

Tamir Goodman to speak at Federation's pre-Campaign event on Aug. 17

By Reporter staff

Due to security measures, this is a private event. Those attending must register by Monday, August 11, by visiting www.jfgb.org, contacting the Federation office at 607-724-2332 or e-mailing director@jfgb.org. The locale will be revealed to those who register.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton will hold a pre-Campaign dessert reception featuring basketball player Tamir Goodman on Sunday, August 17, at 7 pm. Goodman will speak on "Spiritual and Life Lessons from the Game of Basketball." (An interview with Goodman can be found in the July 11 issue of *The Reporter*.) The event will serve as the 2026 Campaign kickoff event. Reservations must be made

by Monday, August 11, by visiting www.jfgb.org, contacting the Federation office at 607-724-2332 or e-mailing director@jfgb.org. Those attending will have the opportunity to make their 2026 pledge.

Goodman, who has been called the "Jewish Jordan," was the first Jewish athlete to play Division I college and professional basketball while wearing a yarmulke and observing Shabbat. In addition to being a basketball player, Goodman is the author



Tamir Goodman
(Photo by Chabad of Binghamton)

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of the book "Live Your Dream" and a coach who has worked with thousands of athletes worldwide. As an entrepreneur, he has brought three products to market, including the Aviv Antimicrobial and Moisture-Wicking Basketball Net. He currently serves as the director of strategic brand initiatives at Fabric. Goodman, who holds a B.A. in communications, has spoken to audiences across the world.

"We are so lucky to host Tamir as our speaker for this special Federation event," said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation.

"Tamir has an inspirational story of faith and commitment," said Marilyn Bell, 2026 Campaign chairwoman. "We are excited to engage him as our Campaign speaker. Join us for what is sure to be a meaningful event."

Federation to hold "Guardian" and "Stop the Bleed" trainings on Aug. 27

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton will hold a security training session on Wednesday, August 27, at 6:30 pm, at the Jewish Community Center, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal. The trainings to be featured are "Guardian: Identify. Protect. Respond." and "Stop the Bleed." The program will be led by Mark Henderson, regional security advisor, Rochester, for

the Secure Community Network. To RSVP, visit www.jfgb.org or e-mail director@jfgb.org; the deadline to register is Monday, August 25.

"To keep our mindset and skills evolving, we are pleased to bring back our security professional, Mark Henderson," said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. "These trainings have been updated and are unfortunately



becoming more relevant to our day-to-day lives. I hope you will join us for this important training that could help save a life."

"Guardian: Identify. Protect. Respond."

"Guardians are active participants in the safety and security of their families and communities. This training will focus on the development of a guardian mindset

and concrete skills that include identifying suspicious people, vehicles and packages," said organizers of the event. "These are principles critical to protecting oneself, family and community institutions, as well as principles surrounding how to respond during emergencies. A small segment on de-escalation skills is also included."

"This training is aimed at all members See "Stop" on page 5

Chabad Center to hold Piaker lecture on Sept. 4

The annual Pauline and Philip M. Piaker Memorial Lecture will be held on Thursday, September 4, at 7 pm, at the Chabad Center, 420 Murray Hill Rd., Vestal. The guest lecturer will be Joel Finkelstein, Ph.D., who will speak about "Algorithmic Hate: Botification, Antisemitism, and the Machinery of Mass Persuasion." There is no charge, but reservations are required and can be made at www.JewishBU.com/Piaker or by calling 607-797-0015. There will be an opportunity for a question-and-answer session after Finkelstein's presentation. A

dessert buffet will follow the program.

Finkelstein is the co-founder and chief science officer of the Network Contagion Research Institute, which deploys machine learning tools to expose the growing tide of hate and extremism on social media. He is a graduate of Princeton University, where his award-winning doctoral work focused on the psychology and neuroscience



Joel Finkelstein, Ph.D.
(Photo courtesy of Joel Finkelstein, Ph.D.)

of addiction and social behavior. He currently directs the Network Contagion Lab at the Miller Center for Community Protection and Resilience at Rutgers University, where he trains the next generation of students in the field of critical intelligence, social-cyber threat identification and threat forecasting. His work on hate in social media has appeared in "60 Minutes," *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street*

Journal, NPR and other media outlets.

"In his lecture, Finkelstein will use data driven studies to expose how foreign regimes, ideological movements and propaganda networks exploit America's openness – educational systems, nonprofit status, and digital platforms – to spread antisemitism and undermine national cohesion," said organizers of the event. "Drawing on NCRI's original research, the talk introduces the concept of botification: the cognitive process through which individuals lose See "Piaker" on page 7

Spotlight

Rabbi writes synagogue murder mystery

By Rabbi Rachel Esserman

Rabbi Suzanne Brody will hold a book signing for her murder mystery "Body on the Bima" at All My Friends Books, 51 Main St., Cortland, on Sunday, August 10, from 1-3 pm.

As a writer, Rabbi Suzanne Brody is best known for her books of poetry. That's why her latest publication might come as a surprise: "Body on the Bima" (Silver Bow Publishing) is a murder mystery. Its narrator, Rabbi Shachar Whyte, and her *b'nai mitzvah* students are preparing to lead a Friday evening service when they discover a dead body on the *bima*. Along

with Detective Misha Tara, Whyte tries to discover why the crime was committed and the name of the murderer.

Brody noted that she enjoys reading mysteries. "I've always felt that escaping into a cozy mystery is both fun and relaxing," she said in an e-mail interview. "There's a part of me that long wondered how people were able to write whole books like that since my poems and professional writing have always tended toward the shorter."



Rabbi Suzanne Brody
(Photo courtesy of Suzanne Brody)

Thinking of ideas for mysteries was originally a family activity. "Long before I ever started writing 'Body on the Bima,' especially on the walk home from synagogue on Shabbat, my husband and kids would happily brainstorm things that might be in a Jewish mystery," she said. "When I mentioned some of my ideas to friends and colleagues, they were very encouraging, and when my schedule finally allowed for some concentrated writing time, the pieces of 'Body

on the Bima' started to come together."

Fans of the book will be happy to know "Body on the Bima" will not be the only work featuring Rabbi Whyte. "I don't know if it will be a long series, but it's definitely not just one book," she said. "I've already started working on the next one with Rabbi Shachar Whyte and Detective Misha Tara – and have some ideas for a third that keep bouncing around."

Brody makes it clear in the book's opening "Author's Note" that this is a work of fiction. (She also writes that her book "is also not meant to be read as a solution to your See "Rabbi" on page 7

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Chautauqua 2025: “This is a very comfortable place to be a Jew”

By Bill Simons

Education, culture, recreation and religion – both its study and practice – are Chautauqua Institution’s pillars. Nestled in a rural, small-town parcel of southwestern New York state, the 750-acre community hugs Lake Chautauqua. Although primarily a nine-week summer Brigadoon, some year-round Chautauquans brave the winter. Often passed down through familial generations, roomy Victorian homes with distinctive porches set the architectural tone. Bestor Plaza serves as the town common. There are also hotels, condominiums, churches, restaurants, stores, classrooms, performance venues, a library, an art gallery and administrative offices. The amphitheater – where presidents, Noble laureates, entertainers and clergy have held court – has evidenced the morality to which Chautauqua aspires. Rather than fleeing, Chautauquans rushed onto that stage on August 12, 2022, when novelist Salman Rushdie was

stabbed to subdue the would-be assassin and to administer life-saving medical care.

