

THE REPORTER

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Federation to hold Active Shooter Training on June 23

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton will hold an Active Shooter Training with Captain Christopher Streno of the Vestal Police Department on Thursday, June 23, at 6:30 pm, at Temple Israel, 4737 Deerfield Place, Vestal. The training is a follow-up to the Security Seminar the Federation held on May 12. Due to the seriousness of the content, one must be at

least 18 years old to attend. To register for the event, contact the Federation at 724-2332 or director@jfgb.org, or visit www.jfgb.org.

“Sadly, we are living in an era that requires all people in this country to be vigilant of their surroundings,” said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. “No matter how many security measures

we have in place, if we wish to be a welcoming community, we risk having a terror attack. The important thing is to know what to do if, God forbid, that does happen. We hope and pray never to have to put what we learn into practice, but it is clear that the best thing we can do is be prepared.” Streno, who spoke at the Security Seminar, has more than 30 years of experience

working in law enforcement. His skills include hostage negotiation, crime prevention and community policing. He will outline steps people should take if they are in an active shooter situation.

“What could be more important than learning how to save your life or the life of someone else? Please make it a priority to join us for this important training,” Hubal added. “Help us to protect each other.”



JCC to hold Annual Meeting on June 30

The Jewish Community Center will hold its Annual Dessert Meeting on Thursday, June 30. All JCC members, friends and supporters are welcome to attend. The doors will open at 7 pm for a dessert buffet and drinks prepared by chef Victor Torres. The event is free to the community. Anyone planning on attending is requested to call the JCC office at 724-2417 to make a reservation.

The evening will begin with a brief tribute to Ukraine, including a video performance done by the New York Broadway cast of “Les Misérables” standing in solidarity with the Ukrainian people.

Presentation of awards thanking those individuals and organizations that went

above and beyond in their support of the JCC this past year will follow, including a presentation in honor of JCC honorary president, the late Buddy Koffman.

The meeting will conclude with the installation of the 2022-23 JCC Board of Directors:

◆ Executive Committee: Susan Walker, president; Jeff Platsky, treasurer; Bonnie Brown, secretary; Carrie Wenban, past president; Lillian Levy, past president; and Mark Walker, Federation Liaison.

◆ Board members: Glenn Alenik, Gerry Hubal, Neil Auerbach, Jeff Loew, Lisa Berk, Justin Salkin, Charles Gilinsky and Jeff Shapiro.



At right: Jewish Community Center staff enjoyed the last Annual Meeting.

Federation to sponsor day at Rumble Ponies on July 10

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton will sponsor a Jewish community outing to see the Rumble Ponies baseball team on Sunday, July 10, at the Mirabito Stadium, 211 Henry St, Binghamton. The game will begin at 1:05 pm. Discounted tickets are \$4 each and must be purchased through the Federation, either at its website, www.jfgb.org/; the Federation office, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal; or by calling the Federation at 724-2332. Vouchers will

be given in case of a rainout. The last day to purchase tickets is Tuesday, July 5; those purchasing by mail should include the form on page 3. The Federation is also looking for a child 5-15-years-old to throw out the first pitch.

“It’s summer and that

means baseball!” said Shelley Hubal, Federation executive director. “We thought this would be a great communitywide event for baseball fans, families with children of all ages and anyone looking to connect with others in the Jewish community.

What a great way to spend a

Sunday afternoon: a baseball game and time with old or new friends.”

Hubal continued, “We will also be choosing a child to throw out the first pitch. If your child, aged 5-15-years-old is interested, contact me at 724-2332 or director@jfgb.org. We’ll all be there to cheer on the child who is picked.

“We are so pleased to offer reduced price tickets for our Jewish community members. Be sure to join us for a fun afternoon,” Hubal said.



TC-TI Adult Education to present Bill Simons discussing Hank Greenberg on June 19

The joint Temple Concord and Temple Israel Adult Education Committee will hold a brunch featuring a presentation by Professor Bill Simons on “The Legacy of Hank Greenberg, Baseball’s Pre-eminent Jewish Hero” at Temple Concord on Sunday, June 19, at 10 am. There will be a \$7 charge at the door for the brunch, which will be followed by the talk. Reservations should be made by Thursday, June 16, by contacting the synagogue at 723-7355 or templeconcordaa@gmail.com. Walk-ins will also be welcomed. The program will be available on Zoom, at <https://bit.ly/3vWNAhA>, meeting ID 850 9986 1626 and passcode 623610.

Simons’ lecture will examine Hank Greenberg’s 1934 decision not to play

during a play-off game that was held on Rosh Hashanah within the context of the national and international zeitgeist of the time. A PowerPoint presentation will employ photographs and other supporting materials. In addition to the 1934 High Holiday decision, the lecture will discuss the full arc of Greenberg’s Hall of Fame baseball career, military service, role in facilitating the racial integration of baseball, evolving relationship to Judaism and legacy, as well as a comparison to Sandy Koufax and contemporary Jewish major leaguers.



Professor Bill Simons (Photo by Armand La Potin)

Questions and comments will follow the formal presentation.

“Despite a career abbreviated by four-and-one-half years of World War II military service, Greenberg, a 6’4” first baseman-outfielder, ranks as one baseball’s greatest sluggers and stands with pitcher Sandy Koufax, a fellow Hall of Famer, atop the list of the game’s most iconic Jewish players,” said organizers of the event. “In the equivalent of nine-and-one-half seasons, Greenberg hit 331 home runs, accumulated 1274 runs batted in, averaged .313, four times led the American League

in both home runs and runs batted in, won two Most Valuable Player Awards, and led his team to four pennants. Until 1998, no right-handed batter exceeded Greenberg’s 1938 season total of 58 home runs. His .605 career slugging percentage is exceeded by only five other players.”

Organizers added, “In contrast to Koufax, whose 1961-1966 pitching peak coincided with a period of general acceptance of Jews in America, Greenberg’s 1933-1940 prime seasons took place amidst resurgent domestic antisemitism, fueled by victims of the Great Depression who blamed hard times on the Jews, and isolationists who believed that Jews sought to provoke a war between Nazi

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Jews in Baseball

Baseball Hall of Fame President Josh Rawitch

BILL SIMONS

On September 8, 2021, the National Baseball Hall of Fame performed its most important rite, the induction of new honorees. September 8 was also the second day of Rosh Hashanah, 2 Tishrei 5782. On the very next day, September 9, Josh Rawitch assumed the HOF presidency.

