

Federation to offer program by David Rittberg on “Conversations about the Day After”

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton will hold the Zoom event “Conversations about the Day After” with David Rittberg, senior director at the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies, on Wednesday, January 31, at 7 pm. Rittberg will discuss life after the October 7 attack on Israel. He will speak about what is happening in southern Israel, and how the war will affect Jewish communities and philanthropy in the United States. To register for the event, visit www.jfgb.org/. Rittberg noted why he feels it’s important

to share information about his recent trip to Israel. “Having the opportunity to travel to Israel during this time was an incredible privilege that carries with it a responsibility to share what I learned, saw and felt,” he said in an e-mail interview. “In a world of polarization, binary thinking, misinformation and disinformation, first-hand accounts are powerful and important.” He added that this is especially important for Jews living



David Rittberg
(Photo courtesy of Schusterman Family Philanthropies)

in the U.S. because “for many, our post October 7 world has highlighted a powerful reality that we are all interconnected and reliant on one another.” His most recent trip was “a fact-finding’ and ‘bearing witness’ trip for Jewish foundation professionals,” he noted. “Part of the responsibility of leading Jewish philanthropies is to understand what’s happening to the Jewish people, in Israel and in the Diaspora. We were focused on

learning that can affect our work in the U.S. and in Israel, in the near and long-term.” The purpose of the trip was to learn as much as possible about what had happened. “We explored so many overlapping and competing themes from the incredible spirit of the Israeli people and society, to the depths of horror and trauma on October 7,” Rittberg said. “We learned about the emerging plans for the ‘day after’ and explored what it means to ‘bear witness.’ We met with a diversity of Israelis from a range of communities, many of whom are evacuees, survivors, soldiers, See “After” on page 8

JLI course “Advice for Life” to begin Jan. 29

The Jewish Learning Institute will hold the class “Advice for Life: The Lubavitcher Rebbe’s Guidance for Leading a More Purposeful Life” on six Mondays beginning January 29 at 7 pm. The course fee, which includes the textbook, is \$79 per person, or \$150 per couple. The class will be held in person at the Chabad Center and on Zoom. For registration and additional information about the course, contact Ruth Shea at 607-

797-0015 or rshea@chabadofbinghamton.com, or visit www.myJLI.com. “This immersive journey explores the extensive communications of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, of blessed memory,” said organizers of the course. “Through thousands of typewritten letters, in-person meetings and hundreds of thousands of spoken public discourses, referred to as *farbrengens*, the

Rebbe interacted with individuals of all walks of life, both from within and outside the Jewish community on matters of work, family, health and well-being. The Rebbe’s spiritual leadership is the force behind the modern Chabad movement and his wisdom continues to inspire and guide countless individuals on their journeys of faith and personal growth.” Organizers added, “On issues as far

ranging as the daily work grind, family life, medicine and mental health and staring down adversity, the Lubavitcher Rebbe’s guidance offers invaluable – sometimes counterintuitive – insights for successful and wholesome living.” “‘Advice for Life’ is an invitation to delve into ideas that guide us toward elevated living and mindful growth,” noted Rivkah Slonim, course instructor. “This course provides profound, but accessible, teachings, coupled with practical insights, much of it gleaned from heretofore unpublished correspondence.”

“As a genre, self-help books and advice columns typically attempt to show how we can achieve success and happiness,” Slonim explained. “This course, too, offers a vision of a better life – but it does not pursue happiness for happiness’ sake. Instead, happiness and success are seen as inevitable by-products of a life spent in pursuit of our divine purpose. In each area See “JLI” on page 7

Hillel Academy to hold challah bake and *Kabbalat* Shabbat on Jan. 19

Hillel Academy of Broome County will hold a “Community Challah Bake and *Kabbalat* Shabbat” on Friday, January 19, beginning at 9:30 am, at the school, 4737 Deerfield Pl., Vestal. There is no cost for the event. Those interested in attending should RSVP to frontoffice@hillelacademyofbc.org or 607-304-4544.

“Please join our students in learning the significance of challah and partake in the preparation of your own challah to enjoy at your Shabbat table,” said organizers of the event. “We will share a delicious lunch and, together with the Hillel Academy students,

participate in a musical *Kabbalat* Shabbat led by our very talented Cantor Rabbi Moshe Shmaryahu. This is a wonderful opportunity to show your support for the students of Hillel Academy and engage with the young Jewish community of Broome County. We look forward to seeing everyone there.”

Film Fest to hold virtual showing of “Our Almost Completely True Story” in February

By Reporter staff

The Greater Binghamton Jewish Film Fest will hold a virtual showing of “Our Almost Completely True Story” in February. The film is a romantic comedy of “love discovered in the golden years.” A discussion of the film will be moderated by Richard Mattson on Sunday, February 4, at 6 pm. Mattson is an associate professor and director of the undergraduate program in psychology at Binghamton University. (See an interview with Mattson on page 5.) The link to the film will be sent to those who register by 5 pm on Thursday, February 1. People can register for the film and the discussion by visiting www.jfgb.org/film-fest. Donations are appreciated; the suggested donation is \$10.



Mariette Hartley and Jerry Sroka in “Our Almost Completely True Story.” (Photos courtesy of Silent Crow Arts)

tells a fictional version of the real life romance of actress Mariette Hartley and voice actor Jerry Sroka; both star in the film. It offers “over-the-top bits about the perils of online dating, wistful remembrances of the old days of Hollywood

and awkward run-ins with exes.” The film was the winner of the Audience Award, Best Feature Comedy, at the Sedona International Film Festival and the winner of the Outstanding Achievement Award at the Indie Fest Film Awards. Sammie Purcell, Reporter Newspapers, called it “a delightfully sincere romantic comedy about the trials and tribulations of love, dating, and romance past middle age.” Herbert Paine, Broadway World, wrote, “Here’s a film wrapped in moments of

genuine hilarity – repartee, one-liners, and situations that shine and resonate with comic brilliance” and noted that it is “a brilliantly paced and cleverly written account of love discovered in the golden years [and] is in itself a pure work of gold.” “‘Our Almost Completely True Story’ is a charming film,” said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, which sponsors the Film Fest. “This is the perfect movie for a cold winter night.”

Federation board meeting open to community

The Jewish Federation will hold a full board meeting on Wednesday, January 17 beginning at 7:30 pm on Zoom. For information about Zoom links, contact the Federation at director@jfgb.org.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Talks around town
Beth David and Temple Concord announce upcoming talks open to the community.
.....Page 3

In Gaza
A hospital director says Hamas recruited him to turn Gaza’s medical centers into military facilities.
.....Page 7

News in brief...
U.N. human rights experts demand accountability for Hamas’ Oct. 7 atrocities; more.
.....Page 8

Special Sections
Book Review..... 4
Congregation Notes 6
Business Profiles..... 7
Classifieds 8

Opinion

Post-war: Israel and Gaza

By Bill Simons

“They make a desert and call it peace”: that line from the writing of Tacitus, a historian of ancient Rome, is subject to mistaken contextualization, often falsely employed as a descriptor of the salting of defeated Carthage’s soil. Nonetheless, it speaks truth. Many wars end with retribution, subjugation, destruction and mass killings. It would compound tragedy should the preceding define the aftermath of the Israel-Gaza War. By its nature, war is horrific: peace need not be.

