Happy Rosh Hashanah 5781

May we all be inscribed in the Book of Life...
I have a quote on my fridge. Written on what is now an old, stained sticky note, it has been there for years. I heard it during a podcast, scribbled it down and impulsively stuck it up. I loved the way it looked at the time, and I stuck it up. I then learned that it was repeated countless times over the years, taking direction from them. The quote, by poet and author Mark Nepo, says, “In the practice of our days, to listen is to lean in, softly, with a willingness to be changed by what we hear.”

To be honest, I always viewed Nepo’s words with a critical mind. “A lawyer who worked at a nonprofit that concentrated on education and policy in the religious Zionist community, she joined Yair Lapid’s Yesh Atid Party that espouses a left-leaning centrist agenda.”

“I may be able to forgive what happened because the pain will remain forever. Is there a fair outcome? Not really; what occurred that day should that person be allowed to become a doctor or run for public office and should she become part of Benny Gantz’s Blue and White coalition, but was ranked too low in the party’s list in any of the three elections that were held between 18 months to get into the Knesset. After Gantz joined forces with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to form the current coalition government in April, Lapid’s party pulled out of Blue and White to sit in the opposition. But Friedman-Nachalon switched to Gantz’s party. At that point, due to Israel’s had been regularly demonstrating outside his official residence demanding that he resign because of the legal changes, however dubious, that led to indications against him. That’s why her talk of unity, at one and the same time, the last thing that most partisans are interested in, while also being exactly the tonic that a country that is suffering through the coronavirus pandemic and sick to death could use.”

“Be a better listener, be a better person,” the quote, by Nepo, said. “In the middle of the corona days, in the heart of a

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Federation to launch annual Campaign 2021 on Oct. 18

By Reporter staff
The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton announced that it will launch its annual fund-raising Campaign on Super Sunday, October 18. The theme for this year’s Campaign is “Socially Distant, Spiritually Connected.”

“The running a fund-raising campaign during a pandemic is not something I ever thought I would be challenged to do, but here we are and I look forward to working hard to make the Campaign a success,” said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. “Due to the pandemic, we are not holding any in-person programming and we need to limit the time volunteers gather to make phone calls. So, in order to keep our volunteers safe, we are asking people to pledge early.”

Campaign Chairwoman Marilyn Bell added, “Our community needs us even more now, but we also need to keep our volunteers safe. Please do a mitzvah and pledge early.”

Pledges can be made three ways:
- Visit the Federation website at www.jfgeb.org and click on “make a pledge.”
- A pledge in the subject line.
- Fill out the form in the ad on page 9 and mail it to the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850.

“I know that the past months have been difficult for most of us,” Hubal continued. “Many of our local Jewish institutions are in great need and we need to keep our organizations strong. By working together, we can make this happen. I know this community and am so proud to be a member of it. I look forward to a time when we can gather in person. Although we may be keeping our distance socially, we are all spiritually connected as Jewish people.”

Film Fest to hold virtual film event

By Reporter staff
The Jewish International Film Fest of Greater Binghamton will hold a virtual showing of the film “They Ain’t Ready for Me” directed and produced by Brad Rothschild. “They Ain’t Ready for Me” is a full-length documentary about Tamar Manasseh, an African American rabbinical student who is leading the fight against senseless killings on the south side of Chicago. It explores the challenges and motivations of the community leader as she works to prevent more people from being killed by gun violence. A discussion on the film with Rothschild will be led by Ben Kasper, professor emeritus of social science at SUNY Broome and a member of the Temple Israel Executive Board.

People will be able to register on the Federation website, www.jfgeb.org. The film will be streamed free for up to 100 computers. After Shabbat ends on Saturday, September 12, a link to the film will be sent to those who sign up in advance. The film will be available for viewing on personal devices for 48 hours. On Monday, September 14, at 7 pm, Kasper will facilitate the online video discussion of the film.

“As isolation due to COVID-19 continues, we wanted to do another film screening as a way to stay connected to community members,” said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. “They Ain’t Ready for Me” is an inspirational film that shows the power of one person deciding to make a difference in this world. It is the perfect way for community members,” said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation.

“We are going to do another film screening as a way to stay connected to our volunteers and keep our community informed,” said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. “Due to the pandemic, we are not holding any in-person programming and we need to limit the time volunteers gather to make phone calls. So, in order to keep our volunteers safe, we are asking people to pledge early.”

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September 11-24, 2020

Dog in a baby sling. The reason for her serious nature of their plots. That care deeply about their characters. That not only kept my interest, but made me my interest because my mind was still and I so wanted to read the final book, in one series ended with a cliff hanger but what else you've read recently. Be – book depends not only on your mood, “Separation Anxiety” (Ecco), is so dis out to be much more. Judy, the narrator know about your new address. Or just leaving town for a few porter know so you can stay temporary) address!

Neighbors in Your Holy Season

Greet our Jewish Friends and

Roman Catholic Diocese of Syracuse

and the People of the

Bishop Douglas J. Lucia

"Separation Anxiety"

“Separation Anxiety” (Ecco), is so dis...
TC Sisterhood planning for Whale of a Sale

Temple Concord Sisterhood is in the early stages of considering how Whale of a Sale could and/or should be held in 2020. “Whale of a Sale is an important Temple Concord Sisterhood fundraiser,” said organizers of the sale. “The proceeds are used to support Temple Concord and its religious school, as well as to make donations to local, state, regional, and national charitable organizations.”