Josh addressed the Rosh Hashanah episode during our April 25 telephone interview. He takes seriously his obligations as president of the Hall of Fame – management, fund-raising, public face – and as a practicing Jew. Although the Rosh Hashanah induction and its scheduling preceded Josh's presidency, he responded candidly. The schedule conflict was regrettable, but difficult to avoid. Due to the COVID cancellation, the 2020 inductions were added to the 2021 ceremony, which the pandemic moved from its usual mid-summer slot. And the Cooperstown hotel situation left little flexibility. Josh asserted that the induction-High

Holiday conflict was “certainly not something we would want to repeat in the future.”

Carrying a name, Joshua, prominent in Hebrew tradition, he found family and Judaism intertwined. The saga of East European Jewish immigrants, settlement in the Lower East Side and Chicago, and post-World War II migration to Los Angeles' San Fernando Valley is told in his mother's book, “100 Years of An American Jewish Family.” Parents Bob and Cynthia, prominent educators and journalists, raised Josh, twin brother, Jeremy, and older sister, Dana, in the Conservative tradition. Family observance, temple, bar mitzvah, confirmation, United Synagogue Youth, Camp Ramah and a family trip to Israel shaped Josh's Jewish identity. Supporting Soviet Jewry in the late 1980s, Josh and Jeremy were paired with Russian twins. For a time, Josh and future MLB player and manager Gabe Kapler were in

the same Hebrew School class. Josh expresses pride that Dana is the first woman CEO of Jewish LearningWorks, a leader in outreach education.

His wife Erin, a photographer/website creator, is Christian, but she supports Josh's strong commitment to Judaism. Bat mitzvahed at their former synagogue in Arizona, daughter Emily attends a summer Jewish sleep-away, Camp Stein. Son Braden, studying under his aunt, will observe his bar mitzvah at the Hall of Fame.

Counting Josh, the Hall of Fame has had only eight presidents since opening its doors in 1939. Jeff Idelson, Josh's predecessor, is also Jewish. COVID, technology, an aging fan base, declining attendance, cultural shifts and competition confront the sport that once stood unrivaled as America's national pastime. Although only 44 years old, **See “Rawitch” on page 3**

Opinion

In My Own Words

Gun violence and free speech

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Gun violence

Is it possible to say anything new about gun violence? In April, before the killings in Buffalo and Uvalde, TX, I'd thought about doing a column after reading this in *The New York Times*' daily e-mail: “Murders have spiked nearly 40 percent since 2019, and violent crimes, including shootings and other assaults, have increased overall. More tragedies, from mass shootings to smaller acts of violence, are likely to make headlines as long as higher levels of violent crime persist.” Talk about an accurate, but incredibly sad, prediction.

In order to deal with gun violence, we need to talk about at least three things:

1) Realistic gun control: There is no way to stop Americans from owning guns. In fact, I'm not advocating restricting access to all guns. But there is no need for citizens to own assault rifles. Those are not hunting guns: they are only used to kill people. If gun licenses were more like driver's licenses with tests and restrictions, we might be better off. But this isn't an easy issue to discuss because many people believe gun control = no guns. I know some people want that to happen, but it's just not realistic.

2) Mental health awareness: We need to increase mental health services and find better methods of intervention to stop attacks before they happen. But we also have to realize that some attacks are more about hate than mental illness. How we can stop the isolation and radicalization that leads to those attacks? Unfortunately, I have no idea,

but we need to talk about the issue because some people do have ideas about what can be done.

3) American culture: An underlying problem is our culture. Even though we are no longer pioneers, the pioneer image underlies much of the pro-gun movement. The need to protect our homesteads and the idea that we are under threat from our neighbors underlies the desire for guns. In addition, people see anyone who has different ideals about America as undermining our country. Change is seen as the enemy, rather than a path to improvement.

How do we change American culture? With the continuing polarization in our country, I don't know if that's possible, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't try. We must also call out those politicians who refuse to protect us, to take a stand against violence. The fact is that some of them fear that violence will be turned on them if they do. If so, then they either need to overcome that fear or resign. We must change America's culture because right now no one and nowhere is safe. If we don't and gun violence continues, we've lost the right to call ourselves a civilized nation.

Free speech

A recent “Pearls Before Swine” comic strip mentioned something interesting about the state of American society: One character wakes up from a nightmare, saying that he dreamed that if you said one wrong thing, then your career would be over and you would be ostracized by your friends. The second character notes that's not a dream and disavows their friendship. The strip is partly correct: On the left, if

you say something that is not politically correct, you will be condemned and your career will be in tatters. People are expected to agree on everything and if someone dares to question whether a path is correct, they are condemned. They refuse to listen to anyone who disagrees with them and, on some college campuses, protest speakers who offer a different side of an issue. That's a sad commentary on the state of higher education.

However, that is not true everywhere and for everyone. When the left condemns a statement by someone on the right, those same statements are cheered by supporters from the right. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, Sen. Ted Cruz, Rep. Lauren Boebert and Sen. Bill Cassidy have all made outrageous statements lately and, while those on the left have condemned them, their popularity with supporters have not dropped one bit. Wonder what they said?

◆ Newsweek reports that “Republican U.S. Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia has promoted a conspiracy theory that claims billionaire Bill Gates is hoping to ‘make a lot of money’ from an outbreak of monkeypox.”

◆ Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) stated that “one of the big problems around mass shootings is that there are just too many doors in buildings,” according to HuffPost. People have noted that one reason for having more than one door to a building is to help people escape in case there is a fire or gunman.

◆ Rep. Lauren Boebert has compared guns to airplanes, noting planes weren't banned because they were used in 9/11. That may be true, but automatic rifles have little purpose except for killing as many people in as short a time as possible, something not true of airplanes.

◆ Sen. Bill Cassidy believes the people of his state, Louisiana, need assault rifles to kill feral pigs. Hmm, that's kind of insulting to the hunters in his state, in addition to the fact that there are other ways of keeping that population under control.

Does anyone seriously think these statements are going to prevent these folks from being re-elected? I wish they would, but let's be honest: for every person who thinks what they said are nonsense, there is at least one, if not more, who agree with them. How do you think they got elected in the first place? Do I want to silence these folks? No, because I do believe in free speech, but I also believe there should be repercussions if someone shouts “fire” in a crowded theater when there is no fire. I'm also not sure, though, that every word they say needs to be reported in newspapers and website, because that reportage only gets them more followers. However, incorrect facts on both sides – right, left and anywhere in-between – need to be corrected, but we are so polarized that one side sees as an opinion, the other side sees as a fact. That is profoundly sad and does not bode well for our country.

