

# THE REPORTER

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BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK

## Jewish Film Fest to hold virtual showing of "The Tasters"

By Reporter staff

The Binghamton Jewish Film Fest will hold a virtual showing of the film "The Tasters." Nancy Basmann, a historian who trained at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, and earned a doctorate in urban studies from the University of Kent in Canterbury, will lead the virtual discussion, which will take place on Sunday, February 8, at 7 pm. To register for links to the film and discussion, visit [www.jfgb.org](http://www.jfgb.org). Registration is due by Wednesday, February 4. The film will be available for viewing from Thursday-Sunday, February 5-8. The film is in Italian with subtitles. The film fest is sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton.

"The Tasters" tells the story of 26-year-old Rosa, who escaped from bombed Berlin in 1943 and arrives at a village that

At right: A scene from the film "The Tasters." (Photo used with the permission of Vision Distribution)



hides a secret: Hitler's headquarters are located there. Rosa is one of the women chosen to taste Hitler's food before it is served to make certain it has not been

poisoned. The film is inspired by a true story: shortly before her death in 2012, real-life Margot Wölk revealed that she had been one of the tasters and told her

story for the first time.

On the website [Silenzioinsala.com](http://Silenzioinsala.com), critic Giorgia Fanari wrote about the film, noting that "what truly emerges intelligently is the complexity of the contradictions inherent in war, which is not just a matter of battles between armies, but also an internal struggle, made up of painful moral choices, compromises and sacrifices. 'The Tasters' becomes a tale of survival, capable of delicately and convincingly bringing to the big screen the vision of women's experiences in times of conflict."

"Join us for this fascinating and complex film that explores ethical dilemmas, and is a story about the Holocaust that has never been told," said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. "The virtual discussion also promises to be extremely interesting."

## BD luncheon on Feb. 14 on Jewish belonging at BU

Beth David Synagogue's Saturday, February 14, luncheon speaker will be Brian T. Rose, Binghamton University's vice president of student affairs. His topic will be "The History and Current State of Jewish Belonging at Binghamton University."

"When it comes to understanding what it is that attracts an ever-growing number of Jewish students to Binghamton University, Vice President of Student Affairs Brian T. Rose is the person to ask," organizers say, "and we are delighted to have him as our February Beth David Shabbat Luncheon guest speaker. When compared to the elite universities that are the center of attention around the question of Jewish student life, Binghamton University is a relatively young institution. And yet, as Brian Rose points out, it is arguably the premier public university in the state where more than 20 percent of the entire Jewish population of the United States lives. Binghamton has significant history and an important role to

play in preserving the promise of America for Jewish students."

Rose will explore the history of Jews in American higher education and the specific history of Binghamton University. He will also describe current efforts at the university to preserve and foster "a strong sense of belonging" for Jewish students, as well as for alumni, faculty and staff. "I also will speak candidly," Rose adds, "about the challenges of doing so as a secular public university that must equally provide a sense of belonging for all of our students."

Rose has served as vice president of student affairs at Binghamton University since January 2008, and oversees both student affairs and auxiliary services. Before his appointment at Binghamton, he spent 17 years at Rutgers University, where he served



Brian Rose (Photo courtesy of Brian Rose)

in student affairs, university counsel and central administration. He obtained his undergraduate degree from the University of Pennsylvania, majoring in history and international relations, and his law degree from Georgetown University. He began his professional career as an attorney in private practice before transitioning to higher education. In addition to his role as vice president for student affairs, Rose teaches a graduate course in higher education law within BU's College of Community and Public Affairs, and has also led undergraduate seminars in "First Amendment Law," "Higher Education Policy," "Campus Planning and Privacy Law."

"Brian Rose will address a topic that is of crucial importance," organizers say. "Those of us who know Brian can attest to what a gifted speaker he is. Join us to

benefit from his expertise and to share your questions and concerns!"

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

## TC/TI Adult Ed. program on "Law and Reason"

The Adult Education Committee of Temple Concord and Temple Israel will hold a program and light brunch on Sunday, March 22, from 10 am-noon, at Temple Israel, 4737 Deerfield Pl., Vestal. Rabbi Talia Laster will speak on "Law and Reason," focusing on the role of rationality in mitzvah observance.



Rabbi Talia Laster (Photo by Yehoshua Hooper)

"The Torah tells us, 'do not cook a kid in its mother's milk' and this has translated to extensive practices among traditionally practicing Jews - from separate sinks to abstaining from chicken parmesan," said program organizers. "What do we do with mitzvot that do not seem to make rational sense? What autonomy should we have to figure out our own reasons for mitzvot? How do we know what is God's will and whether to submit to it? These are

some of the questions that Laster will address in light of sources from Jewish philosophy, Talmud and halachah in order to explore the specific question of meat and dairy, as well as the larger question of the role of rationality in mitzvah observance."

Laster serves as the campus rabbi at the Grinspoon Hillel Center for Jewish Life at Cornell. She received rabbinic ordination from the Rabbinical School of Hebrew College, in Newton, MA, and has studied at the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies and the Hadar Institute, among others. She lives in Vestal with her spouse, Rabbi Micah Friedman.

The entire community is welcome to attend the program. There is a suggested donation of between \$5-20 per person. For more information and to RSVP, contact

Temple Israel at 607-723-7461 or e-mail [office@templeisraelvestal.org](mailto:office@templeisraelvestal.org), or Temple Concord at 607-723-7355 by Monday, March 16, so enough refreshments can be prepared. The TC/TI Adult Ed. Committee

gratefully acknowledges a gift from The Community Foundation for South Central New York - The David and Virginia Eisenberg Fund, which helped to underwrite this program.

## TC Sisterhood to hold annual book talk

By Babs Putzel

The annual Temple Concord Sisterhood sponsored book talk will feature Rabbi Rachel Esserman on Sunday, January 25, in the social hall at Temple Concord, 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton. An 11 am brunch will be served, followed by the book talk. A suggested donation of \$5 will cover the brunch. The program is open to the community. Reservation should be

made by contacting Phyllis Kellenberger at [phylkellen@gmail.com](mailto:phylkellen@gmail.com) or 607-727-8305 by Wednesday, January 21. The snow date is Sunday, February 1

Esserman, who will discuss three books, said, "I once again am looking forward to one of my favorite events of the year. It is always a pleasure to do this for Sisterhood."

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# North American *aliyah* tops 4,100 in 2025, highest level in four years

By JNS staff

(JNS)—More than 4,100 immigrants from North America made *aliyah* to Israel in 2025 with the support of Nefesh B'Nefesh, marking the highest annual figure in the past four years, the organization announced in a press release on December 29.

According to the data, 4,150 North American Jews immigrated to Israel this year in cooperation with Israel's Ministry of Aliyah and Integration, the Jewish Agency for Israel, Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael and Jewish National Fund—USA. The figure represents an increase of more than 12 percent compared to 2024, when 3,706 immigrants arrived from North America.

Nefesh B'Nefesh said the rise reflects a growing sense of Zionism and solidarity among North American Jewry following the outbreak of war on October 7, 2023. More than half of *aliyah* applicants cited solidarity with Israel as a primary motivation for immigration.

The organization reported a sharp increase in *aliyah* applications since the war began. Between 2022 and 2025, the number of applications opened rose by approximately 50 percent, from 8,943 in 2022 to 13,389 in 2025. In response, NBN expanded its staff and held dozens of *aliyah* events across North America to assist



New immigrants to Israel disembarked at Ben-Gurion International Airport on August 20, 2025, part of the first Nefesh B'Nefesh charter flight since October 7, 2023. (Photo by Yonit Schiller)

prospective immigrants.

The 2025 immigrants comprised 297 families, 946 children, 1,476 single individuals and 548 retirees. The average age was 31, with the youngest immigrant a 4-month-old infant and the oldest 96 years old. *Olim* (immigrants) arrived from across North America, primar-

ily from New York, New Jersey, California, Maryland, Florida and Illinois, NBN said.

“As we conclude the year, we are particularly encouraged to have reached a milestone of nearly 4,200 *olim* from North America,” said Rabbi Yehoshua Fass, NBN's co-founder and executive director. “These *olim* underscore that *aliyah* is not solely a personal milestone, but a national and historic endeavor.”

Many of the new immigrants arrived with professional backgrounds in high-demand fields, particularly medicine. In 2025, 93 physicians from North America made *aliyah* as part of the International Medical Aliyah program, a joint initiative led by NBN and several Israeli ministries. Overall, 541 physicians from around the world immigrated through the program this year.

As part of the NBN and Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael “Go Beyond” program, which encourages settlement in Israel's peripheral regions, 1,505 North American *olim* moved to the Negev, the Galilee and Jerusalem. Of those, 1,097 chose to settle in Jerusalem, making it the leading destination for North American *aliyah*.

Other popular destinations included Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Beit Shemesh, Ra'anana, Modi'in-Maccabim-Re'ut, Netanya, Herzliya and Haifa.