To better plan, organizers request that people contact Lani Dunthorn at lani.dunthorn@yahoo.com or 348-4099 by Wednesday, September 30, with a list of items that they would like to donate to Whale of a Sale. The information provided will help determine the size of the inventory Whale might have.

Film

Nichols is a product of the Jewish camping movement. He spent 10 summers at the Goldman Union Camp in Zionsville, IN, before receiving his degree in vocal performance at the University of North Carolina. In 1995, realizing the potential of music to make a “meaningful connection with Jewish youth, Nichols established the Jewish rock band Eighteen. Since that time, he and Eighteen have released 11 full-length studio albums. “Each one has received critical acclaim and has been celebrated by Jewish adults and youth alike,” organizers added.

“Dan’s anthology includes a wide range of sounds and styles, from energetic Jewish rock anthems to moving interpretations of traditional Jewish liturgy. Jewish youth and adults from around the world draw inspiration from Dan’s music and its positive message of Jewish values, identity and pride,” they said. “Dan’s live performances are legendary for their unbridled energy and infectious spirit.”

Nichols’ studio concerts during the pandemic have continued his impact. His URI “Campfire on Tour” concert in late June was the impetus for the program. Rabbi Steve Weissman reached out to him to put together an online Selichot musical and storytelling program.

Nichols has been a part of the conferences and conventions of nearly every major Jewish movement, including the URJ Biennial, NFTY Convention, B’Nai’Jared International and in addition to his musical talents, Nichols has been called a gifted teacher.

High Holiday service schedule

TC-TI to hold virtual Selichot concert with Dan Nichols

September 11-24, 2020

Visit us on the web at www.thereportergroup.org

**Wishing you a happy, healthy, peaceful and prosperous New Year**

**DeMunn Funeral Home**

86 Conklin Avenue, Binghamton 722-8800
timothy.szs@lozenia.com 

Broome County Executive Jason T. Garnar

**Savitch Agency**

Savitch Agency, an insurance brokerage firm in the Southern Tier, has announced its partnership with Acrisure, a global top 10 insurance brokerage firm. The local firm will now have access to Acrisure’s technologically advanced and operational support specialists, keeping business as usual on a local level, while seeking to keep business as usual on a local level.

For more than 74 years, spanning three generations, Savitch Agency has been providing insurance to clients locally and in 28 states nationwide. Savitch Agency serves the business community across a wide range of industries and professional practices, and seeks to provide a portfolio of tailored and competitively priced personal lines coverages for its individual clients.

Acrisure is among the top five insurance brokers in the United States and among the top 10 globally. It has 200 agency partners with more than 200 locations in 37 states, 14 international locations and more than 6,000 employees.
By Bill Simons

In 1959, Yom Kippur—Tishrei 10 on the Hebrew calendar—fell on October 12. Although raised in an Orthodox Jewish home, Hank Greenberg, then 48 years old and living in Manhattan, was no longer religiously observant. Nonetheless, on this, the most solemn and holy day of the Jewish year, something stirred in him. Divorced and the custodial father of two sons, Greenberg told his boys, Glenn, 12, and Steve, 11, that they were not going to go to school that day because it was Yom Kippur. Glenn and Steve had 12, and Steve, 11, that they were not going to go to school that day because it was Yom Kippur. It was for him a reaching back to something, but he couldn’t go all the way.” Greenberg undoubtedly thought of another Yom Kippur, 25 years before in 1934, when his decision as a young baseball player concerning observance of the High Holidays attracted national attention.

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. In the equivalent of nine-and-one-half seasons, Greenberg hit 331 home runs, accumulated 1,274 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 1999, 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.

In contrast to Koufax, whose 1961-66 pitching peak coincided with a period of general acceptance of Jews in baseball’s major leagues, Greenberg’s 1934-38 batting dominance during a period amidst resurgent domestic antisemitism, which was fueled by victims of the Great Depression who blamed hard times on the Jewish community, and Greenshank’s perception that Jews sought to provoke a war between Nazi Germany and the United States. Moreover, Greenberg played for the Tigers, a team whose ownership included Henry Ford, who had collaborated with Hitler in the motor industry, and in 1934, the year before Okon, arguably America’s two most notorious antisemites. Automobile manufacturer Ford republished the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion,” a venerable forger purporting to document a Jewish conspiracy to control international finance and world government. Coughlin, a Catholic priest with a national radio show, rallied 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 1929, and the 23-year-old Greenberg, the team’s top slugger, was crucial to Detroit’s chances. 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 noted 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. In response to queries, Detroit Rabbi Leo Franklin provided a statement that heightened the pressure on Greenberg: “In the Jewish faith, there is no power granted to the rabbi to give dispensation to anyone for doing anything which reads contrary to his own conscientious convictions—indeed, we insist upon the doctrine of personal responsibility. In such a case as this, Mr. Greenberg, who is a conscientious Jew, must decide for himself whether he ought to play or not.”

While Detroit boosters asserted that Greenberg had a civic duty to play baseball on September 10, there were fellow Jews who reminded him that his failure to observe Rosh Hashanah would make it more difficult for co-religionists to absent themselves from school or work on the High Holidays. A great internal struggle raged within an anguished Greenberg between synagogue and baseball. On orv Rosh Hashanah, he sleeplessly tossed and turned throughout the night. Come the morning of September 10, Greenberg attended Rosh Hashanah services at the Shaarei Zedeck synagogue. As afternoon approached, Greenberg, in something of a daze and half expecting divine retribution, arrived at Navin Field and took his position at first base. The Tigers defeated the Red Sox 2-1 in this crucial game. The Tiger scoring came as a result of two home runs, both by Greenberg. Following the game, Greenberg returned to Rosh Hashanah services at the Shaarei Zedeck synagogue. Greenberg made a different decision on Yom Kippur. He did not play on September 19, 1934, and attended Yom Kippur services. Without Greenberg, the Tigers lost to the New York Yankees 5-2. The folk poet Edgar Guest wrote: “Came Yom Kippur—our fastest worldwide over the Jew. And Hank Greenberg to his teaching and the old tradition spent/The day among his people and he didn’t come to pray.” From rival dugouts and hostile fans, Greenberg heard many vile antisemitic slurs. At times, Greenberg responded with clenched fists, more commonly with his bat, saying, “I came to feel that if I, as a Jew, hit a home run, I was hitting one against Hitler.”

