

THE REPORTER

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Campaign 2022: allocations

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton is currently working through the allocation process to distribute the funds being raised by Campaign 2022. “We’re still doing fund-raising for the Campaign,” said Shelley Hubal, Federation executive director. “At the same time, the Federation board is looking to allocate funds for the different organizations we support.”

The allocation process takes place over several months. This year, the forms were sent out on June 21. However, one thing was different: each organization received questions aimed specifically at their organization. “We want to ask questions that would help each organization highlight what their specific role is in the community,” Hubal said. “With the old forms, we realized that not every question was relevant to every organization. These new forms have proven to be the best way for each organization to communicate directly with our board members.”

Hubal added that, “The Federation tries to make the allocation process as simple as possible, but we take our obligation to the community seriously and make certain the precious funds we raise are put to the best possible use. While not always easy, we try to work with every organization

to help our wonderful local community continue to thrive.”

The forms and budgets were due in the Federation office August 23 and then were distributed to the board. Board members had until September 13 to submit questions to the organizations for clarification. Answers to those questions were due by October 7. On Wednesday, October 20, some organizations will be asked to offer presentations to the board and answer additional questions. On Wednesday, November 17, the board will finalize the allocations.

The process was changed last year for organizations asking for an allocation of \$1,000 or less. For the first time, they were only asked to submit their request in a letter that included their contact information and the reason for the request. Those letters were also due on August 23.

Federation President Suzanne Holwitt noted how the Federation is trying to make the process easier. “The allocation process can be a stressful time for local organizations because the money the Federation gives out is extremely important to their budgets,” she said. “That’s one reason why it helps us to know just how much money we’re raising. It’s so important to keep these organizations healthy so they

can continue to serve the community.”

Campaign Chairwoman Marilyn Bell said, “I know the results of the Campaign directly affect local Jewish organizations. That’s one reason we’ve started the Campaign early. This way, the Federation board has an idea what funds will be available. The serious and considered discussions that take place during the allocation process show just how important the board considers every local Jewish organization.”

To make a pledge, see the ad on page 3 of this paper, contact Hubal at director@jfgb.org or 724-2332, or visit the Federation

website at www.jfgb.org/.

Organizations receiving allocations

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton gives allocations to the following organizations (in alphabetical order):

- ◆ Hillel Academy
- ◆ Hillel at BU
- ◆ Jewish Community Center
- ◆ Jewish Federations of North America
- ◆ PJ Library
- ◆ *The Reporter*

The Campaign also provides the operating funds for the Federation and Jewish Family Service.

Hillel Academy to host “Falafel and Chips Day”

Hillel Academy will host “Falafel and Chips Day” on Friday, October 29, from 11 am-2 pm. Rabbi Moshe Shmaryahu will prepare pita wrapped falafel for sale. The food is kosher vegetarian. The cost per falafel is \$10. Reservations for the dish may be made by e-mailing frontoffice@hillelacademyofbc.org or calling the main

phone number, 723-7461. This is takeout only and the food can be picked up at Hillel Academy, 4737 Deerfield Pl., Vestal.

“We hope to see you there,” said organizers of the event.

For more information, contact Joy Yarkoni at the e-mail and phone number listed above.

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’ 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 remaining two lectures will be held on Thursdays, October 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 problems.

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 noted, “Jesus of Nazareth is often seen as rejecting a Judaism incorrectly characterized as legalistic, elitist, obsessed with ritual purity, misogynist, vengeful and



Amy-Jill Levine
(Photo courtesy of Amy-Jill Levine)



Barbara U. Meyer
(Photo by Rebecca Hartman)

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 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’ 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).

See “CJS” on page 7

JLI course on “Outsmarting Antisemitism” to begin in November

Registration is still open for “Outsmarting Antisemitism,” a four-part course that speaks about “the absurdity of antisemitism and now to beat it with purpose, positivity and pride.” 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, e-mail 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,” said organizers of the course. “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?”

“We will not allow antisemitism to define us, nor can we ignore it, however,” says Rivkah Slonim, who is teaching the course. “This course will offer thoughtful responses to this eternal problem and offer tools for not internalizing the hatred, but rather, moving forward unapologetically, with positivity and pride.”

“Outsmarting Antisemitism could scarcely appear at a better moment,” as-

serted American Jewish historian Jonathan Sarna, Ph.D. “As hatred of Jews resurges across the world, Jews everywhere wrestle with the question of what causes it and how best to respond. This course supplies time-tested answers.”

It 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.

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Opinion

From the Desk of the Federation Executive Director

With gratitude

SHELLEY HUBAL

Big Mama is a majestic pine tree that lives by a small bend on the Vernal Pool Trail at the Binghamton University Nature Preserve. My family gave the tree that name many years ago when we started hiking the preserve on a regular basis. You can't miss its thick, twisted roots that spread deep and wide in all directions. Our tradition is to carefully touch its enormous, scarred trunk each time we pass by. This is our way of showing respect for the tree's beauty and longevity. I don't know how old Big Mama is, but I am certain it has been providing shade and shelter for many, many generations.

So, too, there have been many generations of Jewish people that planted deep roots in the Southern Tier of New York. These generations worked tirelessly to create an enduring Jewish community. They raised families and built businesses here. They held fund-raising campaigns and distributed their precious resources. They supported one another in both good and challenging times. They built Jewish infrastructure such as synagogues, schools

and the Jewish Community Center. They created Jewish Family Service, which has, for many decades, supported our neighbors in their time of need. If you are a member of the Binghamton Jewish community or the surrounding area, chances are you have benefited from their sweat and tears.

This year, the Binghamton community has seen a considerable wave of Jewish families saying good-bye to the Southern Tier for good. Some are moving to warmer climates and some to be closer to family. Whatever their reasons, we are losing a generation of leaders. We are losing a generation that tended to our community's financial and social needs with great care. To these people I want to say, "Yasher koach and toda raba."