Aside from bicycles and free buses, the streets are for walking. Cars are parked on the periphery of the grounds. The Chautauqua demographic leans toward affluent, white, well educated, friendly and liberal. A heterogenous assortment of Jews is integral to Chautauqua 2025. However, that was not always the case.

Founded in 1874 by Methodist minister John Heyl Vincent and Lewis Miller, entrepreneur and philanthropist, to strengthen Protestant Sunday school teaching, Chautauqua Institution evolved over the decades from Protestant exclusivity to interfaith pluralism. Aside from an incognito work retreat by composer George Gershwin in 1925 and the subsequent residential segregation of Jewish musicians from the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra, a “Gentlemen’s Agreement” long kept Jews from renting or

purchasing property at Chautauqua. They could, however, attend events through the purchase of a day pass. In 1959, Jewish services were held at Chautauqua for the first time, and the Hebrew Congregation formally organized in 1960. The first Jewish purchase of a home on the grounds received approval in 1965. The Everett Jewish Life Center opened in 2009, with the Chabad Jewish House following in 2014. The Methodist Church makes its sanctuary available for Saturday morning Shabbat services. Various venues sponsor Jewish events. And there is a Jewish presence in the Department of Religion. Today, approximately 25 percent of Chautauqua residents are Jewish.

In the interregnum between the 2024 and 2025 seasons, controversy, consequential to Jews, roiled at Chautauqua. In 2023, the institution had named Rafia Khader, a Muslim woman, director of religion programs. Her December 2024 See “Chautauqua” on page 7

Opinion

In My Own Words

Life is what happens...

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

“Life is what happens when we are doing the best we can.” That was the one thing I said during a home hospice visit that seemed to emotionally affect the relative to whom I was speaking. He had been talking about all the things he would have done differently the past year if he had known how close his parent was to death. I’m not sure where the words came from since I don’t recall thinking or saying them before, but he was not the only person affected by them.

As I drove home, I thought of all the times I’d done the same thing: thinking that if I knew then what I know now, I would have done things differently. Of course, hindsight is easy: we know the result of our actions. But we can’t guarantee if we had done something different that life would have been better. There might have been other problems or other difficulties that arose from those actions.

We have to give ourselves credit for doing the best we can with what we do know.

This was not the first time when acting as a chaplain that I’ve thought I should take some of my own advice. For example, when encouraging one individual to focus on the positive things happening to him, I noted that he should think good thoughts – that today will be a good day because (fill in the blank with whatever positive thing is happening that day). As a person whose basic nature is to focus on the negative, that’s good advice for myself, but it’s so hard to do. I’ve written before about how I relate to the characters in the Winnie-the-Pooh stories: I am a negative Eeyore who wants to be a very positive Tigger.

Yet, when running a business like *The Reporter*, there are times when it pays to think of the worst possible scenario so that I can be prepared if it happens. My family used to

laugh at me when I planned ahead for things to go wrong. However, that more easily allows me to change my plans, something at which I am not good. When I lived outside of Philadelphia during rabbinical school, I would say that making only one mistake traveling somewhere meant it was a perfect trip. That way I was prepared for the mistakes I did make and didn’t feel disappointed when they occurred.

However, it is far more difficult to do this when it comes to our personal life. If only, I’d been less strict about that; if only I’d realized that didn’t really matter; if only I’d known that a pandemic was coming; if only.... I think the idea is clear. If we could predict the future, life would be so much easier. But we can’t: all we have to work with is what we know right this minute. All we can do is remember that “life is what happens when we are doing the best we can.” We can only hope and pray that is enough.

Letters

Staying silent on Israeli actions in Gaza is a moral failure

To the Editor:

In April 2024, we were the only two people from the local Jewish community to speak in favor of the cease-fire resolution in Gaza before the Binghamton City Council. The resolution called for a permanent cease-fire, the return of hostages, increased humanitarian aid to Gaza and the reinstatement of U.S. funding for the United Nations relief agency for Palestinians (UNRWA). The resolution passed unanimously. In the weeks that followed, we were called out by various members of the local Jewish community for speaking publicly in favor of the resolution. It was unclear if we were criticized for being opposed to what was unfolding in Gaza and U.S. complicity, or the fact that we were Jews publicly criticizing Israel. We did not then, nor now, apologize for our position.

Today, nearly a year and half later, there is no cease-fire, hostages – living and dead – are not returned, and most would agree that the humanitarian crisis includes mass

starvation of Palestinian civilians along with the near total destruction of hospitals, schools and all forms of infrastructure. Since the beginning of the war, the Israeli government has severely restricted the amount of food, water, medical supplies and other aid allowed to enter Gaza. As a result, the people of Gaza are starving: they have been for months on end, and it’s getting so bad that the mainstream media and establishment politicians are finally paying attention.

This man-made famine is worsening by the day, with the World Health Organization reporting that one in five children under the age of 5 years old in Gaza are malnourished. The death toll in Gaza exceeds 60,000, with Israeli forces shooting and killing Palestinians as they wait for food at the drastically diminished aid distribution centers. Whether we call it genocide, ethnic cleansing or crimes against humanity, Israeli actions in Gaza appear to be in preparation for total displacement of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip readying it for annexation.

Coinciding with the horror in Gaza, the Israeli state is pursuing its expansionist goals in the West Bank. Israeli settlers, with the tacit support of the IDF, burn Palestinian villages and kill their inhabitants with the goal of driving them out of their homes and property. Meanwhile, here in the United States, any criticism of Israeli state policies, is conflated with antisemitism. Moreover, any support for the victims of Israeli state brutality and oppression is vociferously dismissed along with the deep-seated racism directed toward Palestinians in Israel-Palestine.

We ask ourselves, why, here in Binghamton, as across the U.S., there is mostly silence from the Jewish community and its lay and religious leaders when it comes to acknowledging Israeli state violence, which is too often aided by United States weapons and political support. By staying silent, we as Jews are failing the greatest moral test in modern history and putting the soul of the Jewish people at risk.

We can begin to speak out about the horrendous harm being inflicted upon the people of Gaza and Palestinians in the West Bank. We can begin by urging our representatives in the New York state assembly to vote in favor of the “Not On Our Dime” bill that will prohibit not-for-profit corporations from engaging in unauthorized support of Israeli settlement activity. We can begin by urging our congressional representatives to pass the Block the Bombs Act aimed at preventing the U.S. from sending certain weapons to Israel that have been used to harm civilians in Gaza, specifically referencing the use of “dumb bombs” and other weapons in attacks on schools, hospitals, and residential areas. This act seeks to ensure compliance with both U.S. and international law, and to hold Israel accountable for its actions. We can begin by signing on to the numerous petitions circulating to increase humanitarian aid. Lastly, we can begin by financially supporting organizations that support in various ways the victims of Israeli state oppression.

