

THE REPORTER

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Inside Campaign 2022

By Reporter staff

There are people in the community who have no idea what the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton does. That came as a surprise to Federation Director Shelley Hubal. "It's so easy for those of us who have been involved with the Federation to understand the importance of our Campaign and how we help the community," she said. "But we need to make sure everyone understands."

The Federation website notes that its purpose is to serve "the local Jewish community as a financial, cultural, educational and unifying resource. We solicit, collect and allocate funds. We support and promote Jewish identity and welfare locally and globally. We believe each individual and each organization is a thread that strengthens the rich tapestry of Jewish life."

The 2021 local beneficiary agencies included Hillel Academy, the Jewish Com-

munity Center, Jewish Family Service, *The Reporter* and Hillel at Binghamton. The Federation supports the PJ Library, which provides free books and recordings to local Jewish children. It also gives funds to support the Jewish Federation of North America.

In addition to this support, the Federation also runs its own programs, including the International Jewish Film Fest of Greater Binghamton, the Holocaust memorial service (see photos on page 5) and the Day of Caring. During the pandemic, it has sponsored outdoor holiday programs for Hanukkah and Shavuot, online services of caring with local rabbis and outdoor programs for families with young children. The Film Fest moved online during the pandemic as have other educational programs, including author talks and lectures.

"We are looking for more programming for families with young children to help them feel welcome," said Hubal. "We not only want to connect with these families, but to give them an opportunity to get to



know each other, no matter which synagogue they belong to, or if they haven't yet joined a synagogue."

Hubal noted the difficulties of running a second pandemic Campaign. "It's not easy when we can't gather in one place," she said. "But I'm certain our wonderful community will once again prove it is a strong and caring community."

To make a pledge, see the form on page 5 of this paper, contact Hubal at director@jfgb.org or 724-2332, or visit the Federation website at www.jfgb.org/.



Almost 30 people attended the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton's Tot Shabbat program on June 11 at Arnold Park.

Federation and JCC to hold lecture on "The Chinese Jews of Kaifeng" on Oct. 1

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton and the Jewish Community Center will hold a lecture about "The Chinese Jews of Kaifeng," an online exhibit sponsored by a grant of the Friends of the UW Libraries at the University of Washington Seattle, on Friday, October 1, at noon. Rabbi Anson H. Laytner, president of the Sino-Judaic Institute and editor of its journal *Points East*, will speak via Zoom about the online exhibit, which discusses the history of the Jewish community in China. (To read an interview of Laytner, see the August 27 issue of *The Reporter* or visit www.thereporter.org/local-stream/laytner-to-speak-about-the-chinese-jews-of-kaifeng.) The lecture is free, but donations will be accepted. To

receive the Zoom link, contact Federation Executive Director Shelley Hubal at director@jfgb.org or 724-2332, or visit the Federation website at www.jfgb.org/.

"We were hoping to hold the program as a Lunch and Learn," said Hubal. "We're sorry that isn't possible due to the pandemic. But even if we can't gather in one place, we can look forward to what should be a fascinating lecture."

According to the exhibit's website, "The purpose of the display is to introduce the fascinating history of the Jewish



A group celebrated Hanukkah. (Photo courtesy of the Sino-Judaic Institute)

communities in China, especially the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng, which was the capital city of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127) and is located in today's Henan Province.... [The exhibit presents] the story of the Jewish communities in China, how they interacted with the local cultures and life, and what has become of them eventually. We believe this story will enrich our understanding of both Jewish and Chinese history and cultures."

Prior to his retirement, Laytner was program manager of the Interreligious Initiative at Seattle University's School of Theology and Ministry and an adjunct professor there with the Department of Theology and Religious Studies. He has also worked as a chaplain and as a director of non-profit See "Kaifeng" on page 4

Fall CJS Zoom lecture program: "Jesus the Jew in History and Memory"

The College of Jewish Studies fall 2021 Zoom lecture series will be devoted to the topic of "Jesus the Jew in History and Memory." The lectures will explore how the image of Jesus's Jewishness was understood historically by Jews and Christians from antiquity through today. "Three pioneering scholars will offer insights into different aspects of this complex and fraught phenomenon," said organizers of the series.

The lectures will be held on Thursdays, October 7, 14 and 28, at 7:30 pm. Registration for one or all of the lectures is available through the CJS Facebook page, the homepage of the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton and the Judaic Studies homepage. A Zoom link will be sent out a day ahead of each talk. Contact Jon Karp at jkarp@binghamton.edu with any questions or problem.

On October 7, Susannah Heschel, the Eli Black Distinguished Professor of Jewish Studies at Dartmouth College, will speak about "Jesus from Jew to Nazi: How Germany Shaped Modern Interfaith Dialogue." Her talk will examine 19th-century efforts by European Jews to reclaim Jesus as a key figure in the global spread of Jewish monotheism via both Christianity and Islam. She will then discuss the emergence of the theological racism by pro-Nazi German Christians who cast Jesus as a non-Jew and "Aryan." Heschel notes, "Protestant theologians welcomed Hitler and created a synthesis of Christianity and Nazi antisemitism, purging the Christian Bible of the Old Testament and removing every positive statement about Judaism in the New Testament." Finally, recent post-Shoah attempts at Jewish-Christian dialogue have brought Jesus's definite Jewish identity

back into focus. Heschel's presentation will aim to untangle this historical web and show where Jewish, Christian and Muslim relations stand today in connection with the complex notion of Jesus the Jew. Heschel is the author, among other works, of "The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany" (Princeton University Press, 2010).

On October 14, Professor Amy-Jill Levine - Rabbi Stanley M. Kessler Distinguished Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies at Hartford Seminary and university professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies Emerita at Vanderbilt University - will give a lecture titled "Jesus Within Judaism: Piety, Practice, Prayer, and Parable." She notes, "Jesus of Nazareth is often seen as rejecting a Judaism incorrectly characterized as legalistic, elitist, obsessed

with ritual purity, misogynist, vengeful and xenophobic. Understanding Jesus in his Jewish context corrects false stereotypes, brings new meaning to his parables, politics and piety, and it offers a new path for Jewish-Christian relations." Levine is the co-editor of the "Jewish Annotated New Testament" (Oxford, 2017) and author of "Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi" (HarperOne, 2014), among numerous other books.

On October 28, Barbara U. Meyer, associate professor of religion at Tel Aviv University, will discuss "Jesus the Jew in Theology and Memory." Meyer will ask what the Jewishness of Jesus can mean for Christian theologians today, who oppose the idea that Christianity is spiritually superior to or has "superseded" Judaism. "Jesus was an observant Jew, but See "CJS" on page 5

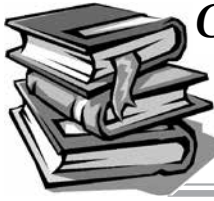
INSIDE THIS ISSUE

"Outsmarting Antisemitism"
Chabad will offer the JLI course "Outsmarting Antisemitism" in November.
..... Page 3

Jews in sports
Columnist Bill Simons takes a look at WNBA and Olympic basketball star Sue Bird.
..... Page 7

News in brief...
Germany and P.A. sign cooperation agreement; U.S. to freeze military aid to Egypt; and more.
..... Page 8

Special Sections
Opinion 2
Book Reviews 2 and 4
Congregational Notes 6
Classifieds 8



Off the Shelf

Sacred reading

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

One of my favorite moments in literature occurs in the first chapter of "Jane Eyre" by Charlotte Bronte. Jane is sitting in a window seat, drawing the curtain closed and reading a book. Something about that moment of comfort and safety stayed with me. Even before I was old enough to read the novel, my mother, who also loved "Jane Eyre," told me parts of the plot. I've read the book at least twice and had different reactions each time; that's partly because I read it before and after being influenced by the feminist movement. Although the last time I read it was when I was in my late 20s, I remember the book fondly almost 40 years later.