With the exodus of these Jewish families from Binghamton comes a great loss of funds. The Federation Campaign is going to suffer from these losses. Not just this year, but for years to come. Federation supports all our local organizations in some way. What does this mean? It means we have fewer resources to distribute and we will

have to make difficult decisions about what organizations to support. It means the next generation will not have the same Jewish opportunities as our predecessors. It means we will, most likely, attract fewer Jewish families who want to plant their roots here.

At this critical time, I am asking all of you, and especially the middle-aged and younger generations, to think about what you want the Binghamton Jewish community to look like in years to come. Do you want to have Jewish opportunities for our youth and young families? Do you want to have a JCC and places of worship? The choice is yours. There are many ways to support the community; consider giving to the Federation Campaign or joining the JCC. Perhaps it is time to become a member of one of our local synagogues or give of your time by joining a local leadership board. I promise your efforts will be rewarded. You will create a meaningful legacy and reap the fruits of your labor. Now is the time to nourish the roots the generations before us have planted.

In My Own Words

Thoughts about dead Jews

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Did anyone else ever read the Anne Frank quote, "I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart," and wonder if Frank would have felt the same after being taken to the concentration camp where she died? Dara Horn has. She has difficulty with that quote for a simple reason: it allows people to believe that killing Jews is a lapse from normal civilized behavior, rather than acknowledging that killing Jews is actually a rather common behavior. Not only have many people in the past hated Jews enough to murder them, Horn believes that the same hatred still exists today.

This thought appears in one of the essays in Horn's provocatively titled work "People Love Dead Jews: Reports From a Haunted Past" (W. W. Norton and Company). She believes that the Jews most people are familiar with are dead Jews, particularly those who died in the Holocaust. For a while, the horrors of the Holocaust seemed to protect American Jews, but that has changed. Horn writes that "the last few generations of American non-Jews had been chagrined by the enormity of the Holocaust – which had been perpetrated by America's enemy, and which was grotesque enough to make antisemitism socially unacceptable, even shameful. Now that people who remembered the shock of those events were dying off, the public shame associated with expressing antisemitism was dying too. In other words, hating Jews was normal. And historically speaking, the decades in which my parents and I had grown up simply hadn't been normal. Now, normal was coming back." As Horn notes in her three essays called "Dead American Jews," attacks on American Jews have become far more common. She also

expresses concerns about the way these are reported: far too many offer excuses about how the Jews themselves provoked the attacks.

Those are strong words and ones that many of us don't want to hear. But I do understand why Horn wrote them: she seems desperately afraid that someone is going to kill her children. I don't mean she's worried that someone will single out her children because someone has a personal grudge against them, but rather they are at risk because they are Jews and people are killing Jews – even in the U.S. – simply because they are Jews. If you think she doesn't need to be afraid, she'll talk to you about the attack in Pittsburgh, then the one in San Diego and finally the one in Jersey City, which was close to her home. Yes, she acknowledges that people came out in support of Jews. But she also notes the explanations offered for the Jersey City attacks were a problem; they suggested the attacks were caused by Jews moving into a new area of the city, making it seem as if it were their own fault for straying into non-Jewish neighborhoods.

The essays in "People Love Dead Jews" aren't only about what's happening in the United States. Horn discusses the incongruity of Jewish heritage sites, which offer tours of places where Jews once lived, but which are now empty of Jewish life. And she notes that no one talks about how and why those Jews disappeared. In another essay, she fumes about a website that offers photographs and information about Jewish sites across the world, many of which have been destroyed, but which also refuses to discuss how they were destroyed or take sides in the arguments about why the destruction occurred.

My favorite essay, "On Rescuing Jews and Other," is thought-provoking and challenging. What Horn wants to do is flip the way we view rescuers and the need for rescuing. It tells about Varian Fry, who went to Europe before World War II to save famous writers and artists. Most works about Fry talk about the difficulty of deciding who was vital enough to western culture to be saved. Horn sees this as the wrong debate: "The assumption in such stories is that the open maw of death for Europe's Jews and dissidents was something like a natural disaster. These stories, in some sense, force us – people removed from the time by generations – to ask the wrong questions, the kind of question that we might ask about shipwrecks or epidemics. *Someone* has to die, this thinking goes, and the only remaining dilemma is who will get the last seat in the lifeboat or the last vaccine. But these questions fall short

by assuming the perpetrators were irrelevant. As long as we are questioning the choices that were made, shouldn't we be considering the possibility of the Holocaust never happening? If someone was in a position to choose whether to save person A or person B, shouldn't whole societies have been in the position to reject the notion of genocide altogether? Why wasn't everyone Denmark?" Horn also discusses why Fry acted as he did and what happened to him after the war. She credits him for the good he did do, but also suggests that no one tried to save the everyday culture of the Jews. No one helped the average person who lived a life of righteousness.

Horn admits that, at times, she has also been blind to the true questions to ask, particularly when it comes to English literature. In her essay "Commuting with Shylock," she writes how her 10-year-old son learns of William Shakespeare's play "The Merchant of Venice" and convinces his mother to download a production of the play so they can listen to when they're traveling in the car. Horn does a great deal of research on the play, looking for ways in which to explain that the play is not antisemitic because Shylock is treated as a human being in one famous speech about how he bleeds like any other human. Horn's son, however, isn't fooled: he compares the speech to that of the monologue spoken by evil super villains in superhero movies to explain the horror they are about to inflict. Unlike her own efforts, Horn notes, "My son insists on integrity. He is not afraid to be unpleasant; he knows evil when he hears it."

I debated writing about Horn's work in this column or in my regular book review column. It's placed here because these essays show how the personal can be political. Horn writes of her feelings, but those feelings are also reflected in the larger world. Although best known for her fiction, she acknowledges that what is happening in the world today doesn't fit into a simple story with a beginning, middle and end. The persecution of Jews – and the excuses made for it – seems ongoing. To be clear, Horn is not saying that the U.S. is becoming Nazi Germany, only that the death of Jews in the U.S. now seems to be taken for granted. Is Horn right? I'm so divided in my opinion: I want her to be wrong, but I can't argue with what she says. Horn ends her acknowledgments noting that this book is dedicated to her children and that "it is my fervent hope that they will never feel the need to read it." My fear is that someday they and their children and grandchildren unfortunately will.