Rhonda Levine and Arie Ullmann

Correction

In the annual Community Guide, the address for Glass Creations by Carole was incorrect. Glass Creations by Carole is currently located at 108 Sunset Ave., Vestal. The corrected ad appears on page 5 of this issue. *The Reporter* apologizes for the error and any confusion it may have caused.



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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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Dedication to take place at Journal Celebration fund-raiser

Sandra and Fred Weitsman donate memorial sculpture to Hillel Academy

Hillel Academy announced that Sandra and Fred Weitsman have donated an outdoor sculpture that will stand as a tribute to those who lost their lives in the October 7, 2023, attacks in Israel. The sculpture will be formally dedicated at the school's 61st annual Journal Celebration on Thursday, September 11, which will be held at Temple Israel. The evening will include a ceremony honoring the Journal awards recipients – Dr. Howard Warner, CHOW Food Pantry and Rabbi Rachel Esserman – and the Weitsmans' generosity, while commemorating the lives lost. All members of the community are welcome to attend. Tickets for the Journal Celebration can be purchased by e-mailing hilleljournalgroup@gmail.com or calling 607-304-4544.

"The Weitsmans, longtime supporters of Jewish life and education in Broome County and beyond, felt deeply moved to

create a lasting memorial that would both honor the memory of the victims and offer a place of reflection and resilience for generations to come," said organizers of the event.

"We wanted to do something that helps children and families connect with the meaning of Jewish memory and solidarity," said Sandra Weitsman. "This sculpture is not just a remembrance of lives lost, but a reminder of the strength and hope that lives on."

The sculpture, which will be installed near the entrance to Hillel Academy, was commissioned from Boston-area artist Dale Rogers and designed to invite contemplation, learning and connection. Crafted in Cor-Ten Steel and Stainless Steel, it incorporates elements of Jewish symbolism; its inscription will read, "In memory of the lives lost on October 7, 2023. May their memory be a blessing."

Dr. Alexander Kaminsky, president of Hillel Academy, noted that the sculpture will serve as both an educational and spiritual landmark for the school community: "Our students will grow up seeing this sculpture every day – asking questions, learning its story and carrying its message forward. It's a gift that will shape our school's identity and values for years to come."

"We invite the community to share in this powerful moment of remembrance and unity," said organizers. "In a time of global uncertainty and local resolve, Sandra and Fred Weitsman's gift is a testament to the enduring power of memory, the importance of Jewish education, and the ability of art to help a community heal."

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

BD Luncheon on Sept. 13 to feature Eliyana Adler

Beth David Synagogue's 2025-26 Second-Saturday-of-the-Month Luncheon Speaker Series will resume on Saturday, September 13. Shabbat services will begin at 9:30 am, followed by the luncheon and program. Professor Eliyana R. Adler will speak on "Private Schools for Jewish Girls in the Tsarist Empire."



Professor Eliyana Adler (Photo courtesy of Eliyana Adler)

Adler is a scholar of East European Jewish history and will present insights from her award-winning book, "In Her Hands: The Education of Jewish Girls in Tsarist Russia" (Wayne State University Press, 2011, with a new edition in 2024). Her research – conducted in Russian and Lithuanian archives as well as the YIVO Institute in New York – challenges long-held conjectures about Jewish girls' education in the 19th-century Russian Empire. The work received the 2011 Heldt Prize from the Association for Women in Slavic Studies and was a National Jewish Book Award Finalist in Women's Studies. It was translated into Russian in 2022.

"Professor Adler's groundbreaking work upended some previously held erroneous assumptions about Jewish girls' education under the Russian Empire," said organizers of the event. "She shares what was considered commonplace, as witnessed in a remark made by a European-born rabbi in a 2000 interview that appeared in *The New York Times*. He is quoted as saying that Jewish girls in Eastern Europe did not need any education; they just needed to learn how to peel potatoes. 'In fact,' Professor Adler has noted,

'contemporary witnesses often remarked that Jewish women were much more educated than their peers. But how did this come about? My talk will discuss Jewish educational norms in the late 19th century, with a special focus on the private schools for Jewish girls that proliferated in the Russian Empire.'"

Adler recently joined the faculty in the Departments of History and Judaic Studies, and the Institute for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention, at Binghamton University. She holds a doctorate from Brandeis University, and teaches and studies East European Jewish history at Binghamton. In addition to her work on Jewish girls' education in Tsarist Russia, her most recent book, "Survival on the Margins: Polish Jewish Refugees in the Wartime Soviet Union" (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020) received both the Yad Vashem International Book Prize for Holocaust Research (2021) and the Rachel Feldhay Brenner Award in Polish Jewish Studies (2021). Adler has published articles in many journals and has held fellowships sponsored by multiple institutions. Her current research focuses on post-Holocaust Polish Jewish memorial books.

"We are thrilled to have Eliyana as part of our community and university," organizers said. "Her groundbreaking work is sure to be fascinating and enlightening. She looks forward to sharing her findings and answering the important See "BD" on page 8



DEADLINES

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

ISSUE	DEADLINE
August 22-September 11	August 13
September 12-25	September 3
September 26-October 9	Sept. 15 (early)
October 10-23	September 29 (early)
October 24-November 13	Oct. 13 (early)

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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Ithaca Beit Midrash announces 2025-26 schedule

The Ithaca Beit Midrash announced its 2025-26 class schedule. Courses will include "Mahloket Matter," "Jewish Witches and Witchcraft," "Jewish Demons," "Challah Covers," "The Midwives (Shifra and Poah)," "Revelation: What Really Happened at Sinai" and more. There are classes for children, teens, families and adults of all ages and backgrounds. Some classes are available on Zoom for those who don't live in Ithaca. Different levels of pricing are available for families or those taking more than one class.

The classes are taught by Rabbi Suzanne Brody, who

received her rabbinic ordination from the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies. Brody is a member of the Rabbinical Assembly's Committee on Jewish Laws and Standards, a JEA board member, and the author of multiple books of poetry and prose.

For more information about classes, visit www.ithaca-beitmidrash.com/2025-26-classes.

Bookkeeper wanted

The Reporter is seeking a part-time bookkeeper who has experience with QuickBooks, Excel and Access, plus a willingness to learn other programs and material as necessary. The bookkeeper must also be able to interact with clients in a personable manner.

