

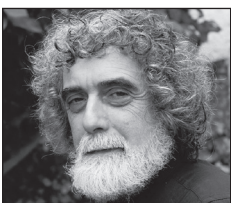
Spring 2024 CJS series to feature lectures on “In The Shadow of October 7”

The Spring 2024 College of Jewish Studies Series will explore the causes, character and effects of the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel. On Thursday, April 4, at 7:30 pm, political theorist Joshua Muravchik will address the question “Is Anti-Zionism More Dangerous than Anti-Semitism Today?” during a Zoom lecture. On Thursday, April 11, at 7:30 pm, Israeli journalist and historian Gershom Gorenberg will speak on “Israel and the War in Gaza: What Went Wrong and What Must Go Right” during a Zoom lecture. On Thursday, April 18, members of Binghamton University’s Judaic Studies Department and Israel Studies Institute will host a live in-person discussion with audience members at 7:30 pm at the Jewish Community Center, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal. They will address questions

and comments on all aspects of the tragedy and its aftermath. There will be an \$8 charge for the in-person event.

Those wishing to attend one or both of the Zoom lectures can pre-register via the College of Jewish Studies Facebook page at www.facebook.com/bingcjs or the homepage of the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton. An e-mail with the “CJS Spring 24 Series” in the subject line may also be sent to jkarp@binghamton.edu.

CJS chairman and Judaic Studies Professor Jonathan Karp said, “I felt the October



Gershom Gorenberg
(Photo by Yasmin Gorenberg)



Joshua Muravchik
(Photo courtesy of J. Muravchik)

7 attacks had to be confronted directly. It is too soon to take the full measure of the event and its aftermath. But because it is so horrific and momentous, we have an obligation even now to try to understand

its various meanings. We will have two extraordinary scholars to help us – one from the center right, the other from the center left. They will give us valuable, yet distinctive, perspectives. Then we will draw on the expertise that we have right here at Binghamton University, through our Judaic and Israel studies scholars, to put the talks

in perspective while addressing some of the still unanswered questions. This final event will be more of a community conversation than an academic presentation.”

Joshua Muravchik is the author of “Making David Into Goliath: How the World Turned Against Israel,” as well as 10 other books and more than 400 articles about politics and international relations. He has been a scholar or fellow at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, the American Enterprise Institute, the George W. Bush Institute and the Washington Institute on Near East Policy. He teaches at the Institute of World Politics in Washington DC.

Muravchik describes his topic by noting that “when Jews see Israelis subjected to See “CJS” on page 7

Federation to hold “Stop the Bleed” and “Security Update” programs on March 27

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, will hold a “Stop the Bleed” and a “Security Update” program on Wednesday, March 27, at 6:30 pm, at Temple Concord, 5 Riverside Dr., Binghamton. The program will be presented by United Health Services Trauma Services. Mark Henderson, Secure Community Network regional advisor, will begin the evening with an update on security in the post October 7 era. This will be followed

by a “Stop the Bleed” presentation and “hands on” training. It is limited to 50 participants. Registration is required and can be made on the Federation website, www.jfgb.org, or by calling Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation, at 607-724-2332. Registration must be made by Monday, March 25.

The “Stop the Bleed” program is designed to enable trained bystanders to take lifesaving action if needed until professional



help can arrive following an accident, mass shooting or other acts of violence. Instructors focus on training people in all walks of life to become immediate responders.

Hubal noted, “Sometimes people are not able to escape a dangerous situation and may be injured. It takes time for the police to secure a scene and the medical personnel can’t enter until that happens. If someone is injured, then those who are with them

are the only ones who can offer medical care. This program will give people some basic skills to do that. Even if you have done this training before it is important to keep practicing in order to learn the skills.”

She added, “Knowing how to do first aid in a traumatic situation could very well be the difference between life and death. *Pikuach nefesh* is the Jewish principle that tells us saving a life is of utmost importance. That is why we are doing this training.”

Federation holding Chai Campaign in March

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton will hold a Chai Campaign during

Chai Campaign for Security

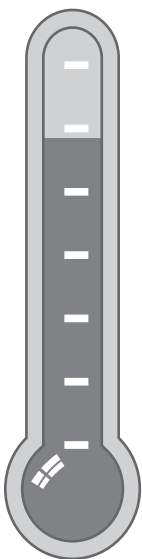
\$4,386

as of 3/18/24

Goal: \$7,500

Thanks to a generous gift from Adam Weitsman and family, all gifts up to \$7,500 will be matched.

Help us meet our goal, give today at www.jfgb.org.



the month of March. Adam Weitsman and family will match up to \$7,500 of the funds raised.

“This Campaign’s focus is on raising money for security,” said Shelley Hubal,

Federation safety and security measures

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton has worked to improve the community’s safety and security:

- ◆ In 2023, it held two communitywide, in-person security training courses.
- ◆ It provided grant-writing resources to assist local organizations in obtaining security funding.
- ◆ It purchased and distributed 15 Stop the Bleed kits to seven local Jewish organizations, including synagogues in Norwich and Oneonta.
- ◆ It acted as a clearinghouse for security resources, assisting local leadership in improving their security protocols, accessing virtual training courses and providing real-time access to a security professional to mitigate threats.
- ◆ It procured funding for a critical infrastructure project at a local synagogue.
- ◆ It provided mini-grants to help cover the cost of in-person security for the High Holidays.



executive director of the Federation. “There is an urgent need to improve the security of our community. Monies raised will help us to provide communitywide trainings and grants for in-person security. We are also looking to establish an endowment that will enable us to partner long-term with Secure Community Network, a national organization that provides crisis management, intelligence sharing and facilities assessments. When you give to the Chai Campaign, you will be making life safer for all of us.”

Hubal added, “We chose *chai* (the Hebrew word for life) because security enhances all of our lives. This is a collective effort. We are asking everyone to just give a little ‘chai.’ Your dollars will be doubled

and have an impact for years to come.”

Donations for the Campaign can be made in several ways:

◆ Checks can be made payable to Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, with Chai Campaign on the subject line, and mailed to the Federation at 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850.

◆ Online donations can be made by visiting www.jfgb.org.

◆ To make a verbal pledge, contact the Federation at 607-724-2332 or e-mail Hubal at director@jfgb.org.

“It’s up to us to help keep our community safe,” Hubal noted. “Your donation will help make that happen. Our thanks to Adam and his family for their generous matching grant.”

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The Reporter’s Editorial Committee and staff thank
Dennis & Sandy Foreman for a generous donation
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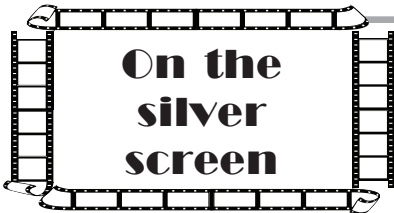
Survey says...