## Opinion

### My friend Armand the mensch

By Bill Simons

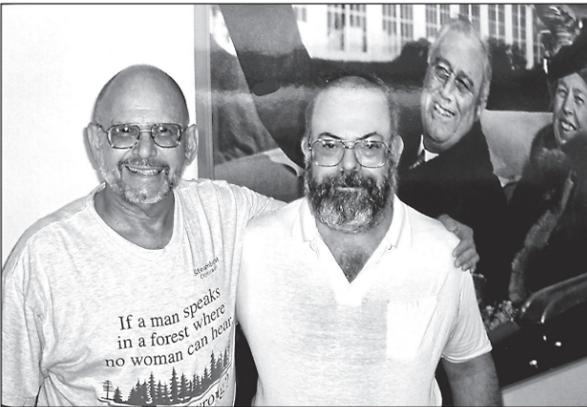
Navigating the American Christmas season is not easy for many Jews. Christmas music, lights, decorations, movies, cards, gifts, greetings and good cheer appear almost everywhere – but we are not really part of it. Relating the Hanukkah story of the Maccabees across the generations, lighting the menorah candles for eight nights with the shamash while reciting the blessings, spinning the dreidel, eating latkes and exchanging presents are warm, meaningful and treasured traditions. But that still leaves many Jews apart from the festivities of their communities.

If you are a divorced, middle-aged Jewish parent whose children are not with you during the holiday season, it is easy to feel like Tiny Tim on a cold street peering into a festive home tableau of a family celebrating a joyful Christmas. And circa 1990, my friend Armand and I were divorced, middle-aged Jewish fathers whose children would spend the peak of the holiday seasons with their mothers. Drinking a beer or two and munching Orville Redenbacher's popcorn while watching a rented Blockbuster movie on a VCR appeared a bleak prospect.

So, Armand and I decided we would participate in the spirit of Christmas – compassion, generosity, gratitude, joy – but on our own terms as Jews. We would volunteer for the Oneonta (NY) Friends of Christmas, delivering meals to neighbors, friends and total strangers. At the First United Methodist Church, we entered fellowship hall and the embury room to exchange greetings with other volunteers. The scene made you feel like a character in the concluding Christmas scene of “It's a Wonderful Life.”

Preparing to navigate roads, sometimes covered by snow with intermittent patches of ice, Armand and I received delivery assignments and packed enough hot meals to fill the car's back seat and trunk. Poverty, immobility and/or loneliness were common amongst the recipients, who invariably greeted us warmly, often inviting us into their homes to share holiday greetings. If we finished our route early, we came back to get a second delivery assignment. At the end of our travels, we returned to the church to share the sit-down Christmas meal. Following the spirit of the day, we sat with “guests” rather than with other volunteers. The program gave Armand and me the opportunity to perform a mitzvah while sharing in warm fellowship with celebrants of Christmas.

My dear friend Armand La Potin was a mensch. Our shared Judaism provided one of the strong bonds between



L-r: Armand La Potin and Bill Simons. (Photo by Nancy Simons)

us. Given that neither of us was inclined toward ritual or theology, our Jewish connection rested more on history, family and sensibility. For us, the Jewish sensibility came out in mockery of pomposity and unjust authority, digressions into skepticism, identification with the underdog, compassion, loud and emotional conversations, and an affinity for communicating something to each other in a public setting that those outside “the tribe” would not catch. Our indulgences of wit were more Milton Berle than Noel Coward.

In Salt Lake City, organizational home of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Armand and I lingered over a plaque at the site of the settlement's first Jewish temple, Congregation B'nai Israel. The re-enactment of the “Gun Fight at the OK Corral” in Tombstone led us to remark that while the Clantons didn't fell Wyatt Earp, he is buried in a Jewish cemetery next to his wife, the former Josie Marcus. An exhibit at Philadelphia's Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History prompted Armand and me to consider that the question of “who is a Jew” is less important than “what is a Jew.” When the Philadelphia Phillies' Mike Lieberthal hit a home run, we joined the hometown cheer because the catcher was Jewish. We savored outsized corned beef sandwiches at the pre-eminent Jewish delis in New York City, the Carnegie Deli, and Los Angeles, Canter's. A subdued tone accompanied our tour of the Holocaust Museum LA in the Fairfax district. Armand loaned me his copy of “The Winds of War” with instructions to watch the explicit gas

chamber scene. Over the decades, Armand and I attended several Passover seders and many High Holiday services together, often sharing stories during post-service walks about our own Jewish journeys, including his coming of age as an “Edgies” camp counselor. At my son's *bris* in 1984, Armand assisted the *mohel* and did a good job, as evidenced by Joe's five children.

It is not surprising that two loud, opinionated and physically demonstrative men would occasionally argue, but those intervals were transitory. The glue was a genuine affinity for sharing joy in the passions of the other, trains for Armand and baseball for me. So, in Baltimore, we toured the B&O Railroad Museum and rode the light rail, visited Babe Ruth's boyhood home and took in a ball game at Camden Yards.

Along with our friend Gerrit Gantvoort, a frequent partner on Armand's numerous and diverse train adventures, I was the co-best man at his wedding to Carolyn, and Armand reciprocated when I married Nancy. Armand and I confided to each other how lucky we were since it's not who you start with but who you finish with that counts. And Carolyn and Nancy, both strong, sensible, stable, loving Midwestern ladies, brought new happiness to our lives.

Even after Armand and Carolyn retired to Tucson, he still returned to Oneonta once or twice a year, typically for close to a week at a time. For decades, an annual drive to the Hyde Park home of our hero, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, was part of the annual itinerary. We debated the restraints on FDR's ability to take further action during the Holocaust.

SUNY Oneonta professor of history (with an office that adjoined mine), administrative jack-of-all trades, prolific author, city councilman, numismatist, chef, Keeshond whisperer, restorer of classic cars, cruise ship adventurer, philanthropist – Armand merits a megillah.

He was a loving husband, father, stepfather, grandfather and great-grandfather.

Despite his own serious health issues, Armand endured the long trip from Arizona to Central New York in March 2025 when I had a heart attack to comfort Nancy and me, sustaining us through a hard passage.

In mid-December 2025, the phone rang. Armand, then in hospice with kidney failure, said, “Sit down – I'm dying. I am not afraid and I am not in pain.” I kept up the pretense of composure until putting down the receiver. Armand died the next day, December 18. I will light the *yahrzeit* candle.



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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.

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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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**DEADLINE**

Regular deadline is noon, Wednesday, for the following month's newspaper (see deadline dates on page 3). All articles should be e-mailed to TRReporter@aol.com.

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# Carousels topic of BD Sisterhood Feb. 11 meeting

Beth David Sisterhood will meet on Zoom on Wednesday, February 11, at 1:30 pm. One need not be a member of Sisterhood or Beth David to participate.

Roger Luther, Broome County historian and president of the Broome County Historical Society, will discuss the carousels in Broome County.

"Most likely, you are aware that Broome County is home to six historic carousels and you or a family member have ridden on at least one of them," said organizers of the event. "Roger Luther will now tell you the stories behind each of these beloved merry-go-rounds, from their origins to the intricate craftsmanship that makes each one special.



(Image created by Roger Luther)

He will show stunning photos and tell captivating tales of design quirks, restorations and community pride."

Flyers, which will include the Zoom link, will be sent to everyone who receives Beth David Sisterhood's e-mails, Rabbi Zev Silber's weekly newsletter and the "What's Happening in your Jewish Community" e-mail from Federation.

Those not on one of the above-mentioned mailing lists, may contact the Beth David Synagogue office at bethdavid@stny.rr.com, or call the office at 607-722-1793 on Tuesday or Thursday mornings to request that the Zoom link be sent to them.

# Flo Balin celebrated 100<sup>th</sup> birthday at TI

On December 28, Flo Balin celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday with her great-niece, Amy Boyer, Amy's husband, Brian, and their daughters, Breanna and Olivia, of Atlanta, GA. On December 27, Balin was honored at Temple Israel and called to the *bima* to receive blessings and prayers. A *kiddush* luncheon and birthday cake in her honor followed Shabbat services. The celebration continued that evening with a family gathering.

Balin was born and raised in Binghamton, the second of three daughters. She worked as a secretary for several years, and at one point owned and operated a business teaching secretarial skills to young women to assist them in becoming independent. "Flo was adventurous, was not afraid to take chances and on one occasion, much to her father's chagrin, she drove cross country to California, stopping in several states before returning to Binghamton," a family friend said. "When asked how she knew where she was going, Flo's standard response is always, 'you just read the map and follow the directions. It's easy.'"

Balin is currently a resident at Susquehanna Nursing Home and welcomes visitors.



At right: Flo Balin with Amy, Brian, Breanna and Olivia Boyer. (Photo by Amy Boyer)



Flo Balin's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration with family members. (Photo by Amy Boyer)



Flo Balin and her great-niece, Amy Boyer, with the second 100<sup>th</sup> birthday cake of the day. (Photo by Rita Bleier)

# Book..... Continued from page 1

She will be discussing three books:

◆ "Children of the Book: Memoir of Reading Together" by Iland Kurshan. The author writes about reading to her children and the way that can connect generations.

◆ "One of Them" by Kitty Zeldis. The novel deals with antisemitism on a college campus the years after World War II.