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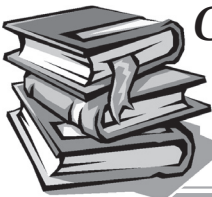
During the High Holidays 5786, JFS will be distributing monetary gifts to community members in need who always say,

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Off the Shelf

Science, fantasy and Israeli life

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

There is something wonderful about watching an author’s work blossom and grow. In my review* of Iddo Gefen’s “Jerusalem Beach: Stories,” I noted that the stories “prove Gefen is a talent to watch.” There is, of course, always a danger that a work will not live up to one’s expectation. In fact, when reading the opening chapters of “Mrs. Lilienblum’s Cloud Factory” (Astra House), I worried that the author was not going to be able to pull together the disparate pieces of his puzzle. I am happy to say that, not only did he successfully manage to do that, but his witty and quirky novel ultimately proved to be a moving piece of literature.

Although Sarai Lilienblum’s disappearance seems at first to be the focus of the novel, it is her son, Eli, whose point of view informs the work. Unlike many soldiers, Eli chose not to travel after his Israeli Army service, but rather to return to his parents’ house and work in the lodge his father, Boaz, runs. That lodge is a rather unsuccessful tourist destination in Israel located on a cliff, but it feels like home. Eli is not there just to help his father, but himself: “His military discharge had left him feeling adrift, and the work at the lodge gave him something to hold onto. Over the past year, he had rarely seen his friends, most of whom were long plane rides away, sending him photos from Himalayan mountain peaks or Aztec temples he knew he would never see with his own eyes, photos that only made him burrow deeper into the familiar cliff. The outside world loomed dark and muffled, and the thought of venturing out there made his chest constrict.” His sister, Naomi, on the other hand, so could not wait to leave home that she enrolled herself in a boarding school when she was 14 and returns as infrequently as possible.

Sarai, who is an inventor of sorts, is discovered in the desert drinking a cold martini by a hitchhiker after she had gone missing for three days. What is even odder is that she seems to have invented a machine – which looks like the family vacuum cleaner – that vacuums up sand and somehow turns it into clouds and rain. In a country that seeks to turn desert into fertile land, this feels miraculous. A video of her using the machine goes viral and Naomi, who works for tech companies, returns home to form a start-up company, which will produce the seemingly magical machine. Eli soon finds himself working for Cloudies, with his sister running the financial aspects of the company and his very impractical mother running the technological aspects. However, his mother has no practical experience in anything other than science and teaching, leaving Eli worried about not only the number of people his mother hires, but the amount of money spent on impractical and expensive extras for the staff.

Eli’s life becomes even more complicated when a new visitor, Tamara, arrives at the lodge due to her interest in the legend of McMurphy, an Irish hiker who disappeared into the desert. That mystery brings many visitors to the area because not only was no body ever found, but sightings of McMurphy continue and periodically an artifact connected to him is discovered by a hiker. As Eli spends more time with Tamara, he, too, becomes interested in what happened to McMurphy, especially after he realizes that solving the mystery might make him better understand his parents.

The best sections in the novel include philosophical discussions, which add, rather than detract, from the plot. For example, when helping his sister run Cloudies, Eli learns just how much of the business world is

show: he now sees it as “a world of inflated professional jargon meant to disguise the inherent unknowingness that existed in the lives of all those roaming the third planet from the sun. But even those who asserted with complete confidence that life was devoid of meaning didn’t know it with absolute certainty. They were just as single-minded and ignorant as everyone else. Perhaps, Eli pondered, the only way not to err was to believe that life was meaningful, yes, but also meaningless. To wholeheartedly embrace these two contradictory beliefs.” He realizes that everything can be both of utmost importance, while, at the same time, of little importance. This contradiction works not only in terms of Eli’s life, but explains his mother’s erratic behavior.

There is an absolutely beautiful section that describes the *kabbalistic* idea that our world was built by the breaking of vessels. It is normally thought that humanity’s task is to reassemble these shards and bring order to chaos. Sarai notes, though, that a very young Eli had a different interpretation of the story, suggesting that our purpose is not to return the world to what it was before the shards broke. Saria says that instead “he suggested the takeaway should be the opposite: everything in this world, no matter how beautiful, was constructed from shards – intrinsically imperfect. Even the most

exquisite flowers, or gorgeous cities.” That leads her to advise her listeners to “make it your mission to gather the vessels’ shards and spark of light and build new things. And not beautiful, pristine, whole things, but fractured, unconventional, crazy things. Because the way to build the world isn’t through replication, but creation.”

This might make it sound as if “Mrs. Lilienblum’s Cloud Factory” doesn’t have much plot, but rather it features several different plot lines that are difficult to discuss without giving away the surprises Gefen offers. Those surprises includes a few “oh, that is *not* what I expected to happen” moments toward the end of the novel. His wizard-like ability to enchant and surprise is amazing.

“Mrs. Lilienblum’s Cloud Factory” ranks as one of the best novels I’ve read this year. I found it charming and sweet, and I mean those adjectives in the most positive way. According to the author’s biographical note, he is working on his Ph.D. in cognitive psychology and neuroscience. I imagine his studies leave him little free time, but I hope he uses what time he can find to write more fiction.

*The full review of “Jerusalem Beach” can be found at www.thereporter.org/features/off-the-shelf-two-israeli-authors-393288.

On the Jewish food scene



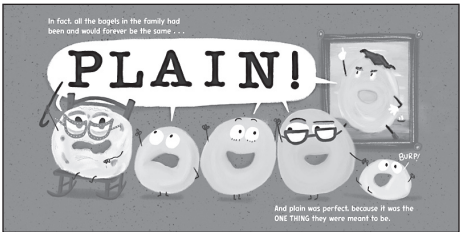
Lessons from a picture-book bagel

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

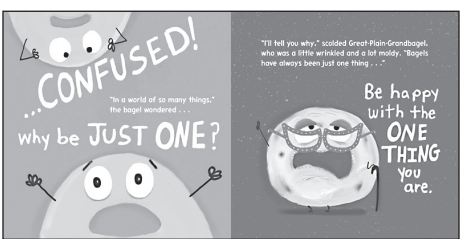
Alan Silberberg seems obsessed with drawing pictures of food, which is a good thing for children and adults who love funny picture books that feature talking food. He published an alphabet book of anthropomorphized Jewish food (see The Reporter’s review at www.thereporter.org/features/celebrating-jewish-literature-jewish-food-from-across-the-world-460561) and other works that feature matzah, latkes and hamantashen as the main characters. It’s not surprising that this Jewish author would at some point turn to bagels, as he did in his latest book, “The Bagel Who Wanted Everything” (Viking).

However, in this picture book, Silberberg seeks to teach children an important lesson: they can try different identities before deciding what fits them best. The main character is a plain bagel who wants to be more than plain. He asks why must an onion bagel only be onion or a sesame be only a sesame or... I think you get the idea. By way of some very silly action, the plain bagel manages to become an everything bagel, which encourages others to try out different types of identities (although I don’t think anyone is going to eat a spaghetti and meatball bagel).

Now you might be thinking I’ve managed



Above and below: Pages from “The Bagel Who Wanted Everything” by Alan Silberberg (Page used with the permission of Viking/Penguin Random House LLC)



to slip an extra book review into the paper disguised as a food column. Ah, but the book led me to ask an important food-related question: What is your favorite type of bagel? I’ve written before about some of my preferences (including the fact that there is no such thing as a blueberry bagel, only blueberry bread, and that chocolate See “Book” on page 7

ROSH HASHANAH 5786

Greetings

Deadline: September 4 (September 12 issue)

Once again this year, **The Reporter** is inviting its readers to place personal New Year’s greetings to the community. These New Year’s greeting ads will appear in our September 12 issue.