A new BBYO survey finds 71 percent of Jewish teens have experienced antisemitism.

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Agony and ecstasy: “Maestro” and “Oppenheimer”

BILL SIMONS

Now available on streaming platforms, “Maestro” and “Oppenheimer,” are two of the most acclaimed films of the past year, the latter receiving the 2024 Academy Award for Best Picture. They dramatize the agony and ecstasy of Jewish American geniuses. Both are cinematic biographies of 20th century titans who found their gifts a source of exhilaration and despair. “Maestro” highlights conductor-composer Leonard Bernstein. “Oppenheimer” confronts the conflicts that beset physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer, father of the atomic bomb.

Destined to rank as a cinematic classic, “Oppenheimer,” running three hours, tells an epic tale of a momentous milestone in human history – the unleashing of the universe’s primal power, as well as being an intimate story of love, friendship, betrayal and conflicted conscience. As the protagonist, Cillian Murphy conveys the painful intensity and fierce brilliance of J. Robert Oppenheimer. The film, grounded in history, finds its source material in the opus biography of Oppenheimer, “American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer” by Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin. Given the importance of the film and the reputation of director Christopher Nolan, major stars enlisted to take supporting roles for less than their usual stipend. Casey Affleck, Emily Blunt, Kenneth Branagh, Tom Conti, Matt Damon, Robert Downey Jr., Josh Hartnett, Rami Malek, Matthew Modine, Gary Oldman and Florence Pugh deliver memorable performances.

Framed by the 1954 federal Personnel Security Board hearings, the film examines the major episodes in Oppenheimer’s life through non-linear scenes: his fascination with the explosive energy generated by a star as it compacts

and dies; his unhappiness amongst the beakers and tubes of lab work at Cambridge; discovering his gift for theoretical physics and bringing it back to the United States; his involvement in leftist politics; his friendship and intimate romance with Communists, despite refusing to join the party; recruiting and leading the extraordinary team of scientists at Los Alamos, NM, that developed and tested the atomic bomb; his directorship of the Institute for Advanced Study; his great fame and prominence at mid-century; his becoming an advisor to the Atomic Energy Commission; and his postwar opposition to developing a hydrogen bomb, while advocating for negotiations with the Soviets to place atomic energy under international controls.

“Oppenheimer” is adamant that its protagonist was a loyal American, a patriot and supported use of the atomic bomb against Japan to avoid an invasion and thus save American and Japanese lives, as well as to frighten the world against any further use of such a destructive weapon. However, the carnage at Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the specter of the bomb’s fearsome fireball haunted Oppenheimer, leading him to call for arms controls through diplomacy. To Albert Einstein, famed for the theory of relativity, Oppenheimer confided the terror of setting off a chain reaction that could consume the world. Twice, the film depicts Oppenheimer reciting Hindu text: “Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.” President Harry Truman dismissed Oppenheimer as a “crybaby.” The movie argues persuasively that the personal vindictiveness of AEC Chair Lewis Strauss, Cold War tensions and the distortion of his politics led the Personnel Security Board to deny Oppenheimer renewal of his security clearance, depriving

him future voice in the debate about nuclear weapons. No reference is made to theological or institutional ties to Judaism in “Oppenheimer.” However, Oppenheimer says pointedly that it is his people the Nazis are taking to the concentration camps. And his pre-surrender impetus for committing to the Manhattan Project was to drop the atomic bomb on Germany.

“Maestro” is not a musical – rather it employs a biographical canvas to explore the complex, loving, volatile and painful relationship between Leonard Bernstein and his wife, Felicia Montealegre Bernstein, a beautiful, accomplished, cultured actress. Though not religious, both were Jewish: Lenny (his preferred name) by parentage and upbringing, and Felicia by paternal lineage and conversion.

Felicia went into the marriage knowing that Lenny was bisexual, but hoped his discretion and their shared love would leave enough of what she needed. For a time that worked. Both were good parents to their three children, shielding them from much of the drama. The love between Lenny and Felicia never died. However, enveloped by surreal, homoerotic fantasies, Lenny’s love for people knew no boundaries.

In middle age, Lenny’s sexuality, as depicted in “Maestro,” was no longer circumspect. Bernstein’s sexuality even turned predatory in his seduction of the student conductor of his Young People’s Concerts. Increasingly dissipated, sometimes under the influence of alcohol and drugs, and suffering from emphysema that was worsened by constant smoking, Bernstein was tormented by his failure to meet the exalted expectations ignited by his bravura debut

See “Agony” on page 5

Opinion

In My Own Words

Uninspired

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

I’m feeling totally uninspired and wondering why since I usually have more ideas for this column than I can write. Maybe it’s the cough that has taken up residence in my throat and doesn’t want to leave. Perhaps it’s political overload: even the most outrageous statements don’t register because I now expect certain politicians to say bizarre, ridiculous and alarming things on a regular basis. Or, sigh, it could be reading far too much about death and destruction that seems to have no end. Even worse, no one has real answers

Letters

The Israeli war with Hamas

To the Editor:
Lori Tuberman spoke at Beth David Synagogue about her recent trip to Israel. She met people impacted by the October 7 attack, including victims, soldiers and family members. Israelis are grateful for American support, contrasting with abandonment they felt during the past. Lori mentioned the “Me Too Movement” has been silent after the rape and murder of Israeli women and children. At times, she fought back tears and I welled-up repeatedly.

The latest Temple Israel/Temple Concord Adult Education Program included reading “Jewbird” by Bernard Malamud. This story concerns a Jewish talking bird (Schwartz) who experiences antisemitism from other birds and confronts hatred from Mr. Cohen, the father. These programs induced me to write.

When I spoke at Beth David about the Jewish experience in Iberia, I mentioned Jews were eliminated when not useful to the Christian monarchs. They were inconvenient. Under the Islamic rulers, conditions were somewhat better but,

as to how to create a lasting peace in Israel, Ukraine and more places than I can mention here. I don’t feel like I have something new to add to these conversations, partly because the experts I’ve read either have no solutions to offer, or can’t agree on the best path.

To help myself out of these doldrums, I’ve been focusing on the upcoming holiday. Just as with Hanukkah, there are people who want to change what we do for Purim for a variety of reasons, some of which make sense to me.

as second-class citizens, they were expendable.