Letters

The human cost of COVID

To the Editor:

I want to personally thank you for your sensitive and hopefully widely read piece in *The Reporter* June 3-16. The human cost of this disease, intensely and societally recognized only when seasoned with widespread fear in the first few months of its assault on New York City, seems, like so many events of sadness in our society, to have rapidly passed from the American psyche. As you point out, the death toll is likely far greater than a million. And the toll of grief, which you describe so well as a family and friends multiplier, far greater than that. And that does not even address the issues of long-term COVID syndrome, or medical problems with heart or brain that may not be evident for years, especially in infected children, or the behavioral/psychological/educational damage done to schoolchildren, or the families with meager savings who found themselves bankrupted by

business and job losses. Thank you especially for encouraging your readers to be fully immunized.

One million is an arbitrary if horrific data point, and as such will not resonate with all people. Five-hundred-thirty-one deaths in our county alone might convey better to a community through what it is that they are passing. As I have observed to some of my friends and family, our nation seems capable of denying or ignoring such terrible loss and suffering within our own borders and of showing indifference the one million landmark, instead choosing to act as if it is not only “over,” but that it wasn't all that bad. Then what do its citizens care about six million European Jews massacred over a four year period in Europe 80 years ago? Sadly, probably, even less.

Sincerely,
Mark Epstein, M.D.



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

LETTERS

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

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TI continues Brick Walkway fund-raiser

Temple Israel still has spaces for commemorate bricks in its Brick Walkway. More than 110 commemorative inscribed bricks have already been installed. One does not have to be a member of Temple Israel to install a brick;

businesses are also welcome.

“The Brick Walkway fund-raiser started as a way to raise money when the temple building collapsed in 2013,” said organizers of the fund-raiser. “For the cost

of a tank of gas, you can create a lasting legacy. We’ll install and maintain your brick. Your help will make you feel better.”

The cost of the small brick is \$100; larger bricks are available for \$200 and \$400. Inscriptions should be 14 characters long and two lines are available. Examples of inscriptions are those made in memory of or in honor of someone. Payment should be sent to Temple Israel, 4737 Deerfield Place, Vestal, NY 13850 with inscription information.

For more information or answers to questions, contact Temple Israel at 723-7461, Larry Hurwitz at 237-6256 or Al Lavker at 327-2476.

Rawitch..... Continued from page 2

Josh – imbued with remarkable social skills, discerning judgment and transformative vision – is well prepared for the challenges and responsibilities of preserving baseball’s history, connecting the generations and honoring excellence.

Immersion in the game came early for Josh. As a young boy, he listened, with his parents and grandparents, to the legendary Vin Scully broadcast games of his favorite team, the hometown Los Angeles Dodgers. Years later, Scully would congratulate Josh on the air upon Braden’s birth.

A utility infielder for Chatsworth High School, Josh had the thrill of going to bat in the Los Angeles city championship game at Dodger Stadium. In that same eventful year, Josh became a Dodger intern, beginning a career of more than two decades in MLB, punctuated by degree work at Indiana University and a two-year stint as a baseball reporter. Switching from marketing to media with the Dodgers, he ascended to the title of vice president of communications. Moving on to Arizona, he earned accolades as the Diamondbacks’ senior vice president of content and communications. Then, Jane Forbes Clark, chairwoman of the board of directors, called, offering Josh the presidency of the Hall of Fame.

Josh has experienced the intersectionality of Judaism and baseball. Playing school ball as the only Jew on the team, he asked the coach for – and received permission – to leave early for Hebrew school. As an MLB executive, he participated in discussions about Jewish and Israel appreciation days, as well as kosher refreshments. Handling logistics at the 2017 World Baseball Classic games in South Korea, Josh felt pride when Team Israel players – several the children of interfaith marriages with only a tangential connection to religion – felt a quickening of ethnicity, taking off their ballcap and putting on a *kippah* during the playing of “Hatikvah.” He feels a special relationship with Jewish fans, media and players, the latter evident when he bonded with Max Fried, a fellow native of the Los Angeles Jewish community, in the Atlanta clubhouse after the star pitcher had just pitched the Braves to victory in game seven of the 2021 World Series.

Judaism and baseball share a spirituality, and the Hall of Fame is the game’s sanctuary. For some fans, reflected Josh, a once-in-a-lifetime-trip to Cooperstown is akin to a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. I shared with Josh that when my father stood before Hank Greenberg’s plaque, he felt

emotion akin to what he experienced at the Wailing Wall. Josh agreed that Jewish fans continue to express an identification with players with whom they share a common ancestry that is now less common amongst those from other ethnic groups.

Josh acknowledged that the story of future Civil War General Abner Doubleday inventing baseball in 1839 Cooperstown is apocryphal. National myths, at their best, however, express who we were, who we are and who we aspire to be. The Hall of Fame arose on the Doubleday myth, and the baseball shrine brought the Rawitch family, now living in the myth, to Cooperstown.

A progressive, cognizant of his obligation to all members of the diverse family of baseball, Josh named Ryan Selzner the HOF’s first woman vice president (people and culture). As for history, the way to change the past is to render it more inclusive, perhaps by exhibits and events highlighting specific groups, including Jews. The HOF might sponsor a conference examining recent Jewish baseball phenomena, including the 2006 Israel Baseball League, the great run of Team Israel in the 2017 World Baseball Classic and 2021 Olympics, the Bregman/Braun/Pederson/Fried MLB generation, and women of the game.

Josh’s baseball ascension would have elicited amazement and *nachas* from his grandparents.

Bill Simons is a professor emeritus at SUNY Oneonta where he continues to teach courses in American history. He is also the co-director of The Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture, and served as a speaker for the New York Council on the Humanities.

*The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to **Howard Brown Jr.** on the death of his father,*

*The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to **Dr. Andrea Rothe** on the death of her mother,*

REPORTER DEADLINES

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

ISSUE	DEADLINE
July 1-14.....	June 22
July 15-28.....	July 6
July 29-August 11	July 20
August 12-25.....	August 3

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

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Joyce Haber memorial

Joyce Haber loved being part of the Yiddish Group. Please come to a virtual celebration of life memorial on Sunday, July 10th, from 2-3:30pm EST. Please RSVP for details and link to the service. Respond to Julie Haber at 520-730-3585 (cell) and/or e-mail her at jamilajule@gmail.com for the Zoom link. We hope you will join us.