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 F and J), the medium one is \$40 (style H and I) and the largest one (not shown) is \$78.

To ensure that your greeting is published or for more information on additional styles, sizes & designs, please contact Kathy Brown at 724-2360, ext. 244; or e-mail advertising@thereporter.org. Checks can be made payable to **The Reporter** and sent to: **The Reporter**, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850.

Style H - \$40
Actual Size: 3.22" x 1.975"

May you be inscribed in the Book of Life for good health, peace and prosperity.

Your Name(s)

Style I - \$40
Actual Size: 3.22" x 1.975"

May this New Year be a time of peace & joy for you and all those you love.

Your Name(s)

ROSH HASHANAH Greetings

Deadline: September 4 (September 12 issue)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

E-mail _____

Greeting Style _____ Message _____

How you would like it signed _____

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Print Name on Card _____

Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____

Address, City, State, Zip (Registered billing address of card) _____

Deadline: Sept. 4

Checks can be made payable to **The Reporter**, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850.

THE REPORTER
Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton

Style J - \$21
Actual Size: 1.52" x 1.975"

Style F - \$21
Actual Size: 1.52" x 1.975"

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and any drink out of the fridge

Call or place your order online through our website. Curbside ordering option is available!

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BU Hillel, Federation pen pal program

By Reporter staff

Hillel at Binghamton and the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton will offer a L’Dor V’Dor Pen Pal Program. The program will match Binghamton University students with seniors in the local Jewish community for the fall semester, September to December. The semester will end with a meet and greet. Seniors who are interested in engaging with a pen pal should visit www.jfgeb.org and click on the L’Dor V’Dor Pen Pal Program slide to sign up for a pen pal. The deadline to submit the form is Tuesday, August 26. Pen pal pairings will be sent out by Tuesday, September 2. For any questions or help filling out the form, contact Ellie Spivak, incoming president of Hillel at Binghamton, at 585-770-8312 or espivak1@binghamton.edu, or Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation, at 607-222-9026 or director@jfgeb.org.

“Our program will give you the opportunity to write back and forth to your pen pal to get to know each other,

learn from each other and discuss meaningful prompts and questions that will be sent out monthly,” said organizers of the program. “You will have the option of e-mailing, texting or handwriting letters to your pen pal, whatever is most comfortable to you. We will try to match pen pal pairs with the same letter format preference. Pen pals are expected to write to their match no less than once per month. At the end of the semester, before finals week, there will be a meet and greet event on the Binghamton University campus for you to meet your pen pal.”

“When I first came up with the idea for the L’Dor V’Dor pen pal program, I was thinking about the divide that I have felt between our on-campus Jewish community and the wider Binghamton community and, more specifically, the lack of connection between the generations,” said Spivak. “In high school, I got the chance to write to a senior pen pal, and I learned so much from the experience. Students have so much to learn from the older generation, but, in college,

we are very isolated amongst only people of our age.”

Spivak noted that “the goal of this program is to promote connectivity and community amongst the on-campus student Jewish community and the Jewish senior community living in Binghamton. Students and seniors will write back and forth with their matched pen pal throughout the academic semester, and the program will culminate at the end with a meet and greet, where pen pals will have the chance to meet in person! I will send out monthly prompts that pen pal pairs can have the option of addressing in their letters. Please consider signing up to receive a student pen pal and new friend!”

“I was excited when Elie Spivak from Hillel at Binghamton University approached me with this idea,” Hubal said. “Having a university student pen pal is a great way to make a new friend and to cross a generational divide. If you are curious about the younger generation, this is a great way to learn something new.”

BD Sisterhood to host “Challah Baking Demonstration” on Sept. 10

The Beth David Sisterhood will hold its opening meeting of the 2025-26 season at Beth David Synagogue on Wednesday, September 10, at 7 pm. The evening’s program will feature a hands-on challah baking demonstration. For a donation of \$20, each attendee will receive a challah baked earlier that day, in addition to one they will shape and bake themselves during the meeting.

Since a finite amount of space, dough and previously baked challahs will be available, an RSVP by Wednesday, September 3, is highly recommended for anyone hoping to do more than watch. Reservations should be sent to Stacey Silber by calling or texting 607-727-9738, or e-mailing silbercreations@gmail.com.

“As always, the meeting will be open to everyone, members, non-members, women and men, but due to limited space, priority to participate will be given to paid up members of Beth David Sisterhood,” said organizers of the event.

At the meeting, Silber will demonstrate how to braid the round challahs that are typically eaten during the holidays and explain how to make a variety of other unusual and artistic shapes. “Especially appropriate for Rosh Hashanah is a challah that can accommodate a bowl of honey in the middle,” said organizers. “The really adventurous might be inspired by a lulav and etrog challah pairing for Sukkot. Recipes and instructions of how to create unusual and artistically shaped challahs for the High Holidays will be provided.”

Organizers added, “The Sisterhood meeting on September 10 will start promptly to allow the challahs to be baked during the meeting. The demonstration will precede the actual Sisterhood business meeting. Participants who

are unable to stay until their challah has been baked may choose to take them home to be baked later.”

Beth David Sisterhood membership dues for 2025-26 are \$25 and will be payable at the door, as will any money owed because of Mitzvah Cards that have been sent. “Remember Mitzvah Cards are only \$3 each and can be requested for any occasion and at any time of the year by

contacting Toby Kohn directly, or through the Beth David office at bethdavid@stny.rr.com,” organizers noted.

“As usual we will also be collecting non-perishable food items, which will be donated to CHOW,” organizers continued. “We look forward to seeing all of our members and friends on September 10 so we can wish them an early *l’shanah tovah tikatevu*.”



Glass Creations by Carole

Specialty: Stained glass
Location: 108 Sunset Ave.
Vestal, NY 13905
Name: Carole A. Perkosky
Hours: Mon.-Fri., noon-6 pm. Closed Sat.-Sun.
Phone: 607-754-2728
E-mail: Cap4glass@gmail.com
Website: www.cap4glass.com

Glass Creations by Carole specializes in custom stained glass designs for your home or workplace, such as signs, sidelights, transoms, cabinet doors and room dividers. Owner Carole Perkosky will also custom design.

Carole teaches every phase of stained glass, from beginner to Tiffany lamp classes, and many specialty classes.

Glass Creations by Carole carries a full line of stained glass and supplies. Feel free to come in and see the works on display in the show room.

Carole looks forward to seeing you.

The Reporter

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

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

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

Stop Continued from page 1

of an organization or congregation because at some time almost everyone will open a door and need to make a decision about whether or not it’s safe to do so,” said Hubal. “It teaches how to identify suspicious people, vehicles and packages, and learn ways to protect our community. We all should become active bystanders who can respond to incidents and situations.”