Within two weeks of the attack, public relations were lost. The tribal nature of humans allows antisemitism. Media chose sides long before the battles. During Roman times, our total was over 10 percent of Mediterranean area, but today less than 1 percent. Jews have won a disproportionate percentage of Nobel Prizes, serve in academia, written literature, create entertainment and contribute to general wealth. Our ancient nation was attacked by Babylon, Assyrians, Ptolemies and Romans, among others. Nazis sought a “final solution,” hence the Holocaust.

The latest procurer of hate is Hamas, an Iranian proxy, seeking elimination of Israel and replacement by an Islamic state, not peaceful co-existence. Our community is troubled by the death of civilians in Gaza. From safe Broome County, we can criticize Israel. Please support the people of Israel, seven million Jews and two million Muslims. Give emotional and financial support. For those able and willing, visit Israel.

Howard Warner

Although I understand that impulse, acknowledging the holiday feels ever more important to me this year. I feel a need for Purim silliness: dressing up in costume, laughing at a Purimspiel and acting as if all is well with the world for a few hours.

I know this won’t save democracy in the United States (from whichever political party you think threatens it); I know it won’t free the hostages still in Hamas’ hands or create a lasting peace in Israel; and it certainly won’t prevent the continuing rolling back of women’s rights in the U.S. But if we want to have the energy to keep fighting for our political beliefs, then we need to periodically refresh ourselves and that means reminding ourselves of the simple joys life offers. We need to take a walk and notice the buds on the trees and appreciate the warm weather. (Of course, by the time this appears in the paper, we will probably have had another snowstorm: it is March in New York after all. But I think you get what I mean.)

This morning, I went outside to pick up my recycling bins and heard a strange sound. I paused to figure out what it was because I still have trouble identifying sounds. It took a few seconds for me to realize it was a bird singing. I stood there and remembered the years I couldn’t hear that simple sound. In fact, I spent at least 30 years unable to hear birds singing; my hearing difficulties started long before my final hearing loss. I know a bird chirping doesn’t mean much in the grand scheme of the world, but it does serve as a reminder that even with all the fuss and mess we humans make, nature continues. I may not be able to solve the world’s problems, but I can pause to note its wonders. Those wonders can give us the energy and desire to return to working for *tikkun olam*, the repair of our world. Our ancient sages said – in a statement that bears repeating – it is not ours to complete the task, nor should we cease from it.



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of Greater Binghamton

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LETTERS

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

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DEADLINE

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

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Chabad to hold community seder, deliver “Seders in a Box,” make *shmurah* matzah available for purchase

Passover seder

Chabad Center will hold a Passover seder open to the general community on the first night of the holiday, Monday April 22. Festivities will begin with services at 7:30 pm, followed by the seder; the services and the seder will be held at the Chabad Center, 420 Murray Hill Rd., Vestal. For more information and seder reservations, contact Chabad at aslonim@Jewishbu.com or 607-797-0015.

The seder will include all of the traditional observances, a full-course dinner, handmade *shmurah* matzah and mystical insights. The haggadah will be read with participation from all present in both Hebrew and English, and the many customs and traditions of the seder will be explained. “Our seder is open to anyone who wants to attend a traditional seder; no previous knowledge or

level of observance is required,” explained Rabbi Aaron Slonim, executive director of Chabad. “Be prepared to be welcomed – just as you are – as part of the family.” There is no charge for the seders, but donations to help defray the cost would be appreciated and can be sent to Chabad before or after the holiday.

“We will be serving a full course, traditional holiday dinner, but I do urge participants to have a bite to eat earlier in the evening to tide them over the ceremonial, opening portion of the seder, which precedes dinner,” added Rivky Slonim.

“Seder in a Box”

For those who are unable to attend and would like to celebrate the holiday with all of the traditions, Chabad will make available a “Seder in a Box.” Interested parties are asked to contact Chabad at aslonim@Jewishbu.com or at

607-797-0015 to reserve their box, or a box for a friend or relative, as soon as possible. The “Seder in a Box” contains matzah, grape juice, a holiday dinner (for one or two) and all of the ceremonial items necessary for a seder. A haggadah will be included, as well.

The subsidized cost of the “Seder in a Box” is \$54, which includes one dinner; there is a \$25 cost for each additional meal. Reservations for attending the seder in person or for a “Seder in a Box” will be taken until Friday, April 19.

Community members who wish to assist in this effort can help with delivery, underwrite the cost of a box or two, and/or help with the cooking of the food and packaging of the boxes. To offer assistance, contact Chabad at 607-797-0015. Checks earmarked for this purpose may be sent to Chabad, 420 Murray Hill Rd., Vestal, NY 13850.

Shmura matzah

Handmade *shmura* matzah will be available for purchase through the Chabad Center for \$19 a pound. Three matzahs can be purchased for \$10 as long as the supply lasts; interested parties are urged to place their orders as soon as possible. To order *shmura* matzah, call Chabad at 607-797-0015.

BD Sisterhood to hold Passover Workshop on April 3

Beth David Sisterhood will hold its annual Community Passover Workshop on Wednesday, April 3, at 7 pm, at Beth David Synagogue. The workshop is open to everyone in the Jewish community, men and women, whether or not they are affiliated with the Beth David Sisterhood or Beth David Synagogue.

Rabbi Zev Silber, spiritual leader of the Beth David Synagogue, will attempt to answer everyone’s questions about Passover. Although it is preferable if questions are submitted to him in advance in case they require research, he will try to provide answers to all queries. Questions should be sent to him at rabbisilber@stny.rr.com.

“Rabbi Silber will update us on recent changes to products that are acceptable for Passover use, offer tips on preparing the kitchen for Passover and give suggestions as to how we can make the seder and Passover a more meaningful and positive experience,” said organizers of the event.

Attendees will be encouraged to share favorite Passover recipes, tips, shortcuts and other useful information that may make cleaning or cooking easier this year.

“Please remember that we collect food for CHOW at every meeting, so start cleaning out your pantry early and bring your *chametz* donations to our meeting,” organizers said.

TC Sisterhood to hold Women’s Seder on April 7

The Temple Concord Sisterhood will hold a Women’s Seder on Sunday, April 7, at 1 pm, in the Kilmer Mansion, 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton. A packet adapted from “The Dancing with Miriam Haggadah” will be used and copies will be provided to participants. The cost is \$36 per person and reservations with payment should be sent to

the temple office by Tuesday, March 26. The event will be catered by Phantom Chef, which is owned by Temple Concord member Michelle McIlroy. The seder will feature a vegetarian menu.

The Women’s Seder is being organized by Rachel Coker. Rabbi Rachel Esserman will help lead the service.