Hamas terrorists provoked the war by their slaughter, rape, torture and murder in southern Israel on October 7. Committed to the destruction of Israel and annihilation of Jews, the terrorists – their images and voices transmitted on their own social media – expressed euphoria over the carnage. Utilizing other Palestinian civilians as shields, Hamas built a complex maze of tunnels under residences, infrastructure, hospitals and mosques.

Adamant concerning the right of self-defense, the Israeli offensive is unrelenting. Many innocents number amongst

the dead and wounded. For Israel to stop the offensive short of the eradication of Hamas, however, would only give pause to the cycle of violence. There is another option for ending the war: the return of all Israeli hostages and unconditional Hamas surrender, with its incarcerated leaders prepared to accept the verdict of justice. As that appears unlikely, it is time to plan for the future of post-war Gaza and Israel.

American history offers examples of both failed and successful epilogues to war. Two episodes, in particular, ought to invite reflection by the diplomats who craft the Israel-Gaza peace. Following the Civil War, which claimed upwards of 620,000 lives, Reconstruction was imposed on the defeated South from 1865-77. Despite the establishment of administrative military districts, three major constitutional amendments, congressional enactments, creation of a Freedmen’s Bureau, expansion of the educational system and participation of Blacks in the political process, white violence compromised and ultimately vitiated most gains. The infrastructure of the South, much of it devastated by war, was not sufficiently rebuilt nor expanded. Without

the economic base that “40 acres and a mule” would have provided, most Blacks were ultimately reduced to the status of landless sharecroppers and tenants. By the late 19th century, the North gave up on Reconstruction and, for the next 100 years, racism, resentment and poverty pervaded much of the South.

The post-World War II German experience was very different. Part of a broad program of denazification, trials of leaders of the Third Reich for war atrocities and crimes against humanity resulted in executions and imprisonments. Germany was initially divided amongst the four major Allied nations with the goal of reunification. In the words of Winston Churchill, post-war Europe was “a rubble-heap, a charnel house, a breeding ground of pestilence and hate.” Through its Marshall Plan, the United States invested economic, technological and human resources that rebuilt not only the Western Allies, but Germany as well. Although the Soviet Union impeded reunification of Germany, the Cold War gave impetus for the American initiatives.

See “Gaza” on page 4

How culture warriors weaponized Jewish grief and forced Harvard’s president to resign

By Jay Michaelson

This story originally appeared in the Forward. To get the Forward’s free e-mail newsletters delivered to your inbox, go to forward.com/newsletter-signup.

In a few years, no one will remember ex-Harvard President Claudine Gay’s plagiarism kerfuffle. All we’ll remember is that that she angered some rich pro-Israel donors, as well as opportunistic activists and politicians, and they got her fired.

That should be chilling.

Gay, who resigned January 2 after just a six-month tenure, has faced calls for her resignation since October, when a consortium of Harvard student organizations issued a statement blaming Israel for the October 7 attacks. Instead of condemning that position, Harvard’s response merely stated that Gay and senior administrators were “heartbroken by the death and destruction unleashed by the attack by Hamas.”

Calls for Gay’s resignation increased after her much-scrutinized testimony in front of Congress on the question of whether “calls for genocide against Jews” would violate Harvard’s anti-harassment policies. She correctly noted that the answer depended on context, but did not condemn such statements – which she was not asked to do.

The criticism was particularly vehement and sustained from conservatives. The same conservatives who, until about five minutes ago, professed deep fears that ideologically motivated actors were “canceling” academics they disagreed with.

But times have changed.

There are two motives in the coalition that forced this surrender: the pro-Israel politics of extremely wealthy (mostly Jewish) donors like Bill Ackman, and the war on “woke” higher education by social conservatives like Rep. Elise Stefanik and the same cadre of activists, like Christopher Rufo, who call gay people “groomers” and

fight to ban books. Both are troubling.

Yes, the immediate pretext for Gay’s resignation was a plagiarism controversy. I can say – as someone who holds a doctorate and has written a handful of academic articles, as well as a book based on my doctoral dissertation – that Gay’s use of “paraphrases” that are really unattributed quotations with one or two words changed around is a significant offense. Everyone in the academic world knows this kind of non-citation is an ethical violation, and Gay did it in at least five of her 11 scholarly articles.

Of course, scholars can quote, but they have to cite, as well. That’s how it works.

Then again, it’s also true that Gay, whose research focuses on government and African-American studies, is primarily a quantitative scholar, not a literary one. She didn’t steal anyone’s research, and she didn’t take credit for anyone’s ideas beyond a few phrases here and there.

See “Harvard” on page 8

In My Own Words

A look at my personal 2023

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

I recently read “The Man Who Died Twice,” the second book in Richard Osman’s Thursday Murder Club series. The four main characters are in their 70s and, when referring to their ages, acknowledge that they are old. After reading the book (which was very funny, but also had some moving moments), I realized that, at 68, we are very close in age. Why didn’t I think of that immediately? Most likely because the characters are retired and live in a British retirement village with others their age and older.

Corrections

The Jewish Learning Institute article on page 3 of the December 29 issue listed the wrong program. The course for this semester will be “Advice for Life: The Lubavitcher Rebbe’s Guidance for Leading a More Purposeful Life.” For information about the course and how to register, see the article on page 1.

Also in the December 29 issue, one of the book titles in the TC Sisterhood book review meeting article was incomplete. It should have been “Loving Our Own Bones: Disability Wisdom and the Spiritual Subversiveness of Knowing Ourselves Whole” by Julia Watts Belser. *The Reporter* apologizes for any confusion caused.

It was not so much age, but life expectations, that made the early part of the year difficult. I did remarkably well when my mom died in September 2022, which was a surprise because we’d been very close. Then in late January or early February of last year, I learned a friend from rabbinical school was dying. I spent most of that evening crying. When thinking about it afterward, that seemed an overreaction: we’d only seen in each once since we graduated and had lost touch when he and his wife retired and moved back to Canada. Then I realized I was having a delayed reaction not just to my mom’s death, but to my general life situation. Any kind of major change in our lives can do that. That’s something I’ve been dealing with since then. It’s also something I’m sure I’ll continue to deal with as the years pass and I face different challenges.

This was also a very difficult year politically, something I’m not going to go into detail about here. (If you are a regular reader of this column, you already know what I think about the events of the past year. If you’re not and you’re curious, you can find my previous columns at www.thereportergroup.org/executive-editor.) But with all the losses and changes that have occurred in my personal life, I made a decision not to let what’s happening in the U.S. and Israel take over my life. That doesn’t mean I’ve forgotten about either, but I’ve placed them in a mental box, at least

some of the time, so I can enjoy the good parts of my life. That’s a luxury many people don’t have, but my living in anguish is not going to help them. In fact, it takes away the strength I’ll need when it comes time for me to act.

During my chaplaincy work, I was recently reminded of something I hadn’t thought about in awhile. Someone showed me a coloring sheet that featured characters from Winnie the Pooh. I’m not sure if the person I was talking to understood what I meant when I said, “I am an Eeyore who wants to be a Tigger,” but that didn’t matter. The statement was a reminder to myself. My basic nature tends to focus on the bad side of things, to assume the worst. My desire – what I work toward – is to find joy in the world. That takes effort, but it is reflected in Jewish tradition: a rabbinic teaching says that, after we die, we are required to account for all the righteous joys we denied ourselves. I’m trying to make certain my list is not a long one.