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

LETTERS

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

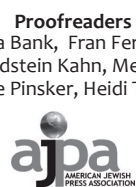
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www.thereporter.org

Beth David Sisterhood to discuss "Often Forgotten Women in Jewish History" on Oct. 13

The Sisterhood of Beth David Synagogue will hold its first meeting of the 2021-22 season on Wednesday, October 13, at 7 pm, on Zoom. Zoom links will be sent to everyone who regularly receives notices from Sisterhood or Beth David Synagogue. Anyone who is not on these lists should contact the Beth David office at 722-1793

or bethdavid@stny.rr.com, and request the link when it becomes available.

Rivka Kellman will lead a discussion of "Often Forgotten Women in Jewish History." Her talk will include elements from classes she has given to students at Binghamton University. "Not only is the topic relevant to all Jewish women (men,

you can listen in too!)," said organizers of the event. "But these women's stories are told, or sometimes not told, in Bereshit (Genesis), so it ties in perfectly with the Torah portions being read during this season."

Organizers added, "If you attended the last in-person meeting held by Beth David Sisterhood for Purim 2020, you will remember what a dynamic and interesting speaker Rivka Kellman is. You will experience a whole new way of looking at stories you thought you knew, or maybe you will be

hearing them for the first time.

"We regret we will not be meeting in person, but since the COVID situation is so unpredictable, we decided it was more important to keep our friends and family safe than to be able to greet them in person," they said.

Traditionally, many people have renewed their Sisterhood membership at the first meeting of the season. Sisterhood members are encouraged to send their \$25 dues to the new treasurer, Kerry Wright. Contact the synagogue for Wright's address.

Syracuse Press Club announces final results

By Reporter staff

Rabbi Rachel Esserman, executive editor of *The Reporter*, already knew she was taking first and second place in the Critique category of the 2021 Syracuse Press Club awards because her two reviews were the only ones listed in that category. The Press Club had hoped that by waiting until September, it would be able to hold the awards ceremony in person, but, due to the increase in COVID cases, held it virtually.

Esserman's review "Family and finding a home" ([www.thereporter.com/past-articles/feature-book-review/feature-](http://www.thereporter.com/past-articles/feature-book-review/feature-book-review-stream/book-review-stream/off-the-shelf-family-and-finding-a-home-by-rabbi-rachel-esserman)

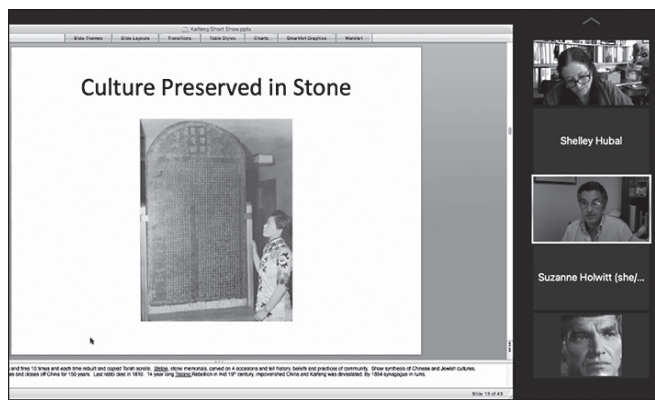
book-review-stream/off-the-shelf-family-and-finding-a-home-by-rabbi-rachel-esserman) won first place. The judges commented, "Compelling histories never fail to fascinate, especially when described so well." Esserman's other review, "Hollywood and Jewish refugees" (www.thereporter.com/streams/executive-editor/executive-editor-stream/off-the-shelf-hollywood-and-jewish-refugees) took second place.

To read more about the reviews, visit <https://www.thereporter.com/local-stream/esserman-wins-two-syracuse>.

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to William and Suzan Cohen on the death of their son, Alec Cohen

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to Charles Manasse on the death of his sister, Leonore (Lynn) Manasse

Federation and JCC held Zoom lecture



On October 1, the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton and the Jewish Community Center held a Zoom lecture about "The Chinese Jews of Kaifeng," featuring Rabbi Anson H. Laytner, president of the Sino-Judaic Institute and editor of its journal *Points East*. More than 25 people attended. At left: On the left is one of the slides used as part of the lecture.

TC Sisterhood held exercise class



At left: On September 30, members of Temple Concord Sisterhood took part in an exercise class under the tent behind the synagogue. The class was taught by Jill Lukach, who teaches Pilates and "Silver Sneakers" classes at the JCC.

Moving any time soon?

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

DEADLINES

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

ISSUE	DEADLINE
October 22-November 4	October 13
November 5-18	October 27
Nov. 19-Dec. 2 (Chanukah)	November 10
December 3-16	November 22*

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

Annual Campaign 2022

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- 1) Visit the Federation website at www.jfjb.org and click on "make a pledge."
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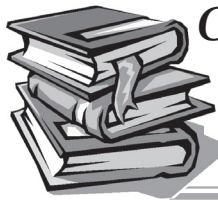
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Off the Shelf

Characters from real life

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Readers are often curious about whether characters in a novel are based on real life people. That's why most novels' reverse title page (the page that contains copyright information and details about the publisher) usually feature statements such as "this is a work of fiction" or "this is a novel." Those two sentences appeared in two recent works, both of which contain real life characters, in addition to their fictional ones. The reverse title page of "The Vixen" by Francine Prose (Harper) also notes that the work is "drawn from the author's imagination" and makes it clear that "real people, events, establishments, organizations, or locales... are used fictitiously." The reverse title page of Joshua Cohen's "The Netanyahus: An Account of a Minor and Ultimately Even Negligible Episode in the History of a Very Famous Family" (New York Review of Books), on the other hand, offers only the sentence that it's a novel with no additional disclaimers, although details about the accuracy of the story are offered at the end of the work.