OF NOTE

Kirschen

Bryan Kirschen, a professor of Hispanic linguistics at Binghamton University, is the co-director of the recently established American Ladino League. According to its website, <https://americanladinoleague.org>, the organization “supports the diverse and growing community of Ladino speakers and educators in the United States. We believe in opening Ladino studies to all who are interested. Whatever your background, whatever your goals – our suite of programs and resources will help you on your Ladino journey.”

In addition to his work at BU and ALL, Kirschen offers the opportunity to learn Ladino at his Ladino Linguist website (<https://ladinolinguist.com>) and curates the digital humanities project, Documenting Judeo-Spanish, focused on the Hebrew-based Sephardic cursive known as Solitreo (<https://documentingjudeospanish.com>). He also serves as the director of the international delegation of Shadarim (<https://shadarim.com>), in collaboration with the National Authority of Ladino.

Tea and Talk

Chabad of Binghamton, with co-sponsorship from the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, holds Tea and Talk programs, a bi-weekly hour-long gathering for local Jewish seniors who are looking for “a meaningful conversation,” from 11 am-noon, in Chabad’s atrium on the second floor. The program is open to all and free of charge.

Upcoming dates are:

- ◆ April 4
- ◆ April 18
- ◆ May 2
- ◆ May 16

To RSVP or for more information, visit www.JewishBU.com/Tea or call 607-797-0015.

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Klionsky

As part of Women’s History Month, the Broome County Status of Women Council held its 47th annual awards luncheon that honors the accomplishments of women nominated by various organizations in the county. Nominated by Binghamton University Women, Marti Klionsky received a certificate signed by Senator Lea Webb of the New York State Senate, naming her a 2024 Woman of Achievement Recipient. Twelve women belonging to Binghamton University Women attended the March 9 awards luncheon.




Marti Klionsky (standing) was named a 2024 Woman of Achievement Recipient. (Photo courtesy of Marti Klionsky)

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



DEADLINES

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

ISSUE	DEADLINE
April 5-18.....	March 27
April 19-May 2	April 10
May 3-16	April 19 (early)
May 17-30	May 8

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

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Off the Shelf

Through the generations

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Almost everyone has something in their past they would prefer not be made public. Sometimes it’s just a minor embarrassment, but other times, it’s a secret that not only affects their life, but that of their children. These secrets can cause deep misunderstandings between generations, making it impossible for members of a family to truly understand each other. Secrets form the core of two new novels: “In the Shadow of the Greenbrier” by Emily Matchar (G. P. Putnam’s Sons) and “Mother Doll” by Katya Apekina (The Overlook Press). The characters in each only learn to understand each other when the hidden parts of their past are revealed.

A true event inspired Matchar’s work, which is set around the real life Greenbrier Resort located in White Sulphur Springs, WV. However, her real interest is to portray how living near the Greenbrier affected four generations of the fictitious Zelnor family. In 1992, Jordan, who had recently begun working at *The Washington Post* as a reporter, receives an anonymous letter telling him the Greenbrier has a secret worth revealing. Jordan knows his mother Doree prefers not to talk about her life in White Sulphur Springs since her mother and brother died there in a mysterious automobile accident when she was still young. Doree narrates the section that takes place in 1958, complaining about having to help her socially clueless younger brother, Alan, who gets into trouble due to his lack of social graces. She also clashes with her mother, Sylvia.

In 1942, Sylvia notes how unhappy she is with her marriage to Louis and her life in White Sulphur Springs. Although she has recently given birth to Doree, she still misses the cosmopolitan life she left behind in Europe. She and Louis live with his parents, Sol and Pauline. Although Pauline

has made it clear that she doesn’t approve of her daughter-in-law, Sol helps make life tolerable. To complicate matters, Sylvia is upset that the Greenbrier is being used to house German and Italian diplomats now that the U.S. has entered World War II. She resents that they are living in comfort when she doesn’t know if her relatives in Poland are safe or even alive. However, when she’s offered a chance to sew for an Italian diplomat, she wonders if the extra money might provide a way to escape her dull and boring life.

However, Sylvia is not the only member of the family to have emigrated to the United States. Sol came to the U.S. from Lithuania in 1909 to escape being recruited by the czar’s army. Making his way to the U.S. on his own, he becomes a traveling peddler. After an upsetting event, he has the opportunity to open a store in White Sulphur Springs. But even in that seemingly safe small town, he learns that being Jewish means one’s life will never be easy.

Matchar alternates the narration between the four different characters, which allow readers to slowly piece together the true story of what occurred in White Sulphur Springs. However, the secret of what happened at the Greenbrier is the least of the revelations. What, at first, seemed like an almost mundane family saga turned into a surprising and moving work. Most of the secrets revealed were inspired and completely unexpected. The ending of “In the Shadow of the Greenbrier” was bittersweet and satisfying. The choices the characters made are open to debate, making this an excellent work for book clubs.

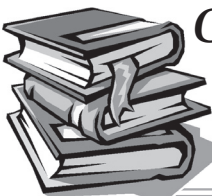
While “In the Shadow of the Greenbrier” offers insights from four different characters, “Mother Doll” concentrates on two: Zhenia and her great-grandmother Irena.

However, Apekina uses their voices to help readers understand the two intermediate generations—Marina, who is Zhenia’s mother, and Vera, Marina’s mother and Irena’s daughter – that connect them. However, rather than have separate sections for her two main characters, she has Zhenia talk to her dead great-grandmother through a medium called Paul.

The timing for Irena’s appearance is not great: although Zhenia and her husband, Ben, said they did not want to have children, Zhenia finds herself pregnant and desperately wants to keep the baby. Ben, however, feels she is imposing her wishes on him. Their marriage has never been in the best of shape: Zhenia acknowledges

she’s never loved Ben and she cheated on him while they lived together before their marriage. Her beloved grandmother Vera is dying, which means that the only person Zhenia feels ever really loved her will soon be no more. Zhenia never knew her father before the family left Russia when she was 5, and she feels no affection for her stepfather and little connection to her half-brother. Unfortunately for readers, Zhenia comes across as a selfish, rather unpleasant person who instigates unnecessary arguments to create drama.

Irena has some of the same traits as her great-granddaughter. All Zhenia knew of her is that Irena left Vera at an orphanage in See “Generations” on page 8



Off the Shelf

Jews in Manchuria

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

There’s a joke about Jewish holidays that says, “They tried to kill us; we won; let’s eat.” When thinking of recorded Jewish history, that statement could be changed to read, “They invited us to live there. We prospered, so they hated us and tried to destroy us. Then we left.” This is a simplified version of what occurred in the former Jewish community of Harbin, China, as described in Scott D. Seligman’s “Murder in Manchuria: The True Story of a Jewish Virtuoso, Russian Fascists, a French Diplomat, and a Japanese Spy in Occupied China” (Potomac Books). Using the kidnapping and murder of Semyon Kaspé, a young Jewish musician whose father owned a large hotel in Harbin, as his starting point, Seligman looks not only at the development of the Jewish community in that area, but the larger socio-political elements that affected that community.