Which brings me back to the characters in “The Man Who Died Twice.” Being old has not stopped them from righting wrongs, even if sometimes they do so by not-so-legal means. They may need a nap in the afternoon or fall asleep during a long car trip. They are not as spry as they once were, but they are aware they can still make a difference in this world. If I am to take any lesson from 2023, that is a good one to remember.



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TC Sisterhood to hold annual book review on Jan. 28

Rabbi Rachel Esserman will discuss three books at the annual Temple Concord Sisterhood book talk on Sunday, January 28, at 11 am, at Temple Concord, 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton. This will be an in-person only event and will be held in the Kilmer Mansion. The snow date is Sunday, February 4. The community is invited to attend. Brunch will be served at no cost to Sisterhood members. The cost for non-members is \$5. Reservations must be made by contacting Phyllis Kellenberger at pweinste@stny.rr.com or 607-727-8305 by Wednesday, January 24.

The books to be reviewed are "Kunstlers in Paradise" by Cathleen Schine, "Abomination" by Ashley Goldberg and "Loving Our Own Bones: Disability Wisdom and the Spiritual Subversiveness of Knowing Ourselves Whole" by Julia Watts Belser.



Rabbi Rachel Esserman

"I am once again looking forward to reading these books for what is one of my favorite events of the year," said Esserman. "It's always a pleasure to read and discuss interesting books, and there's no better place to do this than with Sisterhood members."

"Kunstlers in Paradise" is about 93-year-old Mamie Kunstler, who escaped Vienna in 1939 when she was 11. Her family made its way to Los Angeles, where they joined a colony of Jewish musicians, writers and intellectuals also escaping Hitler. In 2020, Mamie is joined by her 20-something grandson, Julian, who wants to

make good in Hollywood, but the pandemic shut down the world. Mamie tells Julian of her early years and the famous people she knew, giving him a view of a very different world. See "Review" on page 4

BD Jan. 13 luncheon to feature Dr. Howard Warner

Beth David Synagogue's Luncheon Speaker Series will continue with Dr. Howard Warner speaking on Saturday, January 13. Warner's talk, "A Look at the Jewish Experience in Iberia," was inspired by a trip to Portugal taken in the spring of 2019. People are encouraged to attend the morning service, which begins at 9:30 am. There is no charge for the luncheon.

"Because of my daughter Shelley's study abroad architectural fellowship, sponsored by Rensselaer Polytech Institute," Warner said, "I was able to pursue my passion for history by joining her during the two-and-one-half weeks that were spent in Portugal. While there, we were able to visit two synagogues, but because of security reasons were unable



Dr. Howard Warner

to gain entrance into Lisbon's main synagogue."

Beth David's Luncheon Speaker Series takes place the second Saturday of the month. Since the monthly series' continuation depends on the generosity of contributors, Beth David welcomes and appreciates donations to the Luncheon Fund in order to keep the program going. Donations as well as sponsorships can be made in honor of, or in memory of, someone, or to mark a special occasion. Those wishing an acknowledgment to be sent to the person being honored, or to the family of someone being remembered, can indicate that along with the necessary information. Donations

can be sent to Beth David Synagogue, 39 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905, Attention: Luncheon Fund.

TC/TI adult ed. brunch to feature Rabbi Talia Laster on Jan. 21

The Temple Concord/Temple Israel Adult Education Committee will offer a brunch and presentation by Rabbi Talia Laster on Sunday, January 21, from 10 am-noon, at Temple Concord, 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton. Laster will speak about "Areyvut: What Responsibility Do Jews Have to One Another?" The brunch will be served at 10 am, and the presentation and Zoom session will begin at 10:30 am. The series is underwritten by the Eisenberg Foundation. There is no charge for the event, but donations will be appreciated.

RSVPs to the Temple Concord or Temple Israel office are requested by Wednesday, January 17, to help with planning; no one will be turned away at the door. To request the Zoom link or additional information, visit the Temple Concord website at www.templeconcord.com



Rabbi Talia Laster
(Photo by Yehoshua Hooper)

or contact Eve Berman at eberman@stny.rr.com.

In her lecture, Laster will discuss the talmudic teaching found in Tractate Shevuot that says "all Jews are guarantors for one another." She will explore applications of the principle and the underlying question: are all Jews really in the same boat?

Laster serves as the campus rabbi at Cornell Hillel. She received rabbinic ordination in 2022 from the Rabbinical School of Hebrew College in Newton, MA. Her interests include "spirited and playful" *tefillah* (prayer), Talmud study and the unfolding of *halachah* (Jewish law). Laster is a life-long member of the National Havurah

community and noted that she is "passionately committed to its values of empowered lay-leadership, joyous ritual and deep Torah learning."

Jonathan Grier to speak at BD Sisterhood Feb. 14 Zoom meeting

The Sisterhood of Beth David Synagogue will host a Zoom presentation by Jonathan Grier on Wednesday, February 14, at 1 pm. Grier will speak about cybersecurity, focusing on how to spot the red flags of phishing and avoid them. Attendees will learn tips for securing data and their identity while browsing the internet, checking e-mails or conducting other activities online.

The Sisterhood meeting is open to all in the community. The Zoom link will be available to anyone on the Beth David Sisterhood e-mail list or who receives the weekly bulletins from Rabbi Zev Silber. Anyone who does not receive these e-mails should contact the Beth David Synagogue office at 607-722 1793 or bethdavid@stny.rr.com.

Messages are typically retrieved on Tuesdays during office hours.

Grier is a computer scientist, consultant and entrepreneur known for his work in cybersecurity. He is currently principal at Grier Forensics, a Maryland-based software business providing forensic, security and cyber technology solutions for clients across multiple industries and sectors. He is a frequent speaker at computer conferences and has had his research published several times.

Grier is also a member of the Association of Orthodox Jewish Scientists and has lectured on the intersection of *halachah* with computer science and physics. In 1994, he was named a Yeshiva University Distinguished Scholar.

Bar/Bat photos needed

Can we have your mug? Kids mugging for the camera, that is. For *The Reporter's* annual Bar/Bat Mitzvah issue (coming January 26), we need photos of all teens who became bar/bat mitzvah during the calendar year of 2023.

Please e-mail these photos with identification, including name, date and place of the bar/bat mitzvah ceremony. Please send them by Tuesday, January 16. Photos can be e-mailed, in TIF or JPG format, to TRReporter@aol.com; please note in the subject line that a bar/bat photo for *The Reporter* is attached and include the necessary information in the message.

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to Sue Krause on the death of her sister,

Carol Krause

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to the family of

Maida Piaker

DEADLINES

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

ISSUE	DEADLINE
January 26-February 8	January 17
February 9-22	January 31
February 23-March 7	February 14
March 8-21	February 28

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

Binghamton Philharmonic

Mozart Requiem

Sunday, Jan 28, 2024 at 3pm • Forum Theatre

with *Southern Tier Singers' Collective* and the *Binghamton University Chamber Singers* (William Culverhouse, Director) and vocal soloists by special arrangement with the *Curtis Institute of Music*.

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JCC Friendship Club

Wednesday, January 17, 2024

1:30 pm program at the JCC

Brenda Cave-James, storyteller, will be discussing the history of the underground railroad in the Binghamton/Vestal area.

All are welcome to attend.

Our Bar/Bat Mitzvah Planning Guide is coming soon!