Looking for this issue’s “Jewish Resources”? Visit www.thereporter.org/streams/miscellaneous-features/miscellaneous-features/tag/80309? to find out what’s happening online.”

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Jewish Community @ Rumble Ponies Game

Sunday, July 10th
Game Starts at 1:05pm
Mirabito Stadium, 211 Henry St, Binghamton
Tickets are \$4

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton will sponsor a Jewish community outing to see the Rumble Ponies baseball team. Tickets can be purchased through the Federation in one of three ways:

- 1) At its website, www.jfgeb.org/
- 2) At the Federation office, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal
- 3) By Calling the Federation at 724-2332

Tickets are non-refundable. Vouchers will be provided if the game is canceled due to rain. The last day to purchase tickets is **Tuesday, July 5**; those purchasing by mail should include the form below. The Federation is also looking for a child 5-15 years old to throw out the first pitch.

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone number*: _____
* Where you can be reached on the day of the game.
Number of tickets: _____

PLAY BALL WEEKEND JUNE 10TH-12TH

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Off the Shelf

Tales from Poland and Israel

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

There are several approaches to writing short stories. Some offer only a brief glimpse of a person's life or thoughts. Others tell of events that encompass decades, but which focus only on the most relevant details. Each approach offers something different, reminding us of the unpredictable twists and turns life can take. These unexpected changes can be seen in two new works of short fiction. The tales in "I'd Like to Say Sorry, But There's No One to Say Sorry to: Stories" by Mikolaj Grynberg (The New Press) are really vignettes – very brief episodes that carry a powerful punch. Omer Friedlander's narratives in "The Man Who Sold Air in the Holy Land: Stories" (Random House) are more complex, but effective in their own right. Underlying all the stories are the joys and sorrows of the human condition.

Grynberg, who lives in Poland, has published several non-fiction books about Polish Jews that focus on life after World War II. A trained psychologist, he gathered those histories while working as a photographer. In his first work of fiction, Grynberg distills what he learned into gem-like short works, most of which read like conversations. Some stories feature narrators who learn they are Jewish when a relative reveals the family secret. Other narrators are clear in their dislike of Jews, even when they are unsure of why. There are also Jewish Poles who discuss living in a country that makes them feel less than welcome.

"I'd Like to Say Sorry" is only 140 pages long, but contains more than 30 stories. What's amazing is how complete and satisfying the stories are. For example, in "An Elegant Purse," an estranged daughter pushes her mother to show her her grandparents' graves, something the mother resists. The result is not what the daughter expects. Although two generations of the narrator's family found shelter in "The Convent," she hopes to prevent the same scenario from happening to future ones because being Jewish in Poland still feels unsafe. While more than happy to help tourists find the Jewish museum, the narrator of "Arkadia" performs a far greater service – a secret she

won't reveal to the tourists or friends. In "Sweet Dreams," a man withdraws from his survivor mother, who has one last secret to reveal. "Bringing Families Together" shows how powerful photos taken after the war can be and what attention to detail can uncover.

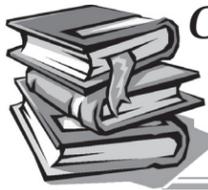
Grynberg's stories show how some in Poland are still haunted by the events of World War II and their country's actions during and after the war. His ability to distill so much meaning and feeling into a few short pages is astonishing, and makes his work well worth reading.

While Grynberg focuses on Poland, he and Friedlander do have something in common: neither has any illusions about the behavior of their homelands. In the brilliant "Checkpoint," Friedlander manages to show sympathy and understanding to both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in addition to offering a compassionate view of his main character: a woman who greatly mourns the loss of her son who was killed during his army service. That does not stop her, though, from documenting the behavior

of Israeli soldiers at checkpoints to make certain the Palestinians passing through are treated humanely. This story alone is worth the price of Friedlander's book.

Several stories focus on personal relationships between Israelis and Palestinians. For example, "Jaffa Oranges" allows the narrator to revisit his youth and the friendship he had with an Arab whose family owned the orange orchard where he once worked. These bittersweet memories remind him of actions he wishes he could change. Forbidden love occurs in "The Sand Collector," although the young narrator is well aware that she can never marry the Bedouin who has captured her heart and imagination. Israeli army service informs two stories: "Jellyfish in Gaza" and "Walking Shiv'ah" portray how that service affects all members of a family, whether or not their loved one survives.

While not every story focuses on the conflict, all portray their characters' mixed emotions about the changes that naturally occur as people change and grow. Friedlander is definitely a writer to watch.



Off the Shelf

Familial relationships

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Lifecycle events – changes in status – often make us pause and review our lives. They also can cause us to re-evaluate the way we understand our parents' behavior and our connection to them. These ideas form the basis for two recent memoirs: After his mother's death, Brian Morton discusses their strained relationship and the difficulties of caring for an elderly parent in "Tasha: A Son's Memoir" (Avid Reader Press), while Aileen Weintraub not only ponders the state of her marriage, but re-evaluates her beliefs about her late father, when she's placed on bed rest during a difficult pregnancy in "Knocked Down: A High-

Risk Memoir" (University of Nebraska Press).

Morton, the son of a Jewish mother and Irish father, strictly limited the amount of time he spent with his mother as an adult. He found her overbearing – something his friends confirmed when they talked his mother's unrealistic fears and demands. It didn't help that he'd published a novel with a comic portrait of her that she felt was unfair. Now that she's no longer living, he realizes that there was another side to her that he needed to explore.

The daughter of an actor who frequently traveled and often lived with another woman rather than his wife and daughter, Tasha (as Morton refers to his mother) left home early and worked for most of her life. She was an impressive, innovative teacher who later became a member of the Board of Education in Teaneck, NJ, and continued to attend meetings as long as she was able. (Tasha was so well-known that, when she died, the Teaneck newspaper published an article about her life and work.) She was ahead of her time on school integration and, to practice what she preached, moved the family into a predominately Black section of town.

Yet, Tasha was also opinionated and stubborn. For example, she despised angel food cake and fought (and almost lost) a friend who innocently served that cake when she visited. Although Jewish, she disliked the Orthodox who moved into her Teaneck neighborhood. She complained that her children never visited enough, but her constant, unreasonable demands make it easy to understand why Morton and his sister limited the time they spent with her.

One major factor in Tasha's life was her marriage. Morton writes about its high and low points, for example, when his father lost his job, but was too proud to tell Tasha, whose discovery of the fact almost caused a permanent rift. Yet, the marriage was generally a happy one, so much so that Tasha was devastated when her husband died. Morton is not sure if that's when his mother began to show signs of depression or if being with his father had held her depression in check.