◆ "Fagin the Thief," by Allison Epstein. The novel looks at the Jewish villain from Charles Dickens' "Oliver Twist" and offers a different view of his life.

Esserman recently retired as the executive editor of *The Reporter*. She will continue to write book reviews and food columns for the paper.

She has won numerous American Jewish Press Association Rockower Awards and Syracuse Press Club Awards for her opinion columns and book reviews.

Esserman serves as a chaplain for the Broome Developmental Disabilities Service Office. Her writing has been published in "The Women's Torah Commentary" and "The Women's Haftarah Commentary," both by Jewish Lights Publishing. She also has had a book of poetry, "I Stand by The River," published by Keshet Press of Temple Concord.

A Reconstructionist rabbi who says her first love is teaching, Esserman serves as a freelance rabbi for life-



Rabbi Rachel Esserman

cycle events, hospital visits and chaplaincy, and has been a rabbi-on-call when needed by local Reform and Conservative synagogues.

Her education includes a bachelor of arts degree in sociology from the University of Pennsylvania, and rabbinic ordination and a master of arts in Hebrew letters from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, Wyncote, PA. In 2023, she was awarded an honorary doctor of divinity degree from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College for 25 years of service.

Sisterhood's co-chairwomen for the program are Kellenberger, Deb Daniels and Roz Antoun.

Binghamton Philharmonic

## Ode to Joy

Saturday, Mar. 28, 2026 at 7:30pm • Forum Theatre

**Ludwig van Beethoven: Symphony No. 9**  
with soloists from *Curtis Institute of Music* and combined choirs  
*Southern Tier Singers' Collective* and *Binghamton University Chamber Singers*, joined by members of the *Syracuse University Oratorio Society*

Season Sponsor: Symphonic Series Sponsor:

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The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to the family of **Susan Remizowski**

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to the family of **Rita Shawn**

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to Janet Weiss and Stephen Weiss on the death of their father, **Richard Weiss**

## DEADLINES

The following are deadlines for all articles and photos for upcoming printed issues of the monthly *REPORTER*.

ISSUE	DEADLINE
March .....	February 11
April .....	March 11
May .....	April 6*
June .....	May 6

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

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*Pops* at the Forum Binghamton Philharmonic

## CANONS and CANNONS

Saturday, Feb. 28, 2026 at 3:30pm • Forum Theatre

**Pops is more than just a style of music; it's a state of mind!**

1812 Overture • My Fair Lady • Sleeping Beauty • Victory at Sea  
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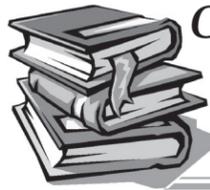
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There are four levels: Bronze \$200, Silver \$400, Gold \$600 and Platinum \$1,000.

To arrange for a sponsorship or for answers to questions, contact Rabbi Rachel Esserman at [rachel@thereporter.org](mailto:rachel@thereporter.org).



Off the Shelf

# Gangsters, detectives and spies

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

◆ “Kaplan’s Plot”

At first, I wondered why such a fuss had been made about “Kaplan’s Plot” by Jason Diamond (Flatiron Books). The novel made several “most anticipated books of the year” lists, which is one of the reasons I asked for a review copy. However, at first, the work, which includes two intertwined stories, seemed lackluster and unoriginal. Parts of the book focus on Elijah Mendes, a whiny, divorced, former entrepreneur whose business went bust, and who has returned to his native Chicago after his mother, Eve, was diagnosed with terminal cancer. The other story features Eve’s father, Yitz Kaplan, a typical immigrant to successful businessman tale that seemed unremarkable. However, I could not have been more wrong in my assessment: Diamond has written a wonderful, moving, insightful work that is worth all the accolades it’s received.

When Elijah discovers that his family owns property of which he has never heard, he tries to ask his mother about her father. Elijah and Eve have never been close, partly because she is never interested in talking about her past. One reason is that her immigrant father was not a businessman, but a gangster. Watching Yitz slowly change from a struggling immigrant to the cruel person he becomes was mesmerizing. Readers will note that parts of the two stories don’t seem to mesh, but it’s worth being patient because the final connections are shocking and fascinating. To say more would spoil the surprises, but the emotional impact of the novel is as great, if not greater, than those unexpected twists and turns.

“Kaplan’s Plot” comes highly recommended. This is Diamond’s first novel; he is definitely a writer to watch.

◆ “Midnight Burning”

“An Einstein-Chaplin Thriller”: It was

those words that made me ask for a review copy of “Midnight Burning” by Paul Levine (Blank Slate Press). The Einstein is Jewish Albert Einstein and the Chaplin is Charlie Chaplin, the actor whose religious ancestry is open to debate. (My research suggests he’s not Jewish, but others disagree.) Einstein and Chaplin were real life friends, although it’s doubtful that they investigated a Nazi plot to not only kill 20 celebrities (many of whom were Jewish), but to create a movement to overthrow the U.S. government and install a fascist one. Those shaking their heads at this statement should know that, while the two may not have been detectives, the conspiracy was real.

“Midnight Burning” is filled with hard-boiled detective prose that works perfectly for this type of novel. The relationship between Einstein and Chaplin was fun to read. They debate which of them has done more for the world, each thinking the other’s contribution was more important. There is some interesting commentary on Hollywood; I really liked when someone commented that Orson Welles, who was just starting out at the time, would never amount to anything.

However, what really counts is whether the novel lives up to the title thriller. The answer? Absolutely! The plot gets very exciting (I don’t want to give away details that would ruin the surprises), and the tension and excitement build as Einstein and Chaplin try to prevent the assassinations and thwart the Nazis.

“Midnight Burning” was fun and easy to read. At the end of the novel, the author offers helpful notes about which characters are real and more details about the Nazi plot. Lovers of thrillers and detective novels will find a great deal to enjoy.

◆ “The Persian”

One of the most interesting things about contemporary spy novels is that few of their heroes and villains are painted as black and white. Instead, each contains shades of grey: often they have to do horrible things or deceive and use good people in order to save lives. This dilemma forms the foundation of “The Persian” by David McCloskey (W. W. Norton and Company).

When Kamran Eshani agrees to move his dental practice from Stockholm to his native Tehran, he does so at the request of Arik Glitzman, who runs a secret unit for

Mossad that specializes in assassination and sabotage. Mossad offers Kamran enough money for his work, so that someday he will be able to fulfil his dream of retiring to California. Arik, on the other hand, is a dedicated professional. While he knows that the killings he orders won’t prevent future deaths, he also knows that not doing so will also not stop the violence. It would mean that only Israelis would die.

The action becomes intense when Kamran recruits an Iranian widow who doesn’t realize that her actions are helping Mossad. His feelings are complicated by knowing that it was Arik who ordered her husband’s death. What increased the tension is that readers know what happens to Kamran – the novel opens with him being tortured by the Iranians – but not why or how.

“The Persian” is an impressive work. Readers will come to care for the characters, feeling their anguish when they are forced to make difficult, complex and, often, distasteful decisions. The book includes a great deal for readers to ponder and discuss, which makes it an excellent selection for book clubs interested in spy novels and moral dilemmas.

New in Books

## Kalaniot Books to release new children’s books for spring

Kalaniot Books announced that it will release three new children’s picture books for the spring 2026 season:

◆ “Maya’s Journey: A Story of Two Great-Grandmothers” by Marcella White Campbell with illustrations by Olivia Smith (Release date: February 24)

When her teacher asks the class for family stories, Maya is stumped. That’s when her parents tell her the story of two of her great-grandmothers: Great-Grandma Essie crossed an ocean by herself to escape danger in Romania, and Great-Grandma Martha rode in a Jim Crow train car across the American South to seek fairness and freedom. The story was inspired by real events.

◆ “Tractor Zack on Sunshine Kibbutz” by Alice Blumenthal McGinty with illustrations by Rotem Teplow (Release date: April 7)

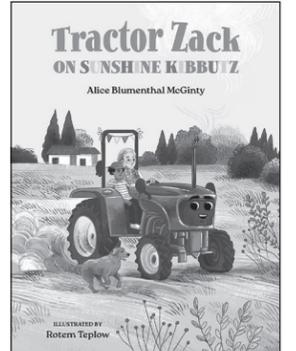
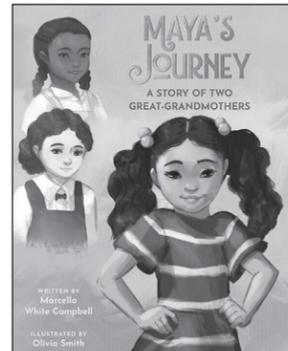
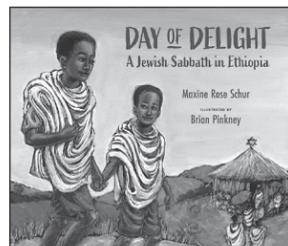
Set on an Israeli kibbutz, Tractor Zack loves his work, but when his engine is unable to work as well as it once did, he wonders

if he will no longer be of use. But, with the help of some friends, Zack learns there is more than one way to be useful. The book also looks at how the holiday of Shavuot is celebrated on the kibbutz.