This explains why when I saw in an e-mail that someone had written an article about using "Jane Eyre" as a sacred text, I had to click through to learn more. Imagine my delight to discover the author, Vanessa Zoltan, was Jewish and had written a book called "Praying with Jane Eyre: Reflections on Reading as a Sacred Practice" (A TarcherPerigee Book). A few minutes after finishing the article, I'd asked for a review copy of what turned out to be a fascinating and challenging book.

Before attending Harvard Divinity School, Zoltan

received a B.A. in literature and creative writing, and an M.S. in nonprofit management. She makes an unusual chaplain: a self-declared atheist whose grandparents survived the Holocaust, she finds it impossible to use the Hebrew Bible as a sacred text. That doesn't mean she has rejected Judaism. The list of her connections to her heritage include calling herself "super-Jewish." In fact, she not only loudly proclaims her Jewishness, she notes that "I love Judaism. I love going to temple and studying Torah and looking to Halacha for a guide on what to do in a difficult moment."

However, where she parts from formal Judaism is that she doesn't believe in God. It's easy to understand the reasons behind her disbelief: her father once told her "that if there is a God, then that God hated us, so he hoped there wasn't one." She interpreted that remark in her own way: "If there is a God, he certainly always allows the wrong people to suffer, so I hope there isn't one too." It probably didn't help that, when she was young, her parents frequently played the game of which-of-our-friends-would-save-us-if-the-Holocaust-took-place-today. In addition to familial pressure, Zoltan has suffered from depression and painful physical illness. Plus, the biblical stories trigger feelings

that make it difficult for her to use it in her chaplaincy.

What Zoltan does in "Praying with Jane Eyre" is describe how she has used the novel and other texts to better understand herself and the world, and make herself a more compassionate chaplain. Her first step was to decide what sacredness means: "[Zoltan and her teacher] decided that sacredness is an act, not a thing. If I can decide that *Jane Eyre* is sacred, that means it is the actions I take that will make it so. The decision to treat *Jane* as sacred is an important first step, surely, but that is all the decision was – one step. The ritual, the engagement with the thing, is what makes the thing sacred. Objects are sacred only because they are loved. The text does not determine the sacredness; the actions and actors did, the questions you asked of the text and the way you returned to it." The study Zoltan does with "Jane Eyre" and the questions she asks are similar to the way people study the biblical text. In both types of study, two people often read the same words, but disagree about their meaning. Zoltan is clear that not every book can serve as a sacred text: it needs to be complex enough so that people have to struggle to learn what it's attempting to teach.

See "Reading" on page 7

Opinion

In My Own Words

Afghanistan

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Ever have so many confusing thoughts about an issue that you feel like you are being pulled in two different directions? That's the way I feel about the war in Afghanistan: not just the end of the war, which is what most people are concentrating on, but the war from its beginning. To help myself understand how I came to this pass, I decided to outline my different reactions.

1) I did not support our incursion into Afghanistan (which, by the way, was done under the administration of former President George W. Bush – a fact being ignored at

the moment by both Republicans and Democrats). The U.S. once again started a war without a firm knowledge of the cultural and political reality of the country; we also lacked a firm plan of what we were attempting to accomplish. I admit to being influenced by the Vietnam War: the French left that country because they knew it was an impossible war, but the U.S. blundered into the fight, taking part in a civil war in a country ruled by dictators on both sides.

2) However, I didn't support immediately leaving Afghanistan when President Barack Obama took office.

You cannot go into a country and destroy its social and economic infrastructure without finding a way to replace it before your troops leave. The world learned that lesson after World War I, which is why economic and other help was given to Germany and Japan after World War II. Unfortunately, we seem to have forgotten that lesson in contemporary times.

3) But I feel it's important for the U.S. to keep its word when an agreement is made with other countries. That's why I was distressed when President Donald Trump backed out of several treaties and left some of our allies in danger. If we don't follow through on our promises and agreements, even if a new administration takes over, any treaties or agreements we make will be considered meaningless by the rest of the world. So, when President Trump arranged with the Taliban (not Afghanistan's government) for U.S. troops to leave the country, President Joe Biden had no choice but to keep to that promise.

5) What I am left with is a sense of loss and an ache for those who were allies of the U.S. who are now forced to leave their country for safety. I also ache for those who remain who dreamed of a different kind of life. What surprises me, though, is why we didn't start planning for the possibility of a government meltdown the minute the agreement was made with the Taliban. Even if we expect nothing to go wrong, we should always have a worst case scenario ready just in case.

Why did the Afghanistan army basically desert its post? Why did the Taliban so easily reclaim the country? What happened to all the trillions of dollars that were spent to support our armed forces and the new Afghan government? These questions will be argued about for decades, but one thing is clear: American experts misjudged what was happening, possibly because they didn't clearly understand a culture different from our own. No matter how much we might want to do so, we cannot remake another country in our image.

I'm not looking to blame anyone because the system itself and our ideas were flawed. The loss of American and Afghan lives is to be mourned. Were those lives wasted? I can only pray that they were not. But my hope is that, in the future, we stop and think before we send men and women to die far from home – for their sakes and for those living in those faraway lands.

Letters

Belly Lox has come to Binghamton

To the Community:

Warning: This letter is not intended for people who are on a sodium-restricted diet. Following its recommendation might cause an immediate visit to your cardiologist who will declare, "Bistu mishugah?" ("Are you crazy?")

When I was a little girl in Brooklyn, I loved nothing more than going to my grandparents' very little grocery store in East New York, around the corner from Thomas Jefferson High School. There, on the marble counter would be my Grandpa Izzy cutting thin, perfect slices of lox. When I say "lox," I mean *real* lox, not the currently popular "Nova" variety, now preferred by everyone but a few die-hards who remember what lox used to taste like in the old days when it cost a fortune and the poor immigrant Jews who frequented their East New York establishment would come and request, not "lox," but "a sixteenth," or, if they had just won the lottery, "an eighth!" These days, what most of you reading this letter think of as "lox" is what rigid, opinionated eaters like myself refer to as "that pinkish-orangish stuff with the distinct flavor of colored paper." So, *nu*, I give in to your concerns about high blood pressure and constricted blood vessels, and I buy it and eat it, not because it's a taste sensation, but because the color on the cream cheese, on my *emesdikeh* (real) bialy* reminds me of days of yore.

But, my *guteh fryndz oon fryndinehs* ("tanks to the One Above," as Grandma Dora would say), we in the hinterlands have once again been blessed by the comings

of a new product now carried by that very large store in Johnson City. It's a package called *Belly Lox*. Yes, you heard it here: *Belly Lox* has come to Binghamton, well technically Johnson City, but, hey. If I can shlep in from Deposit to the Triple Cities for such a *geshmakteh* (delicious) goody, you might want to try it out. You certainly don't need to use a slab of it on your bagel, as such is the current custom of our over-privileged current generation of bagel-eaters. In the old days, if my grandparents saw someone place a slab of that precious commodity on a bagel or a bialy, they would only be thinking painfully of all the poor children in Europe whose empty stomachs could have been filled with what it cost for that slab! And, you really don't need as much as you would using Nova. In fact, if you wanted to be frugal, the way people were in 1951, you could break it up into little polka dots, elegantly placed in patterns on your bagel halves (yes, my sister still laughs at me arranging it thusly), and still get more flavor than an entire slab of Nova.