The real-life character featured in the "The Vixen" is Ethel Rosenberg. The novel includes two very different portraits of her: 1) the real-life woman known to the mother of the narrator, Simon Putnam, and 2) her stand-in Esther Rosenstein, who is the main character in "The Vixen, the Patriot, and the Fanatic," a novel Simon is editing. When Simon began work at a prestigious New York City publisher in 1953, the job was

not his first choice. After being rejected by the graduate school he hoped to attend, he had no real plans. Between graduation and finding work, Simon lived with his parents and watched the news about the Rosenbergs' execution on TV with them. The experience was traumatic for all three, but especially for Simon's mother, who grew up in the same apartment building as Ethel and refuses to believe she was a spy. However, it was dangerous to express that sentiment since Joe McCarthy was calling people before the House Un-American Activities Committee: one hint of sympathy for the Rosenbergs or communism could get someone fired or worse.

Although Simon had not planned to go into publishing (and only received the job with the help of his uncle, who is a literary critic), he does hope to find a novel in the slush pile worth editing and publishing. That's why he's thrilled when his boss hands him a book that he claims may not be as worthy as most they publish, but which might save the company from bankruptcy. Unfortunately, the book is "The Vixen, the Patriot, and the Fanatic," which is not only awful (in writing and plot), but offers a horrendous portrait of an Ethel-related character, Esther, who sleeps around, treats people like dirt and dominates her husband. Simon is horrified, not just because the novel is smut, but because he can never let his parents know of his connection to the book. His only hope is to convince the author, Anya Partridge, to make changes in her portrayal of Esther. Unfortunately, Anya, who is living in a sanitarium, has no interest in changing the novel. In fact, she shows little interest in the work and says that the character of Esther (Ethel) is based on her own life and desires, something she seeks to prove to Simon.

In "The Vixen," almost nothing is as it first seems, and Simon is surprised when he learns the truth behind Anya's novel. The question then becomes whether he is willing to put his ethical principles aside and find the success of which he dreams or if he's willing to risk his future to do what he believes is the right thing. However, the question is not as simple as it might first appear: How much leeway should a person or a society have to perform unethical actions in the hopes of achieving a result they believe is for the greater good of society? Prose's novel, which is extremely well done and

ultimately moving, offers a great deal for readers to ponder.

While real life people play only a minor role in "The Vixen," a version of the real-life Netanyahu family appears in the second half of the Cohen's book, and Ben-Zion Netanyahu's view of Jewish history creates the true drama of the work. Ruben Blum, the narrator, is the first Jew to become a professor at Corbin College, a small town in New York state, during the late 1950s. He is careful to note that while he is a Jewish historian, he is not a "historian of the Jews." His expertise is in American history. There are difficulties being the only Jew in the town and it doesn't help that both his wife, Edith, and his daughter, Judy, are discontent with their surroundings. In fact, Judy seems unhappy with life, school and, in particular, her nose. However, no matter how often she asks, her father refuses to let her have the nose job she desperately desires.

As part of their adjustment to their new home, Ruben invites his parents and in-laws for the fall Jewish holidays, rather than them traveling to New York City. While Edith's parents visit (mostly to complain about the house, the small town and college, and the fact that Ruben isn't rich), Ruben's parents turn down his offer, with his father reminding Ruben that there is no synagogue in their town so they would be unable to attend services. They do visit later, but their trip is not a success on many levels. Soon afterward, Ruben finds himself serving as the resident Jew on a committee interviewing a new professor, solely because the applicant, Ben-Zion Netanyahu, is also Jewish. Ruben is to escort him around the campus, listen to the lecture Ben-Zion is slated to give and sit in on his interview.

Ruben might be excused for thinking this won't be a difficult task, but it becomes far more complex than expected for opinions of Ben-Zion's work greatly differ. Included are the texts of letters of recommendations: one that greatly praises Ben-Zion's work and another that suggests it would be better for Israel if he found an academic position in the U.S. While it might sound as if these chapters disrupt the flow of the novel, they actually offer fascinating portraits of Ben-Zion's theories.

See "Real" on page 8

Falafel & Chips Day at Hillel Academy!!

Friday Oct. 29, 11-2pm To-Go Only
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Off the Shelf

Religion and sex

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Religion and sex: it can be difficult to separate the two because many people's attitudes about appropriate sexual behavior were informed by their religious education. However, as Noam Sachs Zion notes in the impressive "Sanctified Sex: The Two-Thousand-Year Jewish Debate on Intimacy" (Jewish Publication Society), Judaism has two conflicting ideas about sexual behavior and intimacy. Zion's in-depth look at how Jewish traditions evolved and changed is 544 pages long (and that's not counting the footnotes, bibliography and index). Even at this length, Zion writes that he focuses only on the Ashkenazic world since those are the traditions and laws with which he is familiar.

Zion discusses Judaism's two main approaches concerning the sanctity of sexual desires and actions: "One approach to sanctify is chiefly defined negatively, by what one should not do - namely, by refraining from illicit intercourse and suppressing sexual impulses and thoughts in order to preserve the sanctity of a pious Jew (primarily, male) and of Israel, its land and people. The other involved positive actions that celebrate the expression of erotic intimacy in intimate bonds of fidelity, mutuality, and pleasure as the royal road to enhancing sanctity, peace, love, and unity in the world." The struggle between these two approaches is still being played out in contemporary times. After looking at the Bible, Zion then focuses on what other Jewish texts say about sex; sources include the Mishnah, Talmud, medieval mystical works, writings from various branches of the *haredim* world and contemporary ideas from North American rabbis (focusing on the sexual revolution and feminism).

In a book of this depth and size, it's impossible for a review to discuss all the texts and the changes that occurred, but some generalizations are possible.

◆ Focusing on the biblical story of Adam and Eve, Zion notes that "the implicit purpose of marriage according to Genesis 2 is the search for existential unity. The text makes it clear that marriage is not created for momentary sexual relief... but rather for a stable new kinship relationship. God facilitates the union of man and woman not for *reproduction*, but for *reunion* of the basic man-woman unit that God had earlier divided into two halves (Genesis 2:21, 24), neither of whom was self-sufficient without the other." He also suggests that although sex plays a role in marriage in the Bible, it can serve either of two functions: procreative sex (in order to produce children) and unitive intercourse "by which two become one flesh."