Although Greenberg missed most of the 1941 season due to pre-war military service, he re-entitled the day after Pearl Harbor. There was a story, perhaps apocryphal, told in Jewish neighborhoods: “A big fellow is weaving his way around a World War II embarkation point, saying in a loud voice, ‘Is there anybody here named Ginsberg or Goldberg? I’ll kick the living daylights out of him.’ A soldier stands up and says, ‘My name’s Hank Greenberg, buddy.’ The drunk looks him up and down, and replied, ‘I didn’t say Greenberg. I said Ginsberg or Goldberg.”

During much of his adult life, Hank Greenberg felt an ambivalence about Judaism. Some of it derived from the pressure he felt as a young man thrust into the unwanted position of standard bearer for American Jewry, a status that reached its apogee in the controversy surrounding his 1934 High Holiday observance. Neither theology nor the synagogue played a significant role in Greenberg’s life in the years that followed. However, Greenberg expressed his Jewish identity in other ways—batting against antisemites, contributing to Jewish charities and organizations, supporting Israel and boosting other Jewish ballplayers. See “Dilemma” on page 8
Jewish resources to occupy your family during social distancing – part 20

By Reporter staff

A variety of Jewish groups are offering online resources – educational and recreational – for those who are not allowed out of the house. Below is a sampling of those. The Reporter will publish additional listings as they become available.

- The Forward will present “On Lox and Life” on Tuesday, September 22, at 5 pm. Len Berk, the last Jewish lox slicer at Zabar’s, and Melissa Clark, The New York Times food writer and cookbook author, will offer a pre-Yom Kippur conversation about all things-appetizing moderated by Jodi Rudoren, editor-in-chief of The Forward. To register, visit https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/...
- The Jewish Youth Climate Movement is offering programming in September, including a Teen Led Climate Panel and an Environmental Racism panel. For more information, visit www.jewishyouthclimatemovement.org/calendar.
- Hillel Rebout is offering a variety of High Holiday programming featuring Broadway performers, Hollywood screenwriters, musicians and more. To sign up, visit https://higherholidays.org.
- IUUC-JIR offers College Commons, a digital learning platform offering topical and scholarly content to congregations, schools, JCCs, Hillels and other educational institutions worldwide. For more information or to sign up for courses and programs, visit https://collegecommonsinfo.levlearning.com.
- The Forward will hold its first “Come As You Are Gala” on Monday, October 19, at 8:30 pm. The virtual event will include appearances from actress Mayim Bialik, comedian Avi Liberman and more. For more information, contact Roberta Caplan at 212-453-9446 or caplan.forward.com.
- Jewish Women’s Archive picked the books for the 2020-21 year of its Book Club. To view the list, visit https://jwa.org/programs/bookclub/bookshelf. For additional information about the Book Club, visit https://jwa.org/programs/bookclub.
- Chabad.org is offering an on-demand course called "How to Blow the Shofar: The Sound and the Spirit." The course offers “practical tips and mystical insights” into the shofar. For more information, visit www.chabad.org/multimedia/course_cdo/aid/4848963/jewish/The-Sound-and-the-Spirit.htm.
- The Jewish National Fund will hold a virtual “Fall Reading Series” hosted by Steven Shalowitz: Wednesday, September 23, at 8 pm, “Becoming Israeli: The Hysterical, Inspiring and Challenging Sides of Making ‘Aliyah” by Akiva Gersh; Wednesday, October 28, at 8 pm, “Zionism: The Concise History” by Alex Rychvin; and Wednesday, November 18, at 8 pm, “The Foods of Israel Today: More than 300 Recipes – and Memories – Reflecting Israel’s Past and Present Through Its Many Cuisines” by Joan Nathan. For more information or to register, visit www.jnf.org/events-landing-pages/fall-reading-series.
- The interfait group 18Doors offers a variety of virtual events connected to the High Holiday season. Events include a New Year’s seder and a mini-retreat. For more information or to register, visit https://18doors.org/event.
- Jewish National Fund Arts and Entertainment presents “The Imagination Series” presented by Lee and Susan Berk. The first virtual performance will be by pianist Tamir Hendelman on Wednesday, September 23, from 9-10 pm. For more information or to register, visit www.jnf.org/events-landing-pages-the-imagination-series. See “Resources” on page 14.

Wishing the Community Shana Tovah.

SHANA TOVAH

Rabbi Rachel Esserman

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Let the New Year be the start of only the sweetest things!

Hollie Levine and Brendan Barnes

“Shannah tovah”

Marilyn Bell & Family

For a New Year as sweet as honey

Merri & Tony Zander, Anna, Maya, Dora & Ari Linka Preus

Shanna Tovah

Rabbi Rachel Esserman

Wishing you and your family a very Happy New Year. May you be blessed with life, health, prosperity and nachat.