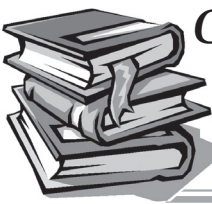
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Ad Deadline: January 18

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Off the Shelf

Historical novels that take place...

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

In biblical times

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the word jezebel refers to “an impudent, shameless, or morally unrestrained woman.” For readers of the Bible, Jezebel was the evil wife of King Ahab, ruler of the northern kingdom of Israel. She was hated for bringing foreign gods to the land and trying to suppress the worship of the one true God. Unlike most queens of Israel, her name not only appears in the Bible, but is far better known today than those of many lesser male rulers. That fame – being written into the formal history of the kingdom, rather than serving as a nameless wife – forms the basis for Megan Barnard’s “Jezebel” (Penguin Books), which tells the story from the queen’s point of view.

Readers learn of Jezebel’s life in her native Tyre, including her pain when learning that, as a girl, she can never rule the kingdom. She vows that someday her name will be as well known as any ruler. When sent to Israel to marry Ahab as part of a political alliance between their fathers, she is not happy: she misses her home by the sea, and Ahab shows little interest in her or the politics of the kingdom. Unable at first to get pregnant, she makes herself indispensable to Ahab’s father and, after his death, helps her husband turn Israel from a poor kingdom to a prosperous land. That is, until the prophet Elijah appears and condemns her for building temples to her gods. The drought that his words bring is just the beginning of her downfall, although she clings to the idea that her name will be listed among the other kings who have ruled the land.

Unfortunately, Barnard creates a backstory for Jezebel and Elijah that may not convince readers who prefer their biblical fiction to hew closely to the text. In the early part of the novel, Elijah is a scribe for the king, and he and Jezebel become lovers. The differences in their approach to life are what drives them apart, even before Elijah becomes a prophet. However, those willing to keep an open mind will find the prophetic sections interesting, particularly after Elijah’s victory over the priestesses of Jezebel’s gods. What happens there won’t be a surprise to those who have read the Bible, but it’s fascinating to see it through the eyes of someone who views that destruction as a horrific massacre. And the description of Elijah after the event may change readers’ view of the prophet.

Barnard does an excellent job making Jezebel three-dimensional, showing her good points and acknowledging the mistakes she makes. The author does not pretend that Jezebel is perfect, but rather someone done a disservice – someone whose viewpoint is worth understanding. The novel will appeal to readers and book clubs interested in revisiting biblical stories from a woman’s point of view.

During the American Revolution

Fact and fiction: those words describe “The Spymaster’s Mistress” by Pamela R. Winnick (She Writes Press). Told through the eyes of two characters – the fictitious Rachel Gomez and the real life David Salisbury Franks – the novel offers a view of Jewish life during the Revolutionary War.

Rachel is the daughter of a family that supports the revolution and is personally known for her opposition to British rule. When the British take over her hometown New York City, her father – who is helping fund the American army – takes her to live with relatives in Philadelphia. Unfortunately for Rachel, not only has this part of the family converted to Christianity, but they support the British. The British Army rules Philadelphia and, even though her hosts fraternize with them, Rachel plans to keep her distance. However, that changes when Rachel is offered the opportunity to help the American cause: she is asked to find and befriend a British soldier and pass his secrets to the American army. Rachel is hesitant and scared at first,

but decides to be brave for the cause.

The only problem is that Rachel not only befriends the real life Captain John Andre, a handsome British officer, she finds herself falling in love with him. Andre prides himself on honesty in all his relationships, something Rachel struggles with since she knows the very basis of their connection is a lie. Meanwhile, David Franks is an aide for Benedict Arnold, whom he feels never gets appropriate credit for all he has done for the American cause. When Rachel and David separately learn that an American general may be deserting to the British cause, they must each decide where their loyalties lie.

Although readers may be familiar with the American history that the novel covers, “The Spymaster’s Mistress” still managed to be exciting and suspenseful. The last chapters were also extremely moving since readers will have come to care deeply about the characters. Book clubs who enjoy American history will find much of interest.

In Rome, Italy, in 1749

The inspiration for some historical novels comes strictly from real life. That’s the case with Joie Davidow’s “Anything But Yes: A Novel of Anna Del Monte, Jewish Citizen of Rome, 1749” (Monkfish). While other novels have looked at life in the Roman ghetto, few offer as clear a view of Jewish-Christian relations at that time. The work is based on the diary of a real person: Anna Del Monte who is violently ripped from her family and taken to a convent after someone claimed she was his fiancé and, like him, wanted to convert to Christianity. Anna clearly denies that she has any desire to convert and asks to be returned to her family. However, few in her position have escaped the clutches of the church or regained their former lives.

Davidow juggles several different points of view, including those of Anna’s family, who despair of ever seeing her again, even as they work behind the scenes to get her released. There are descriptions of the cramped, unpleasant life in the ghetto and the restrictions the Jews face there and when they travel to other parts of the city. Readers also learn of the Jewish converts to Christianity, who extol their lives to Anna, and the priests who try to convince her to convert to what they firmly believe is the only true religion. However, most of the novel belongs to Anna and focuses on the torment she feels.

Anna’s section may leave readers feeling claustrophobic: She’s locked in a small, uncomfortable room with little food and even less sleep. Priests keep her awake a good portion of the night offering lectures – in great detail – of how she will be tormented in hell if she does not convert. Theologians argue with Anna about the biblical text to prove that God wants her to become Christian. Several female converts try to convince Anna her life will be better if she will only but nod her head yes: one tries to tempt her with tales of a rich husband, while the other talks of her contentment living in the convent, far from the poverty of the ghetto.

Anna speaks as little as possible – refusing to even answer questions or nod her head – in case that is taken to mean she is willing to convert. The droning voices of her visitors

prevent her from sleep, which is a torture in itself. Some call her stubborn and insist they will force her to convert. Anna’s only answer is that she remains true to her religion and only wants to go home. She clings to her beliefs, but is so tired and lonely that she worries she may mistakenly do the wrong thing. The question becomes whether she will be able to hold out, or if the church will force her conversion before her family might be able to rescue her.

Davidow does something truly impressive in “Anything But Yes”: she shows how each of the characters – Jewish and Gentile – truly believe in their God and their theology. These beliefs allow well-meaning Christians to be fundamentally and horribly cruel to Anna, since they think what they are doing is for her own good. These theological differences will form the basis of discussions at book clubs and Jewish study classes for what is a disturbing and, ultimately, fascinating novel.

Gaza. Continued from page 2

Within a decade, the policies of the U.S. and the other Western democracies resulted in an economic miracle and democratic government in West Germany, which became a vital member of the Western alliance. Despite the “Day of Infamy” attack on Pearl Harbor, fierce fighting in the Pacific and the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the post-war occupation of Japan also led to a remarkable economic revival and establishment of democracy.

Ideally, the rehabilitation of Gaza will follow the trajectory of post-war Germany, moving from occupational control to autonomy. To lay the groundwork for lasting peace, an international judicial tribunal, administrative commission and peacekeeping force – comprised of Israel, the U.S., European democracies and Arab nations – committed to regional cooperation, progress and a defense pact must take form. The Abraham Accords as well as evidence of growing rapprochement between Israel and Saudi Arabia suggest that the preceding is possible. After a judicial tribunal – operating under transparent rule of law – determines the fate of Hamas leaders, the administrative commission, abetted by the peacekeeping force, should root terrorist influence out of Gaza culture, education and institutions, finding a template in the denazification of Germany.