“Stop the Bleed”

“Stop the Bleed® Training is a nationally recognized, standardized course created and sponsored through stopthebleed.org,” organizers added. “This interactive course stresses the importance of understanding why bleeding is the number one preventable cause of death after an injury, how to save a life through identifying life-threatening bleeding, recognizing different types of injuries, and learning how to control bleeding when someone is injured through wound packing and tourniquet application. Hands-on exercises are a required component of this course and are designed for every member of the community.”

“Sometimes people are not able to escape a dangerous situation and may be injured,” Hubal noted. “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.”

The Cat Doctor

Specialty: A full service veterinary hospital providing medical, surgical, dental and behavioral care for cats of all ages.
Location: 825 Vestal Parkway W.
Vestal, NY 13850
Owner: Darcy Sobel, D. V. M.
Phone: 607-754-7221
Hours: Mon. and Fri. 8 am-5 pm, Tues. and Thurs. 12:30-8 pm, Wed. 8 am-3 pm, Sat. 9 am-1 pm

The Cat Doctor is celebrating 31 years of caring for cats and their people. Dr. Darcy Sobel, Dr. Kaitlin Pace, Dr. Lea Callan and staff at The Cat Doctor recognize that cats are important family members and treat each individual with special attention to their age, temperament and health conditions. Preventive medicine is practiced by providing complete physical examinations, behavioral counseling, dental care, diet management and appropriate vaccinations. The hospital has advanced radiology capabilities, providing instant, superior quality, digital x-rays as well as digital dental x-rays for the detection of early tooth disease below the gumline. The hospital now offers abdominal ultrasound for early detection of organ problems. When illness does occur, thorough and caring medical and surgical treatment is tailored to each patient.



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Connecting through love

CHAZZAN ABBE LYONS, JEWISH CHAPLAIN, HILLEL AT ITHACA COLLEGE

Revelation is not just a one time experience, but the beginning of a learning process. In *parashat* Vaetchanan, the Israelites are finally, after 40 years, camped near the Jordan River, almost ready to cross, and Moshe tells them the story of the revelation at Sinai. He tells them that he is teaching them and that they, in turn, will teach their descendants. Moshe speaks about what the people saw, what they heard and what they knew. The whole people had just had an extraordinary experience crossing the Sea of Reeds and escaping from their Egyptian pursuers, followed by an equally, if not more, extraordinary experience at Sinai. Moshe’s account is not just a recap, but an important re-telling. Forty years have passed and a significant portion of the adults who were present at Sinai have died in the desert. The generation of those who were enslaved has given way to the generation of migrants. Many of the Israelites Moshe is speaking to in this *parasha* were either children or not even born yet.

In Moshe’s lead-up to actually recounting the Ten Commandments, he repeats the injunction against creating or worshipping fixed images several times. While

Moshe acknowledges that everyone experienced God’s manifestation of fire on the mountain, he says “You did not see any form... when God spoke to you... from the midst of the fire.” (Deut. 4:15). In addition to that fire, the Israelites Moshe is speaking to by the Jordan have become accustomed to the pillar of fire by night and the pillar of cloud by day accompanying them. After the golden calf experience, you can see why Moshe feels that it’s important to help them understand that it wasn’t a form.

In fact he goes into detail, warning against making idols patterned after male or female humans or any animal that walks, flies, crawls or swims, and cautioning also against the possible allure of the sun, moon and stars. He even repeats himself, which may be reminiscent of the way adults sometimes repeat themselves when trying to make sure that children will take a warning seriously. And indeed, Moshe makes clear that making idols is destructive and dangerous. It will lead to both exile and to being forced to “serve there gods made by human hands, of wood and of stone, which cannot see and cannot hear, and cannot eat and cannot smell.” (Deut. 4:28) What can counter the draw

of what is visible, tangible and easy to grasp?

Moshe recounts to this generation the Ten Commandments, the part of the revelation that our sages say that the Israelites experienced most dramatically. They asked Moshe to help them connect to God in a less direct, less intense way. The revelation at Sinai was a transformative, immersive experience, and it continues as each generation learns how to understand and live that revelation on a day to day basis.

And right here, in *parashat* Vaetchanan, Moshe shows this generation of Israelites how to connect or reconnect to God, not through a physical form, but through emotion, thought and transcendent experience. Shortly after the Ten Commandments, Moshe says, “here is what God tells me to tell you,” and he recites the first paragraph of the *Shema*, beginning with the six words of *Shema* calling us to listen, followed immediately by *V’ahavta*. “And you will love.” Not “you will fear.” Not even “you will be awestruck.” Even with their intergenerational trauma from the enslaved elders who raised them, this younger generation

See “Love” on page 8

Congregational Notes

Temple Concord

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

Some services and programs are online only.
Fridays, August 8 and 15: At 7:30 pm, Friday Shabbat services are in person, on Zoom and Facebook.com.
Saturdays, August 9 and 16: At 9:15 am, Torah study is in person and on Zoom. An in-person only service will take place at 10:30 am.
Wednesdays, August 13 and 20: At 5:30 pm, evening prayers in person only. At 6 pm, adult education class in person and on Zoom.
Upcoming event:
Tuesday, August 19: At 7 pm, the Social Action Committee meeting will be held at the temple. If anyone has questions regarding the meeting, they should contact the committee co-chairs, Debra Saltzman at 607-765-9269 or Phyllis Weinstein at 607-727-8305.

Temple Beth El of Oneonta

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

Temple Beth-El of Ithaca

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
Rabbi: Caleb Brommer
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: president@tbeithaca.org, secretary@tbeithaca.org
Website: www.tbeithaca.org
Presidents: Melanie Kalman and Alexis Siemon
Sisterhood President: Gail Zussman
Director of Education: Calle Schueler
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.

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.

Norwich Jewish Center

Orientation: Inclusive
Address: 72 South Broad St., Norwich, NY 13815
Phone: 334-2691
E-mail: fertigj@roadrunner.com
Contact: Guilila Greenberg, 373-5087
Purpose: To maintain a Jewish identity and meet the needs of the Jewish community in the area.
Adult Ed.: Call ahead, text or e-mail to confirm dates.