Other sections of the memoir focus on what occurs after Tasha has a stroke. Morton notes that, even before she started to suffer from dementia, you could never get Tasha to change her mind. After her stroke, she refused to listen to anything he and his sister said. Her house was a dangerous mess: even when prompted, she refused to get rid of even so much as a piece of paper. It finally becomes impossible for her to live alone, but there is another problem: her daughter had been ill and was in no condition to take care of her mother. Morton, on the other hand, finds himself unwilling to do so, at least at first. However, Tasha did live with his family for a short time before she moved to an assisted living facility as she began to need even more care.

Morton combines humor and pathos when discussing his mother, something that works, but which can be difficult to read, especially for anyone who has gone through similar experiences with a parent. His book does also discuss a real problem: the difficulty of finding people or a place who can make it possible for ill, elderly parents to retain their dignity. Morton notes that, in the U.S., parents and children are on their own. At least, Morton feels that way because, as he makes clear, he doesn't have a community that will help with the practical aspects of caring for an aging parent.

While Morton focuses on one relationship, Weintraub discusses numerous ones, including hers with her husband, mother and late father. The author didn't follow what she calls the traditional path for nice Jewish girls: college and an early marriage with children quickly to follow. Instead, she moves from New York City to the countryside, leaving See "Familial" on page 8



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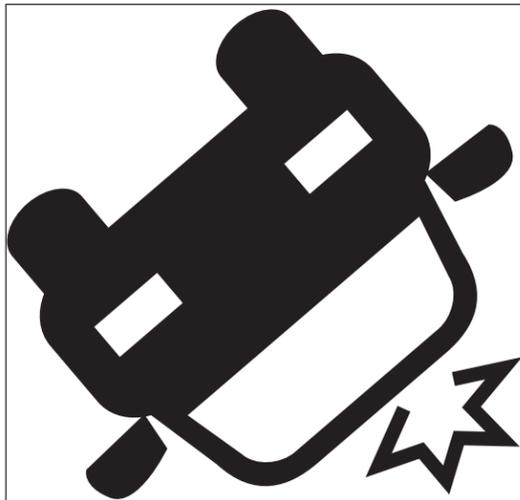
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Intersisterhood held in-person event

After a two-year hiatus of the in-person event because of Covid restrictions, the Beth David Synagogue, Temple Concord and Temple Israel Intersisterhood program took place at Beth David on May 25. "This event attracted one of the largest turnouts we've ever had," organizers say. "Approximately 55 attendees laughed, swayed and even hummed along as David Sperber and Robert Rogers, who were accompanied by John Isenberg on the piano, regaled us with their clever Jewish-inspired reworkings of famous Broadway show tunes in a performance they called 'Better Than Never!'"

The refreshments part of the program was coordinated by Judy Silber with the help of Ani Loew, Barbara Zelter and Susan Wright. The program was dedicated to the

memory of Paula Rubin, who served as Sisterhood president at Beth David and who was instrumental in the concept of having an annual program where all three Sisterhoods came together to create a program that would bring everyone together. The Sisterhoods alternate at which synagogue the annual event takes place.

"My Mom loved Broadway musicals, and I loved going to them with her," said Paula's daughter Lisha Levin. "The Rubin family is so pleased to be able to support a program that she would have adored!"



Performers of "Better Than Never" (in back, l-r): David Sperber and Robert Rogers. In front: pianist John Eisenberg.



L-r: Barbara Zelter; Dora Polachek and Ani Loew, Intersisterhood coordinators.

At right, clockwise from left: Roz Antoun, Marsha Luks, Linda Lisman, Arlene Krassin, Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell, Merri Pell-Preus, Nancy Dorfman and Suzanne Holwitt.



At right, clockwise from left: Alice Bonis, Judy Silber, Cathy Valenchik, Susan Wright, Trudy Greenspan and Phil Goodman.



Approximately 55 people were in attendance at Beth David for the Intersisterhood show.



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DON'T LET ALCOHOL GET BEHIND THE WHEEL

When alcohol is the driver, nobody's safe! It doesn't take a large amount to do a lot of damage. Even one drink can cloud judgment and slow reflexes enough to hamper fast thinking and total control at the wheel. At holidays when many people celebrate "to the limit", steer clear of disaster. If you take a drink, don't take the driver's seat...and make it a safe and happy holiday weekend!

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Keeping the menorah lit

RABBI GEOFFREY BROWN, TEMPLE ISRAEL

The Torah portion BeHa'alotcha gets its name from the first word of distinction in its second verse, *beha'alotcha*, meaning "When you light up." This is not the Torah's prescription for smoking, but rather what the rabbis consider the prescription for keeping the menorah lit. And, the duty of keeping the lamp lit was commanded by God to Moses who is then, in typical Torah fashion, *Vayomer Hashem li'Moshe lamore*: And God said to Moshe, saying, "Speak to Aaron and say to him essentially, 'Keep the menorah lights on.'"

If one were to follow priestly tasks as ordained by God, one would characterize keeping the menorah lit as a perfect example of priestly daily tasks, among other ritual tasks as

part of the *Mishkan* /sanctuary's upkeep. "This simple daily ritual epitomized the role for the priest. The priest engages in rites that in essence never change."⁽¹⁾ This ritual, like many rituals, have a particular design as a reminder. In this case, we are being reminded that God is everlasting and each time we see the menorah, or in today's experience, each time we enter a Jewish house of worship, an eternal light hangs from above the Ark with the same purpose: to remind us of God's presence.

Another unusual passage in *parashat* (portion) BeHa'alotcha connects our 2022 Judaism to the Children of Israel wandering in the Wilderness. This passage has found its way into

our weekly liturgy, namely as part of our Torah service. As compared with Aaron's priestly mandated daily rituals, including the menorah's upkeep that provide routine and predictable solace to the Israelites, this verse reveals an opposite intent. "As the ark was carried forward, Moses would say, 'Adonai, rise up and scatter Your foes, so that Your enemies flee Your presence.'"⁽²⁾ Moses is signaling to the encamped Israelites that it is time to break camp and move to the next spot. The words spoken by Moses are not formulaic God-commanded edicts, but rather Moses' hedging words, words that sound like a plea, asking God to keep the Israelites safe from enemies

See "Lit" on page 7

Congregational Notes

Temple Israel

Orientation: Conservative
Rabbi: Geoffrey Brown
Address: 4737 Deerfield Pl., Vestal, NY 13850
Phone: 723-7461 and 231-3746
Office hours: Mon.-Thurs., 8:30 am-3:30 pm; Fri., 8 am-3 pm
E-mail: titammy@stny.twcbb.com
Website: www.templeisraelvestal.org
Service schedule: Tues., 5:30 pm; Fri., 5:30 pm; Sat., 9:30 am

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

On Saturday, June 18, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person (masks are required). The Torah portion is Numbers 8:1-12:16 and the haftarah is Zechariah 2:14-4:7. The bar mitzvah of Ezra Gindi will take place at 5:30 pm. At 9:45 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom.