The goal of the multinational occupation should be to enable the eventual emergence of an autonomous and democratic Palestinian state, entailing the merger of Gaza and the West Bank under responsible leadership. Gaza residents willing to relocate to the West Bank would receive economic incentives. Israel would have to make the difficult and divisive decision to turnover significant holdings in the West Bank to the unified Palestinian state. And the prosperous nations overseeing the transformation would need to fund the regional equivalent of a Marshall Plan to provide the resources for the new Palestinian state to thrive. Simultaneously, economic sanctions, augmented by surgical strikes, could destabilize terrorist sponsors in Yemen and Iran. For the world, including Palestinians and Jews, such an ambitious and expensive enterprise would ultimately prove less costly than unending cycles of uprisings and wars.

Beyond making the painful decision to reduce its footprint in the West Bank, Israel must commit to transformative change for an enduring and just peace to prevail. Prior to the war, the political and social disintegration of the modern state of Israel, then observing the 75th anniversary of its founding, appeared a possibility. Hundreds of thousands of protesters – liberal, centrist and secular Jews – demonstrated against the proposed measures of the hawkish and ultra-Orthodox government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to enervate the judiciary and democratic rule. Himself less an ideologue than a corrupt politician seeking to avoid prison, Netanyahu also ignored festering resentments in Gaza and countenanced vigilante activities by Jewish homesteaders against Palestinians on the West Bank. His focus on the West Bank and misreading of intelligence from Gaza created conditions that rendered southern Israel vulnerable for the October 7 carnage by Hamas terrorists. For post-war Israel to move forward, the political process must remove Netanyahu from office, and jurisprudence must hold him accountable. Israel needs a centrist government able to govern by consensus as it forges peace amongst its own citizens and with Palestinians.

Post-war Israel must not continue the Netanyahu practice of flouting the counsel of allies amongst Diaspora Jews and other Americans, who provide necessary material resources, diplomatic support and media ballast. As we recite the *Kaddish*, we will mourn our dead, although some wounds will never heal. We must also remember the dead, maimed and displaced Palestinians, just as the Passover ritual of the wine drops recalls the innocent Egyptians who perished by plague due to the tyrant Pharaoh. The preceding agenda poses painful and onerous challenges. However, according to the Jewish calendar, we have survived for 5,784 years. Let us seek wisdom, perseverance and compassion, taking on anew the obligations of the mitzvahs and of survival.

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To arrange for a sponsorship or for answers to questions, contact Rabbi Rachel Esserman at rachel@thereportergroup.org.

Review. Continued from page 3

“Abomination,” winner of the Debut Fiction Prize at the 72nd National Jewish Book Awards, is a novel that tells the story of two friends whose lives are changed by a scandal at their ultra-Orthodox day school. The two men go in very different directions, but are forced to look at their lives when they meet again.

In “Loving Our Own Bones: Disability Wisdom and the Spiritual Subversiveness of Knowing Ourselves Whole,” Belser offers insights from biblical stories through the eyes of disabled, feminist, Black and queer thinkers.

Esserman, the executive editor and book reviewer for The Reporter Group, noted that, in 2022, she won three Syracuse Press Club awards and one Rockower award from the American Jewish Press Association. The year before that she won two Syracuse Press Club awards and two Rockowers.

In addition to her work at *The Reporter*, she serves at the Jewish chaplain for 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, she sees her position at *The Reporter* as an opportunity to educate the public about Judaism.

Esserman also serves as a freelance rabbi for lifecycle 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. She was also awarded an honorary doctor of divinity degree from RRA for 25 years of service.



Names

RABBI SUZANNE BRODY, ITHACA BEIT MIDRASH

Names have always been very important. The first thing that Adam did in the Garden of Eden was name all of the animals. Expectant parents agonize over names for the child they will soon welcome. There is even an entire scientific field devoted to the study of names, onomastics. This field encompasses linguistics, history, anthropology, psychology, sociology and so much more. Our names are reflections of parental hopes and dreams, and are often used to link us to previous generations. When we change our names, we send a clear signal to those who know us that an aspect of our identity has shifted – whether from single to married or from one gender to another. The names we use can also signal our relationship with another person. For example, close friends and family may use one or more nicknames; those in a professional setting may use a title and last name; and others may use

a first name. An upset parent may use first and middle names together. This understanding that we each have many names is not a new notion. A *midrash* in Kohelet Rabba, which was compiled between the sixth and eighth centuries, opines that “a person has three names: one that he is called by his father and mother; one that people know him by; and one that he acquires for himself.” I, therefore, find it fascinating that “God spoke to Moses and said to him, ‘I am Adonai. I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as El Shaddai, but I did not make Myself known to them by My name Adonai.’” (Exodus 6:2-3) This isn’t the first time that God has spoken with Moses, so why does God feel the need for this particular re-introduction? My first thought was that Moses was being singled out and elevated above the patriarchs. He is getting to know God by a name that even our venerated ancestors didn’t know.

Rashi takes things in a different direction. He points out that the name Adonai is associated with promises fulfilled. While God made many promises to the patriarchs, those promises were not fulfilled during their lifetimes (though they were fulfilled in later generations). Moses, however, sees God’s promise fulfilled within his own lifetime. The *midrash* in Shemot Rabba takes a much harsher view of Moses in this moment. Moses had just had his first unsuccessful audience with Pharaoh. Not only were the Jews not freed, their work was made even harder by the fact that they were no longer being given straw with which to make the bricks. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had faith that God would fulfill the promises made to them: they didn’t question God. Moses, on the other hand, immediately turns to question and challenge God when the Jews are not See “Names” on page 7

Congregational Notes

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: titammy@stny.twcbc.com
Website: www.templeisraelvestal.org
Service schedule: Tues., 5:30 pm; Fri., 5:30 pm; Sat., 9:30 am
On Fridays and Tuesdays at 5:30 pm, services will be led by Rabbi Micah Friedman via Zoom and in-person (masks are required for unvaccinated participants).
On Saturday, January 13, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person (masks are required for unvaccinated participants). The Torah portion is Exodus 6:2-9:35 and the haftarah is Ezekiel 28:25-29:21. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 5:45 pm.
The temple office will be closed on Monday, January 15.
There will be a Board of Trustees meeting on Tuesday, January 16, at 7 pm.
There will be a Ritual Committee meeting on Wednesday, January 17, 10 am.
The Temple Israel/Temple Concord adult ed. program will be held on Sunday, January 21, at 10 am, at Temple Concord. The speaker will be Rabbi Talia Laster. (For more information, see the article on page 3.)
The class “Jewish Quest for Wisdom” will be held on Tuesday, January 23, from 6-8 pm.
On Saturday, January 20, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person (masks are required for unvaccinated participants). The Torah portion is Exodus 10:1-13:16 and the haftarah is Jeremiah 46:13-28. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 6 pm.

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 Brith Sholom

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

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

Beth David Synagogue

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

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.