Penn-York Jewish Community

Treasurer: Beth Herbst, 607-857-0976
B’nai B’rith: William H. Seigel Lodge
Purpose: To promote Jewish identity through religious, cultural, educational and social activities in the Southern Tier of New York and the Northern Tier of Pennsylvania, including Waverly, NY; Sayre, Athens and Towanda, PA, and surrounding communities.
Friday, August 8, light candles before..... 7:55 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, August 9 8:54 pm
Friday, August 15, light candles before..... 7:45 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, August 16 8:44 pm
Friday, August 22, light candles before..... 7:35 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, August 23 8:33 pm

Temple Israel

Orientation: Conservative
Rabbi: Micah Friedman
Address: 4737 Deerfield Pl., Vestal, NY 13850
Phone: 607-723-7461 and 607-231-3746
Office hours: Mon.-Thurs., 8:30 am-3:30 pm; Fri., 8 am-3 pm
E-mail: office@templeisraelvestal.org
Website: www.templeisraelvestal.org
Service schedule: Tues., 5:30 pm; Fri., 5:30 pm; Sat., 9:30 am
On Fridays and Tuesdays at 5:30 pm, services will be led by Rabbi Micah Friedman via Zoom and in-person.
On Saturday, August 7, Shacharit services will be held at 9:45 am via Zoom and in-person. The Torah portion is Deuteronomy 3:23-7 and the haftarah is Isaiah 40:1-26. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 9 pm.
On Saturday, August 16, Shacharit services will be held at 9:45 am via Zoom and in-person. The Torah portion is Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25 and the haftarah is Isaiah 49:14-51:3. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 9 pm.
Upcoming events:
“Torah in Our Times” class on Tuesdays, August 12 and 19, at 4:30 pm.
On Wednesday, August 20, Ritual Committee meeting will meet at 10 am.

Congregation Tikkun v’Or

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

Temple Brith Sholom

Affiliation: Unaffiliated
Address: P.O. Box 572, 117 Madison St., Cortland, NY 13045
Phone: 607-756-7181
President: Leo Searfoss
Cemetery Committee: 315-696-5744
Website: templebrithsholomcortland.org
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Temple-Brith-Sholom-114006981962930/>
Service leaders: Lay leadership
Shabbat services: Services are usually on the third Friday of the month and led by a variety of leaders. Check the Facebook page or weekly e-mail for upcoming services. Contact the president to get on the e-mail list.
Religious School: Students are educated on an individual basis.
Temple Brith Sholom is a small equalitarian congregation serving the greater Cortland community. Congregants span the gamut of observance and services are largely dependent on the service leader. The Friday night siddur is “Likrat Shabbat.” The community extends a warm welcome to the Jewish student population of SUNY Cortland, as well as the residents of local adult residences. The Board of Trustees meets on the second Tuesday of the month.
Services and programs are held by Zoom usually on the third Friday of the month.

Chautauqua.....Continued from page 2

article in Interfaith America rejected accusations of terrorism when describing Hamas’ initial 2023 attack on Israel as a “momentous October day.” Khader also wrote of her discomfort of working with Jews: “I was nervous about how I would interact with the Jewish members... knowing that at least one of them worked for a Zionist organization.” Leaders of Chautauqua’s Jewish community expressed strong concern about these and other provocative comments by Khader. Attempts at conciliatory dialogue between Khader and Jewish activists proved unsuccessful. Amidst unresolved tension, Khader announced her February 2025 resignation. Throughout most of the imbroglio, Chautauqua President Michael Hill supported Khader before belatedly expressing qualified misgivings. Simultaneously, Hill was involved in other divisive battles, including allegations that he planned to Disneyfy Chautauqua. Subsequently, Hill stated that he would step down as president.

Despite disputes, a robust contingent from diverse sectors of Judaism contributed to the vitality of Chautauqua’s summer 2025 season. To the observant, the Jewish presence at Chautauqua is ubiquitous. On the parameter of the commons, The Kosher Tent serves bagel sandwiches, knishes, blintzes and other iconic Jewish treats. It is managed by Rabbi Zalman Vilenkin, director of the Chabad

Rabbi.....Continued from page 1

problematic synagogue politics.”) The novel did not begin as a commentary on synagogue politics, though. “‘Body on the Bima’ actually started in my mind as a short story in reaction to a student who was petrified of participating in a class service,” she said. “At first, this was going to be a story about reassuring students stepping up to lead services. But that lesson got a bit buried when the idea of reassuring students juxtaposed with actually finding a dead body on the *bima* started to unfold.”

However, Brody does have some suggestions for those – volunteers and staff – who work in a synagogue setting. “I think that the biggest real-life lesson would be the need to really talk to each other and be transparent about decisions that are being made,” she noted. “I have a lot of both educator and rabbi colleagues who have shared their experiences with some of the issues I included in the book. Even though we know we shouldn’t do it, people talk behind each other’s backs, and small irritations turn into big issues. Board members and the professional staff don’t always have the same priorities and, at least based on what I’ve heard, almost every community has a few individuals who want to control everything.”

Brody used to be the director of education and youth programming at Temple Beth-El of Ithaca. When her contract was not renewed, she opened the Ithaca Beit Midrash and serves as its director. The change in position left her free “to focus on which aspects of the rabbinate and education were most appealing to me at the time,” she said. “I’ve always loved teaching Torah and Talmud, and am always looking to share some of the lesser-known aspects of our tradition.”

Some of her educational methodology is reflected in “Body on the Bima.” While she has not used the exact lesson plan featured in the book (during which students looked at photos of different locations and decided which ones they thought would be conducive to prayer), she has used similar ones. “[Shachar’s] method of teaching is very much based on my own,” Brody added. “I haven’t had students do that exact activity [featured in the book], but have done others that are similar. I’m a big proponent of using concrete, familiar things to get into deeper conversation. It’s often easier for a student to react to a prompt (visual, aural, textual, etc.) than to ask them to start off with sharing personal thoughts and feelings.”

For information about the Ithaca Beit Midrash, visit www.ithacabeitmidrash.com.

Jewish House, and his staff, primarily comprised of family. I first met a young man who identifies as Yisrael working at The Kosher Tent. I, then, made it a point to stop by each morning and *kibbitz* with Yisrael. He and I also had longer, more substantive discussions on the porch of the Chabad Jewish House, a residence, sanctuary, event venue and place of learning. Yisrael introduced me to his wife Chaya, who is expecting their first child in late summer. Natives of Crown Heights, Brooklyn, they are both 23 and will soon receive their first Chabad leadership assignment. Yisrael and I discussed the teachings of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson and other matters of theology, the mission of Chabad-Lubavitch and our own Jewish journeys. One morning, at Yisrael’s invitation, I fulfilled the mitzvah of binding *tefillin* to my head and upper arm.

This summer was my fourth time teaching a course at Chautauqua. One of the adult learners in my America in the 1950s course was Ellen Brookstein, three years my junior, a fellow native of Swampscott, MA. She is the daughter of my original rabbi, Martin Katzenstein, the founder of Temple Emanu-El, the first Reform congregation on the North Shore of Boston. Following class, I shared with Ellen my appreciation for the grounding in Jewish ethics and history given to me by her father through memorable sermons. Rabbi Katzenstein also taught me how to keep box score at a baseball game.

At the Hall of Philosophy, David Bernstein, past president/CEO of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs and

Piaker.....Continued from page 1

agency and adopt rigid ideological programming. Antisemitism plays a central role in this process – used not just to incite hate, but to control, divide, and radicalize.”

Organizers added, “The lecture will blend psychological findings with network analysis, revealing how both authoritarian regimes and domestic actors manipulate platforms like TikTok and weaponize movements on the left and right to erode civic trust.”