◆ During the rabbinic period, the ancient rabbis debated the purpose of sex, which included its use for procreation, emotional solidarity and erotic pleasure. Texts speak to a man's marital duty, which included providing his wife with sexual pleasure. A schedule was developed as for how often sexual intercourse had to occur; the timing depended on the husband's type of employment.

◆ The two basic models of sex behavior in marriage developed during talmudic times. The behavior was based on two different rabbinic scholars: Rav, who is shown engaging in lively talk with his wife before intercourse, and Rabbi Eliezer, whose behavior was far more restricted. For Rabbi Eliezer, intercourse could only take place around midnight, only a small part of his wife's body could be exposed at a time (and then must be covered again) and no conversation was allowed. Although some legal rulings say there are no limits to what a couple could do in the privacy of their bedroom, others greatly restricted the interaction of a couple even outside the bedroom. These two models of behavior are still debated in the *haredim* and Orthodox worlds.

◆ Mystics added a new dimension to the discussion of sex. Kabbalists believe that what happens on earth is reflected in the heavens, and that includes sex. They also note the importance of intercourse on Shabbat. Not only does this help create a peaceful home on the earthly level, but it allows the male and female dimensions of God to unite.

◆ Later legal codes added new stringencies to not only how couples should have sex, but men's interaction with their wives outside the bedroom. Men were discouraged from having any conversation with their wives and sex was to be limited as much as possible. Some of these rulings were so strict that men came to consider women only as a means to an end.

See "Religion" on page 5

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Next Upcoming Issue: November 5
Ad Deadline: October 28

THE REPORTER
Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton



Jewish Baseball Players

King of Jewish baseball: "Fishball," part I

BILL SIMONS

"Uganda?!" I exclaimed. "That's where Israeli commandos rescued the Jewish Entebbe hostages." Nate Fish retorted that he had gone there to develop and recruit Ugandan baseball prospects, but didn't find any.

In addition to Uganda, baseball has taken the peripatetic Fish to five continents, many countries and a potpourri of American cities. A wandering Jew of the Diaspora, Fish – as player, coach and manager – found baseball adventures in Cincinnati, Savannah, New York City, Cape Cod, Germany, Italy, Argentina, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, South Korea, Japan and other postings. Israel has also figured prominently in the Fish itinerary.

Fish, at age 41, was living in Arkville, NY, a hamlet in rural Delaware County, when I interviewed him during the late spring of this year. When I asked Fish what had brought him to rustic Arkville, he quickly answered, "A woman." Fish and his fiancée Shawna came to manage a new hotel in the Catskills. Even though COVID imploded that venture, the couple loved the region and bought a home.

Fish was then playing vintage baseball for the Mountain Athletic Club, based in Fleischmanns, a nearby hilltop enclave. About three weeks after our interview, I watched Fish – at shortstop and on the mound – play a dominant game, including hitting the longest ball of the day, under 1895 rules in a 31-6 romp over the visiting Delhi Nine. I inquired concerning Fish's motivation for joining a small-town team playing by antiquated rules. Fish called M.A.C. vintage baseball "really cool." "Because I've been in so many different environments," he reflected, "maybe I have a little bit more adaptability and flexibility when it comes to the level of play." The next time I saw him on July 12, he was coaching Team Israel in a pre-Olympic tune-up game. Fish is a collector and connoisseur of experiences.

The son of Jewish parents, with a mother who seriously considered becoming a rabbi, Fish grew up in Shaker Heights, an affluent

suburb of Cleveland. At the University of Cincinnati, he captained a baseball team that included his friend, fellow Jew and future Red Sox star Kevin Youkilis. As an undergraduate, Fish lacked the batting proficiency and speed that would have shaped a major league trajectory. Over 54 games as a catcher-third baseman during his senior year at Cincinnati, he had a respectable .287 batting average and connected for seven home runs. In the years to come, Fish's batting would improve.

Fish left Cincinnati without a degree and, like countless aspirants before him, came to New York with literary ambitions. At the New School, he picked up the elusive degree. To pay the rent, he took a job coaching the children of the rich and influential at The Baseball Center NYC, improbably located in the basement of The Apple Bank on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. Although his Baseball Center charges remained more privileged than accomplished, Fish finetuned his own batting techniques in long sessions at the Iron Mike during downtime – and he began to learn how to coach.

Gifts of personality and athleticism gave Fish a niche as a New York sports entrepreneur, running youth baseball clinics, teams, camps and academies. And he returned to the diamond, often within a Jewish framework. Improbably, Fish's play ratcheted up with age. Switching temporarily to softball in 2005, he journeyed to Israel for the Maccabiah Games (Jewish Olympics) as part of the U.S. gold-medal, fastpitch softball team.

In 2007, American businessman Larry Baras created the Mideast's first professional hardball circuit, the Israel Baseball League. One of the league's stars, Fish batted an impressive .347 and won a Gold Glove for his fielding at third base. The IBL died after one season, but it nurtured baseball saplings in Israel and strengthened the bond between Fish and the Jewish homeland. Over the next decade, while coaching Israeli teams – and doing double duty as bullpen catcher – in the European Baseball Championship and the World Baseball Classic,

Fish formed friendships with several Jewish major leaguers, including Brad Ausmus, Shawn Green and Gabe Kapler.

A baseball conduit between U.S. and Israeli Jews, Fish acquired dual citizenship. Appointed national director of the Israel Association of Baseball, he resided in the Jewish homeland from 2013-16. Fish's mission was to grow Israel baseball, not an easy task amongst an abrupt, frenetic people with neither the patience nor interest in the game's calibrated rhythms. Nonetheless, Israel baseball growth was discernable and consequential, albeit modest.

"Fishball" emphasizes attention to detail and smart execution, but it is also motivational and promotional. Indicative of the latter, Fish proclaimed himself – and named his blog – "King of Jewish Baseball." Photographs feature him in a royal red robe, topped by an over-the-top crown and carrying a baseball bat as a scepter. Muscular, six-foot, with the dark-good looks of a latter-day King David, Fish has brought

attention to himself and Jewish baseball by crafting a flamboyant, charismatic persona. In person, the authentic Fish is courteous, reflective and self-aware.