◆ “Day of Delight: A Jewish Sabbath in Ethiopia” by Maxine Rose Schur with illustrations by Brian Pinkney (Release date: April 21)

In the Ethiopian Jewish community, also known as Beta Israel, community members begin to prepare for Shabbat when the sun rises on Friday morning. The book focuses on the ways that Senvetu and his family work to create a meaningful “day of delight” that is filled with “purpose, tradition, and community.”

Below at right: Book covers are used with permission of Kalaniot Press.



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# Civil rights commission to investigate rise in campus Jew-hatred

By JNS staff

(JNS) – The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights has scheduled a bipartisan public briefing (<https://www.usccr.gov/meetings/2026/02-19-federal-response-rise-antisemitism-american-college-and-university-campuses>) on February 19 “to investigate the increase in antisemitism on America’s college and university campuses.”

The investigation is being led by commissioners Peter Kirsanow, a Republican lawyer from Ohio appointed to the commission by former U.S. President George W. Bush, and Mondaire Jones, a Democrat and former congressman who represented New York’s 17<sup>th</sup> District. The commission will examine “how the federal government responded to civil rights violations pertaining to Title VI,

specifically allegations of antisemitism on college campuses.”

In particular, the commission will review how the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice have handled reports of campus Jew-hatred since the Hamas-led terrorist attacks in southern Israel on October 7, 2023. The inquiry will also assess how a sample of colleges and

universities have responded to reported antisemitic incidents on their campuses since October 7 and feature testimony from “current and former federal employees, impacted students and university officials, advocacy organizations and legal and policy experts.”

The in-person briefing will be followed by a public listening session on February 20.

# Jewish caucus urges DHS to drop “onerous” nonprofit security grant terms

By JNS staff

(JNS) – Leaders of the Congressional Jewish Caucus warn that new requirements tied to the Nonprofit Security Grant Program will politicize a vital security initiative. The security program provides federal funding for physical security enhancements such as cameras, access controls and other protective measures for nonprofits at risk of attack, including synagogues and other houses of worship, amid rising antisemitism nationwide.

In a letter sent to Kristi Noem, the U.S. homeland security secretary, on January 7, caucus co-chairs Jerrold Nadler (D-NY) and Brad Schneider (D-IL) specifically raised concerns about revised “standard terms and conditions” issued by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on April 18, 2025. The revised conditions

“create onerous new compliance requirements for recipients that will divert limited funds and restrict the religious conscience of synagogues, schools and other institutions pivotal to our community,” the lawmakers wrote.

“Insufficient funding or unnecessary obstacles to obtaining grants could undermine the right of every religious community to freely and peacefully worship and congregate without fear,” the letter stated.

Nadler and Schneider urged Noem to “promptly issue new guidance that provides clarity and waives any terms and conditions that do not directly relate to the grant’s purpose, which is to help qualified institutions improve their security against increasing threats.”

Members also objected to what they described as an attempt to link security fund-

ing to ideological or political conditions. “We reject any efforts to force Jewish and other houses of worship and institutions to choose between vital security funding and expression of their core religious freedoms, as well as their faith teachings and values,” the letter stated.

The caucus urged the department to reverse the new requirements by January

21, warning that delays within the “limited window” could affect whether institutions accept grants. “In this time of increased hate crimes against minorities, and in particular rising antisemitism, we believe it is crucial that NSGP remains a critical resource accessible to all communities in need and free from partisan politicization,” the letter stated.

# Bipartisan bill would limit U.S. funding to U.N. if Israel expelled

By JNS staff

Bipartisan legislation introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives on January 13 would cut American funding for the United Nations if it expels Israel. H.R. 7018, informally named the Stand with Israel Act of 2025, would target any U.N. agency that carries out such an action. It has been referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Calls for Israel’s expulsion have increased among opponents of Israel’s war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip following the terrorist group’s attacks on October 7, 2023. Malaysia announced in November that it would draft such a proposal.

Rep. Mike Lawler (R-NY), the bill’s lead sponsor, noted that “Israel is one of America’s strongest partners across the world. ... The U.N. has a responsibility to uphold its own rules, not bend them to appease extremists or reward antisemitism,” Lawler stated. “The

United States should not bankroll institutions that engage in discriminatory and unlawful actions against our allies.”

No nation has ever been expelled from the United Nations, although Arab states tried to take such action against Israel in 1982. They dropped the bid due to a lack of support. At the time, then-U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz cited existing American policy to withhold its dues in response to such actions.

Rep. Jared Moskowitz (D-FL), cosponsor of the legislation, said the United States would not sit idly this time either. “International organizations should not be allowed to ignore its own rules to single out Israel, one of our closest allies,” Moskowitz stated. “The Stand with Israel Act makes clear that American taxpayer dollars will not be used to support or legitimize unlawful actions that target Israel. International institutions must follow their own rules.”

# Demolition of Brooklyn shul stopped

By JNS staff

(JNS) – New York Gov. Kathy Hochul, a Democrat, halted the planned demolition of the historic Kingsbrook Shul, formerly Congregation Chaim Albert,

in the East Flatbush neighborhood of Brooklyn, NY.

Built in 1950 on the grounds of the former Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center, See “*Shul*” on page 11

## Wedding and engagement photos wanted

The Reporter is looking for photos of couples who became engaged or married in 2025 for the annual Wedding, Prom and Party Guide issue (coming in March).

Please e-mail these photos with the names of all those in the photo (including maiden names), date of wedding and photographer. Please do so by Tuesday, February 10. Photos can be e-mailed, in TIF or JPG format, to [TReporter@aol.com](mailto:TReporter@aol.com); please note in the subject line that a wedding/engagement photo for The Reporter is attached and include the necessary information in the message.



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Your contributions help us to create a strong, safe, vibrant Jewish community. Thank you.

This information is updated as of January 7, 2026. We acknowledge contributions from several anonymous donors and sincerely apologize if we have accidentally omitted anyone or made other errors.

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# Little focus on Jew-hatred today in European textbooks, UNESCO study suggests

By Mike Wagenheim

(JNS) – A United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization study published in November found large gaps in the ways that Jewish history is taught in Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland and Spain, as well as a dearth of information in those curricula about contemporary Jew-hatred.

“Antisemitism today is either not treated in textbooks (of Hungary, Lithuania or Greece, for example) or only marginally (of Denmark, Spain and Poland, for example),” per the study (<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000396332>). “In some cases, learning materials stress the continuity between historical and contemporary antisemitism by framing contemporary human rights legislation as a post-war response to the persecution and murder of Jews in the Holocaust.

“Contemporary antisemitism is most commonly addressed in the context of hate crimes or prejudice,” it adds.

Dr. Peter Carrier, of the Georg Eckert Institute in Germany who was part of the three-person team that ran the study, told JNS that he knew “roughly what we might find,” but the team developed a questionnaire to “cover every possible eventuality.” “It’s essential to be open to surprises,” he said. “And there were a few surprises.”

One finding that caught the team off guard was the lack of guidance from governing authorities about the curricula. “There’s an amazing lack of coherence and very little information about Jewish history in state curricula,” he told JNS. “What there is is piecemeal and not systematic. Not thought through and not coordinated between different countries.”

Katharina von Schnurbein, European Commission coordinator on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life, told JNS that the study “can give educators and policymakers important indications of what they need to address in order to close the gaps in textbooks and curricula” to better teach “accurate and meaningful information about the Holocaust,” to show “Jewish agency in history” and to address “contemporary forms of antisemitism in a coherent manner.”

The commission supported the study financially via its partnership with UNESCO. “We trust that this tool, paired with the outreach by UNESCO, will support educators in a concrete and effective way,” von Schnurbein told JNS. (JNS sought further comment from von Schnurbein about the study’s findings.)

The European textbooks in question are meant to cover world history, so Jewish history wasn’t meant to be a focus. But Carrier told JNS that the texts “strongly emphasize” monotheism. “So ancient history, ancient Israel. Then a little bit about the Middle Ages. But early modern times, even modern times – 19<sup>th</sup> century – is very weak or missing completely,” he said. “Then we jump into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.”

That means, he told JNS, that the textbooks instruct students about Judaism in biblical times, and “then we zoom through the following 18 centuries and land in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the Holocaust and Israel. ... There needs to be more meat put on the bones,” he said, “between those two historical poles.”

Some textbook approaches are mixed bags, like “eclectic” Hungarian textbooks, according to Carrier. “They’re not all on the same wavelength,” he said. Hungarian texts draw a “very simplistic” division between medieval Christians and Jews, but set the modern conflict in the Middle East in the context of the Cold War, which is a “very, very reasonable thing to do to add complexity to understanding,” Carrier told JNS.

Carrier thinks those subtleties reflect more on individual textbook authors than on the attitudes of state governments. He and his colleagues found more coherence in France, which has a centralized education system, he said.

The countries studied cooperated for the most part, but the work was mainly done by individual authors and scholars, who pored over textbooks in their home countries. There was little coordination with governmental bodies, according to Carrier. There were some workshops urging ministries to “take account of Jewish history and antisemitism more, particularly in the political situation today,” Carrier told JNS.