The first Jews arrived in Harbin during the last years of the 19th century. At its height, the community numbered around 20,000. Although the last remaining Jew in Harbin died in 1985, a major exodus occurred during the second half of the 1930s. The murder of Kaspé played a major role in this emigration, although his death was only part of a continuing campaign against the Jews in the area.

Russian Jews had originally been encouraged to move to Harbin to help its growing economy. The idea was appealing because life in Russia was not easy. Seligman notes, “Jews [in Russia] were subject to special taxes, banned from some professions, and subjected to school quotas. Jewish boys could be conscripted into military service at age twelve and forced to serve for decades, usually as cannon fodder, never as officers. Plus, Jews were the all-too-frequent targets of violent pogroms – genocidal attacks, often religiously motivated – that killed or injured many and were sometimes even sanctioned by the local authorities.” For many, Harbin must have originally looked like a wonderful opportunity, a place to live a better and safer life.

However, although Harbin might have been considered safer at first, this haven was not to continue. Seligman writes of the wars between Russia and Japan over this area of China, with each nation alternately assuming control. At the time of Kaspé’s kidnapping and murder in 1933, the area was technically an independent nation called Manchukuo, which was supposed to be run by the Chinese living in the area, but which was really controlled by the Japanese. Harbin was also populated by White Russians, those who had supported the losing side in the Russian Revolution. Many of them were Fascists who hated Jews because they believed all Jews had supported the revolution – even when those Jews were capitalists who had also left Russia for similar reasons.

According to Seligman, the Japanese needed money to finance their control of

Manchukuo – money that could not come from Japan. The Japanese believed all Jews were wealthy, in addition to their being able to exert great political and financial control across the world. But the Japanese did not want to be the ones who actually extorted the money. The author notes, “The Japanese would use the reactionary Russian émigrés to bilk [the Jews] – people of wealth like Josef Kaspé [Semyon’s father] – for all they were worth. But it all had to be done covertly; to be seen to be behind it could spoil Japan’s plans for gaining international recognition of its puppet state, and for attracting foreign investment to it.”

Semyon was not the first or last Jew in Harbin to be kidnapped, but Seligman believes his kidnapping was a watershed event – one that made it clear to the Jewish community it was time to leave Harbin. The author offers information about the kidnapping and the problems entailed in trying to ransom Semyon. One thing that the kidnappers had not considered was that Josef simply did not have the funds necessary to pay the ransom. Attempts to find Semyon and his kidnappers were stymied because members of the police force had taken part in planning the kidnapping and warned the kidnappers when searchers were close. The conclusion to the kidnapping was not unexpected: Semyon was found dead, his body in terrible shape from abuse and hunger.

Even though some of Semyon’s kidnappers were arrested, justice eluded the family. Antisemitism played a major role in this failure because his kidnappers were called Russian patriots who planned to use the money to overthrow the Soviet government – making the kidnapping a political act, rather than a criminal one. False claims about Josef – for example, that he sold stolen Russian national treasures – were treated in much of the press as if they were fact. Although during the first trial, the Chinese judges found the kidnappers guilty and condemned them to life imprisonment, not only were their sentences quickly vacated, but the judges themselves were arrested for conducting a fair trial.

It’s not possible for a short review to fully explain the many complex forces acting on the Harbin Jewish community and the political realities of the time. “Murder in Manchuria” opens with three pages of “Dramatis Personae,” which many readers may need in order to keep straight the numerous people involved, including members of the Jewish, Japanese, Chinese, White Russian and European communities who played a role in the story. Seligman’s writing is dry, but that is befitting the story; it also makes what happened to Semyon that much more heartbreaking. This book is not just for those interested in the history of Asia in the years before World War II, since it also serves as a case study of the way the Jewish population has been treated in country after country over the centuries.

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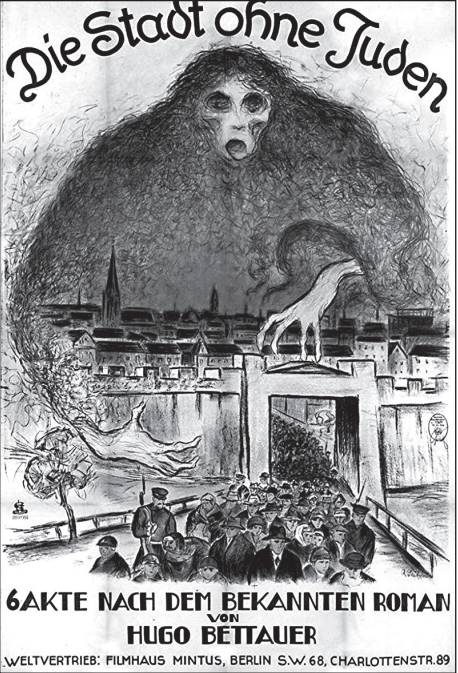
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Live music and silent movie event to be held at BU on April 7

The College of Jewish Studies, the Binghamton University Judaic Studies Department and the BU Music Department will hold a live music and silent movie event featuring H K Breslauer’s film “The City Without Jews” (“Die Stadt Ohne Juden,” 1924) “ on Sunday, April 7, from 7:30-9 pm, at Binghamton University’s Casadesus Recital Hall.



Poster of “The City Without Jews”

The performance is free and open to the public. The showing will feature the musical accompaniment of klezmer violinist Alicia Svigals – of Klezmatics fame – and Donald Sosin, silent film pianist. Svigals and Sosin composed the original score. To reserve a seat, send an e-mail with the subject line “Silent Film Event” to jkarp@binghamton.edu.

Set in the fictitious city of Utopia (a thinly-disguised stand-in for Vienna), the satirical film follows the political and personal consequences of an antisemitic law forcing all Jews to leave the country. After an initial wave of enthusiasm, the citizens of Utopia are faced with the consequences, as they watch over their own economic and cultural decline in a “City Without Jews.” Facing a political backlash, their government must decide whether or not to revoke its earlier expulsion decree.

“Darkly comedic in tone, Breslauer’s film has an ominous prophetic resonance for today’s audience,” said organizers of the program. “Intended as a sharp critique of Nazism, it was banned after 1933 and all complete prints were thought to be destroyed. Now, thanks to the serendipitous discovery of a nitrate print in a Parisian flea market in 2015, as well as to the restoration efforts of the Filmarchiv Austria, this previously ‘lost’ classic of early 20th century cinema can once again be

appreciated in its ever-relevant entirety.” The program is underwritten by a grant from the Sunrise Foundation for Education and the Arts, La Jolla, CA. For more information and updates, visit binghamton.edu/judaic-studies/events.