Nonetheless, his visual art and writing are brash, explicit and iconoclastic. His work was featured in two New York City art exhibits, and Fish is the author of several magazine articles and books. He gifted me with three of the latter. A line in Fish's poem "Flatbush Life" captures a universal yearning: "I am writing this so I am not forgotten."

Back in American baseball, the Los Angeles Dodgers hired Fish as a minor league coach in 2019. Spring 2021 brought Fish into collaboration with an organization touting an image as outlandish as his own.

The Savannah Bananas Premier Team hired Fish as its head coach (manager). The Bananas play specialty games in garish yellow uniforms – and sometimes kilts – with bizarre rules, including counting balls caught by fans as outs. Bananas' owner Jesse See "King" on page 7



Did you know?

(NAPSA) – Age-related physical and mental changes can affect your ability to drive safely. If you're alert to these changes and manage them carefully, you may be able to continue driving safely for some time, say the experts at the American Geriatrics Society. Visit www.healthinaging.org/driving-safety for more information.

Religion.....Continued from page 4

end, and only because the Bible requires men to be fruitful and multiply. Bodily pleasures were something to be denied.

◆ In contemporary times, some *haredim* are reclaiming the pleasures of sex. Zion notes that for these groups, "as a relationship partakes of greater life-enhancing intimacy, it becomes more sacred."

◆ These ideas have been challenged in contemporary times. Some liberal rabbis believe sacred sex is only possible in marriage, although they realize many in their congregations are not waiting for marriage to have sex. A few offer different levels of committed relationships, which allow for sex to take place outside of marriage, although marriage is still encouraged. Even rarer are suggestions for how sacred sex can occur without a marital commitment. Feminist writings are divided between those who believe Jewish law can be reformed to feminist ideals and those who demand a new covenant, one that acknowledges the

reality of women's lives.

These are simplistic versions of what Zion discusses in great detail. His explanations are clear so that readers unfamiliar with Jewish texts should still be able to understand the material. Some sections were frustrating – not because of Zion, but the nature of the material. However, that will differ for each reader: some will find the treatment of women unpleasant – for example, one text that notes a man shouldn't thank his wife any more than he should say thanks his horse – or the need to teach a man it's not a sin to speak to his wife in order to let her know when he's leaving the house. Others will dislike the more liberal approaches, some of which OK sex before marriage and believe marital sanctity should be offered to the LGBTQ community. Zion is to be commended for offering such wide varieties of opinion and suggestions for how Jewish thoughts about sex are still relevant today.

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Weekly Parasha

Noah, Genesis 6:9-11:32

The devastation of the earth

RABBI BARBARA GOLDMAN-WARTELL, TEMPLE CONCORD

We entered the *shmita* year on Rosh Hashanah, which is tied to our relationship with the land and with social and economic justice. While the connection to the land had been understood to apply to the land in Israel, the Jewish environmental movement has expanded applying the sabbatical year to the entire planet. Our world has become more interconnected, so our relationship with the land is with the land throughout the world.

In the midst of a second year of global pandemic – and with diverse parts of the planet experiencing heat waves or extreme cold, huge fires, prolonged droughts, melting glaciers, floods and more – climate change and global warming are concerns for all of us and part of mainstream conversations.

I concur with Hazon in understanding our “contemporary

environmental and agricultural challenges as consequences of our actions and of those who came before us and not as punishment.” These challenges include “soil erosion, overgrazing, pollution, acid rain, climate change, droughts, fires and flooding.”⁽¹⁾

The time is now. The recent report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concluded that the planet is in dire straits. “The devastating effects of climate change are coming faster than even the most pessimistic scientists predicted,” according to the report. “This summer of fires and floods and heat and drought and violent storms is not a taste of things to come – it’s here.”⁽²⁾

When I look at the first part of *parashat* Noah, I am struck by the devastation of the earth caused by the flood.

Scholars have debated for years what it means that Noah was righteous in his generation. The questions stem from Noah following God’s instructions without questioning if there was a way to save others beyond his family and the animals. What can we learn from Noah?

“Gates of Repentance,” an earlier High Holiday prayerbook of the Reform movement, included a meditation section of texts. The one which spoke to me this year is this *midrash*, reminiscent of Jonah in Nineveh:

“After the flood, Noah opened the ark and looked out. He saw the earth desolate, forests and gardens uprooted, corpses visible everywhere. There was no grass, no vegetation; the world was a wasteland. In pain and dismay, he cried out to See “Earth” on page 8

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: Tuesday, 5:30 pm; Friday, 5:30 pm; Saturday, 9:30 am

On Fridays and Tuesdays at 5:30 pm, services will be led by Rabbi Geoffrey Brown via Zoom and in-person (masks are required).

On Saturday, October 9, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person (masks are required). The Torah portion is Genesis 6:9-11:32 and the haftarah is Isaiah 54:1-55:5. At 7:30 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom.

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

The temple office will be closed on Monday, October 11.

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

On Saturday, October 16, at 9:30 am, the b’nai mitzvot of Kathy Seitel West and Charlie Pladek will be held. Shacharit services will be held at 10 am via Zoom and in-person (masks are required). The Torah portion is Genesis 12:1-17:27 and the haftarah is Isaiah 40:27-41:16. At 7:15 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom.

On Sunday, October 17, Torah study will be held at 10:30 am on Zoom only.

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.

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.

Synagogues limit face-to-face gatherings

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

Beth David Synagogue

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

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 egalitarian 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, October 8, light candles before 6:15 pm
 Saturday, October 9, Shabbat ends 7:14 pm
 Friday, October 15, light candles before 6:03 pm
 Saturday, October 16, Shabbat ends 7:02 pm
 Friday, October 22, light candles before 5:53 pm
 Saturday, October 23, Shabbat ends 6:52 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, October 8: Shabbat services with Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell and Jason Flatt. 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 9: No 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); and at 7 pm, “Havdalah with a Bonus” at <https://bit.ly/3zd0atv>, meeting ID 897 4179 1260 and passcode 408279.

Tuesday, October 12: 6:30 pm, Temple Concord executive board meeting; and 7:30 pm, Temple Concord general board meeting.