On Tuesday, June 21, at 7 pm, there will be a Congregational/Board of Trustees meeting.

On Wednesday, June 22, there will be a Ritual Committee meeting at 10 am and Torah study from 4-5 pm on Zoom.

On Saturday, June 25, at 9:30 am, Shacharit services will be held via Zoom and in-person (masks are required). The Torah portion is Numbers 13:1-15:41 and the haftarah is Joshua 2:1-24. The b'nai mitzvah of Isaac and Aaron Sambursky will take place during services. At 9:45 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom.

On Wednesday, June 29, there will be Torah study from 4-5 pm on Zoom.

The temple office will be closed on Monday, July 4.

Penn-York Jewish Community

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Temple Beth El of Oneonta

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
Rabbi: Amelia F. Wolf
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: Carol Levine, 315-696-5744
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.

Rohr Chabad Center

Affiliation: Chabad-Lubavitch
Rabbi Aaron and Rivkah Slonim, Directors
E-mail: aslonim@binghamton.edu
rslonim@chabadofbinghamton.com
Address: 420 Murray Hill Rd., Vestal, NY 13850
Phone: 797-0015, Fax: 797-0095
Website: www.Chabadofbinghamton.com
Rabbi Zalman and Rochel Chein, Education
E-mail: zchein@Jewishbu.com, rchein@Jewishbu.com
Rabbi Levi and Hadasa Slonim, Downtown and Development
Chabad Downtown Center: 60 Henry St., Binghamton
E-mail: lslonim@Jewishbu.com, hslonim@Jewishbu.com
Rabbi Yisroel and Goldie Ohana, Programming
E-mail: yohana@Jewishbu.com, gohana@Jewishbu.com
Regular service times: Daily 7:30 am, Friday evening 6 pm, Shabbat morning 9:30 am, Maariv and Havdalah one hour after candle-lighting time, Sundays 9:30 am.
To join the mailing list, for up-to-date information on adult education offerings or to arrange for a private tutorial, for details concerning the Judaica shop and resource center, or for assistance through the Piaker Free Loan Society or Raff Maasim Tovim Foundation, call Chabad's office at 797-0015.

Chabad will be holding pre-Shabbat virtual programs. For more information, visit www.JewishBU.com/S2020Partnership.

Norwich Jewish Center

Orientation: Inclusive
Rabbi: David Regenspan
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.

Temple Beth-El of Ithaca

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
Rabbi: Rachel Safman
Rabbi Emeritus: Scott L. Glass
Address: 402 North Tioga St. (the corner of Court and Tioga streets), Ithaca, NY 14850-4292
Phone: 273-5775
E-mail: rabbi-safman@tbeithaca.org and secretary@tbeithaca.org
Website: www.tbeithaca.org
Presidents: David Weiner and Linda Aigen
Sisterhood President: Gail Zussman
Director of Education: Rabbi Suzanne Brody
Services: Fri. 8 pm; Sat. 10 am, unless otherwise announced.
Weekday morning minyan 7:30 am (9 am on Sun. and legal holidays).
Religious School/Education: September-May: Classes meet on Sunday, 9 am-12:30 pm and Wednesday, 3:45-5:45 pm. The Midrashah (eighth grade and high school) classes will meet at times designated by their respective teachers.
Adult Ed.: Numerous weekly courses, several semester-long courses and a variety of mini-courses and lectures are offered throughout the year. Call the temple office for more details.

For upcoming services and events on Zoom, visit www.tinyurl.com/HappeningAtTBE.



Friday, June 17, light candles before 8:24 pm
Saturday, June 18, light candles after 9:25 pm
Friday, June 24, light candles before 8:25 pm
Saturday, June 25, light candles after 9:26 pm
Friday, July 1, light candles before 8:25 pm
Saturday, July 2, light candles after 9:26 pm

Beth David Synagogue

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

Temple Concord

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism
Rabbi: Barbara Goldman-Wartell
Address: 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905
Office hours: Tues.-Fri., 10 am-2 pm
Phone: 723-7355
Fax: 723-0785
Office e-mail: TempleConcordbinghamton@gmail.com
Website: www.templeconcord.com
Regular service times: Fri., 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, June 17: at 7:30 pm, Shabbat service with Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell and Rabbi Rachel Esserman. To attend in person, all must show proof of COVID-19 vaccinations. Masks are required. Join via Zoom at https://bit.ly/3hRmW2Y, meeting ID 869 9699 8146 and passcode 826330; or on the Temple Concord Facebook page.

Saturday, June 18: Torah study at 9:15 am on Zoom at https://bit.ly/3CVxM14, meeting ID 882 9808 7579 and passcode 676707.

Sunday, June 19: at 10 am, TI/TC Adult Education Brunch: "The Legacy of Hank Greenberg, Baseball's Pre-eminent Jewish Hero" by Bill Simons. For more information, see the article on page 1. Join via Zoom: https://bit.ly/3vWNAhA, meeting ID 850 9986 1626 and passcode 623610.

Friday, June 24: at 7:30 pm, Pride Shabbat Service with Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell. Proof of vaccination is required to attend Shabbat services. Masks are optional but recommended. Join via Zoom at https://bit.ly/3hRmW2Y, meeting ID 869 9699 8146 and passcode 826330; or on the Temple Concord Facebook page, or on the Temple Concord Facebook page.

Saturday, June 25: at 9:15 am, Torah study with Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell. Join via Zoom: https://bit.ly/3CVxM14, meeting ID 882 9808 7579 and passcode 676707.

Thursday, June 30: A 90th birthday party will be held for Sylvia Diamond on Thursday, June 30, at 2 pm, at the synagogue. Friends of Diamond are invited and should RSVP by Friday, June 24, by calling 723-7355 or e-mailing templeconcordaa@gmail.com. Anyone interested in assisting with the event should contact Nancy Dorfman at 760-2282.