“Personally, I am very much



Philip and Pauline Piaker (File photo provided by Chabad)

looking forward to learning more about the ideological puppeteering Dr Finkelstein has been studying and how his data can be used to prophylactically stop crimes,” said Rivky Slonim. “I am intrigued by the role social media plays in crafting cognitive biases, social incentives and algorithmic contagion. More generally, I am deeply appreciative of the support the Piaker family provides so that we in Binghamton can benefit from edifying presentations such as this one.”

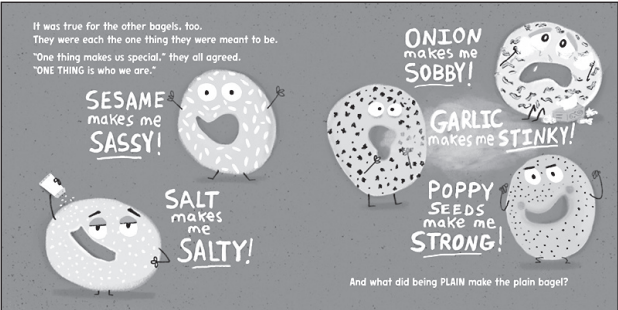
Book.....Continued from page 4

chips belong in cookies, not bagels or challah). But the unnamed hero of the book becomes an everything bagel at the end of the book. While I’m glad that he’s happy, I don’t really care for everything bagels since I’m not a big fan of poppy or sesame seeds.


Out of curiosity (because who doesn’t like looking at lists of food online), I googled bagel flavors and there are *way more* than there were when I was a kid and regularly ate bagels. I admit to being out of touch because I generally try (emphasis on the word try here) to avoid white flour, although I would always eat the monster (my mom’s word) bagels my brother used to bring up from New Jersey. One website listed 20 flavors, including some I’ve never heard of before, like an Asiago cheese and chive bagel (yes, the cheese and chives are baked into the bagel). I don’t know if cranberry belongs in a bagel (a muffin yes; a bagel, I’m not so sure). Even though I believe bagels should be savory (it’s their nature), I have to admit the French toast bagel sounded interesting, but I don’t think a bagel has the right texture for French toast. (Challah, on the other hand, is a different matter.)

What kind of bagels do I like? Plain bagels are good for bagel sandwiches, but if I want to eat one with just

butter or cream cheese, I’ll go for onion first. If an onion bagel is not available, I settle for garlic, although I have to be careful not to breathe on anyone afterward. But as Silberberg reminds us in his book, just as we have a choice between being one thing, a few things or many things, we can make the same choices about the food we eat.



A page from “The Bagel Who Wanted Everything” by Alan Silberberg (Page used with the permission of Viking/ Penguin Random House LLC)



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New in Books

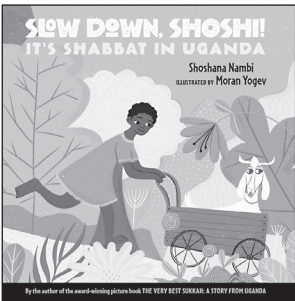
Kalaniot Books to release new children's books this summer/fall

KalaniotBooksannounced that it will release five new children's picture books for the fall 2025 season:

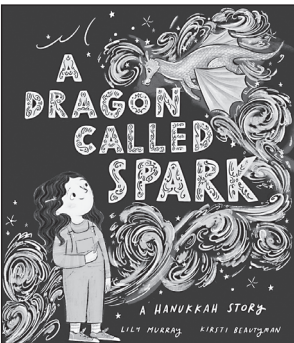
- ◆ "Jewish Songs From Around the World" with music by Moshe Dor, Yosef Hadar, Shalom Secunda and Aaron Zeitlin, and illustrated by Lucile Ahrweiller (release date: August 26). This illustrated musical board book features songs from around the world and includes easy to push buttons, an on/off switch and lyrics with transliterations.
- ◆ "Slow Down, Shoshi! It's Shabbat in Uganda" by Shoshana Nambi and Illustrated by Moran Yogev (release date: September 16). The picture book offers a look at a Shabbat celebration by a member of



"Jewish Songs From Around the World" (Book covers are used with permission of Kalaniot Press)



"Slow Down, Shoshi! It's Shabbat in Uganda"



"A Dragon Called Spark"



"With a Needle and Thread"



"Con hilo y aguja"

Abayudaya Jewish community in Uganda and their traditions. ◆ "A Dragon Called Spark: A Hanukkah Story" by Lily Murray and illustrated by Kirsti Beautyman (release date: September 30). A lonely girl makes a friend and shares the comfort of her imaginary dragon friend while celebrating Hanukkah.

- ◆ "With a Needle and Thread: A Jewish Folktale From Cuba" by Jennifer Stempel and illustrated by Libi Axelrod (release date: October 14). A Cuban-Jewish girl and her abuelita (grandmother) used their talents to turn a dress into Jewish symbols of community and tradition.
- ◆ "Con hilo y aguja: Un cuento judío de Cuba" by Jennifer Stempel, illustrated by Libi Axelrod and translated by Lawrence Schimel (release date: October 14). This is a Spanish language version of "With a Needle and Thread."

Love. Continued from page 6

of Israelites have the opportunity to connect to God in a new way: through choosing to love. As an even younger generation, we can dive deeply beyond the surface of the Hebrew paragraph we may have learned to recite by rote. We have the opportunity to listen, feel, learn, know and teach. This *parasha* gives us the opportunity to connect the extreme groundbreaking, earthshaking, people-making experience at Sinai with this accessible spiritual practice

for day to day living. Just as Moshe stresses the importance of connecting with God who might "appear" in a fire or a disembodied voice, but does not have a fixed physical form, the first line of *Shema* keeps reminding us to look beyond the surface. And instead of an admonition not to create idols, *Shema* offers us a positive vision of listening with our whole selves to the wholeness and oneness of the Divine Source, which is both infused within and surrounds all existence. The option to connect is available to us in every moment.

If you can really hear and take in that oneness, then love will flow naturally in all levels and in all dimensions. You can allow love to flow in the world of *nefesh*, your embodied self (*b'chol naf'sh'cha*), in the world of *lev*, your heart (*b'chol levav'cha*), in the world of *m'od*, your perspectives, your questions, your drive to explain and find patterns (*b'chol m'odecha*). And this leads to love on the spiritual level in the world of becoming, in which you go beyond your ego, beyond everyday consciousness, connecting deeply, even if just for a moment.

BD. Continued from page 3

questions we know her audience will bring!" Beth David's luncheon speaker series takes place the second Saturday of the month after Shabbat morning services and is open to the community. There is no charge for the luncheon. Since the monthly series' continuation depends on the generosity of contributors, Beth David welcomes and appreciates donations to the Luncheon Fund in order to keep the program going. Donations can be made in honor of or in memory of someone, or to mark a special occasion. Those wishing an acknowledgment to be sent to the person being honored, or to the family of someone being remembered, can indicate that, along with the necessary information. Donations can be sent to Beth David Synagogue, 39 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905, Attention: Luncheon Fund.

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