Friday, October 15: 7:30 pm, Temple Concord will participate with the Children’s Defense Fund’s 30th annual National Observance of Children’s Sabbaths Celebration. This year’s theme is “Where Does It Hurt?: Listening to Heal Our Children.” For more information, visit www.childrensdefense.org/childrens-sabbath-celebration/.

Saturday, October 16: 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.

Penn-York Jewish Community

President-Treasurer-Secretary: Harvey Chernosky, 570-265-3869
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 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.

Norwich Jewish Center

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

Congregation 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.

Jewish Community Center

JCC's ECC celebrated Rosh Hashanah



ECC Judaic Coordinator Harry Cohen helped children in the Jewish Community Center's Early Childhood Center celebrate Rosh Hashanah. The children listened to Cohen blow the shofar. They also made holiday crafts and enjoyed holiday treats. (Names of children withheld on request.)



CJS..... Continued from page 1

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 Joy Vel 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.

King..... Continued from page 5

Cole shared his rationale for hiring Fish: "We're breaking the rules and the mold of baseball... We needed a coach that will embody that... Nate is clearly our man."

Part II of "King of Jewish Baseball" will follow the drama that enveloped Nat Fish in the summer and fall of 2021.

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.



Business Profiles



Ernest H. Parsons Funeral Home

Specialty: Funeral
 Location: 71 Main St. Binghamton, NY 13905
 Name: Joseph Fritsch
 Phone: 607-724-1336
 Fax: 607-724-1337
 E-mail: parsonsfuneral@yahoo.com
 Website: www.parsonsfuneral.com
 Hours: 24/7/365

The Ernest H. Parsons Funeral Home, located at 71 Main St., Binghamton, has been a landmark since 1928 and is located in the J. Stewart Wells Mansion, built by renowned architect Isaac Perry, who completed construction in 1867.

Ernest H. Parsons owned and operated the funeral home from 1928 until his death in 1976. Charles Mills purchased the funeral home after Ernest's death and continued the tradition until his retirement in 2012. The current owners – J. Fritsch, R. Fynboe, S. Pitkorchemny and K. Vakiener – strive to uphold the original motto of the founder: "Let Us Serve You with Understanding." Parsons Funeral Home offers distinctive service with respectful attentiveness to the ceremonial rites and the utmost consideration of families' desires to accord a last tribute of affection and esteem to their departed loved ones.

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When faced with the death of a loved one, Hopler & Eschbach Funeral Home invites you to turn to its caring staff to help guide you through the funeral process. Deeply experienced and knowledgeable in the performance of Jewish burial customs, Kurt Eschbach and his staff are the most qualified professionals in the community to help plan and carry out your funeral or memorial services. They provide services at your synagogue, the funeral home or cemetery, and also provide cremation services and funeral pre-planning.

The funeral home and parking areas are newly renovated and spacious. Staff work diligently to provide the highest quality service at a cost that is 10-30% lower than other funeral homes. With their quality service, fair pricing and newly renovated facilities, Kurt and his staff believe you will make Hopler & Eschbach Funeral Home your new family tradition.

Howard Hanna - Suzanne (Sue) Krause

Specialty: Residential real estate
 Location: 4747 Vestal Parkway East Vestal, NY 13850
 Name: Suzanne (Sue) Krause, Licensed Associate Real Estate Broker
 Phones: 607-772-1177
 607-760-3366 (cell)
 E-mail: suekrause@howardhanna.com
 Website: suzannekrause.howardhanna.com

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

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NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

U.S. to examine Israeli data on booster-shot side effects in young people

U.S. chief medical adviser Dr. Antony Fauci has said that the United States will be looking at Israeli data on COVID-19 vaccine booster shots to clarify the level of risk involved in administering them to citizens under the age of 65. “The real question that we have not yet answered is the safety data of an mRNA vaccine in young people vis-a-vis myocarditis,” said Fauci in a telephone interview with Reuters on Oct. 1. Myocarditis, an inflammation of the heart muscles, is found in a small number of those who were vaccinated. “The Israelis will relatively soon have that data, because they’re vaccinating everybody in the country ... from 12 years old up,” he added. The data collected by the Israel Defense Forces on military recruits, specifically, is expected to shed light on the safety of the vaccines in the younger cohort with regard to Myocarditis, said Fauci. While the FDA in August approved two doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech mRNA vaccine for people 16 and older, it has approved a third shot only in emergency cases. It has also granted emergency-use authorization to the Moderna mRNA vaccine and a single-dose Johnson & Johnson shot – and said that it will review the two companies’ applications for booster shots during advisory meetings on Oct. 14-15.

Earth.....Continued from page 6

his Master; ‘Sovereign of all creation, in six days You made the earth and all that grows in it: it was like a garden, like a table prepared for a feast; now You Yourself have brought the work of Your hands to naught, uprooting all that You planted, tearing down all that You built. Why did You not show compassion for Your creatures?’” (3)

Noah is distraught, shocked, discouraged. “God then replied: ‘O faithless shepherd! Now, after the destruction, you come to Me and complain. But when I said to you: Make an ark for yourself, for I am going to flood the earth to destroy all flesh, you did not plead for your neighbors! How differently Abraham will act; he will pray on behalf of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. And Moses, when his people anger Me with their calf of gold, will offer his life for them. But you – when you saw that judgment was about to strike the world – you thought only of yourself and your household, while all else perished by fire and water!’” (3)

I see Noah weeping at the end of the above *midrash*, realizing he fell short and could have done better. Simcha Raphael recently posted a picture of Noah’s Ark in the middle of the rainstorm with the title of his next writing project, “And Noah wept: Jewish Reflections on Climate Grief and Eco-Anxiety.”(4) This is the world in which we are living today.

This *midrash* can give us pause to consider the larger human family, the entire world. The stakes are high for us and for future

generations. Climate change threatens us all. The pandemic is devastating the world with illness and death. We are challenged to take the seven-year cycles of *shmita* more seriously globally as this next cycle is our last chance to slow down global warming and climate change.