Rabbi Zev and Judy Silber and family.
Morality versus Divine command

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

“Thou shalt not murder” is one of the Ten Commandments. Yet, two years later – during Rosh Hashanah and Shabbat Vayera – Jews read the Akedah, the binding of Isaac, which could also be called “the attempted murder of Isaac.” God tests Abraham by commanding him to sacrifice his son. Is obeying this command immoral or the ultimate sign of faith? Aaron Koller explores this question in his fascinating and complex “Unbinding Isaac: The Significance of the Akedah for Modern Jewish Thought” (The Jewish Publication Society edition).

Koller notes the dilemma underlying the story: “The core claim, put as concisely as possible, is that the biblical God would like to want child sacrifice – because it is in fact a remarkable display of devotion – but more does not want child sacrifice, because it would violate the autonomy of the children.” According to Koller, many people think of the trial as one between God and Abraham. Yet, they forget there is a third person present – the one for whom this is a life and death matter – and that person is Isaac. Koller uses the story to discuss individual faith and whether faith should ever triumph over a person’s moral compass.

Koller offers Jewish interpretations of the Akedah from the ancient rabbis to poetry written in contemporary times. He includes both those who see the story as a true test and those who condemn God for making the request. Some believe Abraham is a shining example of faith. Others rebel against the story, claiming that Abraham failed the test by not arguing with God. The author then explores the interpretation of Soren Kierkegaard, a 19th century philosopher. Although not Jewish, Kierkegaard’s writings have influenced commentators of all faiths. In his writing, he calls Abraham a knight of faith – someone willing to sacrifice his son even though he loves him: “The love [Abraham] had for his son is part and parcel of the sacrifice. Without that love, Abraham becomes cold, a killer in the name of God. With that love of Isaac burning hot, he is Our Father, the knight of faith and the bearer of the ultimate sacrifice.” Koller sees this as a very Christian interpretation in that Abraham steps outside moral reality, the rules and laws that govern Judaism. Even so, many Jewish philosophers have adopted Kierkegaard’s ideas, even if they don’t always directly address it in their work.

Two major Jewish thinkers who were influenced by Kierkegaard are Yeshayahu Leibowitz and Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik. Koller notes that they both put a Jewish spin on Kierkegaard’s ideas. Leibowitz sees the Akedah as the story of a conflict between religion and ethics. He believes that “true devotion to God takes no heed of human considerations, even moral judgements.” Koller has a problem with this interpretation because it separates religion and morality, and makes the Akedah the center of all Jewish action. Soloveitchik believes no one can be certain redemption will follow any human action. He connects the Akedah to prayer and suggests that praying three times a day reflects Abraham’s actions. His act of prayer is the act of someone alone, though, someone who can only connect to God when alone. Koller sees this interpretation as incorrect because it doesn’t take into consideration that a third individual is affected by this action: the philosopher concentrates on Abraham and God, while ignoring the bodily harm that Isaac faced.

Koller also addresses what he sees as the major flaws in Kierkegaard’s thought. One problem is that the role of Isaac in the story – or Koller sees it “the erasure of Isaac from the narrative” – is not addressed by the philosopher. Kierkegaard’s ideas can lead to what Koller calls “radical subjectivity,” something that allows each person to decide their own morality. But Koller thinks that will lead to chaos. As the author notes, “Ethics, divorced from religion, is now free to go in dangerous and indeed horrifying directions.” He also believes that religion – at least Judaism – is not a solitary activity; it is a covenantal one and its rules help people understand how to behave in a moral manner. In addition, Koller doesn’t think that God and ethics can be separated: “The ethical cannot be purposely suspended because God aspires to the ethical.” That is what makes the story so difficult to interpret, but the author believes that any Jewish interpretation needs to take at this idea seriously. In the end, he suggests a Jewish ethical teaching based on the Akedah: “As much as it is enticing to do so, one person’s religious fulfillment cannot come through harm to another.” It’s impossible to do justice to “Unbinding Isaac” in a short review because this challenging work is so rich with differing interpretations. That means that even those who are familiar with the commentary on the story may still find a great deal to ponder. Anyone looking to seriously grapple with one of the most difficult stories in the Bible should read “Unbinding Isaac.” It offers an amazing amount of food for thought.

Dilemma. . . Continued from page 6

In the years prior to his 1986 death at age 75, Greenberg made peace with having served as a hero to other Jews during a time of ascendant antisemitism. Greenberg came to understand what he meant to a generation of young Jews who came of age during the virulent anti-Jewish assaults of the 1930s and who, upon reaching maturity, joined other Americans in the war against Hitler: “When I was playing, I used to resent being singled out as a Jewish ballplayer. I wanted to be known as a great ballplayer period. I’m still not sure why or when I changed, because I’m still not a particularly religious person. Lately, though, I find myself

Bill Simon is a professor of history at SUNY Oneonta, whose course offerings include sport and ethnic 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.

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TikTok announces “zero tolerance” for antisemitism, hate speech, bigotry

By Jackson Richman

(JNS) – The video-sharing social-networking service TikTok has expressed that it has “a zero tolerance stance” on accounts linked to antisemitism and other forms of bigotry. “We have a zero tolerance stance on organized hate groups and those associated with them, like accounts that spread or are linked to white supremacy or nationalism, male supremacy, antisemitism and other hate-based ideologies,” said the company in an August 20 blog post on its website. “In addition, we remove race-based harassment and the denial of violent tragedies, such as the Holocaust and slavery,” continued TikTok. “We may also take off-platform behavior into consideration as we establish our policies, such as an account belonging to the leader of a known hate group, to protect people against harm.”