So, I'm taking this as really good news portending well for all of us in 5782. *Zayt gezunt* (Be healthy). *Blaibt gezunt oon ess gezuntehait* (Stay healthy, eat in good health...well maybe, on occasion, *essn gut*, but not sooo *gezunteh* (it's good, but not so healthy)!

Toni Grekin

*This can only be found not in the fresh bakery department, but in the freezer section in a blue box called "What's A Bialy," but I digress.



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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

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DEADLINE

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JLI course on “Outsmarting Antisemitism” to begin in November

Rivkah Slonim of Chabad of Binghamton will offer a new four-session course from the Rohr Jewish Learning Institute titled “Outsmarting Antisemitism.” The four-week course will begin on Monday, November 1. The 7 pm section of the class will be offered in person at the Chabad Center and via Zoom. The 8:45 pm section will be offered via Zoom. Sign-in information will be provided upon enrollment. To sign up, write rshea@ChabadofBinghamton.com or call Chabad at 797-0015 and indicate if coming in person or attending via Zoom. Zoom participants who live locally can pick up the book in person or ask to have it mailed to their home. The course registration fee, which includes the book, is \$79 per person and \$150 for couples.

“Using history, talmudic sources, Jewish mysticism and contemporary expert analysis, the course addresses some of the questions we grapple with as individuals and as a community,” say organizers of the program. “Why does antisemitism persist? How can we make hate go away? How

can we counter Israel-focused antisemitism and prevent our own youth from unwittingly lending their voices to antisemitic agendas?”

“Many Jews are anxious about rising antisemitism today and worry about how to respond to it,” says Slonim. “By exploring the mechanics of antisemitism and probing historical strategies for reducing it, this course offers a framework for confronting it head-on with purpose, positivity and pride.”

“Informative, interesting and empowering, ‘Outsmarting Antisemitism’ is well suited for community leaders and laypersons alike,” say organizers of the course.

“All those who care about religious freedom, both Jews and others, confront a disturbing increase in antisemitism worldwide,” says Cary Nelson, past president of the American Association of University Professors. “It is no longer enough just to be opposed to antisemitism. We all have to be knowledgeable about its history and current manifestations if we are to be equipped to combat its spread. That is why this course matters.”

“What distinguishes the present moment is the rise of antisemitism simultaneously on all fronts,” says Natan Sharansky, former refusenik and chairman at the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy. “To succeed in the struggle against these dangerous phenomena, we have to confront antisemitism on all fronts simultaneously. Therefore, this course from the Rohr Jewish Learning Institute is very important.”

The JLI program is designed to appeal to people at all levels of knowledge, including those without any prior experience or background in Jewish learning. All JLI courses are open to the public, and attendees need not be affiliated with a particular synagogue, temple or other house of worship. JLI, the adult education branch of Chabad-Lubavitch,

offers programs in more than 1,600 international locations in the U.S., Argentina, Australia, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, Panama, Russia, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, Uruguay and Venezuela. More than 400,000 students have attended JLI classes since it was founded in 1998.

Holiday service schedules

September holiday service schedules can be found on *The Reporter* website at www.thereporter.org/local-stream/high-holiday-services-at-area-synagogues-2021. For up-to-date information about closings due to the pandemic, contact the synagogues. Contact information can be found in the congregational notes on page 6.

TC Sisterhood to hold exercise class and get-together on Sept. 30

Temple Concord Sisterhood will hold an outdoor exercise class on Thursday, September 30, at 5 pm, under the tent in the Dorothy Schagrin Memorial Gardens behind the temple. The class will be taught by Jill Lukach, who teaches pilates and Silver Sneakers classes at the Jewish Community Center.

After the class, there will be a “Get Together Under the Tent” event from 5:30-6:30 pm. There will not be a formal program, just the opportunity to spend time with friends.

“The exercise program was done last year and is back by popular demand,” said organizers of the event. “This 30-minute fun-inspired workout will introduce participants to cardio fitness with easy-to-follow moves. We also had a request to repeat last month’s get-together.”

To sign up for the class, make a reservation by Tuesday, September 28, by contacting Phyllis Kellenberger at pweinste@stny.rr.com, or 723-2193 or 727-8305. Sneakers and comfortable fitting clothing is recommended.

Kalaniot Books releases four new children’s books

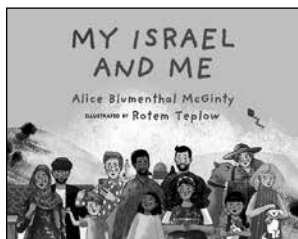
Kalaniot Books announced that it has released four new children’s picture books.

◆ “My Israel and Me” by Alice Blumenthal McGinty and illustrated by Rotem Teplow. Told in verse from a child’s perspective, the book introduces children to the diversity of Israel’s people. It also includes explanatory notes for parents and educators about the cultures and traditions discussed in the book.

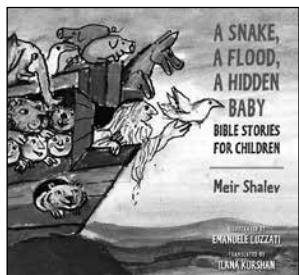
◆ “The Candy Man Mystery” by Rabbi Kerry Olitzky and illustrated by Christina Mattison Ebert. Josh and Becky Stein look for the synagogue’s missing candy man, Mr. Sharansky. Their search takes them all through the synagogue, where they find the candy man and much more.

◆ “The Rabbi and the Painter” by Shoshana Weiss and illustrated by Jennifer Kirkham. The book tells of the relationship between the 16th-century Venetian painter Tintoretto and Rabbi Leon of Modena, also known as Rabbi Judah Aryeh.

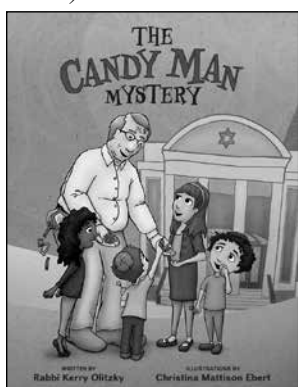
See “Books” on page 4



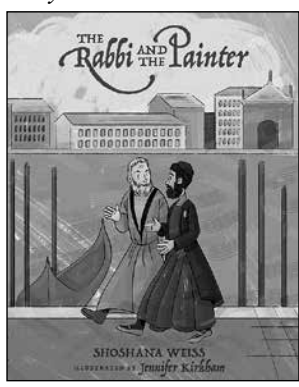
“My Israel and Me” (Covers used courtesy of Kalaniot Books)



“A Snake, a Flood, a Hidden Baby”



“The Candy Man Mystery”



“The Rabbi and the Painter”

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The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to Babs Putzel-Bischoff on the death of her brother-in-law,
James E. Bischoff

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to Edward (Ted) Major on the death of his brother,
Dr. Leslie Major

REPORTER DEADLINES

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

ISSUE	DEADLINE
October 8-21	September 27*
October 22-November 4	October 13
November 5-18	October 27
Nov. 19-Dec. 2 (Chanukah) ...	November 10

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

EPAC
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SEPTEMBER 23RD-26TH
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SUNDAY AT 3PM

Man of La Mancha

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Off the Shelf

Fathers, sons and the legacy of history

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Untangling three generations of a complex family history: that's the reason Alexander Wolff moved to Germany for a year in 2017. He wanted to understand the lives of two men: his grandfather Kurt Wolff and his father Niko Wolff. The German-Jewish Kurt, whose grandmother had converted to Christianity, published books (including those of Franz Kafka) that were burned by the Nazis. While Kurt managed to escape Germany before World War II, Niko remained behind and served in the Nazi army. Both men emigrated to the U.S. – Kurt in 1933 and Niko after the war in 1948 – although much about their European life remained a mystery to Alexander. Their stories form the core of the author's memoir/history "Endpapers: A Family Story of Books, War, Escape, and Home" (Atlantic Monthly Press).