Over the years, I have read many children’s books about the different animals and insects who were saved from the flood by entering the ark. Now we learn of more animals and insects who have lost their habitat by development, pollution or contamination and are facing extinction. This is a far cry from the children’s books about the animals on the ark.

Shmita and this Torah portion can be another wake up call to take our obligations and responsibilities to our world and other living things more seriously.

1. “The Hazon Shmita Sourcebook,” 2014 Yigal Deutscher, Anna Hanau and Nigel Savage.

2. “The Problem is Climate Change, not How I Feel About Climate Change,” Andrew Silow-Carroll, *New York Jewish Week*, August 19, 2021.

3. “Gates of Repentance,” CCAR Press (page 240, section 45), edited by Chaim Stern, copyright (c) 1978 by the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Used by permission of Central Conference of American Rabbis. All rights reserved.

4. Simcha Raphael Facebook post September, 2021.

El Al to start flights from Tel Aviv to Chicago and Tokyo, renew Boston route

Israel’s El Al Airlines announced that it will launch direct flights to Tokyo and Chicago starting in April 2022. The airline had wanted to start the flights last year but the coronavirus outbreak delayed the plans, reported the Israeli business daily *Globes* on Oct. 4. El AL is planning to renew flights between Boston and Tel Aviv but will have competition from Delta Air Lines, which plans to restart its routes in May 2022. A roundtrip ticket between Tel Aviv and Tokyo would cost around \$963.57, according to El Al’s website. A similar ticket in May to Chicago would be priced at \$970.24.

Israeli PM reveals Mossad operation to find info on missing soldier

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett disclosed on Oct. 4 that Israel’s Mossad intelligence agency started an operation in September to find information about the fate of missing Israeli Air Force navigator Ron Arad. “It was a complex, large-scale and daring operation. That’s all that can be said at the moment. We made another effort on the way to understanding what happened to Ron,” tweeted Bennett. Lt. Col. Arad has been classified as “missing in action” since October 1986, when his plane went down over Lebanon. He successfully ejected himself but was captured by the local Shi’ite terrorist group Amal. The captured navigator was learned to have been handed over to Hezbollah, and later, maybe to Iran. Arad was married and had one daughter.

Jewish watchdogs form partnership to combat antisemitism in-person, online

Two organizations dedicated to the security of the Jewish communities have announced a partnership to improve the safety of the community nationwide. The Anti-Defamation League and the Community Security Service will each utilize their strengths to enhance the work of the other as Jews continue to be targeted for harassment or assault in person and in the cybersphere. According to hate-crime statistics released this summer by the FBI, crimes against the Jewish community comprised 60 percent of all religion-based hate crimes in the United States in 2020. CSS relies on a cadre of community volunteers to secure local institutions, especially synagogues. Experts from the ADL’s Center on Extremism will be able to provide CSS volunteers with detailed reports on current trends in antisemitism and extremism. Meanwhile, the ADL will benefit from CSS’s work on the ground to better track antisemitic incidents and hate crimes; its staff will also have opportunities to take security training from CSS experts.

Real.....Continued from page 4

The visit from the Netanyahu family itself serves as comic slapstick. Although only expecting the scholar, Ben-Zion arrives with his unhappy wife and three rambunctious sons who not only make a mess of Ruben’s house, but create havoc in the town. The on-campus interview, lecture and dinner don’t create the same kind of chaos, but it’s clear that Ben-Zion finds the interview process distasteful. These sections of the work are far funnier than this summary suggests, and the novel proved more enjoyable and interesting than one might expect from its plot summary. However, the author’s portrayal of the different members of the Netanyahu family shows them in a decidedly unpleasant light.

Using real-life characters in a novel can be controversial. “The Vixen” shows Simon debating the issue. He believes it’s important to accurately portray Ethel “because Ethel Rosenberg had been a real person, on the surface so like Anya’s Esther Rosenstein that people would think she was writing about the real woman. The guilty one. If readers had been uncertain about Ethel’s alleged crime, by the time they’d spent hundreds of pages with her twisted commie psyche, they would know she was guilty of espionage and worse.” Anya rejects this, noting that her book is “Fiction, okay? It’s not a history book... I’m not saying she’s innocent, I’m not saying she’s guilty. I made up a *story* about a woman who likes power and sex, who likes to control men. A woman who wants to rule the world... I’ve written a story that every woman can identify with.” Yet, because of Simon’s loose connection to the real Ethel, he cannot accept what he sees as slander.

In the “Credits and Extra Credit” section that appears at the end of his work, Cohen writes that his novel is based on a real event, although he notes that Ruben is not an accurate portrayal of the person who told him the story: the Blums took on a life of their own during his writing and do not represent this friend and wife. Cohen also writes that his

novel is a work of fiction, meaning he has taken poetic license and created characters not based on real life. However, the author stands by his portrayal of the Netanyahu family as accurate – even in the face of critics who have objected to his work.

What will strike readers of both novels are the narrators’ relationship to Judaism. At different times in their lives, Simon and Ruben have hidden the fact that they were Jewish. Simon deliberately wrote his application essay to Harvard about Puritan theology. He even believes that other employees at the publishing house are unaware he is Jewish. While Simon says he would not lie if someone asked him about his religious background, he won’t volunteer the information – going as far as to say, “I half pretended to come from a family that was nothing like my family.”

Ruben also notes that for most of his life, he ignored Judaism and Jewish history, saying that “I found no strength in my origins and took every opportunity to ignore them, when I couldn’t deny them.” That is impossible to do in his new home and he struggles to retain his equilibrium when his car mechanic makes a joke about Jews having horns or that the local golf club claims to have lost their application form. Ruben accepts these slights and others because he knows that complaining about them will only create more problems.

Ultimately, both novels are about being Jewish in 1950s America. This fact, in addition to all the other delights they offer, make them worth reading. “The Vixen” is the less controversial of the two because it may be difficult for readers to separate “The Netanyahus” from contemporary political discussions about Israel. “The Vixen” also offers a more cohesive plot, although those interested in Jewish history will be intrigued by the descriptions of Ben-Zion’s theories on medieval Judaism. Readers and book club attendees will find much to explore in both books.

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