The blog post was published six days before the museum at the former Nazi concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz called a trend on TikTok in which young people portray themselves as victims of the Holocaust as “hurtful and offensive.”

In a statement to JNS on September 3, a TikTok spokesperson said that the platform “blocked the #holocaustchallenge earlier this week to discourage users from participating. We do not condone content like this and are redirecting users to our Community Guidelines to further educate users about our policies and the supportive, inclusive community we are working to foster on TikTok.”

On August 31, a TikTok video surfaced of U.S. Army Second Lt. Nathan Freihofer, an influencer on the video-sharing social-networking service with almost three million followers, making a Holocaust joke. “What’s the Jewish person’s favorite Pokémon character?” asks Freihofer, followed by a laugh. “Ash,” he answers, referring to Ash Ketchum, the protagonist in the anime, and the remains of Jews who were gassed and cremated during the Holocaust in death and concentration camps. “I’ve got the f*** out because it’s a joke,” adds Freihofer.

The U.S. Army is investigating the matter, saying the “statement made in the video is completely inconsistent” with its values. Counter Extremism Project senior research analyst Josh Lipowsky told JNS that while social-media companies such as TikTok have been taking steps to combat bigotry, more needs to be done. He said that TikTok’s “comprehensive and specific hate-speech policies...are a step in the right direction for social media,” as “Twitter, Facebook and other platforms have also instituted policies forbidding hate speech and symbols based on race, religion, sex, and other protected criteria.”

“These policies are all great on paper, but we need to see the tech companies proactively enforcing [them] to protect their users,” he stressed. “TikTok and other social-media companies have to do more than just pay lip service to fighting extremism on their platforms. They need to quickly and uniformly enforce their policies to protect against the abuse of their platforms. These are private platforms and the companies that own them have a responsibility to the public to ensure that extremists are not abusing their sites.”

Lipowsky said “some may argue that this is an infringement of free speech, but the fact is these are private companies that have every legal right to limit how their services are used.”

Furthermore, he added, “they have the moral responsibility to ensure that their platforms are not being subverted for the promulgation of hate speech. If extremists manipulate these services into platforms for hate and recruitment to extremist ideologies, then the tech companies are ultimately responsible for those consequences.”

Israeli health minister urges public to refrain from High Holiday gatherings

By JNS staff

(JNS) – Israeli Health Minister Yuli Edelstein on August 26 urged the public to refrain from large family gatherings during the upcoming High Holidays, which begin on September 18.

During a press briefing at the inauguration ceremony of the ministry’s new Corona project coordinator Ronni Gamzu, who also spoke at the briefing, rebuffed criticism of his handling of the pandemic by politicians, among them coalition chairman Miki Zohar, a member of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s Likud Party. “It’s not certain that all politicians and MKs understand what we are doing here and what path we have taken,” he said.

The whole world is now saying ‘maybe we’ll manage [the second wave] without closures.’ But this comes with a price; it’s complex,” Gamzu added.

The inauguration of the new Coronavirus Control Center coincided with a Health Ministry report on August 26 that the new daily number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Israel has again reached approximately 2,000. The area’s largest selection of Wines and Spirits!

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Israeli researchers study larger-than-average jellyfish in Mediterranean

By JNS staff

(JNS) – As a “huge” swarm of jellyfish appeared off the coast of Haifa, researchers at the University of Haifa’s Leon H. Charney School of Marine Sciences took the opportunity to get up close and personal with Israel’s all-too-familiar summer marine animals. And this year, they’re larger than ever.

“Overall, this is the summer boom of jellyfish that we anticipate, but there’s a slight difference in the size of jellyfish – on average, they’re bigger this year than in other years,” said Professor Dror Angel. “We had a very rainy winter this year, and the runoff that reached the sea provided a lot of nutrients that contributed to the formation of the jellyfish bloom,” he explained. “The nutrients feed the algae, the algae bloom and are eaten by small plankton herbivores, and these are then eaten by the jellyfish.”

Could increases in the size of the jellyfish have anything to do with the coronavirus pandemic and the decrease in human presence in the country’s water and along its shores? According to Angel, that’s unlikely. “I don’t think the coronavirus has anything to do with the jellyfish,” replied the professor. “I think nature is the bigger player. We’re looking at cues like changes in temperature, as these probably play a role in determining when jellyfish appear. Rainy winters or more winters could determine the size of the bloom the following summer. “We haven’t identified human-driven factors, like pollution, which could also be affecting the blooms,” he continued. “At the moment, we think natural phenomena have more of an impact than human effects.”

Sitting at the doorstep of the Mediterranean Sea, the university’s school of marine sciences increasingly pursues groundbreaking maritime research with practical applications. Regarding its research on jellyfish, Angel went on to explain: “We’re trying to understand the ecology of the various jellyfish in our coastal waters – when the blooms appear, why are they bigger or smaller in some years and so on. We’re also looking for missing evidence in the life cycle of the nomad jellyfish – where are certain life stages found, what eats the jellyfish and what do the jellyfish eat, how they interact with the marine system. And we are exploring the use of jellyfish as a means to reduce microplastic pollution in the ocean.”

Said Angel, “One of the outstanding observations over the past decade is that we keep finding what we consider new jellyfish in our coastal waters. Different, intriguing species keep appearing. Although we consider them new, it’s possible that they’ve been around, and we just didn’t see them until they became more abundant. It seems that the more you look, the more you see.”