Before he discusses his grandfather and father in detail, Alexander feels the need to put their lives into perspective by writing about Kurt's Jewish ancestors, baptized or not. He shows how antisemitism existed in Germany long before the Nazi era and gives details about the anti-Jewish riots that took place in the early part of the 19th century. Even when Jews converted, they were never completely accepted as German. Alexander mentions that one of the most striking things he saw in the Jewish Museum Berlin was the use of the term "baptized Jew." Although a person is usually no longer considered Jewish after they convert, this was not true in Germany. Alexander lists Germans of Jewish descent (converted or not), who had, by the middle of the 20th century, distinguished themselves in science, music, literature and philosophy, among other fields. He notes that "German Jewish accomplishments touched off resentment. Antisemitism draws strength from stigmatization of the alien 'other'; in nineteenth-century Germany, it also fed of a desire to punish Jews for their prosperity and acculturation, regardless of what they might have contributed or overcome."

However, the main purpose of "Endpapers" is for Alexander to explore the lives of his grandfather and father. When Kurt escaped from Germany, he came to the U.S. with his second wife, Helen. They formed the publishing company Pantheon, which made literary history when "Doctor Zhivago" by Boris Pasternak appeared. They also proved their American credentials with the release of Anne Morrow Lindbergh's "Gift from the Sea." Even with these successes, Kurt and Helen were forced to leave the firm. After moving to Switzerland in the 1950s, they were approached by Harcourt, Brace and World publishers and given their own imprint. Unfortunately, Kurt died in an accident in 1963; his funeral was attended not only by those in the literary world, but the many women with whom he had had an affair.

Niko had not been living with his father when he left Germany because Kurt had divorced Niko's mother, Elizabeth, with whom Niko and his sister, Maria, lived. Elizabeth remarried and her new husband, Hans Albrecht, protected the family. While Albrecht never joined the Nazi Party, he did hold membership in organizations that had close ties to the Nazi command. Because of those connections, Niko and Maria's Jewish ancestry seemed to disappear from official records. Although no member of the family practiced Judaism, their ancestors' conversions were void as far as the Nazis were concerned. As descendants of Jews, Kurt, Niko and Maria could have been sent to concentration camps.

Niko, who came to the U.S. as a graduate student in chemistry with the help of his father, had a successful career working in industry. He also had a very different temperament from that of Kurt: "[Niko's father] had been a man in a hurry: Kurt went into publishing at twenty-one and founded his own firm five years later, marrying in between. But Niko's childhood had been jolted by divorce, his adolescence disfigured by Nazism, his adulthood stayed by war." While Kurt was looking for an extraordinary life, Niko wanted an ordinary existence. This included being a faithful husband, something Kurt was not. Kurt's infidelities produced at least one offspring, in addition to the three children from his two marriages.

What Alexander struggles with most are two aspects of his family's past: his father's time in the Nazi army (particularly when he was stationed in Ukraine) and his grandmother Elizabeth's family's ownership of the Merck Company, which had connections to the Nazi government. The source of his information about Niko's army service in Ukraine are the letters Niko wrote to his mother and the author's research on the Nazi plan to systematically break the Ukrainian spirit. His research uncovered something of which Alexander had not been aware and of which his father never spoke: the Nazis' plan of "genocide by starvation in Ukraine under Nazi occupation during 1941-42... [The Hunger Plan sought] to starve to death up to thirty million non-Germans by diverting food to soldiers in the field and back to the home front." Alexander writes that the plan was not completely successful, although he can't help but note how Niko's letters speak of how well fed he and the troops were during their time in Ukraine. The author assumes that his father's duties of a driver prevented him from taking part in the worst of the atrocities, but he never asked his father exactly what he had done when he was in the army.

Elizabeth, Kurt's first wife and Niko's mother, belonged to the non-Jewish family that controlled the Merck Company, which manufactured chemicals and pharmaceuticals. The company was taken over before World War II by a non-family member, Bernhard Pfotenhauer, who had deep ties to the Third Reich. However, Wilhelm Merck (Alexander's grandmother's brother) joined the Nazi party and became a member of the SS. The company also profited when Adolph Hitler began taking a drug it produced: Eukodal, an opioid described as "twice as effective at relieving pain as morphine, capable of delivering a loftier high than heroin." The drug kept Hitler living in a fog of unrealistic expectations: the now delusional leader believed he could still win the now unwinnable war. The company's past came to haunt the family: Niko, who owned shares in the company, sold them and invested in U.S. companies. Alexander also knows the money from that sale helped fund his summer camp experiences and his college years.

In addition, Alexander ponders the implications of his step-grandfather having connections to the Nazi government. Can he overlook those connections? But would he even exist if not for what Albrecht had done?

The lesson he draws from this is that "no one is in the clear, least all of anyone held to modern standards of accountability. And those standards lead me to an excruciating place. For while it's easy to judge my step-grandfather for having been a supporting member of the SS, who am I to hold against Dr. Albrecht what he might have done to conceal Niko's Jewish roots, if doing so helped saved my father's life?"

Another discussion focuses on the rise of Nazism itself. Alexander notes the artificial nature of democracy in Germany after World War I: "Germany had its first democratic government essentially imposed on it, after the humiliation of a lost war, on a people who only knew how to be subjects, not citizens – which only underscores how fragile, how tied to context, democracy is." He also notes how German Jews' feelings of connection to Germany left them blind and unable to understand what was taking place: these feelings "propagated an illusion of security to German Jews, so many of whom refused to believe the country they loved, the land of Beethoven and Goethe and Kant, would target the very people who most appreciated that culture, who indeed helped create and elevate it."

The author also writes of the difficulties his Aunt Maria faced during the Allied bombing of Germany at the end of the war. Those who remember the Blitz the Germans inflicted on London might find themselves less sympathetic than the author, but he is right to note that one horrific event does not excuse another. Thinking about this allows the author to discuss ethical behavior on both sides of the war.

"Endpapers" is an intriguing and complex work whose purpose is to challenge readers to view the world in many shades of grey, rather than black and white. Alexander never excuses what the Nazis and Hitler did, but his explorations allow him to examine his own relationship to Germany and the United States, his country of birth, in light of what he discovers. While Alexander's writing is clear and easy to read, the tangled paths of his family history are less easy to follow. The extensive family tree included was extremely helpful in keeping the many relationships straight. The ethical decisions and family behavior of which he writes are also far more complicated than one might originally think. There is so much to discuss that book clubs who choose this work might find themselves scheduling extra sessions.