“They are always willing to let those take place,” he said. “But there are tensions, to put it politely, and also within

the delegations. There is great willingness to take part, but reluctance to follow the UNESCO line” to increase and study representations of Jewish history.

“There is resistance to that because of their very polemical attitudes to Jewish history and what’s going on at the moment,” he said.

Those attitudes led to a delay in the study’s publication when “a bunch of national delegates from educational ministries, who sit in Paris,” where UNESCO is based, held it up, according to Carrier. “UNESCO didn’t tell us the details of what resistance was posed to the publication,” he said. Carrier told JNS that he thinks Poland and Hungary “were complaining a bit about some of the content.”

The study authors recommended presenting Jewish history as an integral part of European history, moving beyond portraying Jewish people only as victims, adding Jewish voices – including those of women and girls – across historical periods and ensuring that visual materials don’t reinforce and reproduce antisemitic stereotypes.

The researchers warned that current textbooks, which lack focus on modern issues, can leave students with the impression that antisemitism is only a problem of the past. Only about 10 percent of the textbooks that they analyzed address contemporary Jew-hatred, they said.

UNESCO stated that there are examples in the textbooks of “how inclusive, empathetic and insightful content can stimulate new ways of engaging with Europe’s Jewish life and history.” UNESCO also published a handbook with practical guidance for addressing antisemitism in the classroom.

The document encourages using “authentic, personal stories to humanize experiences and challenge prejudice.” It also recommends “intercultural dialogue and engaging with Jewish heritage” to encourage students to overcome “bias and build bridges between communities.” It also focuses on media literacy to combat online disinformation.

The publications are a part of UNESCO’s project on Addressing Antisemitism through Education, which began in 2023 and, the agency says, has trained more than 1,300 educators and policymakers across Europe.

## Century-old Hungarian Jewish periodical launches bookazine

By Etgar Lefkovits

(JNS) – A Hungarian-language Jewish newspaper first published in Romania over a century ago and re-established in Tel Aviv with the founding of the state is marking its 107<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the launch of a bookazine format.

Új Kelet served as the newspaper for generations of Hungarian-speaking Jews from its first publication as a weekly in 1918 in Kolozsvár, then as a daily in 1920, to its rebirth in Tel Aviv in 1948, with an editorial team that included journalistic luminaries such as Tommy Lapid, Efraim Kishon, Israel Kastner, Dosh and Zeev, first as a daily then as a monthly then a weekly, and finally as a quarterly before becoming solely web based in 2022.

After a three-year break in printing, Új Kelet, Hungarian for “New East,” evolved once more, transforming in 2025 from a 32-page magazine to a 180-page bookazine, of which 1,200 copies are printed in Israel, while the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities prints and distributes 3,800 copies in the Central European country.

“At a time of rising global antisemitism, it is more important than ever that a renewed Hungarian-language voice stands up to bigotry and offers clarity instead of division,” Eva Vadasz, editor-in-chief of Új Kelet and one of the three owners, told JNS.

“In light of what is going on around the world, it is more critical than ever that there is a periodical in Hungarian

from Israel which will reach readers both in Hungary and around the world,” said Ron Lustig, director of the Memorial Museum of Hungarian Speaking Jewry in Safed, who addressed a gala event held at Tel Aviv University last week marking the publication’s 107<sup>th</sup> anniversary and new format.

“From its very beginnings, Új Kelet exerted influence well beyond Transylvania,” said Andor Grosz, president of the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities. “The high quality of its journalism and its consistent Zionist commitment had a profound impact on Hungarian and Hungarian-speaking Jewish communities throughout the world.”

## Israel, Greece, Cyprus sign military cooperation deals

By JNS staff

(JNS) – Israel, Greece and Cyprus signed a trilateral military cooperation plan for 2026, along with separate bilateral agreements between the Israel Defense Forces and each nation’s armed forces, the IDF announced recently.

The agreement was signed on December 23 in the Cypriot capital Nicosia during an annual meeting of the

three countries’ military leadership, the IDF said. Brig. Gen. Amit Adler, head of the IDF’s International Cooperation Division, led the Israeli delegation in meetings with Greek and Cypriot counterparts. The plans outline joint military exercises, training programs, working groups and strategic dialogue on shared security interests with the Hellenic Armed Forces and the Cypriot National Guard. “The

signing of these plans represents another step in deepening military cooperation between the countries and contributes to strengthening stability, security and peace in the Eastern Mediterranean region,” the IDF said.

The signing came a day after the leaders of the three countries met for a summit in Jerusalem where they advanced an energy deal that will link their electrical grids.

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**THE REPORTER**  
Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton

# Google, Tel Aviv University launch three-year AI research project

By JNS staff

(JNS)—Google Israel and Tel Aviv University launched a three-year program to promote research in artificial intelligence and data science, the university said on December 21.

The program will focus on advancing foundational research in AI, including innovation in language models, AI for privacy and algorithmic efficiency. The program will be led by the university's Center for AI and Data Science, headed by Professor Yishay Mansour from the Blavatnik School of Computer Science and AI, with Google's philanthropic arm providing \$1 million in funding, the statement read.

"Our collaboration with Google began about five years ago, when Google supported interdisciplinary AI collaborations connecting researchers in computer

science, engineering and data science, with those in the life sciences, humanities and social sciences," Tel Aviv University President Professor Ariel Porat said in a statement.

"The newly launched program focuses on core areas of AI and includes scholarships for Ph.D. students. In addition, it enables scholarships for students from Israel's periphery — thereby advancing the university's strategy of supporting students who have not had the same opportunities as most of their peers," Porat continued.

"One of our central challenges is developing theories that explain AI's meteoric success. A deep understanding of the processes involved in training large language models can open new directions and contribute to significant improvements in the algorithmic efficiency of learning

processes," added Professor Yishay Mansour, head of the university's Center for AI and Data Science.

Yossi Matias, vice president of engineering and research at Google and head of Google Research, was quoted as saying, "Research and academic excellence are more important than ever. I believe in the benefits of mutual enrichment between outstanding academic research and the development of technological innovation — when researchers from different disciplines and different approaches come together, meaningful advances emerge."

Tel Aviv University's statement further noted that over the past three years, Google has supported TAU's ExactShe program led by Professor Tova Milo, dean of the Faculty of Exact Sciences, which aims to create a supportive community for women in research.

# Emojis can represent Jew-hatred in code, nonprofit warns

By JNS staff

(JNS)—CyberWell, an independent nonprofit that works with social platforms on reporting online Jew-hatred, said it is seeing an increase in coded antisemitic content using emojis and euphemisms that can slip past moderators.

The Tel Aviv-based group said that it submitted public comment to Meta's oversight board and sent alerts to platforms, as the board reviews a case involving coded language and emojis used to target other com-

munities. It said similar tactics are being used against Jews across English and Arabic content, including the use of "juice" and "tiny hat," along with emojis of juice boxes, noses, pigs, mice, monkeys and devils to "dehumanize Jews" online.

"This content represents a troubling, sophisticated evolution of digital antisemitism and evasion tactics," stated Tal-Or Cohen Montemayor, founder and CEO of the nonprofit.

CyberWell said that it found 64 TikTok accounts "using 'Jill Kews' as code for 'Kill Jews,'" and that after it alerted the platform through a trusted partner channel, TikTok removed and banned the large majority of the accounts.

"Antisemitic actors have learned to weaponize tools meant for communication," Cohen Montemayor said. "Emojis now function as coded cues that allow users to signal bigoted beliefs and harass Jews without explicitly naming them."

## Bar & Bat Mitzvah Planning Guide

### Mazel tov to these 2026 b'nai mitzvah

(List provided by area synagogues)

B'nai mitzvah	Parents	Date	Synagogue
Sabrina Kallandar	Amy and George Kallander	March 21	Tikkun v'Or
Trixie Litwin	Claire and Adam Litwin	June 13	Tikkun v'Or
Eliyana Olivieri	Rabbi Tziona Szajman and Tim Olivieri	June 27	Tikkun v'Or
Evan Berne	Rebecca Salk and Mike Berne	October 24	Tikkun v'Or
Joseph Bosworth	Lara Estroff and David Bosworth	December 19	Tikkun v'Or

## Bar/bat mitzvah planning timetable

At birth:

When the child is born start saving! Only joking. But if you can, it's not a bad idea to start a "bar/bat mitzvah club" savings account. If you don't use it, put it toward college.

1-3 years ahead:

- ✦ Set bar/bat mitzvah date
- ✦ Set a budget
- ✦ Reserve synagogue hall for kiddush
- ✦ Reserve hall for additional receptions
- ✦ Arrange for caterer/party planner and band/music for occasion (if desired)
- ✦ Buy a loose-leaf binder with dividers, or start a filing system for keeping business cards, estimates, notes, lists, etc.