Sharks have increasingly made their home along Israel’s shores. August 2020. (Photo by Hagai Nativ, University of Haifa’s Morris Kahn Marine Research Station)

A swarm of jellyfish along Israel’s Mediterranean coast is being studied by researchers at the University of Haifa. (Photo by Hagai Nativ)

A swarm of jellyfish along Israel’s Mediterranean coast is being studied by researchers at the University of Haifa. (Photo by Hagai Nativ)

From Hadera to Ashdod: Daily and seasonal commutes of Israel’s sharks

By JNS staff

(JNS) – Israel’s sharks travel about 50 kilometers (about 30 miles) between human-altered habitats along the shores of Hadera and Ashdod from season to season in a single-day commute, reveals research from the University of Haifa’s Leon H. Charney School of Marine Sciences.

Scientists at the University of Haifa’s Morris Kahn Marine Research Station have tagged a total of 62 sandbar and dusky sharks and taken fin-clip, muscle and blood samples to understand their biology. In addition, they have been monitoring their movement through satellite tagging and acoustic telemetry.

According to Eyal Bigal, manager of the station’s Apex Predator Laboratory led by Aviad Scheinin, it’s surprising to have such a high number of sharks in the area considering that the desert conditions of the water lower primary productivity. “This doesn’t happen anywhere else,” said Bigal. “There’s something about the bay off Haifa, Israel’s coast that attracts apex predators that are, in the case of sharks, already endangered in the Mediterranean. Here, we see large numbers of sharks in human-altered habitats like power stations, gas platforms and fish cages. They’re not anywhere in the open sea.”

Describing the sharks’ seasonal movements, Bigal said that “for some of the sharks that we tagged in Hadera, on the same day they leave that city they go to the other hotspot in Ashdod, even if it’s quite far away. A few of our sharks disappeared from Hadera, and on the same day, they showed up at the fish cages in Ashdod just a few hours later. Then they stayed there for a few months and moved back to Hadera, so they hopped between hotspots. And the same sharks are coming back every year.”

Researchers initially believed the sharks remained in Hadera from December to March, but this year discovered that the sharks stayed along Israel’s shores until June. “During this season they don’t necessarily stay in Hadera,” said Bigal. “They sometimes go in and out every single day. See “Sharks” on page 16

Sharks have increasingly made their home along Israel’s shores. August 2020. (Photo by Hagai Nativ, University of Haifa’s Morris Kahn Marine Research Station)
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Rosh Hashanah Greetings from The Reporter Group

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By Vicki GJ PR, LLC

(BAYONNE, NJ) – The folks at KAYCO (a family of brands that includes Manischewitz, Gefen, Dorot Gardens, Galilee’s Delicacy and more) and Kosher.com are longtime fans of healthy, multi-cultural meals that are as easy to make as they are delicious. And when the High Holidays approach, their staff are always inspired to find some fabulous, family-friendly new dishes for an unforgettable Rosh Hashanah table.

Here are some intriguing options for welcoming the New Year – 5781 on the Jewish calendar, which this year begins at sundown on Friday, September 18. Some are classics with an updated spin; others will take you to surprising gastronomic heights. Super easy and right on trend, these are just some of the current favorites from the Rosh Hashanah recipe collection at www.kosher.com/recipes/rosh-hashanah.

**Tzimmes**

Recipe by Ronnie Fein for Kosher.com (reprinted by permission from Kosher.com).

- 1 pound medium carrots
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- ¼ cup honey (or date honey)
- 3 scallions, chopped
- 1 Tbsp. fresh orange peel, grated
- 1 tsp. fresh ginger, finely chopped
- 1 cube frozen ginger
- Dash of ground nutmeg
- 2 Tbsp. fresh mint, chopped
- 1 cup golden raisins
- ½ cup dates, chopped
- 2 Tbsp. fresh mint, chopped
- Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
- Peel the carrots, trim the ends and slice the carrots into one-fourth inch rounds.
- In a soup pot, place flour; gradually add milk or soy milk. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 20 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in butter or margarine, salt and pepper to taste. Roast for 10 minutes. Stir in the thick honey has softened a bit and is easy to combine with the vegetable oil (about one minute). Pour the honey mixture over the carrots.
- Sprinkle the scallions, orange peel and ginger on top, and toss the ingredients to coat the carrots completely. Sprinkle with salt and black pepper to taste. Roast for another 10-12 minutes, tossing once or twice, or until the carrots are tender and lightly crispy. Spoon the mixture into a serving bowl and sprinkle with mint.

**Citrus Teriyaki Salmon**

Reprinted by permission from Kosher.com.

- 3 Tbsp. orange juice
- 2 Tbsp. light soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp. rice vinegar or other fruity vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. honey
- 2 tsp. ground fresh ginger or the equivalent dried ginger
- 1 tsp. minced garlic or 1 cube frozen garlic
- 4 salmon fillets, about 1 inch thick
- Preheat oven to 450°F.
- Combine first six ingredients in an eight-inch square baking dish, stirring well.
- Add fish to dish; spoon sauce over fish.
- Bake for 15-20 minutes or until fish flakes easily with a fork, basting occasionally.

**Creamy Carrot Soup**

Recipe reprinted by permission from Kosher.com.

- 3 cups baby carrots
- 2 cups water
- 1 bay leaf (optional)
- 1 clove garlic, crushed or 1 cube frozen garlic
- 1 Tbsp. flour
- 2 cups low-fat milk or unflavored soy milk
- Dash of ground nutmeg
- 2 tsp. butter or margarine
- 1 tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. fresh lemon juice
- Combine carrots, water, bay leaf, if using, and garlic in a medium-sized pot. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 20 minutes. Remove and discard bay leaf. Using a hand blender or food processor, blend carrot mixture until smooth.
- In a soup pot, place flour; gradually add milk or soy milk, stirring until well blended. Stir in pureed carrots and nutmeg. Bring to a boil.
- Remove from heat and stir in butter or margarine, salt and lemon juice.