Books Continued from page 3

♦ "A Snake, a Flood, a Hidden Baby" by Meir Shalev, illustrated by Emanuele Luzzati and translated by Ilana Kurshan. The work features stories from the Hebrew Bible retold with whimsy by one of Israel's most celebrated authors.

Kalaniot Books' website can be found at <http://kalaniotbooks.com/>. To read *The Reporter's* interview with Lilian Rosenstreich, one of the owners of the press, visit www.thereportergroup.org/archives/feature/introducing-children-to-different-flavors-of-judaism.

Kaifeng Continued from page 1

organizations. He is editor, with Jordan Paper, of "The Chinese Jews of Kaifeng: A Millennium of Adaptation and Endurance," a scholarly book that explores the culture and history of the Chinese Jewish community and how it combined Chinese and Jewish cultures.

The committee organizing the event included Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation; Sheryl Brumer, executive director of the JCC; and Sima Auerbach, the JCC's Judaic cultural coordinator. "I am very excited that Sima Auerbach has agreed to be the JCC's new part-time Judaic cultural coordinator," said Brumer. "I am looking forward to the upcoming program she is planning with Shelley Hubal and the Federation, and hope we can continue to plan more such programs together in the future."

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THE
REPORTER
Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton

Quick Reference Guide to Planned Giving

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

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Federation held Holocaust memorial service on Sept. 12



The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton held a Holocaust memorial service at the Temple Israel cemetery on September 12. Around 30 people attended the event. Shown is a part of the crowd before the service began.



At right, l-r: Sima Auerbach, former executive director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton; Shelley Hubal, current Federation executive director; and Suzanne Holwitt, president of the Federation's Board of Directors.



The Holocaust memorial stone in the Temple Israel cemetery.



Federation President Suzanne Holwitt welcomed community members to the memorial service. On the right is the Holocaust memorial stone in the Temple Israel cemetery.

Taking part in the service were (not pictured is Rabbi Rachel Esserman):



Carol Herz



Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell, Temple Concord



Rabbi Levi Slonim, Chabad Center



Brian Freedman, Hillel at Binghamton



Rabbi Zev Silber, Beth David Synagogue



Rabbi Benny Kelman



Rabbi Geoffrey Brown, Temple Israel



Rabbi Moshe Shmaryahu, Hillel Academy

CJS.....Continued from page 1

Christianity developed as a religion that is not law-based. That means that even if Christians seek to model themselves on Jesus, they cannot emulate his own lifestyle. What opportunities does this otherness at the heart of Christianity provide?" she asked. Meyer will examine the implications of Jesus's Jewishness for both Christian and Jewish thought today. She is the author of "Jesus the Jew in Christian Memory: Theological and Philosophical Explorations" (Cambridge, 2020).

The College of Jewish Studies provides opportunities for adult Jewish education for the Broome County community by offering fall and spring programs. Drawing on local resources and inviting scholars and experts from a range of universities and cultural and religious institutions, CJS sponsors a wide array of programs dealing with Jewish history, culture, religion and politics.

The College of Jewish Studies, founded in 1986, is an informal coalition between the Judaic Studies Department of Binghamton University and several area Jewish sponsoring institutions: the Jewish Community Center, the Jewish Federation of Greater

Binghamton, Beth David Synagogue, Temple Concord, and Temple Israel. Programming for CJS would not be possible without the additional financial support of a generous grant from The Community Foundation for South Central New York—David and Virginia Eisenberg Donor Advised Fund, the Jacob and Rose Olum Foundation, the B'nai B'rith Lectureship Fund, the Victor and Esther Rozen Foundation, an endowment fund from the former Temple Beth El of Endicott, a grant from the JoyVel Charitable Fund, and the donations of individual sponsors.

"If you are not one already, please consider becoming an individual sponsor so that the CJS can continue bringing quality programs to the community," said CJS organizers. "For more information on how to become an individual sponsor or to make a donation, please e-mail us at jkarp@binghamton.edu." The College of Jewish Studies is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

For more information on the College of Jewish Studies and its programs, visit to www.bingcjs.org and www.facebook.com/bingcjs.

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On Sukkot: Unity of our people

RABBI BENNY RAPOPORT, DIRECTOR OF CHABAD OF THE ABINGTONS/JEWISH LIBRARY AND DISCOVERY CENTER

The holiday of Sukkot, and the *mitzvot* observed throughout the festival's seven days serve as a powerful symbol of Jewish unity.

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.

The *midrash* tells us that the four kinds – the lulav, etrog, myrtle and willow, which are all noticeably different one from the other – signify four very different types of Jews, each with differing levels of Torah knowledge and *mitzvot* observance.

It's brought down in the teachings of Kabbalah that taste and fragrance symbolize Torah and *mitzvot*. Taste symbolizes Torah study, for understanding the Torah

gives us a concrete pleasure similar to the sensation of experiencing a pleasing flavor. Smell, on the other hand, symbolizes the fulfillment of *mitzvot*, because the quality which usually motivates us to fulfill the commandments is *kabbalat ol'* – an unquestioning acceptance of the yoke of heaven. Since we oftentimes do not understand the reasons for the *mitzvot*, their observance may be less

See "Sukkot" 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, September 25, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person (masks are required). The Torah portion is Exodus 33:12-34:26 and the haftarah is Ezekiel 38:18-39:16. At 8:15 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom.

On Sunday, September 26, Torah study will be held at 10:30 am on Zoom only.

The temple office will be closed September 28-29.

On Saturday, October 2, at 9:30 am, the bar mitzvah of Joshua Kweller will be held. Shacharit services will be held at 10 am via Zoom and in-person (masks are required). The Torah portion is Deuteronomy 32:1-52 and the haftarah is Isaiah 42:5-21. At 8 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom.

On Sunday, October 3, Torah study will be held at 10:30 am on Zoom only.

On Tuesday, October 12, at 7 pm, there will be a Sisterhood meeting.

On Saturday, October 16, at 9:30 am, there will be the b'nai mitzvot of Kathy Seitel West and Charlie Pladek.

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.

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
Presidents: Denice Cassaro and Nomi Talmi
Rabbi: Shifrah Tobacman
Education Director/Admin. Coordinator: Naomi Wilensky
Bnai Mitzvah Coordinator: Michael Margolin
Services: Fridays at 7:30 pm unless otherwise notes. Contemplative morning services every Tuesday. Saturday mornings, Gan Shabbat, and other special services at least once a month Call for the weekly schedule.
Jewish Learning Experiences (JLE) for kindergarten through seventh grade meets on Sunday mornings. Sixth and Seventh grade also meets on Wednesday afternoons.
Adult Education: Available throughout the year. Check the website or call the office for details.

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.

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

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 Beth El of Oneonta

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

Temple Brith Sholom

Affiliation: Unaffiliated
Address: P.O. Box 572, 117 Madison St., Cortland, NY 13045
Phone: 607-756-7181
President: Carol Levine, 315-696-5744
Cemetery Committee, 315-696-5744
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Temple-Brith-Sholom-114006981962930/>
Service leaders: Lay leadership
Shabbat services: Either Friday evening at 7:30 pm or Saturday at 10 am from Rosh Hashanah to Shavuot. Holiday services are also held. Check the Facebook page or weekly e-mail for upcoming services. Contact the president to get on the e-mail list.
Religious School: Students are educated on an individual basis. Temple Brith Sholom is a small equalitarian congregation serving the greater Cortland community. Congregants span the gamut of observance and services are largely dependent on the service leader. The Friday night siddur is "Likrat Shabbat," while the Saturday morning siddur is "Gates of Prayer." The community extends a warm welcome to the Jewish student population of SUNY Cortland, as well as the residents of local adult residences.