10-12 months ahead:

- ✦ Begin bar/bat mitzvah lessons
- ✦ Begin attending weekly Shabbat services
- ✦ Arrange for photographer and/or video
- ✦ Book hotel s and investigate transportation for out-of-town guests

6 months ahead:

- ✦ Plan color scheme and/or theme
- ✦ Arrange for florist and/or decorations' coordinator
- ✦ Make guest list

4-5 months ahead:

- ✦ Order invitations, thank you notes, imprinted napkins and personalized party favors
- ✦ Shop for clothing and shoes
- ✦ Purchase tallit, tefillin, etc.
- ✦ Choose a calligrapher, if desired

3 months ahead:

- ✦ Plan Sunday brunch (if applicable)
- ✦ Order printed yarmulkas, if desired

2 months ahead:

- ✦ Meet with photographer
- ✦ Meet with florist and/or decorations' coordinator
- ✦ Mail out-of-town invitations

6 weeks ahead:

- ✦ Order tuxedos (if applicable)
- ✦ Take care of clothing alterations
- ✦ Order wine for kiddush
- ✦ Mail in-town invitations

4 weeks ahead:

- ✦ Prepare bar/bat mitzvah speech
- ✦ Finalize hotel reservations and transportation
- ✦ Meet with caterer(s)
- ✦ Make up welcome gifts for out-of-town guests (if desired)
- ✦ Arrange aliyot
- ✦ Send honorary gift to synagogue
- ✦ Meet with rabbi
- ✦ Make up seating charts for reception

2 weeks ahead:

- ✦ Give final count to caterer
- ✦ Check with florist and/or decorations' coordinator
- ✦ Meet with rabbi
- ✦ Order bar/bat mitzvah cake, etc. for Friday night oneg

A few days ahead:

- ✦ Have bar/bat mitzvah rehearsal and take bima photographs
- ✦ Xerox copies of speeches, room and table layout, etc. and give them to a friend to hold or drop off at synagogue and reception hall, in case you forget to bring your copies that day.

Special Day:

- ✦ Prepare to enjoy your simcha!

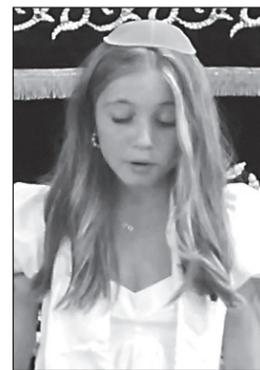
## B'nai mitzvah books

By Reporter staff

Need help preparing for your child's bar or bat mitzvah? Here are some books that can help create the perfect event.

- ◆ "The JPS B'nai Mitzvah Torah Commentary" by Jeffrey K. Salkin
- ◆ "Mitzvah Chic: How to Host a Meaningful, Fun, and Drop Dead Gorgeous Bar or Bat Mitzvah" by Gail Anthony Greenberg
- ◆ "Bar Mitzvah, Bat Mitzvah: The Ceremony, the Party, and How the Day Came to Be" by Bert Metter
- ◆ "The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Planner: Everything You Need to Organize and Plan a Meaningful Ceremony and a Joyous Celebration" by Gabrielle Kaplan-Mayer
- ◆ "Reclaiming Bar/Bat Mizvah: as a Spiritual Rite of Passage" by Rabbi Goldie Milgram

## Mazel tov to the 2025 b'nai mitzvah



Lowy Grekin Fairfield  
May 10, 2025  
Gaby Grekin and Brian Fairfield  
Temple Etz Chaim,  
Biddeford, ME  
(Photo by Skye Lee of  
Kennebunkport, ME)

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# Adapting to a changing world

RABBI LEIAH MOSER, TEMPLE CONCORD

In the Babylonian Talmud, Masechet Berachot 54b-55a, the Gemara examines a saying of Rav Yehuda that "There are three things which, when a person prolongs their duration, they extend a person's days and years: One who prolongs their prayer, one who prolongs their meal-time at the table, and one who prolongs their time in the bathroom." Specifically with regard to prolonging one's time at the table during mealtime, the Gemara explains it in this way: "Perhaps a poor person will come and they (i.e. the host) will give them (food)." It goes on to bring a teaching of Rabbi Yochanan and Rabbi Elazar who, referring to a text in Ezekiel in which a description of the sacrificial altar appears very close to a description of the wooden table upon which the shewbread was displayed in

the sanctuary, teach the following: "All the time that the Temple endured, the altar atoned for Israel. And now – a person's table atones for them."

Jewish history is filled with such acts of re-inscription, in which the sacred purpose invested into a particular symbol or ritual practice is transferred into a new container. Such transformations tend to occur in moments of disruption when suddenly the way things had always been wasn't the way they were anymore. Whenever this happened, it was necessary for the generation living through such times – and for the generations following – to work out how Jewish life was to carry on under radically changed conditions.

Rabbi Yochanan and Rabbi Elazar's teaching evokes one such pivotal moment in the evolution of the Jewish people,

the period after the destruction of the Second Temple by the Roman general Titus in 70 C.E. This period marks the beginning of rabbinic Judaism as we know it, and the rabbinic literature of the time (such as the Mishnah) can be understood as a record of the rabbis' attempts to work out a blueprint for Jewish life in a world in which Jews no longer had access to the Temple and the system of ritual sacrifice it supported. Part of the response, as indicated by Rabbi Yochanan and Rabbi Elazar's teaching, involved taking the underlying values contained in the rituals of Second Temple Judaism and finding ways to express them in the context of Jewish life in the Diaspora. The result was a form of Judaism that was at once more portable and less

See "World" on page 12

## Congregational Notes

### Temple Concord

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism  
 Rabbi: Leah Moser  
 Address: 9 Riverside Dr, Binghamton NY 13905  
 Office hours: Tues.-Fri., 10 am-2 pm  
 Phone: 607-723-7355  
 Office e-mail: TempleConcordBinghamton@gmail.com  
 Website: www.TempleConcord.com  
 Please contact Temple Concord for Zoom links.

Some services and programs are online only. For Zoom links, contact Temple Concord.

Services, ongoing classes and evening prayers at Temple Concord:

Fridays: At 7:30 pm, Shabbat service (in person, on Zoom and on Facebook).

Saturdays: At 9:15 am, Torah study (in person and on Zoom) and at 10:30 am, Shabbat service (in person).

Wednesdays: At 5:30 pm, evening prayers (in person). At 6 pm, adult education classes (in person and on Zoom), "The Structure of Jewish Prayer." Contact the temple office for more details.

Upcoming events:

Tuesday, January 20: At 7 pm, Social Action Committee meeting. For details, contact the temple office or committee co-chairs Phyllis Weinstein or Debra Saltzman for details.

Sunday, January 25: At 11 am, Rabbi Rachel Esserman will review and discuss three books for Temple Concord Sisterhood's Annual Book Talk. Brunch will be served, with a suggested donation of \$5. This program is open to the community. The snow date is Sunday, February 1. RSVP to Phyllis Kellenberger at phylkellen@gmail.com or 607-727-8305 as soon as possible.

Saturday, January 31: At 6 pm, Community Board Game Night in the social hall for all ages. Pizza and salad will be provided. RSVP to the temple office as soon as possible. Suggested donation is \$5 per person or \$20 per family to cover the cost of refreshments.

Sunday, February 1: From 10 am-2 pm, Sisterhood Rummage Sale in the temple basement. Buy one coat or outside jacket/ get one free. Shoppers are asked to use the Oak Street entrance.

See "TC" on page 11

### Norwich Jewish Center

Orientation: Inclusive  
 Address: 72 South Broad St., Norwich, NY 13815  
 Phone: 607-334-2691  
 Purpose: To maintain a Jewish identity and meet the needs of the Jewish community in the area.

### Temple Brith Sholom

Affiliation: Unaffiliated  
 Address: P.O. Box 572, 117 Madison St., Cortland, NY 13045  
 Phone: 607-756-7181  
 President: Mark Suben  
 Cemetery Committee: 315-696-5744  
 Website: templebrithsholomcortland.org  
 Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Temple-Brith-Sholom-114006981962930/  
 Service leaders: Lay leadership  
 Shabbat services: Services are usually on the third Friday of the month and led by a variety of leaders. 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." The community extends a warm welcome to the Jewish student population of SUNY Cortland, as well as the residents of local adult residences. The Board of Trustees meets on the second Tuesday of the month.

Services and programs are held by Zoom usually on the third Friday of the month.

### Beth David Synagogue

Affiliation: Orthodox Union  
 Rabbi: Zev Silber  
 Address: 39 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905  
 Phone: 607-722-1793, Rabbi's Office: 607-722-7514  
 Fax: 607-722-7121  
 Office hours: Tues. 10 am-1 pm; Thurs. 9 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  
 Classes: Rabbi Zev Silber will hold his weekly Talmud class every Tuesday evening after services.

### Temple Beth El of Oneonta

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

### Temple Beth-El of Ithaca

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism  
 Rabbi: Caleb Brommer  
 Address: 402 North Tioga St. (the corner of Court and Tioga streets), Ithaca, NY 14850-4292  
 Phone: 607-273-5775  
 Website: www.tbeithaca.org  
 Presidents: Jerry Dietz and Ariel Avgar  
 Director of Education and Engagement: Calle Schueler  
 Services: Friday 6:30 pm; Saturday 9:30 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 Sundays from 9 am-noon and Wednesdays from 4-6 pm. Teen Midrasha meets Tuesdays from 6-8 pm.  
 Adult Ed.: Numerous weekly courses, several semester-long courses and a variety of lectures are offered throughout the year. Call the temple office or email secretary@tbeithaca.org for more information.