Temple Beth-El of Ithaca

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
Rabbi: TBA
Rabbi Emeritus: Scott L. Glass
Address: 402 North Tioga St. (the corner of Court and Tioga streets), Ithaca, NY 14850-4292
Phone: 607-273-5775
E-mail: president@tbeithaca.org, secretary@tbeithaca.org
Website: www.tbeithaca.org
Presidents: Melanie Kalman and Alexis Siemon
Sisterhood President: Gail Zussman
Director of Education: TBA
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 afternoons, 3:45-5:45 pm. The teen No’ar program meets twice per month (every other Sunday from 5-7 pm) and is designed with the flexibility to accommodate busy student schedules.
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, January 12, light candles before..... 4:35 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, January 13 5:40 pm
Friday, January 19, light candles before..... 4:43 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, January 20 5:47 pm
Friday, January 26, light candles before..... 4:52 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, January 27 5:55 pm

Temple Concord

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism
Rabbi: TBA
Address: 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905
Office hours: Tues.-Fri., 10 am-2 pm
Phone: 607-723-7355
Fax: 607-723-0785
Office e-mail: TempleConcordbinghamton@gmail.com
Website: www.templeconcord.com
Regular service times: Fri., 7:30 pm; Sat., 10:35 am, when religious school is in session.
Hebrew school: Hebrew school meets at 4:15 pm and 5:15 pm on Tues. and Thurs. during the school year unless otherwise noted.
Some services and programs are online only.
Friday, January 12: At 7:30 pm, Shabbat services with Cantor Abbe Lyons of Ithaca. Join via Zoom at https://bit.ly/3hRmW2Y, meeting ID 869 9699 8146 and passcode 826330, or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/templeconcord/.
Saturday, December 30: At 9 am, Shabbat school; at 9:15 am, Torah study with Cantor Abbe Lyons in person and on Zoom (http://bit.ly/3XDnvRE, meeting ID 825 1226 2831 and passcode 743892); and at 10:35 am, Shabbat family service.
Friday, January 19: At 7:30 pm, Shabbat services with Suzanne Holwitt, Rabbi Rachel Esserman and Robin Hazen. Join via Zoom at https://bit.ly/3hRmW2Y, meeting ID 869 9699 8146 and passcode 826330, or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/templeconcord/.
Saturday, January 20: At 9 am, Shabbat school; at 9:15 am, Torah study in person and on Zoom (http://bit.ly/3XDnvRE, meeting ID 825 1226 2831 and passcode 743892); and at 10:35 am, Shabbat family service.
See “TC” on page 7

Norwich Jewish Center

Orientation: Inclusive
Address: 72 South Broad St., Norwich, NY 13815
Phone: 334-2691
E-mail: fertigj@roadrunner.com
Contact: Guilia Greenberg, 373-5087
Purpose: To maintain a Jewish identity and meet the needs of the Jewish community in the area.
Adult Ed.: Shabbat study sessions are held on designated Saturday mornings at 10 am. Call ahead, text or e-mail to confirm dates.

Penn-York Jewish Community

President-Treasurer-Secretary: Harvey Chernosky, 570-265-3869
B’nai B’rith: William H. Seigel Lodge
Purpose: To promote Jewish identity through religious, cultural, educational and social activities in the Southern Tier of New York and the Northern Tier of Pennsylvania, including Waverly, NY; Sayre, Athens and Towanda, PA, and surrounding communities.

Congregation Tikkun v’Or

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism
Address: PO Box 3981, Ithaca, NY 14852; 2550 Triphammer Rd. (corner of Triphammer and Burdick Hill), Lansing, NY
Phone: 607-256-1471
Website: www.tikkunvor.org, E-mail: info@tikkunvor.org
Rabbi: Shifrah Tobacman, rabbishifrah@tikkunvor.org
Presidents: Sue Merkel and Laurie Willick, presidents_22@tikkunvor.org
Education Director/Administrative Coordinator: Naomi Wilensky
Bnai Mitzvah Coordinator: Michael Margolin
Services: All services currently on Zoom. E-mail info@tikkunvor.org for the times and links. Contemplative morning services every Tuesday from 8:30-9:30 am. Saturday mornings, Gan Shabbat and other special services at least once a month. Call for the weekly schedule. Jewish Learning Experiences (JLE) for second through seventh grade classes meet on Sunday mornings. Sixth and seventh grades also meet on Wednesday afternoons. Family programs for kindergarten and first grade held monthly. Adult Education: Offered regularly throughout the year. Check the website for details.

Gaza hospital director admits serving as Hamas commander

By Pesach Benson

The director of a Gaza hospital admitted to Israeli interrogators that he had been recruited by Hamas to help turn the Strip's medical centers into military facilities, the Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet) announced on December 19.

In a video released by the Shin Bet (<https://twitter.com/IDF/status/1737118015509147970>), Ahmed Kahlot, director of the Kamal Adwan Hospital in the northern Gaza Strip, said, "I was recruited to Hamas in 2010 at the rank of lieutenant colonel. There are employees in the hospital who are military operatives of Izzad-Dinal-Qassam [Hamas' "military branch"] – doctors, brothers, paramedics, clerks, staff members."

Kahlot added, "They hide in hospitals because they believe that a hospital is a safe place. They will not be harmed if they are inside a hospital."

Israel security forces arrested Kahlot on December 12. During the interrogation, Kahlot described how Hamas used hospitals and ambulances to hide operatives, launch military activity, transport members of terror squads and even deliver a kidnapped Israeli soldier.

"Hamas has offices inside the hospitals. There are places for senior officials, they also brought a kidnapped soldier there. There is a designated place for investigations, internal security and special security. They all have private phone lines inside the hospital," he said.

Regarding the kidnapped soldier, Kahlot explained that "Hamas uses private ambulances. It has a different color, and no license plate. It was used to bring the kidnapped soldier and to transfer bodies. It comes and goes and does not take down the wounded."

Kahlot told the interrogator: "Once I begged them to take a wounded man to the Indonesian hospital, for healing, for treatment. They refused. Their mission is more important."

Hamas's leaders, he continued, "are cowards. They left us in the field while they hide.... They destroyed us."

On November 23, Israeli security forces arrested Muhammad Abu Salmiya, director of the Shifa Hospital, Gaza's largest medical facility. As far back as 2009, the Shin Bet reported during the war of that year that Hamas operatives were hiding in the hospital, and that the basement had become its headquarters.

In addition to being used to hide Hamas leaders and hostages, the terror group is known to have launched rockets, tortured suspected collaborators and hoarded a half-million

liters of fuel in the hospital compound.

Other Gazans interrogated by Israel have confirmed that Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad have also embedded themselves in other hospitals and in the Strip's Palestinian Red Crescent headquarters.

At least 1,200 people were killed in Hamas' October 7 assault on southern Israel. The number of men, women, children, soldiers and foreigners held captive in Gaza by Hamas is now believed to be 129, as of December 19. Other people remain unaccounted for as Israeli authorities continue to identify bodies and search for human remains.

PBS to stream "Nazi Town, USA"

The Public Broadcasting Service's "American Experience" program will offer the show "Nazi Town, USA," which will premiere on Tuesday, January 23, from 9-10 pm, on PBS stations, PBS.org and the PBS App. (To see if the show is being presented on a local PBS station, visit the station's website.) The director of "Nazi Town, USA," Peter Yost, said that the program "traces the rise and fall of the German American Bund and the threat posed by domestic fascism in the 1930s. There's a resonance in the film with today's fractured times and I hope the story can serve as a reminder of both the fragility – and resilience – of American democracy."