Congregation Tikkun v'Or

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism
Address: PO Box 3981, Ithaca, NY 14852; 2550 Triphammer Rd. (corner of Triphammer and Burdick Hill), Lansing, NY
Phone: 607-256-1471
Website: www.tikkunvor.org
E-mail: info@tikkunvor.org
Presidents: Nomi Talmi and Shawn Murphy
Rabbi: Shifrah Tobacman, rabbishifrah@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.



On the Jewish food scene

Shehecheyanu food moments

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

In order to say the *Shehecheyanu* prayer (which thanks God for sustaining us and allowing us to reach this new season) on the second night of Rosh Hashanah, people either wear new clothing or serve a food they've not eaten since the previous year. For me, the summer months are filled with what I call "*Shehecheyanu* moments," beautiful reminders of the joy of survival and the bounty that appears in the fruit aisles of our grocery stores.

What a magical thing a grocery store is: air-conditioned in the summer and heated in the winter. That's not something to take for granted: try shopping outdoors in the worst heat of summer or the worst cold of winter. And no grocery carts allowed: there was no room on crowded streets and outdoor markets for them.

But I digress. My most recent *Shehecheyanu* moments were for the new fruits of this summer season. Yes, I know that summer has not yet arrived, but fruit that used to be limited to short periods of time are appearing earlier and

earlier each year. I have to admit the cherries weren't great, but they are on sale (probably because they were more sour cherries, rather than sweet ones). I'd bought three bags of them and ended up pitting (oy, did that take a long time!) and freezing many of them. I think they'll be perfect with some unsweetened yogurt, walnuts, cinnamon and maybe a bit of sweeter fruit to play off their tartness.

The surprise was the watermelon I bought. I didn't buy a whole one: I've had two people – who always pick the perfect watermelon – try to tell me how to choose a good one, but I can't visualize what they say when I'm in the store. (Note to self: Get them to go with me sometime and actually show me.) So, I bought some already cut into pieces. They were expensive, but they were wonderful! I ate them slowly and enjoyed every moment.

The point is to stop for a minute before eating and say the blessing as a reminder of how lucky we are to not only have this food, but to have survived another year. In our busy lives, we tend to rush through meals so we can get to everything we need to do. But saying the blessing over food and enjoying the first taste of the year can create precious moments of hope and peace in our lives.

Jewish Community Center

JCC Friendship Club

The JCC Friendship Club met on June 1. The meeting was called to order by Sylvia Diamond. We started by saying the Pledge of Allegiance. Then we had refreshments. Bruce Orden brought in the snacks. We all paid \$3 for dues. We read jokes about aging. Bruce showed us one by an unknown author who wrote "A Cat in the Hat on Aging," which is based on "The Cat in the Hat" children's book by Dr. Seuss. Sylvia brought in one joke about a 96-year-old woman at her husband's funeral. That isn't funny, but, when she said that at her age it seemed to be a waste of time to go home, it becomes humorous. Bruce showed more of the movie "Yentl" starring Barbra Streisand. He will show the end of it at the next meeting at the JCC. On June 18, a group of us met for lunch.

We are meeting for lunch on Wednesday, June 22, at 1 pm. The next meeting at the JCC will be on Wednesday, July 6, at 1:30 pm. For information about the restaurant, contact Sylvia at 722-0726.

Sylvia Diamond
President

Lit Continued from page 6 as they move to their next destination.

What is truly remarkable about this passage is how it is displayed in the Torah. It is as if the *sofer* (scribe) placed parenthesis around Hebrew written as upside down *nun* letters. Nowhere else in the Torah are *nuns* employed to demarcate a verse. This causes us to ask the question, "What is the Torah teaching us?" There is much debate about what we are to learn from this scribal nuance. My favorite explanation is that our passage is specifically found in the Torah between the Israelite's stuck in Sinai experience and their 40-year journey. It clearly symbolizes the stark difference between Aaron's priestly steady, regular, routine rituals and the uncertainty that Moshe led daily as he managed the everchanging details of this new people's wandering for 40 years. Consider the Torah's composition to be subdivided with the first three books, Genesis, Exodus and Leviticus with the first 19 chapters of Exodus and the last 25 chapters of Numbers providing a great story line packed with many incidents. Then the second subdivision is the remaining 59 chapters, the last part of Exodus, the entire book of Leviticus and the first 10 chapters of Numbers, there is no movement. Nothing happens. We are immersed in the *Mishkan* (tabernacle) zone. This zone is the place where we learn about how to make sacrifices to God, how to maintain purity and how to observe our newfound God-commanded ritual and practice.

The purpose of the double *nun* occurrence is perhaps the dividing line between the two halves of the Torah: the timelessness aspect while at Sinai during which we are like Aaron, tending to the daily lighting ritual of the menorah's eternal light and the time-bound aspect when the Children of Israel wandered in the wilderness in pursuit of the God's land gift – Israel. The verse found in our Torah service functions as the third division. A book within the books reminding us that the ark is central, whether we are going out in our journeys or staying at home.

- 1) Sacks, Jonathan. "The Book Between the Books," *Covenant & Conversation: A Weekly Reading of the Jewish Bible: Numbers, New Milford, CT, Maggid Books, 2017, p. 110*
- 2) This verse marks the point near the beginning of the Torah service when the ark is opened.

GRADUATION SIMCHAS

Congratulations to all our graduates!

THE REPORTER

 Mazal-tov, Sophie!
Good luck at Albany!
Love, Rebecca

 "How did this cute kindergartner grow up so fast?"
Congratulations to Sophie on graduating high school and on your acceptance to SUNY Albany!
Rabbi Rachel



Mazel tov, Ephraim and Ahuva on your graduation from Ner Yisroel High School and from Bais Yaakov!

Love, Grandpa and Safta



Katie, I'm going to miss seeing your smiling face when you head to college. Congratulations on your graduation and good luck at Ithaca College!

Rachel



Congratulations Rae on earning a BFA in Illustration and Animation from SUNY Fredonia, *summa cum laude*

Love, Mom, Dad and Josh



Congratulations, Katie, on graduating from Vestal High School! We're so very proud of you! Wishing you all the best at Ithaca College.

Love, Mom and Dad



Congratulations on your graduation, Katie! Wishing you the best as you go to college and beyond.