### 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: Martha Armstrong and Mitch Grossman, presidents\_22@tikkunvor.org  
 Education Director/Admin. Coordinator: Naomi Wilensky  
 Bnai Mitzvah Coordinator: Michael Margolin  
 Services: All services currently on Zoom. E-mail info@tikkunvor.org for the times and links. Contemplative morning services every Tuesday from 8:30-9:30 am. Saturday mornings, Gan Shabbat and other special services at least once a month. Call for the weekly schedule.  
 Jewish Learning Experiences (JLE) for second through seventh grade classes meet on Sunday mornings. Sixth and seventh grades also meet on Wednesday afternoons. Family programs for kindergarten and first grade held monthly.  
 Adult Education: Offered regularly throughout the year. Check the website for details.

Friday, January 30, light candles before..... 4:57 pm  
 Shabbat ends Saturday, January 31 ..... 5:59 pm  
 Friday, February 6, light candles before..... 5:06 pm  
 Shabbat ends Saturday, February 7 ..... 6:08 pm  
 Friday, February 13, light candles before..... 5:15 pm  
 Shabbat ends Saturday, February 14 ..... 6:17 pm  
 Friday, February 20, light candles before..... 5:24 pm  
 Shabbat ends Saturday, February 21 ..... 6:26 pm  
 Friday, February 27, light candles before..... 5:33 pm  
 Shabbat ends Saturday, February 28 ..... 6:35 pm  
 Friday, March 6, light candles before..... 5:41 pm  
 Shabbat ends Saturday, March 7 ..... 6:43 pm

### Temple Israel

Orientation: Conservative  
 Rabbi: Micah Friedman  
 Address: 4737 Deerfield Pl., Vestal, NY 13850  
 Phone: 607-723-7461 and 607-231-3746  
 Office hours: Mon.-Thurs., 8:30 am-3:30 pm; Fri., 8 am-3 pm  
 E-mail: office@templeisraelvestal.org  
 Website: www.templeisraelvestal.org  
 Service schedule: Tues., 5:30 pm; Fri., 5:30 pm; Sat., 9:30 am – all via Zoom and in-person

On Fridays and Tuesdays at 5:30 pm, services will be led by Rabbi Micah Friedman.

On Saturday, February 7, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am. The Torah portion is Exodus 18:1-20:22 and the haftarah is Isaiah 6:1-7:6; 9:5-6. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 6:15 pm.

On Saturday, February 14, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am. The Torah portion is Exodus 21:1-24:18 and the haftarah is II Kings 12:1-17 A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 6:30 pm.

On Saturday, February 21, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am. The Torah portion is Exodus 25:1-27:19 and the haftarah is I Kings 5:26-6:13. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 6:30 pm.

On Saturday, February 28, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am. The Torah portion is Exodus 27:20-30:10 and the haftarah is I Samuels 15:2-34. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 6:45 pm.

Upcoming events:

Mondays, February 2, 9, 19 and 23: "Hebrew with the Weekly Parsha class" with Rabbi Micah Friedman from 6:30-7:45 pm.

Tuesdays, February 3, 10, 17 and 24: "Torah and Our Times" class with Rabbi Micah Friedman at 4:30 pm.

Tuesday, February 3: Executive Board meeting at 7 pm.

Wednesdays, February 4, 11, 18 and 25: Hebrew school at 4 pm.

Monday, February 16: Temple office closed.

Tuesday, February 17: Board of Trustees meeting at 7 pm.

Wednesday February 18: Ritual Committee meeting at 10 am.

### Penn-York Jewish Community

Treasurer: Beth Herbst, 607-857-0976  
 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.

### 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: 607-797-0015, Fax: 607-797-0095  
 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.

# Netanyahu: Israel seeks to end U.S. military aid within a decade

By JNS staff

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that he wants to cease Israel's reliance on U.S. military aid within the next decade. He spoke during an interview with *The Economist* that was published on January 9. "I want to taper off the [U.S.] military aid within the next 10 years," Netanyahu said.

The prime minister said that during his meeting with President Donald Trump in Florida on December 29, he told him that Israel "deeply appreciates" the military aid that "America has given us over the years – but here too, we've come of age."

The Jewish state has "developed incredible capacities. And our economy... will soon reach, certainly within a decade, about \$1 trillion. It's not a huge economy, but it's not a small economy," Netanyahu told *The Economist*. He clarified that this does not mean that he does not want to fight for the "allegiance and support of the American people – you'd have to be crazy not to," but added that the plan was already "in the works."

Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) wrote a post on X, saying that the aid to Israel "has been a great investment" to the benefit of the United States. "Apparently there

is a desire by Israel to change that dynamic because they have a roaring economy," he added.

"We have no better ally than Israel. Their future is tremendously important to America at many levels. ... As chairman of State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee, I will be presenting a proposal to Israel and the Trump Administration to dramatically expedite the timetable," the senator wrote.

"I will always appreciate allies who are trying to be more self-sufficient and believe that, given what the prime minister said, we need not wait ten years. The billions in taxpayer dollars that would be saved by expediting the termination of military aid to Israel will and should be plowed back into the U.S. military, which is the best in the world and in great demand," Graham said.

For the past 50 years, since the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the U.S. has transferred a few billion dollars annually to Israel for defense needs. In the early years, Israel had "considerable freedom" in how to use these funds. Over the past decade, however, nearly the entire annual sum – now roughly \$3.8 billion – has been designated for purchases from the American defense industry.

As global weapons development has evolved, Israel's economy has rapidly strengthened and criticism within the U.S. of the current aid structure has grown. Against this backdrop, Israeli officials have increasingly been open to rethinking the arrangement. A source familiar with the discussions told *Israel Hayom* in November that debates are underway in the Israeli defense and diplomatic establishments regarding what form future American assistance should take.

## Shul . . . . . Continued from page 5

the synagogue was to be razed as part of a redevelopment of the larger site into affordable housing. The project, which is partly financed via the state's housing and community renewal program, would include hundreds of residential units.

The governor's decision came amid a lawsuit in the state's supreme court in Kings County, in which Congregation Chaim Albert sued One Brooklyn Health System, the entity that owns the property. In the June 13 complaint posted by VIN News, the congregation alleged that the synagogue was always intended to remain a permanent house of worship and should not be treated as a disposable real estate asset.

According to the complaint, synagogue services were suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic but were never allowed to resume, even after public-health restrictions ended. The congregation alleged that the prolonged closure was used to justify removing the Kingsbrook Shul as part of the redevelopment.

Hochul said she "led the effort to save the historic Kingsbrook Shul from its demolition" in a statement to CoLive, in which she encouraged "leadership from the hospital and synagogue to find a path forward where both sites can prosper and serve the community."

Aron Wieder, a state assemblyman, said that "protecting institutions with deep community and cultural significance is important."

Letitia James, the state attorney general, also said that "this synagogue has been meaningful to the community for decades, and I am grateful a treasured piece of Jewish history in New York will be preserved."

## TC . . . . . Continued from page 10

Sunday, February 1: At noon, the Temple Concord Brotherhood Luncheon will feature Sharon Sherman, head of the Jewish Genealogy Society of Central New York. This event is \$10 per person including lunch. Call Temple Concord at 607-723-7355 to make reservations by Wednesday, January 28.

Sunday, February 1: At 5 pm, a Tu B'shevat seder hosted by Sisterhood will include a short program, including fruits and juices, following a pizza and salad dinner. There is no charge to attend. RSVP to the temple office by phone, e-mail or the website by Wednesday, January 28.

Tuesday, February 4: At 10:30 am, Tuesday Morning Book Club: "On Division" by Goldie Goldberg. For more information, contact Merri Pell-Preus at 607-222-2875 or merrypell.preus@gmail.com. To join via Zoom, visit <https://bit.ly/3CXVd9b>, meeting ID 881 6469 4206 and passcode 653272.

Tuesday, February 10: At 7:30 pm, general (Board of Trustees) board meeting, open to members of Temple Concord. For the meeting link, call 607-723-7355 or e-mail templeconcordaa@gmail.com.

Tuesday, February 17: At 7 pm, Social Action Committee meeting. For details, contact the temple office or committee co-chairs Phyllis Weinstein or Debra Saltzman for details.

Saturday, February 28: At 6:30 pm, Community Board Game Night in the social hall for all ages. Pizza and salad will be provided. RSVP to the temple office by Wednesday, February 25. Suggested donation is \$5 per person or \$20 per family to cover the cost of refreshments.

## Business Profiles

### Ernest H. Parsons Funeral Home

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 Name: Joseph Fritsch  
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 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.

### Hopler & Eschbach Funeral Home

Specialty: Funeral services, burials and cremation  
 Location: 483 Chenango St.  
 Binghamton, NY 13901  
 Name: Kurt M. Eschbach  
 Phone: 607-722-4023  
 E-mail: hoplereschbachfh@aol.com  
 Website: www.hefuneralhome.com  
 Hours: 24-hour service, 365 days a year

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.