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: Friday 8 pm; Saturday 10 am, unless otherwise announced. Weekday morning minyan 7:30 am (9 am on Sundays and legal holidays).
Religious School/Education: September-May: Classes meet on Sunday, 9 am-12:30 pm and Wednesday, 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, September 24, light candles before.....6:38 pm
Saturday, September 25, Shabbat ends.....7:37 pm
Monday, September 27, light candles before.....6:34 pm
Tuesday, September 28, light candles after.....7:32 pm
Wednesday, September 29, yom tov ends.....7:31 pm
Friday, October 1, light candles before.....6:27 pm
Saturday, October 2, Shabbat ends.....7:25 pm
Friday, October 8, light candles before.....6:15 pm
Saturday, October 9, Shabbat ends.....7:14 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., 8 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, September 24: 6:45 pm, Sukkot Shabbat wine and cheese reception in the sukkah; 7:30 pm, Sukkot Shabbat services with Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell. All are welcome to come in person, but masks are required. The Zoom link is <https://bit.ly/3mc8yFW>, meeting ID 886 4663 5762 and passcode 930361.

Saturday, September 25: 9:15 am, Torah study in the temple library and on Zoom (to view on Zoom, visit <https://bit.ly/3CVxM14>, meeting ID 882 9808 7579 and passcode 676707); 10:35 am, Sukkot Shabbat family service (in person only); and at 7 pm, "Havdalah with a Bonus" at <https://bit.ly/3zd0atv>, meeting ID 897 4179 1260 and passcode 408279.

Monday, September 27, 6:30 pm, "Simchat Torah Online Experience" with other URJ congregations. The program will be on Zoom or in the sanctuary for an online Simchat Torah concert, which will include a brief Torah reading of the end of Deuteronomy and the beginning of Genesis and a storyteller/artist. Contact the synagogue for more details.

Tuesday, September 28: 10:30 am, Atzeret Simchat Torah festival and Yizkor service on Zoom at <https://bit.ly/2XuE0oh>, meeting ID 867 9721 8965 and passcode 606848. A BYO festival lunch will follow.

Thursday, September 30: 5 pm, Sisterhood "Exercise Class – Under the Tent" followed by 5:30-6:30 pm social get-together under the tent. To sign up for the class, RSVP by Tuesday, September 28, to Phyllis Kellenberger at pweinste@stny.rr.com or 723-2193 or 727-8305. For more information, see the article on page 3.

Friday, October 1: 5-7:30 pm, First Friday at the Kilmer Mansion. FASST will be exhibiting the works of 20 local artists; 7:30 pm, Shabbat services with Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell. All are welcome to come in person, but a mask is required. To view on Zoom, visit <https://bit.ly/37UQSpK>, meeting ID 829 9450 3102 and passcode 708450.

Saturday, October 2: 9 am, Shabbat school; 9:15 am, Torah study in the temple library and on Zoom (to view on Zoom, visit <https://bit.ly/3CVxM14>, meeting ID 882 9808 7579 and passcode 676707); 10:35 am, Shabbat family service (in person only); and 7 pm, "Havdalah with a Bonus" at <https://bit.ly/3zd0atv>, meeting ID 897 4179 1260 and passcode 408279. From noon-4 pm, the Kilmer Mansion will showcase artists from the Broome County Council Art Trail.

Sunday, October 3: 10 am-2 pm, Sisterhood rummage sale; and 10 am-4 pm, the Kilmer Mansion will showcase artists from the Broome County Council Art Trail.

Wednesday, October 6: 10:30 am, The Morning Book Club will meet in the Temple Concord library and on Zoom. In person participation is limited to 18; reservations to merrypell.preus@gmail.com are required. At 6:30 pm, Sisterhood schmooze and at 7 pm, Sisterhood meeting.

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.

 **Jews in Sports**

Sue Bird: A leader of epic proportions

BILL SIMONS

Perhaps no player in the history of basketball has garnered as many important awards as Jewish-American superstar Sue Byrd. She has dominated her sport in high school, collegiate, World Cup, Olympic, EuroLeague and Women's National Basketball Association competition. Despite the physical rigors of the hardcourt, the 40-year-old point guard – surmounting injuries and surgeries – has displayed basketball mastery for nearly 25 years. Bird has excelled athletically while summoning the courage to articulate deeply held, but politically controversial, positions – while animating her personal life with honesty and passion.

Basketball stardom preceded Bird's political activism and iconoclastic lifestyle by many years. Bird moved with her father from Long Island to Queens so she could play in a more competitive basketball environment during her last two years in high school. A teenage phenom, Bird paced Christ the King Regional High School to two New York state titles with the team going undefeated her senior year. Named New York City and New York State Player of the Year, Bird was heavily recruited by top collegiate baseball programs.

Playing under coach Geno Auriemma, Bird led the University of Connecticut to NCAA championships in 2000 and 2002. With Bird on the court, the Lady Huskies had an astounding 114-4 record. Pacing UConn in points, assists and rebounds per game her senior year, Bird won the 2002 Naismith Women's College Player of the Year Award. Bird's "incredible consistency as a player comes from her consistency as a person," asserts Auriemma. "She's an incredible leader on the basketball court of epic proportions."

One of the towering figures in professional basketball history, Bird has spent her entire WNBA career (2002-present) with the Seattle Storm. Despite missing two seasons due to injuries, Bird, a 12-time all-star, is the all-time WNBA leader in games (546) and minutes (17,187) played, assists (3,034) and turnovers (1,329) – and second in three-point field goals (939). Among active players, her career totals are third in points (6,541) and second in steals (686). Bird

has led Seattle to four WNBA championships and, with the playoffs still to come, the Storm remain in the 2021 hunt for another title.

To supplement her WNBA salary, modest by NBA standards, Bird participates in media promotions. And, during the WNBA off-season, she has played with Russian professional teams in the EuroLeague, winning five championships.

A stalwart of the USA National Team since 2002, Bird was instrumental in the United States winning four International Basketball Federation World Cup gold medals as well as a bronze medal. Her five FIBA World Cup medals set a standard.

Intelligence, strategy, attention to detail and resilience define Bird's remarkable all-around game. While eschewing flamboyance, she can shoot, pass, rebound, defend and motivate. Bird's no-look full-court passes, pick and roll, downtown three-point shots and ball steals derail opposition momentum and inspire teammates. Bird is the leader: she has always found a way to win. Sam Walker of *The Wall Street Journal* puts in succinctly: "The most successful active team captain in professional sports anywhere on Earth is Sue Bird."

Jews celebrate Bird and her accomplishments. Shaked Karabelnicoff, content creator at OpenDor Media, gushes, "We're seriously kvelling." FanSided media contributor Lauren Rosenberg contends, "Even if you know nothing of basketball, you know who Sue Bird is. Bird brings pride to the Jewish community." However, Bird's Jewishness is complex. Bird's parents, Jewish physician father Herschel and Protestant nurse mother Nancy, separated, thus exposing her to both Christian and Jewish traditions. Although Bird has Jewish relatives in Israel, spent substantive time in the Jewish state and acquired Israeli citizenship, she did so to enhance her access to international basketball. Of her Jewish-Christian ancestry, Bird affirms, "I have both inside of me."