"Nazi Town, USA" tells the largely unknown story of the Bund, which had scores of chapters in suburbs and big cities across the country and represented what many believe was a real threat of fascist subversion in the United States. The Bund held joint rallies with the Ku Klux Klan and ran dozens of summer camps for children centered around Nazi ideology

and imagery. Its melding of patriotic values with antisemitism raises issues that the U.S. continues to wrestle with today.

"American Experience" has been television's most-watched history series. Its documentaries have been honored with every major broadcast award, including 30 Emmy Awards, five duPont-Columbia Awards and 19 George Foster Peabody Awards. For more information about the show, visit pbs.org/americanexperience.

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, or call 607-724-2360, ext. 254, to let *The Reporter* know about your new address.

JLI Continued from page 1

of life this course addresses, we see the Rebbe's guidance reflect this core insight: we cannot afford to divorce our everyday concerns from our spiritual life. We cannot relegate meaning, purpose and active engagement with Judaism to the hours we spend in synagogue. The Rebbe repeatedly demonstrates that inviting our identity and purpose as Jews into the workplace, the home and all of life's dimensions, and sometimes, struggles, gives us tremendous clarity, comfort and confidence. While this course was constructed and slated for spring '24 a few years ago, I feel that it is especially applicable juxtaposed against the current conflict in the Middle East and the upheaval we are all feeling in the wake of 10/7."

"The class welcomes participants from all backgrounds and levels of knowledge, embodying JLI's commitment to making Jewish educational experiences accessible to all," organizers said. "JLI providing its students with valuable insights and transformative educational experiences."

JLI, the adult education arm of Chabad-Lubavitch, operates in more than 800 locations across the U.S. and various countries worldwide. Since its establishment in 1998, JLI has reached more than 400,000 students.

TC Continued from page 6

Sunday, January 21: At 10 am, Temple Concord/Temple Israel Joint adult education talk at Temple Concord with Rabbi Talia Laster addressing "Areyvut: What Responsibility Do Jews Have to One Another?" in person and on Zoom. To join the 10:30 am talk on Zoom, visit <https://bit.ly/4aDvnJp>, meeting ID 884 9233 9659 and passcode 564599. For more information, see the article on page 3.

Names. Continued from page 6

set free at once. Rabbi Meir likened Moses' behavior at that moment to a villager summoned by the king to serve as a messenger with his prospective son-in-law's family. When the villager began speaking presumptuously with the king, the king challenged him, saying "Who caused you to be so arrogant? Surely it was me, who appointed you intermediary!" Similarly, God felt the need to put Moses back in his place, "I am Adonai" (and not you, Moses).

The Mei HaShiloach, a collection of Rabbi Mordechai Leiner's thoughts and sermons from the mid-1800s gathered by his grandson, softens God's reaction to Moses. He believed "[T]his is like one who became angry at his friend, yet he loves him, so when he sees his friend astonished and frightened, he then hints to him that all his anger was only outward and momentary... This is also why it says 'I am Hashem,' for the name Adonai (the Tetragrammaton) is filled with compassion, and the strong rebuke was only outward and temporary, so do not be afraid."

Moses' relationship with God was not the same as Abraham's, Isaac's, Jacob's or anyone else's. In the choice of what name God uses, and in the multiplicity of interpretations of these verses, we find the depth and nuances that each of us experiences in our own relationships with God.



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.

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.

HOPLER & ESCHBACH FUNERAL HOME

"A new family tradition"



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Professionalism
Experience You Can Trust



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Kurt M. Eschbach, Funeral Director
483 Chenango Street Binghamton
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NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

NYPD arrests 325 after anti-Israel protesters block bridges, tunnel

New York City has been a hotbed of anti-Israel protesters since Oct. 7 and the Hamas terrorist attacks that murdered 1,200 people and took more than 250 men, women and children hostage. Demonstrations were particularly disruptive over the holidays. On the morning of Jan. 8, anti-Israel activists organized in groups large enough to shut down the Brooklyn Bridge, Williamsburg Bridge, Manhattan Bridge and the Holland Tunnel for several hours. The New York Police Department and the Port Authority Police arrested a total of 325 people. John Chell, the NYPD Chief of Patrol, said that many protesters would receive misdemeanor charges and a ticket to appear in court. Of those arrested, 120 went into custody for stopping traffic at the lower level of the Holland Tunnel, a key connection between Manhattan and New Jersey. Previous anti-Israel protests to impair those seeking to travel include a Jan. 1 effort to stop passengers from reaching their flights at the John F. Kennedy International Airport, where the release of balloons there, a federal crime, has led to an FBI investigation. Other sites of disruption over the past few months have been at Moynihan Train Hall at Penn Station and Grand Central Station, both in Midtown Manhattan.

U.N. experts demand accountability for Oct. 7 war crimes

Two U.N. human rights experts on Jan. 8 called for full accountability for the multitude of alleged crimes, including sexual torture, committed against civilians by Hamas terrorists on Oct. 7, saying they amount to war crimes. Alice Jill Edwards, special rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and Morris Tidball-Binz, special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, said violations include killing, hostage-taking, torture and sexual torture. “As armed Palestinian groups rampaged through communities in Israel bordering the Gaza strip, thousands of people were

subjected to targeted and brutal attacks, the vast majority of whom were civilians,” the experts said in a statement. “The growing body of evidence about reported sexual violence is particularly harrowing,” they said. Violence included gang rapes, mutilations and gunshots to genital areas. “Female bodies were found with their clothing pulled up to their waists, with underpants removed or torn or stained with blood. ... These acts constitute gross violations of international law, amounting to war crimes which, given the number of victims and the extensive premeditation and planning of the attacks, may also qualify as crimes against humanity.” They said a letter had already been sent to the “State of Palestine” as the official U.N. Observer State and party to relevant human rights and humanitarian law treaties, and that a copy had also been sent to the de facto Hamas authorities in Gaza, which claimed responsibility for the overall attack. On Dec. 28, *The New York Times* published the results of a two-month investigation it conducted into allegations of sexual violence on Oct. 7. Everywhere Hamas terrorists struck on Oct. 7 – at the rave near Kibbutz Re’im, at the military bases along the Gaza border, and at *kibbutz* after *kibbutz* – they brutalized women, it found. The full scope of the rapes may never be known because many of the victims and witnesses were murdered by Hamas. For months, Israeli activists condemned U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres along with the UN Women agency for failing to acknowledge allegations of abuse until weeks post-attack. In early December, as a presentation took place at U.N. headquarters in New York, hundreds protested outside, accusing the world body of ignoring the sexual horrors perpetrated on Oct. 7. “Me too, unless you’re a Jew,” they chanted. “Silence is complicity,” said Sheryl Sandberg, a former Meta executive, at the presentation.

