/80309) to find out what's happening online.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

### Terror victims sue Biden admin. for funding P.A.

Victims of Palestinian terror are suing the Biden administration for awarding millions of dollars to the Palestinian Authority, which pays terrorists and their families. The lawsuit, filed in a U.S. district court in Texas on Dec. 20, contends that the Biden administration is in violation of the 2018 Taylor Force Act, which prohibited the executive branch from providing funds to the P.A. due to its practice of "pay-for-slay," as "paying salaries to terrorists serving in Israeli prisons, as well as to the families of deceased terrorists, is an incentive to commit acts of terror." Taylor Force, a native of Lubbock, TX, and a graduate of West Point, was murdered by a Palestinian terrorist in 2016 while visiting Israel. Listed as plaintiffs in the case are Rep. Ronny Jackson (R-TX), Stuart and Robbi Force, Taylor Force's parents, and Sarri Singer, a New York resident who was the victim of a 2003 Palestinian suicide bombing that killed 17 people. The plaintiffs are led by the America First Legal Foundation, a legal watchdog group, the *Washington Free Beacon* reported. In July, the Biden administration announced \$316 million in additional funding to support the Palestinians. "This is on top of the more than half a billion dollars the United States has provided to the Palestinian people since the Biden administration restored much-needed funding to the Palestinians," the White House said in a statement. The P.A. pays about \$300 million annually in monthly stipends and benefits to terrorists and the families of "martyrs," those killed in the act of carrying out attacks against Jews.

### Israel's Elbit Systems signs Romanian drone contract

The Romanian Ministry of National Defense will receive up to seven Watchkeeper X tactical unmanned aircraft systems (or UAS) from the Israeli defense electronics company Elbit Systems. Elbit Systems announced Dec. 21 that it had been awarded a contract with a potential value of \$410 million to supply Romania with up to seven Watchkeeper X tactical unmanned aircraft systems. The framework contract is valid for five years. "This contract demonstrates the sustained demand for Elbit Systems' UAS. We look forward to further strengthening Elbit Systems' relationship with the Romanian Government," Elbit President and CEO Bezael Machlis said in a statement. He added that as part of the contract, Elbit Systems plans to establish infrastructure and cooperate with subsidiaries in Romania.

### Vision. . . . . Continued from page 6

*parasha*, we are told that Jacob sent his son, Judah, ahead of him. Rashi explains that Jacob sent Judah to prepare a house of study from which would emanate Torah teachings.

We are now in a better position to understand a famous inference found in the very first verse of the next *parasha* in which the Torah tells us that Jacob lived in Egypt for 17 years. Seventeen is a significant number, our sages taught, because its *gematria*, numerical value, is equal to the Hebrew word *tov*, good, implying that this era of Jacob's life was especially good. We know Jacob did not want to descend to Egypt at all, so how could his years there be characterized as good?

But Jacob had a vision and a promise from God, so he perceived why and how living in Egypt could be good. In sending Judah to prepare the infrastructure for self-contained Jewish life and in his final words to his children, it is clear that Jacob did not keep this vision to himself. He spared no effort in teaching his children that Egypt was a necessary, but temporary, stepping stone towards "going up and going home." Jacob wanted his children and grandchildren and their children never to forge that their forefather had come to Egypt upon the command and explicit promise of God. He wanted his descendants to understand that their descent was for the purpose of ascent, that they were inherently and radically different than the members of the broader Egyptian society. Only with this perspective could Jacob and his descendants live in

Egypt. It was not a place for them to settle down and get comfortable. On the contrary, their experience there would be – of necessity – one of strangeness, difficulty and even pain. But he knew and saw the good in it. For it was there that they were meant to grow in ways that they never could had they remained in the Holy Land.

For much of our long and tumultuous history, the Jews, as a people, have been separated from our land. The Jewish experience has by and large, been an Egypt experience: exile in various forms and permutations. But always there is the promise of God to Jacob: do not be afraid. There is a great destiny, God promises, and it is precisely in your journeys – as strangers in a strange land – that you will achieve true splendor. Those words include assurance that wherever the children of Jacob find themselves, God is with us, and that at the appointed time He will bring us up. We must, however, never lose sight of the paradoxical nature of our journey. Even as Jacob lives in Egypt, he lives for Israel – in both its physical and spiritual dimensions – and so it is with his children of all time. We must do our share to nourish and bolster the infrastructure set up by Yehudah, lest we, or our children, forget where we came from and where we are going. We are certainly in this world and have much to accomplish here, but we are not of this world. As Jews, our destiny is to illuminate and transform, defy and ultimately transcend.

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