Jerusalem to hold first Purim parade since 1982

By JNS staff

(JNS) – Jerusalem will host its first Purim parade in more than four decades under the shadow of the five-month-old war with Hamas in Gaza, the municipality announced. The parade will include 30 floats and seven musical stages along the kilometer-long downtown route on March 25 when the ancient walled city celebrates the holiday – Shushan Purim – a day after other places in the world. The event comes even as 130 hostages remain in Gazan captivity, five months after the October 7 massacre, including 70 to 100 people believed to be alive.

“The parade this year is more than a

Purim event, but a victory of spirit and standing strong,” said Jerusalem Mayor Moshe Lion, who was elected last month to a second five-year term.

The last Purim parade in the capital was held in 1982.

The traditional colorful Purim processions held across Israel are called “Adloyadas,” shorthand for the rabbinic Aramaic phrase in the Talmud describing the commandment to drink and make merry as part of the holiday celebration. Stages will be set up at sites in central Jerusalem with musical events including orchestras, DJs and other performance groups.



Children from the Asa Chayil School took part in the Adloyada Purim parade in Efrat, south of Jerusalem on March 5. (Photo by Gershon Elinson/Flash90)

Agony.....Continued from page 2

conducting the New York Philharmonic at age 25. Conducting the works of others had taken precedence over original compositions. In a “Maestro” scene of anger and disappointment, Felicia accuses Lenny of hiding behind depression and insomnia for not doing more with his genius. Finally, the couple separated, but when cancer ravaged Felicia, Lenny returned to share her final years.

As their craft dictates, critics raise caveats. “Maestro,” given its focus on the Lenny-Felicia relationship and his sexuality, fails to give Bernstein’s music, which after all is the reason for his cultural and historical significance, sufficient attention. Even “West Side Story” gets only a passing glance. The trajectory of chronology is broken by ellipses and gaps. The elongated proboscis-prosthesis donned by Bradley Cooper’s Bernstein drew cries of “Jew-face” stereotyping despite its resemblance to Lenny’s actual nose. Most secondary roles receive cursory development. Sarah Silverman, better known for comedy, offers a notable exception in her observant take on Bernstein’s sister, Shirley. Bernstein’s hosting of a fund-raiser for Black Panther leaders, despite their antisemitic rhetoric, at his home and other aspects of his controversial radical chic politics are omitted. The film’s commentary on Bernstein’s Jewishness is largely confined to his refusal to anglicize his last name, wearing a shirt with Hebrew lettering and an ethnic circle of friends. “Maestro” does not explore Bernstein’s association

with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra or the motivation for naming a composition “Kaddish.”

Bottomline, the core of “Maestro,” the portrait of Bernstein’s brilliant, enigmatic, ebullient, tortured self, is superb. As Lenny and Felicia, Cooper and Carey Mulligan deliver remarkable performances. And scenes of Bernstein conducting – soaring and descending while summoning transcendent physical and psychic energy – are memorable. A wunderkind, Cooper also directed, co-produced and co-scripted “Maestro.” Moreover, costuming and cinematography capture the mood and nuances of period and personality.

The following words, attributed to Bernstein, appear as prologue to “Maestro”: “A work of art does not answer questions, it provokes them, and its essential meaning is the tension between the contradictory answers.” Serious cinema is art, and “Maestro” and “Oppenheimer” raise questions about the boundaries between genius and madness, euphoria and despair, creativity and destruction. For secular, assimilated American Jews, yet still carrying the resonance of ethnic sensibility and history, tradition no longer synthesizes creativity and purpose. For Bernstein and Oppenheimer, this quandary was compounded. In “Maestro” and “Oppenheimer,” the musician and physicist, both Prometheus in their fields, birthed creations that exceed their capacities to control. View these two biographical films – better yet, watch them in close tandem.

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The small *alef* and humility

RABBI ZALMAN CHEIN, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND RITUAL, CHABAD OF BINGHAMTON

This Shabbat we will be reading from two Torah scrolls. The first is the weekly Torah portion, Vayikra, the first portion in the Book of Leviticus. We will then read *parashat* Zachor from the second Torah. *Parashat* Zachor describes the first attack on the Jewish people by the Amalekites, the war that ensued and God’s command to always remember – and not to forget – what Amalek has done.

Why would one forget this deed, necessitating a special commandment telling us not to forget? And if it is possible to forget, is there something one can do to avoid it?

Perhaps we can glean some insight from Vayikra, which is not only the name of the portion we read first, but is also its first word. The Torah (Pentateuch, Prophets and Scriptures) in its Hebrew form is primarily

written in one font size and style. However, we find dispersed throughout the Torah a larger font set and a smaller font set.

Let us look at the letter *alef*. The first word in the Book of Chronicles is Adam and it is written with a large *alef*. The first word in Leviticus is *vayikra* written with a small *alef*, when He (God) called to Moses. The large *alef* is associated with Adam’s character trait and the smaller one with Moses’s character trait.

I will focus on the small *alef* and its symbolization, the attribute of humility. The small *alef* is hinting at Moses’s attribute of humility, as we read in (Numbers 12:3), “Now this man Moses was exceedingly humble, more so than any person on the face of the earth.”

What does it mean to be humble? Should someone

that is truly great and talented not be proud of it? Should Moses be humble? Was he not the leader of the people, the one who took them out of Egypt and communicated with God, etc.?

One explanation given by the Chasidic masters: Humility is not a sign of low self-esteem or feeling down about one’s achievements. Rather, it is the recognition that all of a person’s unique talents and accomplishments are a gift from God; had another person received these same “gifts” perhaps they would have done better.

Attributing one’s success to oneself instead of to God makes it easier for one to forget. Perhaps the two portions are teaching us to add a bit more contemplation regarding the source of blessings in our life and, in turn, empowering us to do more good.

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: office@templeisraelvestal.org
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, March 23, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person (masks are required for unvaccinated participants). The Torah portion is Leviticus 1:1-5:26 and the haftarah is I Samuel 15:2-34. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 8:15 pm.

On Tuesday, March 26, at 6 pm, “Jewish Quest for Wisdom” with Rabbi Micah Friedman.

On Saturday, March 30, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person (masks are required for unvaccinated participants). The Torah portion is Leviticus 6:1-8:36 and the haftarah is Ezekiel 36:16-36. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 8:15 pm.

On Tuesday, April 2, at 7 pm, there will be an Executive Board meeting.

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.