Byrd made her fifth Olympic appearance at the 2021 Tokyo games. She and her teammate and friend Diana Taurasi became the first basketball players of either gender to win five Olympic gold medals. By a vote of the U.S.

contingent, Bird was one of America's two flag bearers at the Olympic opening ceremonies.

Yet, back in the U.S. Bird has joined other WNBA players in absenting herself during the playing of the national anthem. Critics claim hypocrisy for Bird to carry the flag overseas while protesting in the U.S. As a labor union vice president, she helped fellow players achieve incremental salary and benefit gains through the 2020 WNBA Collective Bargaining Agreement. Bird advocates forcefully for Black Lives Matter, Say Her Name and LGBTQ+ issues.

Two photos taken about 38 years apart suggest the evolution of Bird's identity. In the first photo, toddler Sue Bird poses with her sister Jen, five years her senior. Seated side-by-side on a couch, the sisters, in matching lavender tops and purple overalls, holding their stuffed Snoopy dogs, are adorable. Love, comfort and happiness radiate through their eyes and smiles. Growing up, Sue wanted to emulate her smart and athletic big sister, who went on to earn degrees from Brown University and Yale Law School.

The second photo adorns the March 2021 cover of GQ magazine. It features a romantic, intimate and erotic embrace between Bird and her fiancée, Megan Rapinoe. Due to the skillful composition of the photo, it is not clear if the couple are wearing tops. Other expressive photos of shared loved accompany the feature story, "Megan Rapinoe and Sue Bird Are Goals." "Goals" refer to sport, personal and political agendas.

Bird had long confided in family and close friends, but not until 2017 did she come out publicly as gay. An Olympic and World Cup gold medalist, Rapinoe is Bird's athletic equal. The daughter of Christian working-class parents, the brash and flamboyant 5'6" Rapinoe, sporting a short hot-pink hairstyle, presents a contrast to Bird. A native of the comfortable suburb of Syosset, the 5'9" Bird, her dark brown hair ponytailed, is grounded by a thoughtful, calibrated template. However, Bird and Rapinoe share a fierce athletic competitiveness, idealism – and love. Their achievements, courage and activism make Bird and Rapinoe the most impactful couple in sports history. Discussing the impetus for the GQ photo spread, the couple evokes legacy: See "Bird" on page 8

Sukkot.....Continued from page 6

tangibly gratifying than Torah study is, much in the same way that smelling something is less palpably gratifying than actually tasting it.

The etrog, which has a pleasant taste and a beautiful aroma, represents a person who is proficient both in studying Torah and in the fulfillment of *mitzvot*. The fruit of the tree from which the lulav is taken, the date palm, which has a pleasant taste but no particular fragrance, represents one who studies Torah, but does not perform *mitzvot*. The myrtle, which has quite a beautiful fragrance but no taste to speak of, represents one who fulfills *mitzvot*, but does not study Torah; and the willow, which has neither taste nor aroma, represents a Jew who neither studies Torah nor observes *mitzvot*.

Yet, in order to fulfill the mitzvah, we need to take all four kinds, bind them together and make the appropriate blessings. As lofty as the etrog is, without the humble

willow bound together with it, it would be inadequate and invalid for the mitzvah.

This theme of Jewish unity is also clearly expressed in the sukkah. For a sukkah encompasses and completely surrounds all who are in it. From the greatest and most pious scholar, to the simplest and unlearned Jew, the sukkah brings out that which is the same in all of us – the Godly spark, the *neschama* that burns inside each and every Jew.

And herein lies the message of Sukkot. Even an individual who seems to be completely disengaged from the Torah and its traditions, someone who may be quite unfamiliar with Jewish living and practice, by virtue of the Godly soul inside them, he or she is a real and vital part of the Jewish people, and without whom we as a people are incomplete.

May God grant all of us a happy and sweet new year, and may he bestow upon all of his children a year of true peace and blessings in both the material and spiritual.

Reading.....Continued from page 2

The 11 essays referencing "Jane Eyre" and the three on other works of literature (one each on "Little Women," "Harry Potter" and "The Great Gatsby") are autobiographical, showing what Zoltan learned as she studied these works by herself and with others. For example, she notes Jane's line "I must keep in good health, and not die" from chapter four of the novel while writing "On Commitment." Zoltan opens the essay by talking about a town in France that made a commitment to radical hospitality; this commitment led them to open their doors to Jews fleeing the Nazis during World War II. She then wonders if she would ever be able to form that deep a commitment to anything. One of the reasons she ponders this question is the example of her grandfather, whose experiences in that same war taught him a different lesson: the need to be detached from the world, including his family. Then, when discussing the circumstance surrounding Jane's speech, Zoltan shows how Jane learned that sometimes the best you can do is stay alive – that the only commitment you can make is to simple survival. Zoltan ends the essay by writing, "We need to take care of ourselves enough to survive with the fire within us intact. We need to survive in order to witness and in order to be agents of change. We need to believe that wanting to survive is at times enough, because we are enough. Surviving as a commitment may sound like a low bar to jump. But sometimes you need the bar to be low so that you can gather up the strength to once again clear the higher ones."

Zoltan's chaplaincy would not be comforting to everyone, but her truth will speak to many people. For example, she refuses to tell someone in distress that everything will be fine: "It isn't true. Everything will be; things will

unfold. But everything will definitely not be fine." She dislikes the idea of destiny because, to her, that means her grandparents were destined to experience the Holocaust in order for her to exist. Zoltan feels it's important to note that "we can make meaning of our hardships; we can be grateful for the lessons we have learned through them and the people we have met without being grateful for the hardships themselves."



Zoltan explains her vocation by saying she is "the person you can come to when you just want someone to say: That sucks. I don't think things will be fine and I don't think that everything happens for a reason. If you want someone who will sit with you in that space, even when it is just a way station, that's fine. That is what I am here for. I live in that way station." When you read the problems Zoltan has faced in her life and the lessons she's learned from her grandparents, you'll understand that she is the chaplain who won't make light of your horrific experiences or pretend they were given to you to make you a better person. She is the one who tells you what's happening is awful and that you did nothing to deserve it.

"Praying with Jane Eyre" offers readers a way to find meaning and understanding using literature that speaks to them. For those interested in practicing sacred reading, Zoltan offers a tool kit that includes Jewish and Christian methods of interpretation. Although I doubt I'll ever read "Jane Eyre" as a sacred text, this book made me think about novels I've loved and the many lessons they've taught me. That's the true beauty of "Praying with Jane Eyre": it will make you look at your life and literature in new and exciting ways.

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Binghamton University's Mitzvah Marathon marks 20th year of Sept. 11 attacks

By JNS staff

(JNS)—The Rohr Chabad Center for Jewish Student Life and Hillel at Binghamton sponsored the annual Mitzvah Marathon Fair in remembrance of the victims of the 9/11 terror attacks for members of the campus community on September 13.