### The Reporter

Specialty: Advertising  
 Location: 500 Clubhouse Rd.  
 Vestal, NY 13850  
 Name: Kathy Brown  
 Phone: 607-724-2360, ext. 244  
 E-mail: advertising@thereportergroup.org  
 Website: www.thereportergroup.org  
 Facebook: The Reporter Group  
 Hours: Mon. 9 am-4 pm, Wed. 9 am-3 pm, Thurs. 9 am-4 pm

Advertising was a new field for Kathy when she started four years ago, but she's discovered the pleasure of working with the clients, giving them ideas on how to promote their business using print ads. Her motto is "the client comes first" and, to prove that, she researches each client to see what they have done in the past and tries to figure out if there is a way to improve their ad-image. She also works with them to discover the ad sections that will best highlight their business.

Kathy has lived here for 40 years, moving from Long Island to meet and marry her husband. She loves the outdoors, even in the winter. She is ready to help you advertise your business in *The Reporter*, in Binghamton and Scranton, the best way she can. Call or e-mail her to discuss options.

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Kurt M. Eschbach, Funeral Director  
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# National Library of Israel unveils rare medieval Maimonides manuscript

By JNS staff

(JNS) – The National Library of Israel is displaying a rare 14<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript of Maimonides' Mishneh Torah for the first time as part of its permanent exhibition.

The illuminated volume, copied in Provence between 1300 and 1350 C.E., represents one of Judaism's "most significant" legal texts. Italian artist Matteo di Ser Cambio later enhanced the manuscript in Spain with vivid illustrations, gold ornamentation and decorative motifs featuring figures, animals and plants. The manuscript shows evidence of centuries of scholarly use, including proofreading notes and corrections. It also bears marks of 16<sup>th</sup>-century Christian censorship, with erasures on its

final page and a censor's seal from 1574.

The Mishneh Torah is considered Maimonides' most important work, encompassing all areas of Jewish law.

Several other items are making their public debut in the exhibition "A Treasury of Words" at the William Davidson Permanent Exhibition Gallery. A 15<sup>th</sup>-century prayer book from Lisbon offers one of the last glimpses into Spanish and Portuguese Jewish liturgical traditions before the 1492 expulsion. The volume features block lettering with colorful and gold decorations. The library is also presenting a newly discovered 13<sup>th</sup>-century liturgical poem found within the pages of the Worms Machzor. The illuminated poem appears between two columns with lions at their base.

Other highlights include the world's earliest printed Passover haggadah, produced in Guadalajara, Spain, in 1482, and the Bengehzi Haggadah from 1943. The latter was hastily printed on confiscated telegram forms by Jewish Brigade soldiers for a seder held shortly after Libya's liberation from Nazi control.

The exhibition also features Persian poetry manuscripts, including a tale of Layla and Majnun by 12<sup>th</sup>-century poet Nizami Ganjavi – a tragic love story that inspired works including Eric Clapton's song "Layla."

Two rotating exhibitions at the library have been extended through May 15 due to popular demand. Tickets are available at [nli.org.il/en](http://nli.org.il/en).

## A 2,000-year-old Jewish ritual bath discovered under Western Wall Plaza in Jerusalem

By JNS staff

(JNS) – A Jewish ritual bath, or *mikvah*, dating back to the final days of the Second Temple period has been unearthed near the Western Wall, the Israel Antiquities Authority announced on December 29. The bath, which still bears ash remains that testify to the destruction of the Temple, was discovered recently beneath the Western Wall Plaza, the state-run archaeological body said.

Hewn into the bedrock, the *mikvah*, which is rectangular in shape, measuring 3.05 meters in length, 1.35 meters in width and 1.85 meters in height, was found sealed beneath a layer dated to the year 70 C.E. Within this layer, which contains ash, numerous pottery vessels were discovered, along with stone vessels characteristic of the Jewish population that lived in the city on the eve

of the destruction, according to the IAA.

The excavations are located in close proximity to the site of the ancient Temple and to what served as its main entrances some 2,000 years ago – the Great Bridge to the north and Robinson's Arch to the south. According to Jewish law, people who wished to visit the temples were required to purify themselves via a ritual bath before entering.

Researchers believe that the bath served the Jews who lived in the area as well as the many pilgrims who frequented the site and the Temple. "Jerusalem should be remembered as a temple city," explained Ari Levy, excavation director on behalf of the IAA. "As such, many aspects of daily life were adapted to this reality, and this is reflected especially in the meticulous observance of the laws of ritual impurity and purity by the city's residents and leaders."

According to Israel's Heritage Minister Rabbi Amichai Eliyahu, "The exposure of the ritual bath beneath the Western Wall Plaza strengthens our understanding of how deeply intertwined religious life and daily life were in Jerusalem during the Temple period."

The discovery was announced on the eve of the Jewish Tenth of Tevet Fast, which commemorates the beginning of the Babylonian siege that led to the destruction of Jerusalem and the First Temple in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.

"The exposure of a Second Temple period ritual bath beneath the Western Wall Plaza, with ashes from the destruction at its base, testifies like a thousand witnesses to the ability of the people of Israel to move from impurity to purity, from destruction to renewal," said Mordechai Eliav, the director of the Western Wall Heritage Foundation.

## Oldest dam uncovered in Jerusalem dated to 800 B.C.E.

By JNS Staff

(JNS) – The largest dam in ancient Israel, uncovered just outside the walled Old City of Jerusalem, has been dated back to the time of the biblical kings, some 2,800 years ago, the Israel Antiquities Authority announced on recently. The monumental dam, which runs about 12 meters high, more than eight meters wide and 21 meters long, was excavated over the last two years in the history-rich



The 2,800-year-old dam wall discovered in Jerusalem's City of David (Photo by Emil Aladjem, Israel Antiquities Authority)

ancient City of David.

A new study carried out jointly with the Weizmann Institute of Science concludes that the barrier constructed to both hold back water and raise its level was built around 800 B.C.E., and dates it to the reign of the kings of Judah, Joash or Amaziah, making it the earliest one ever found in Jerusalem, the state-run archaeological body said.

The researchers at Weizmann employed high-precision radiocarbon dating to unequivocally determine that this was the structure used in the construction of the Siloam Pool, which until now was only described both in the Bible and in historical sources.

"The dam was designed to collect waters from the Gihon Spring as well as floodwaters flowing down the main valley

of ancient Jerusalem to the Kidron Stream, providing a dual solution for both water shortages and flash floods," the excavation directors said.

The newly uncovered structure joins two other water systems from the same period discovered in the City of David, reflecting comprehensive urban planning for managing Jerusalem's water supply as early as the late ninth century B.C.E. and serves as clear evidence of the city's power and sophistication even then, the IAA said.

"This is one of the most impressive and significant First Temple-period remains in Jerusalem, and has been preserved to an extraordinary degree," said Eli Escusido, director of the IAA. "The revealed dam is awe-inspiring and opens new avenues of research."

## A 1,300-year-old pendant shows Jews "didn't stop" visiting Jerusalem

By JNS Staff

(JNS) – A 1,300-year-old lead pendant decorated with a menorah was uncovered during an archaeological excavation beneath the southwestern corner of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, north of the City of David, the Israel Antiquities Authority revealed recently. Only one other ancient lead pendant bearing the menorah symbol is known in the world, the government agency added.

The personal necklace dates to the sixth to early seventh centuries in the Late Byzantine period, and was recently discovered in a large-scale archaeological excavation in the Davidson Archaeological Park of Jerusalem. It is decorated on both sides with an identical image of a seven-branched menorah and was apparently worn by a Jew who traveled

to Jerusalem despite a ban prohibiting Jews from entry, according to the IAA.

Ayayu Belete, a City of David worker, recounted how he found the pendant. "One day while I was digging inside an ancient structure, I suddenly saw something different, gray, among the stones. I picked up the object and saw that it was a pendant with a menorah on it. I immediately showed the find to Esther Rakow-Mellet, the area director, and she said it was an especially rare find. I was deeply moved and excited," he said, according to the IAA statement.

"Research has identified pendants of glass and other metals decorated with a menorah, but we know of only one other pendant in the world bearing the symbol of the menorah, made of lead. That pendant, of unknown origin, is housed in The Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, U.S.A.," said IAA researchers Yuval Baruch, Filip Vukosavovic, Esther Rakow-Mellet and Shulamit Terem.

Baruch assessed that wearing the personal item when access for Jews to Jerusalem was barred "is not only the essence of a personal commitment to one's religious faith... but it also attests that during periods when imperial edicts were issued prohibiting Jews from residing in the city, they did not stop coming there!"

He added that the choice of lead strengthens the assumption that the owner of the pendant wore it as an amulet, not jewelry. "There is a strong basis to this contention, because lead was considered a common and particularly popular material for making amulets at that time."

The rare artifact was being displayed to the public for the first time during Chanukah as part of family tours and activities taking place at the Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein National Campus for the Archaeology of Israel in Jerusalem.

The excavation in the Temple Mount area has been conducted in recent years by the Israel Antiquities Authority, the City of David Foundation and the Company for the Restoration and Development of the Jewish Quarter.

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