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, March 22, light candles before..... 7 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, March 23 8:02 pm
Friday, March 29, light candles before..... 7:08 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, March 30 8:10 pm
Friday, April 5, light candles before..... 7:16 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, April 6 8:17 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, March 22: At 7:30 pm, Shabbat service with Allen Alt. 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, March 23: At 9 am, Religious School Purim program; there will be no Torah study or family service. At 6 pm, the Purim celebration will begin with a brief reading of the megillah followed by a Purimspiel. This is an in-person only event. At 7:15 pm, dinner will be held in the social hall. Reservations were required for the dinner, but not for the Purimspiel.

Friday, March 29: At 7:30 pm, Shabbat service with Rabbi Leah Moser. 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, March 30: At 9:15 am, Torah study in person and on Zoom with Rabbi Leah Moser (http://bit.ly/3XDnVRE, meeting ID 825 1226 2831 and passcode 743892). There is no Religious School or family service.

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.

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.

BBYO survey: 71% of Jewish teens have experienced antisemitism

By JNS staff

(JNS)—BBYO has released the results of a new survey of 1,989 Jewish students conducted from January 23 to February 5. The researchers found that 71 percent had experienced antisemitic hate or discrimination. Those who have faced it in person numbered 61 percent while 46 percent saw it online, and 36 percent had experienced both forms. Of those who had experienced in-person hate, 46 percent said it occurred at school and 45 percent chose not to report the incident. For the teens who encountered online anti-Jewish hate, they reported that the most common platforms were Instagram (33 percent), TikTok See “BBYO” on page 8



Thousands of Jews attended BBYO's International Convention in Orlando, FL, from February 15-19. (Photo courtesy of BBYO)

CJS.Continued from page 1

murder and rape at home and calumnies abroad, they are bound to see antisemitism at work. But Arabs often say that they can't be 'antisemites' because they are Semites, while advocates of 'social justice' scoff at the idea that they might be bigoted. Indeed, a fair number of them are Jews. In this era, when Western publics have been sensitized to the issue of racism, Jews often feel that antisemitism is the critical issue. But is it? The goal of Hamas and Iran and the entire 'axis of resistance' is the elimination of Israel." When assessing this threat, Muravchik will ask whether it matters if their actions and statements are motivated by hostility to Jews per se or to Israel (not precisely the same thing). He suggests that if people want to truly understand and combat this threat, the distinction matters a great deal.

Gorenberg is an Israeli journalist and the author, most recently, of "War of Shadows: Codebreakers, Spies and the Secret Struggle to Drive the Nazis from the Middle East." Gorenberg previously wrote three critically acclaimed books on Israel's history and politics: "The Unmaking of Israel," "The Accidental Empire: Israel and the Birth of the Settlements, 1967-1977" and "The End of Days: Fundamentalism and the Struggle for the Temple Mount." He has written for *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The New York Review of Books* and, in Hebrew, for *Haaretz* and *Maariv*. He lives in Jerusalem, except during stints teaching a workshop on writing history at the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism.

Gorenberg will provide an overview of the steps and missteps that led to the October 7 atrocities and Israel's military response. Among other key questions he will ask is why Israel was taken by surprise, how Israeli society has changed as a result and why the war must lead to a new push for peace.

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

Founded in 1986, CJS is an informal coalition between the Judaic Studies Department of Binghamton University and several area Jewish sponsoring institutions: the Jewish Community Center, the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, Beth David Synagogue, Temple Concord and Temple Israel. Programming for CJS would not be possible without the additional financial support of a grant from The Community Foundation for South Central New York — David and Virginia Eisenberg Donor Advised Fund, the Jacob and Rose Olum Foundation, the B'nai B'rith Lectureship Fund, the Victor and Esther Rozen Foundation, an endowment fund from the former Temple Beth El of Endicott, a grant from the JoyVel Charitable Fund and the donations of individual sponsors.

Anyone who would like to become an individual sponsor or make a donation so that the CJS can continue bringing quality programs to the community should e-mail bingcjs@gmail.com. The College of Jewish Studies is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Jewish Community Center Community celebrated at JCC's Purim Carnival



The Jewish Community Center held its Purim Carnival on March 17. For more photos of the carnival, see the next issue of The Reporter.



On the Jewish food scene Peanut butter, Israel and food allergies

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

I never ate peanut butter as a child. Yep, my poor mom could never get me to eat a peanut butter and jelly sandwich for lunch. The only exception was one summer at a Jewish overnight camp when the food was so bad even I was willing to eat bread with peanut butter rather than choke down the main meal. But that quickly stopped once I was safely home.

Fast forward more years than I want to count and my ear doctor placed me on a medically restricted diet that required me to eat more protein. (I was not a vegetarian, but I rarely cooked meat.) One good protein (at least for breakfast and lunch) was... you guessed it! Peanut butter! That meant, by the way, peanut butter that was 100 percent peanuts — meaning no sugar, no oil, no salt, no preservatives, etc. Yep, just ground peanuts. Since then I've had bread — first whole wheat and then seven-grain bread — and peanut butter for breakfast almost every day. Sometimes on Shabbat, I'll add fruit-juice sweetened jam as a treat, but mostly it's just bread and peanut butter every morning.

That made life difficult when I spent 10 months in Israel during the 1990s. At that time, peanut butter was not a major part of the Israeli diet. I know I managed to find a store — probably the same place I bought my herbal tea — that sold peanut butter I could eat. However, the fact that peanut butter wasn't popular then doesn't mean that peanuts themselves were not part of the Israeli diet: Bamba, which was originally cheese flavored, became a

success when its peanut flavor was released in 1966. (For those who have never eaten Bamba, think of a crunchy corn snack that is flavored with peanuts. It can be found in many local grocery stores if you want to try it.)

Now, however, peanut butter has become more popular in Israel. During a Google search, I even found a company called Holy Butter that makes peanut butter and almond butter with nuts grown in the Negev. I wasn't able to find statistics on its consumption compared to that of the U.S., but I did find one interesting detail: Israeli children are far less likely to have peanut allergies — about one-tenth the rate of that in Western nations. Scientists posit that it's because they begin eating Bamba at an early age.

By the way, I am now a big peanut butter fan. If I'm really tired and have no desire to cook, I've been known to take the peanut butter out of refrigerator — yes, I keep mine in the frig because my mom always did — and put it on rice cakes or matzah as my main course. I usually pull a few veggies out of the frig to make sure it's part of a balanced diet, but it doesn't bother me to have peanut butter more than once a day. I try not to think about how much easier life would have been for my mom if I had eaten peanut butter when I was young, but she would probably say it wouldn't have made that much of a difference: I was a really picky eater and generally a very contrary child. My not eating peanut butter was the least of her problems.