As in years past, thousands of students, faculty and staff were expected to participate in the daylong event, which is designed to offer opportunities to perform good deeds in memory of lives lost on Sept. 11, 2001, as well as all victims of terror. They include contributions to charity, making quilts for underprivileged children, donating food to CHOW, designing New Year's greeting

cards for soldiers on the front or "get well" cards for children in local hospitals, and joining a bone-marrow national registry drive and/or a blood drive sponsored by the Red Cross.

Participants filled out a form documenting their good deed, which was attached to a picture of a victim of 9/11 and strung along a memory wall erected on campus.

Since this event began at Binghamton University in 2002 as a way to mark the first anniversary of 9/11, campuses including the University of Florida, Carnegie Mellon University, Arizona State University and dozens more across the country have replicated the Mitzvah Marathon.

"With the passage of time, it is increasingly important that we raise awareness concerning this national tragedy," said Rabbi Levi Slonim, director of programming and development of Chabad at Binghamton. "Most of the incoming students were not even born in 2001; this kind of program and others like it gives them pause to consider the event from an adult vantage point.

"As the Rebbe would always say, 'A little light dispels a lot of darkness,'" said Slonim. "This program is designed to give participants a practical way in which they can mark the memory of those who perished and add more positivity and light to this world."



Rabbi Levi Slonim (left, with two unidentified students), director of programming and development of Chabad at Binghamton: "Our response to the 9/11 tragedy should be to resolve to do something meaningful with this day." (Courtesy photo via JNS)

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Report: Some prisoners at Gilboa facility were "aware of escape plot" in advance

A number of prisoners at the Gilboa Prison in northern Israel were apparently aware of an escape plot by six incarcerated terrorists, a police investigation into the breakout has reportedly found. According to a report by Kan news on Sept. 14, the Israel Police's Lahav 433 Unit, which is investigating the escape, has questioned several prisoners who may have been aware of the plot in advance. A prison guard has also been questioned about disrupting the investigation in connection with suspicions that he failed to respond appropriately to reports of sand blocking the facility's sewage system. The guard is not suspected of being aware of the escape plan, according to the report, but of failing to pass on the observations of other prisoners of sand in the pipes and of telling police after the breakout that the sand "did not look unusual" to him. The report said that "after the escape, he disrupted the investigation and asked prisoners not to report the fact that he canceled their complaint [about the sand]. The guard has been banned from the prison." The two remaining terrorists from among the six who escaped the Gilboa Prison on Sept. 6 were captured in the Palestinian Authority city of Jenin on the night of Sept. 18, the Israel Defense Forces reported on Sept. 19. As the forces exited Jenin with the prisoners

in tow, residents began to riot, throwing rocks and hurling improvised explosives, according to the IDF. No injuries were reported.

Germany, P.A. sign \$117 million cooperation agreement

Germany and the Palestinian Authority have signed a 100 million euros (\$117 million) cooperation agreement that will see German investment in areas under P.A. control. The donation will finance "sustainable economic development in [Palestine] over the next two years," according to P.A. Prime Minister Mohammed Shtayyeh. "We hope our friends in Germany, the European Union and the international community will help put pressure on Israel to allow elections to be held in all the Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem," he added. Germany's representative to Ramallah Oliver Owczka praised the bilateral relations between his country and the Palestinians, reiterating German support for a negotiated two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Ben-Gurion U. to team with second university in Morocco

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel and Université Internationale de Rabat in Morocco signed a Memorandum of Understanding to collaborate on the study of Moroccan Jewry, in addition to research and education. A focus will be on the cultural heritage of Moroccan Jews, as well as the intertwined destiny of Jews and Muslims in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region. Joint activities will also relate to "people of the MENA region," encompassing humanities, social sciences, and natural and health sciences. "It is especially noteworthy that this historic collaboration between BGU and UIR will delve into the long history of the Jewish people in Morocco, which dates back more than two millennia," says Doug Seserman, chief executive officer of Americans for Ben-Gurion University. This represents the second joint agreement between BGU and a Moroccan academic institution after signing with Mohammed VI Polytechnic University just a year after the Abraham Accords were signed on Sept. 15, 2020.

New Anne Frank statue in Guatemala

A statue honoring Holocaust victim and teenage Jewish diarist Anne Frank was unveiled in Antigua, Guatemala, in early September, reported the San Diego Jewish World. The Anne Frank Children's Human Rights Memorial, which was dedicated on Sept. 3, rests in the San Sebastian Park across the street from the National School for Girls No. 2, Antonio Castro y Escobar. Saint Sebastian was murdered as a youngster by the Romans for being Christian. The site for the statue was chosen by Antigua Mayor Victor Hugo del Pozo. After a year-long delay due to the coronavirus pandemic, the bronze statue was delivered to the Jewish community of Guatemala two months ago. It was created by Jerusalem-based sculptor Sam Philipe and was funded by the Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation.

Report: U.S. to freeze \$130 million of Egyptian military aid over human-rights abuses

The United States is withholding \$130 million worth of military aid to Egypt in order to pressure it to improve human rights, said two sources, including a U.S. official, according to Reuters. The Biden administration decision would stop the transfer of the aid until Egypt improves its human-rights record, said an official quoted in the Reuters report. Sources said an official announcement would occur later the week of Sept. 17. Abdel Fattah El-Sisi came to power after toppling the Muslim Brotherhood government in 2013. The previous U.S. administration's policy maintained the aid flow to Egypt. The report comes a day after Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett met with Egyptian El-Sisi in Sharm El-Sheikh. Bennett thanked El-Sisi for a warm reception at the coastal Egyptian city on the Sinai Peninsula, where the two agreed to continue broadening cooperation and dialogue on a range of issues.

Warsaw's Jewish community buries remains found of unidentified Holocaust victim

Warsaw's Jewish community buried the remains of an unidentified Holocaust victim on Sept. 14, found in a building that was once part of the Warsaw Ghetto. "We are here as the family for a person we don't know," said Poland's Chief Rabbi Michael Schudrich, according to the AP. The bones were wrapped in a white cloth and carried on a wooden cart to the grave in Warsaw's Jewish Cemetery. The human bones were found in a basement, thought to have resulted from a Jew hiding from German forces that destroyed the area during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in 1943.

Israeli ministries issue legal opinion on smuggling of child in Italian cable-car crash


Israeli government attorneys said that the recent smuggling of 6-year-old Eitan Biran from Italy to Israel amounts to kidnapping under international law. A legal opinion from lawyers at the Israeli ministries of justice and foreign affairs said the abduction meets the definition of a kidnapped child under the Hague Abduction Convention, a treaty Israel joined in 1991, reported Israel's Channel 12 news. The convention provides for the "prompt return of abducted children to their country of habitual residence," according to the treaty's text. Eitan is the sole survivor of a cable-car crash in Italy's Piedmont region in May. His parents, maternal great-grandparents and 2-year-old brother were killed in the crash. A total of 14 people died in the accident. Eitan's maternal grandfather reportedly flew him to Israel on Sept. 11 instead of returning him to his paternal aunt near Pavia, in northern Italy, after a pre-arranged visit. Now he is at the center of a custody battle after an Italian court ruled that he could live with his aunt. The Israeli relatives denied that they abducted the boy. However, after the legal opinion by the Israeli ministries, it is likely that Israel will work to return the child to Italy, who was taken without consent of his guardian, said Channel 12.

Bird.....Continued from page 7


"You can do it your own way."

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.



This issue's "Jewish Resources to occupy your family during social distancing" can be found on **The Reporter's website**.
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