**Pomegranate Braised Brisket**

Excerpted from “Peas Love and Carrots” by Danielle Renov. Copyright 2020 by ArtScroll Mesorah Publications, photos by Moshe Walliger. Reproduced with permission of the copyright holder. All rights reserved.

- 1 (3- to 3½ lb./1½ kg.) second-cut brisket
- 1 tsp. cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp. cracked black pepper
- 1 Tbsp. garlic powder
- 1 Tbsp. paprika
- 1 Tbsp. garlic powder
- 1 tsp. cayenne pepper
- 3 medium onions, halved and sliced
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 3 Tbsp. brown sugar
- 3 cloves garlic, smashed
- 1 (11 oz./330-milliliter) bottle hard apple cider
- ½ cup tomato sauce (not marinara)
- ½ cup pomegranate molasses (syrup)
- 2 cups beef broth (or 1 beef bouillon cube dissolved in 2 cups hot water)
- ½ cup pomegranate seeds, for garnish (optional)
- 1. In a bowl, combine all rub ingredients.
- 2. In a bowl, combine all rub ingredients.
- 3. In a bowl, combine all rub ingredients.
- 4. In a bowl, combine all rub ingredients.
**U.S. Surgeon General briefs Jewish leaders on best practices for High Holiday gatherings**

By Faygie Holt

(JNS) – The Surgeon General of the United States, Dr. Jerome Adams, briefed Orthodox Jewish leaders on COVID-19 and best practices for High Holiday services during a virtual talk and question-and-answer session sponsored by the Orthodox Union.

“I spent a semester at Brandeis University two decades ago during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur... and I understand how important this time is for your congregation,” Adams said at the start of his remarks. He told those on the call that “you all are on the front lines” and that “people will heed your advice in ways they won’t mine as surgeon general.”

Then, Adams began to outline the best ways that rabbinc leaders can ensure their congregants are safe and healthy during High Holiday services amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Unlike other viruses, including the common cold, Adams said people can have COVID-19 and not know it: “It’s important that your congregation understand that it’s not just about how you feel and how someone looks, but assuming everyone has the virus, and putting barriers and limiting high-risk activities.

In the context of holiday prayer, such high-risk activities include singing and reciting prayers aloud. Emphasizing that the safest option for congregations is to be online for the holidays – “I understand the virtual option isn’t something you look to do,” Adams said, noting as a doctor he needed it – the surgeon general said that best option would be to hold outdoor services if possible.

If individuals must be indoors, he said, they need to wear masks at all times, remain at least six feet apart from one another, and separate times between the services to allow a room to air out and for proper cleaning to take place. He also suggested that congregations direct foot traffic with arrows or dots on the floor showing people which way to walk, and where to stand and sit.

Acknowledging that the emotional impact of remaining at home is also a vital concern, particularly for those who are accustomed to being in synagogue on the holiest days of the Jewish year, Adams said that it was important for each religious leader to evaluate things individually.

“There’s not a one-size-fits-all” solution, he said. “One

**Shofar: A love song**

By Deborah Fineblum

(JNS) – As a baritone trumpet in the Orville Wright Junior High School band in Los Angeles in 1966, Robbie Weinger didn’t know it, but he was training his lips for another role that would soon become his calling.

Weinger (who now goes by Robert) and other shofar blowers have never been more sought-after as they are this year during the global coronavirus pandemic with so many synagogues either closed for business or accepting limited or outside seating for the High Holidays.

That’s why when Jews the world over are looking for someone to blow shofar for them, Weinger plans to be in Jerusalem, part of a team of shofar-sounders dividing up the city by neighborhood so that citizens can fulfill the commandment to hear the shofar blown on the Jewish New Year.

Robbie Weinger has spent 50 years preparing and perfecting his craft. His teacher was the world’s master shofar blow, Nobel laureate Jose Saramago. According to Weinger, Saramago’s shofar blowing has no equivalent in the world: “His sound was music, his shofar sound cried his destiny: to enable his owner to become one of the world’s master shofar blowers.

Robert Weinger blew two shofars. (Photo courtesy of Robert Weinger)
Storage center in Jerusalem dates from Kingdom of Judah

By JNS staff

(JNS) – In excavations in Jerusalem near the U.S. embassy conducted by the Israel Antiquities Authority, more than 120 of some of the largest and most important collections of seal impressions stamped on jars were discovered, revealing information into tax collection in the period of the Judean monarchs some 2,700 years ago.

The impressions were stamped with the letters “LMLK” — meaning “to the king” — and written in ancient Hebrew script, along with the name of the ancient city in the Kingdom of Judah. Other seals are associated with private individuals and bear the name of senior officials of the Kingdom of Judah or wealthy individuals from the First Temple period.

The excavations are funded by the Israel Land Authority and are being directed by the Machtizim, led by the Israel Development Corporation.

The administrative storage center dates back to the days of Kings Hezekiah and Manasseh in the eighth century to the middle of the seventh century B.C.E. The excavations revealed an unusually large structure with 120 jars handles bearing seal impressions in what is being called one of the most important archeological collections ever uncovered as a part of archaeological work in Israel.