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Jerusalem Biennale showcases Israel's resilience amid Gaza war

By Judy Lash Balint
(JNS)—Israel's war against Hamas grinds on, and Israelis struggle to come to terms with the number of dead and wounded soldiers and the heartbreak of the hostages, yet every week brings evidence of extraordinary efforts to revive and preserve the country's vibrant cultural life.

Over the past decade, the Jerusalem Biennale established itself as the largest platform in the world for contemporary Jewish art and a much-anticipated event in Jerusalem's cultural calendar. However, the sixth Jerusalem Biennale, which was supposed to take place last November, was canceled due to the war. In a display of solidarity, several of the exhibitions did get shown over the past few months in North and South America and Europe.

Now, the Jerusalem Spring Biennale is holding 12 openings between March 10-22 to showcase more than 30 art installations in "some of the most interesting" venues around the capital, including the historic Sha'arei Tzedek building on Jaffa Road, Heichal Shlomo Museum, the Bible Lands

Museum, The U. Nahon Museum of Italian Jewish Art, Museum On The Seam, Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, Jerusalem Theater, The Jerusalem Botanical Gardens, HaMifal, Beita Gallery, the Black Box Street Gallery and others.

All exhibits will run through April 29 and, despite Israeli's preoccupation with the war, are expected to attract thousands of visitors. While most of the works were prepared before the war, some artists created new content after October 7.

At a preview held at one of the sites, the U. Nahon Museum of Italian Jewish Art, Jerusalem Biennale founder and creative director Rami Ozeri told JNS, "The importance of staging the Biennale, bringing people together around art, was only reinforced by the current situation that affects the global Jewish world in different ways."

Art, said Ozeri, "carries a social message that is both open to interpretation and dependent on the context. Now that context is war and even growing antisemitism. For me, the message of the art underscores our strength, which is far greater than what we may have thought — especially the strength of women. We see this in the Spring Biennale's art, curated and created by women from Israel and overseas."

The challenge of establishing and maintaining channels of collaboration in the international art world is now greater than ever, and more important than ever, he added. "We are absolutely committed to keeping Jerusalem on the international map of contemporary art."

The theme of the 2024 Biennale is Iron Flock, a literal translation of the Hebrew phrase Tzon Barzel — a term used idiomatically in contemporary Hebrew to describe shared cultural assets.

The Threading Exhibit at the Museum of Italian Jewish Art explores the cultural



Jerusalem Biennale founder and director Rami Ozeri (Photo by Judy Lash Balint)

assets created by Jewish women, particularly in the textile arts. The curator of the exhibit, Emily Bilski, told visitors that she was presiding over "a conversation between the contemporary women artists and the works of textile art in the permanent collection that were all made and dedicated by women."

Heddy Breuer Abramowitz, a Jerusalem artist exhibiting a piece in the textile exhibit based on an heirloom fabric that was part of her grandmother's trousseau, told JNS, "We cannot escape the presence of the war, yet we are also starved for what elevates us in life: literature, art for the spirit and soul. The Jerusalem Biennale belongs here in this difficult place. It is important that we turn the spotlight toward Jerusalem, flaws, fissures, and yet the foundation stone of Jewish thought."

She added, "I am not sure whether the artists creating here would have the same rich material to pull from were they in any other place. I am also not sure seeing these art works in another place would bring the same reaction. The war has sharpened each of us who live here to being hyperaware of what is important and appreciating each patch of the crazy quilt that is our society."

BBYO.....Continued from page 7

(23 percent) and Snapchat (17 percent).

Matt Grossman, CEO of BBYO, called the survey "a critical wake-up call, revealing the stark reality that Jewish teens are enduring."

The Jewish youth organization said in a statement that "the data indicates that the October 7 terrorist attacks by Hamas and the subsequent spread of misinformation and antisemitic rhetoric and violence have had a traumatic impact on Jewish high school students' safety, well-being, and mental health."

According to the report, 74 percent of BBYO members have seen more discrimination since October 7.

Grossman emphasized that "every Jewish teen deserves to feel safe and supported, and it is incumbent upon us to ensure they have those safe spaces, as well as the tools and assistance they need, to navigate these turbulent times with strength and pride. We are so proud and grateful that involvement with BBYO has played such a significant role in helping teens cope with elevated levels of stress and anxiety."

The uptick in antisemitic incidents and even hate crimes on college campuses has also come to play an important role this year for 64 percent of respondents in deciding which school to attend.

Generations.....Continued from page 4

Russia when she was 4. Then she traveled to the United States, had another family and never tried connect to her first child. However, Irena also had a difficult childhood. After the death of her father, her mother sent her to live with relatives who did not greatly involve themselves in her life. At the school she attended, Irena became involved in the revolutionary, anti-czarist movement. Yet, her actions were based less on political zeal than her desire to be part of a group — first through a teacher at school and then through another student who was active in plotting to overthrow the government. At times, Irena's behavior feels inexcusable, although she always finds a way to justify her actions.

While listening to Irena, Zhenia comes to understand more about the relationship between Vera and Marina, which helps explain not only the interaction between

her mother and grandmother, but about her own upbringing. The question then becomes whether Zhenia can find it in herself to excuse her great-grandmother's actions without betraying her grandmother. She also needs to decide how to live her own life, including finding a way to support herself and the child she is carrying.

The plot of "Mother Doll" is more complex than this summary suggests and includes some unusual digressions. Readers may find it difficult to care about Zhenia and Irena, although watching their interactions — especially when Zhenia truly comes to understand what Irena has done — was the best part of the novel. Its ending was unexpected and not entirely convincing, although it was intriguing. Those who can tolerate works whose characters are challenging to admire may enjoy "Mother Doll."



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PASSOVER Greetings

April 19 (Deadline: April 11) Personal Greetings and Health Care Greetings

Passover is traditionally a time for sharing with family, friends and strangers. While your seder table may not be large enough to fit all these people, you can share the warmth of this holiday with the entire local Jewish community by placing a Passover greeting in *The Reporter*. You may choose from the designs, messages and sizes shown here - more are available. You may also choose your own message, as long as it fits into the space of the greeting you select. (Custom designs available upon request.) The price of the small greeting is \$21 (styles I & J), the medium one is \$40 (styles G & H), and the next sizes are not shown. The next actual size is 3.22" x 2.958" and is \$59. The largest size is 3.22" x 3.95" and is \$78. To ensure that your greeting is published, simply fill out the form below and choose a design that you would like to accompany your greeting, or contact Kathy Brown at 607-724-2360, ext. 244; or e-mail advertising@thereportergroup.org. Checks can be made payable to *The Reporter* and sent to: The Reporter, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850.

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