Kathy





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Simons Continued from page 1

Germany and the United States. Moreover, Greenberg played for the Tigers, who shared a Detroit home with Henry Ford and Father Charles Coughlin, arguably America's two most notorious antisemites. Automobile manufacturer Ford republished 'The Protocols of the Elders of Zion,' an infamous forgery purporting to document a Jewish conspiracy to control international finance and world government. Coughlin, a Catholic priest with a national radio show, railed against Jewish dominance of the American economy, manipulation of politics, and support of Communism. During the 1934 baseball season, public attention to Greenberg's Jewishness peaked both amongst co-religionists and Gentile Americans.

"The Tigers entered September 1934 battling for the American League pennant for the first time since 1909, and the 23-year-old Greenberg, the team's top slugger, was crucial to Detroit's chances," organizers continued. "With the automobile industry devastated by the Great Depression, baseball provided Detroit with one of its few strong bonds of social cohesion. When Greenberg indicated that he might not play in Detroit's September 10 home game against the Boston Red Sox because it conflicted with Rosh Hashanah, the press retorted that the Tigers needed Greenberg on the playing field more than ever during this crucial phase of the pennant race. Detroit sportswriters emphasized Greenberg's obligation to his teammates and to the fans."

As professor emeritus and former chairman of the History Department at SUNY Oneonta, Simons continues to teach courses on the "Jazz Age and New Deal," and "Athletics, Society, and Sports." He is a recipient of both the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence Teaching and for Excellence in Service. Simons earned degrees from Colby College (B.A.), the University of Massachusetts (M.A.), and Carnegie-Mellon University (D.A.). He is the longtime co-director of the Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American

History, an annual academic conference on the national pastime co-sponsored by the National Baseball Hall of Fame and SUNY Oneonta. He has been columnist for *The Reporter* since June 2020. Simons received the American Jewish Press Association 2021 First Place Award for Excellence in Writing About Sports for this column about Hank Greenberg.

Simon has served as editor and contributor to 12 baseball anthologies published by McFarland press. His articles, reviews and essays have appeared in numerous journals and books, including "Addressing Antisemitism and Racism in Statuary and Text: A Pedagogical Approach" in *Israel Journal of Israel Foreign Affairs*; "Jackie Robinson and the American Mind: Media Images of the Reintegration of Baseball," from "Jack Johnson to LeBron James: Sports, Media, and the Color Line"; "Greenberg at the Bat: A Twenty-first Century Jewish Moonlight Graham," "Cooperstown Symposium; "Baseball and American Culture: A Seminar," in "Baseball in the Classroom: Essays on Teaching the National Pastime"; "Hank Greenberg: The Jewish American Sports Hero," in *Sports and the American Jew*; "Sports," *Jewish-American History and Culture*; "Andy Cohen: Second Baseman as Ethnic Hero," in *The National Pastime: Baseball History*; "The Athlete as Jewish Standard Bearer: Media Images of Hank Greenberg," in *Jewish Social Studies*; and "Bloomfield: An Italian Working Class Neighborhood," in *Italian American*.

Simons has delivered many lectures on a wide variety of topics to numerous museums, libraries, colleges and Jewish organizations in New York State, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and Maryland. Many of his presentations were as a speaker for the New York Council on the Humanities. For many years, Simons served as the co-advisor to the Jewish student group at SUNY Oneonta. A labor activist, he served 16 years as president of the Oneonta chapter of United University Professions. Simons lives in Oneonta.

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

EU cuts its UNRWA budget by 40 percent

The European Union's 2022-24 UNRWA aid budget will be 40 percent lower than during the previous three-year period, the E.U. announced in May. The new budget will provide \$82 million annually, compared to the previous average annual figure of \$135 million, according to the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education (or IMPACT-se), a Jerusalem-based nonprofit that monitors educational materials around the world for extremist content. An additional \$15 million was granted through the E.U.'s Food and Resilience Facility for 2022 to help ensure food security following the impact of the Ukraine crisis, according to the report. In April of last year, the E.U. Parliament condemned UNRWA for teaching and producing U.N.-branded hate material uncovered by IMPACT-se, and conditioned E.U. funds on changes to the curriculum. The E.U. commissioner, who announced the reduced funding package, said last year, after the Parliament's condemnation, that the European Union would fight antisemitism and should consider conditioning aid to UNRWA on full adherence to UNESCO standards of peace and tolerance in textbooks.

Familial Continued from page 4

marriage to what her mother considered relatively late and, after finally marrying, moving into the old family house that Chris, her non-Jewish husband, now owns – a house that needs a lot of work. Weintraub feels her life is going well, though, especially when she becomes pregnant at age 29 – that is until she's placed on bed rest. That's when she begins to relive some of the same difficulties her mother faced: Chris refuses to share his emotions and is overwhelmed by the problems of the business he now owns. This leaves Weintraub to reflect on her own life and that of her parents, along with her own failing finances.

One major problem for Weintraub is that she still misses her father: he was her best friend and her hero, and she longs for him to give her advice on her marriage and her pregnancy. Her father is with her in some ways: she hears his voice in her head making suggestions, mostly telling her to buck up and stop complaining. Yet, as she revisits parts of her childhood, she remembers the more difficult times: the years her father suffered from depression and didn't work. Weintraub also acknowledges that her father could be unkind, although as a child, she seems to have either accept this or overlooked it. But thinking about him also helps her better appreciate her mother, who drives her crazy at times, but who always comes through when needed. (Although it still didn't feel as if Weintraub gave her mother enough credit for keeping the family financially afloat when

her father wasn't working.)

What makes her bed rest even more difficult is that Weintraub lost some of her closest friends when she married Chris. Her Orthodox Jewish girlfriends can't accept the relationship and no longer speak to her. Fortunately, Watson, her closest male friend, who is also Jewish, had no difficulty with her choice and the two are in frequent touch. Some of the best parts of the memoir are her phone conversations with Watson, who manages to combine snark with wisdom when Weintraub calls him about yet another emotional crisis.

The real focus of the work, though, is her pregnancy and whether the baby will go to term, or be born premature. Weintraub's descriptions of her doctor visits are funny and serious at the same time. She is filled with guilt for what seems to be no other reason than she is having a difficult pregnancy. But her fears are real: she not only worries about her child, but whether her marriage will survive this difficult time, especially since Chris is working long hours to keep the business he bought going.

By the end of "Knocked Down," readers may be as eager as Weintraub for her baby to be born. Fortunately, the author managed to keep her sense of humor – at least when writing this book, if not during her pregnancy. If readers are willing to follow Weintraub's fun-house, hormone-driven emotional ride, there are pleasures to be found in her work.

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