Three million tourists visited Israel in 2023 before Hamas war

Three million tourists visited Israel last year, with the first nine months before the outbreak of the war with Hamas setting a record for tourism from the United States, the Israeli Tourism Ministry announced on Jan. 8. Annual tourism for 2023 fell precipitously short of the 4.5 million who visited during the record tourism year in 2019 due to the sudden collapse of tourism in the last quarter of the year, when most international airlines suspended flights to Israel, but was still higher than the 2.67 million figure for 2022. The top 10 countries for incoming tourism last year were the United States, France, England, Russia, Germany, Italy, Romania, Poland, Canada and Spain. The average tourist stayed in Israel for eight days, with 70 percent coming independently and 30 percent as part of organized groups, according to a tourism survey carried out during the first nine months of 2023. Half the tourists were Christian and nearly a quarter were Jewish. Fifty-seven percent of incom-

ing tourists were first-time visitors, while 43 percent had visited Israel more than once. Sixty percent stayed in hotels or holiday villages, while 19 percent stayed with relatives and friends and 13 percent stayed in short-term rentals. In all, Israel’s tourism revenue last year reached \$4.85 billion. Meanwhile, Lufthansa along with its subsidiaries Swiss and Austrian Airlines resumed flights to Israel the week of Jan. 8, becoming one of the first major foreign airlines to renew service to Tel Aviv since the outbreak of the war.

Yonkers Public Schools fires coach, kicks player off team over Jew-hatred

The fourth-largest school district in New York, Yonkers Public Schools, announced on Jan. 8 that it has fired a high school basketball coach and kicked a student-athlete off the team at Roosevelt High School following an antisemitic incident at a Jan. 4 game. During that game, a student at the public school told a player from the Leffell School, a private Jewish day school in Hartsdale, NY, “I support Hamas, you f**king Jew.” “The Yonkers Public Schools along with the City of Yonkers sincerely apologize to the students and community of The Leffell School for the painful and offensive comments made to their women’s basketball team during a recent game with Roosevelt High School-Early College Studies,” Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano and Luis Rodriguez, interim superintendent of the school district, announced jointly. They added that the coach and a Roosevelt player were “dismissed” following “a thorough review of videos taken at the game and interviews with those who witnessed the incident.” They did not name the coach or the student.

Latvia, Estonia to join Holocaust memorial program in Los Angeles

The Baltic states of Latvia and Estonia have chosen to join a memorial to address their countries’ history against Jews during World War II and the Holocaust. The two nations plan to show the documentary “Baltic Truth,” rejecting previous governments’ obfuscation of their respective historical records, as part of a program on Jan. 28 in Los Angeles, timed to International Holocaust Remembrance Day, which takes place annually on Jan. 27. Lithuania, another Baltic state, is not joining them. “Yes, during the Soviet invasion, a number of Latvian citizens willfully collaborated with the Soviets and helped doom the lives of many of their Latvian co-citizens,” said Juris Bunkis, the consul for Latvia. “And exactly the same thing happened when the Nazis arrived; volunteer collaborators helped round up and dispose of our Jewish neighbors.” Jaak Treiman, the honorary consul for Estonia in Los Angeles, said there was “little awareness, let alone discussion,” regarding his country’s role in the Holocaust. “This event is an opportunity to open a broader discussion – not in terms of advocacy but in terms of truth-seeking that attempts to capture the total picture.”

After. Continued from page 1

political and thought leaders. We visited the *kibbutzim* in the south, evacuee communities in the Dead Sea, a base in the Western Negev, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Rahat and more. We wanted to understand how broad swaths of Israelis were experiencing and coping with this moment.”

Rittberg’s trip is just one part of what the Schusterman Family Philanthropies does for the Jewish community. He noted that the organization “has worked in the Jewish community for over three decades aiming to empower young adults to connect with Jewish values, deepen their understanding of Israel and contribute to a better world.”

As for Rittberg personally, his work with Schusterman is an extension of an earlier part of his life. “I trace so much of my passion for working in the Jewish community and with Israel to my upbringing and experiences in Binghamton, and I am excited and honored to engage with the community later this month!” he added.

“David’s father, Howard Rittberg, texted me to let me know that his son was touring Israel and the *kibbutzim* affected by the war,” said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. “I wanted to know more about what he was learning and what his perspective is on the future of both Israel and Jews in the United States. I also think it’s important for us to keep talking about what’s happening in Israel. Join us for what is sure to be a fascinating and informative program.”

Harvard. Continued from page 2

This was an infraction, but it’s more like a speeding ticket than a criminal offense.

In context, the plagiarism issue is clearly a pretext to pressure Gay and Harvard Corporation, and to invite a time-consuming and distracting congressional inquiry. The whole campaign, particularly the government action, is the political equivalent of a SLAPP suit – a threat of legal action made with the intention of making its target’s life so miserable that they just give up.

Which Harvard now has done. Ackman’s role in the fracas is particularly troubling – in part because no one would give a fig about his ill-informed and inflammatory views were he not a billionaire. (Ackman is the founder and CEO of Pershing Square Capital Management.) His December 10 letter to the Harvard Governing Boards demanding Gay’s removal misstated her positions and hyperbolically inflated their impact.

Gay did not “support... rather than condemn” the organizations who signed the offensive and preposterous statement holding Israel “entirely responsible” for the October 7 attacks. She simply, and I think ineptly, repeated the free-speech mantra that student organizations speak for themselves and not for Harvard.

And is it really plausible that “President Gay’s mishandling of October 7th and its aftermath on campus have led to the metastasis of antisemitism to other universities and institutions around the world”? Really? The statement of a Harvard University president is what inspired the bigots in Ventura County or France?

I share what seems to be Ackman’s pained, anguished and arguably traumatized response to October 7. It still keeps me awake at night. But that doesn’t mean the response is right.

Because it isn’t about principle; it’s about power. And, yes, that exercise of power obviously reinforces antisemitic conspiracy theories of how rich, powerful Jews squelch criticism of Israel. Somehow, the same people hyperconcerned with the optics of Gay’s actions can seem willfully oblivious to their own.

As to the culture warriors who joined with Ackman in efforts to displace Gay, they are part of a nationalistic campaign opposed to small-l liberalism. It’s not about free speech or the toleration of multiple viewpoints. It is simply

a campaign of power: right against left, our side against theirs, MAGA versus “woke,” conservatism versus progress.

When “our side” is being censored, we are for free speech. When “our side” is being attacked by speech, we are against free speech.

The agenda of people like Stefanik and Rufo, here, is entirely clear. They have long fought against any form of education that they deem insufficiently patriotic; that dares to question conservative narratives of America’s greatness; that points out the enduring power of systemic racism; that diverges from religious traditions regarding sexuality and gender. In the hubbub over campus conflict over the war, they have found a new inroad for their fight.

These same folks are attacking school boards, liberal arts curricula, diversity programs and identity-based affinity groups. They wink at antisemitic statements and symbols when they’re made by people on the right, then profess outrage when they’re made, or allegedly made, by people on the left.

And now, as American Jews are reeling from October 7, from the very real increases in antisemitism around the world, and from the horrors of the war in Gaza (whether we support or oppose it); at this moment when we are, frankly, vulnerable and raw – this is the moment at which our greatest fears are weaponized against the American liberalism that has welcomed Jews for 100 years. For entirely understandable reasons, we have been swept up in a moral panic.

The last word here goes to a Harvard junior by the name of Tommy Barone. Interviewed by *The New York Times* in December, Barone said he did not believe Gay should step down. “Her resigning would be dangerous and set a precedent for higher education that would signal that with enough resources and commitment, powerful people can cow universities into making fundamental decisions about their structure.”

That precedent is now set. Rabbi Jay Michaelson is a contributing columnist for the *Forward* and for *Rolling Stone*. He is the author of 10 books, and won the 2023 New York Society for Professional Journalists award for opinion writing.

The views and opinions expressed in this article are the author’s own and do not necessarily reflect those of the *Forward*.

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