Naria Sapir and Nathan Ben-Ari, directors of the excavations on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority, said: “This is one of the most significant discoveries from the period of the kings in Jerusalem made in recent years. At the site we excavated, there are signs that governmental activity managed and distributed food supplies not only for a shortage, but administered agricultural surplus amazing commodities and wealth.

“Evidence shows that at this site,” they continued, “taxes were collected in an orderly manner for agricultural produce, such as wine and olive oil.”

The National Yiddish Theater Folksbiene will also continue its digital tour. The site also includes resources can take the new “Stop the Hate” webinar. To register, visit https://zoom.us/webinar/register/j21.5968161651/ rn-okSTVmRmTk7qYFJiywKQ.

The Mafriz Museum of Jewish Heritage, which is open to the public only by appointment, offers a “Stop the Hate Learning Portal” at learn.malrmuseum.org. The portal provides online access to the museum’s anti-bias education content, where students can take the new “Stop the Hate” digital tour. The site also includes resources for teachers.

Ritaowl will hold a webinar titled “Return of Self through the Writing of Etty Hillesum: A Five-Day Intensive” Monday–Friday, September 21–25, from noon–1 pm. The cost of the five sessions is $180. The intensive will feature the spiritual practices inspired by the writings of Etty Hillesum. Instead of focusing on the ways in which people have “missed the mark” this year, it will explore how people can come closer to their inner voices and direct connection to God. There will be meditation, writing exercises, personal prayer and discussion. All are welcome regardless of religious background. For more information or to register, visit www.ritaowl.org/return-of-self-through-writings-etty-hillesum-five-day-intensive.

The National Yiddish Theater Folksbiene continues to hold free and accessible events online. For additional resources, see previous issues of The Reporter on its website, www.thereporter.org.
Jersey, saw an immediate increase in requests for food in need of services — everything from counseling, job assistance, financial aid and food from their food bank.

Across the country, the Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles anticipated similar needs, though given the size of its population on a much larger scale. It launched a COVID-19 emergency fund-raiser in March, bringing in $2 million in three months, while its needs rose astronomically in same time frame. Its SOVA Food Pantry in the San Fernando Valley alone saw an increase in demand of nearly 50 percent.

Ask nearly any Jewish nonprofit in the United States these days and administrators will likely tell a similar story. The needs are expansive, the costs of services are rising, and yet they are determined to help as best they can with limited resources in the midst of a global pandemic and economic downturn.

“Jewish human-service agencies have seen marked increases in requests for emergency financial assistance, food assistance, mental-health counseling and employment services—all related to the continuing impact of COVID-19, the related economic fallout, the continued uncertainties and the lasting emotional impact,” said Reuben Rozman, president and CEO of the Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies, which includes many Jewish Family Service and Jewish vocational-service organizations. “Agencies have increased staffing to address these areas and continue to seek funds to ensure continued and increased service delivery.”

According to Jacob Solomon, president and CEO of the Greater Miami Jewish Federation, the pandemic “has affected every aspect of communal life and individual life. The primary concern is for people who are the most vulnerable, and from the beginning, our communal priority was on social-service needs: nutrition, isolation, access to our services.”

He noted that the number of people utilizing the Jewish community’s food bank went from 500 to more than 500, while the number of people needing home-delivery of kosher meals went from 500 to 800.

“We have given out $4 million in extra grants and loans, and a lot of our organizations got the PPP [Paycheck Protection Program] loans, so it’s been a tremendous amount of assistance,” he noted, “but I feel we haven’t scratched the surface of the need we will be seeing.”

The Federation, along with partner agencies, is also hosting drive-thru kosher-food distributions. More than 1,000 families received packages of kosher meat, rolls, locally grown fruits and vegetables, and non-perishables at the event in July. Another food distribution took place in late August.

Taryn Baranowski, chief marketing officer of the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston, says it has been “challenging to figure out how to manage this crisis. We’ve experienced crises before,” including severe floods resulting from hurricanes and storms that devastated neighborhoods, “but they are usually on a truncated timetable and a natural disaster. That makes more than you will probably need. Freeze the rest for another brisket.

3. Place spiced brisket into a ziptop bag; refrigerate overnight. (If you’re short on time, just let spiced meat come to room temp for one hour. Then continue with the recipe.)

4. Remove from the fridge; allow brisket to come to room temperature. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).

5. Heat a large Dutch oven or ovenproof pan over high heat. Add oil and brisket. Sear brisket on all sides until nicely browned. Remove from Dutch oven; set aside.

6. To the same pot, add onions, salt and pepper. Cook for about three minutes until onions are soft and translucent. Add garlic; cook for one minute.

7. Add hard cider, using a wooden spoon to stir it in and scrape up any browned bits from the bottom of the pan.

8. Add remaining ingredients. Bring mixture to a boil; return brisket to the Dutch oven. If you used a pan, pour the mixture over the brisket.

9. Cover the pot tightly. Bake for about one and a half hours.

10. Remove from oven; turn brisket over. Return to oven. At this point, cooking time will vary based on the size of your meat. I suggest giving it another 45 minutes, no matter the size, and after that checking it every 30 minutes until it is soft and tender. Mine took three hours total for a four-pound brisket.

11. Remove from the oven and allow brisket to cool completely in the sauce. (Taking the brisket out of the sauce while it is hot will result in a dry brisket.)

12. If you want to shred the brisket, wait 45 minutes after you take it out of the oven and, while it is still warm, use two forks to shred it in the pot, where it can stay in the liquid.

13. To slice brisket, allow it to cool completely, then remove from sauce and slice against the grain. Garnish with pomegranate seeds, optional.

Apple Bourekas with Silan-Sesame Drizzle

Recipe by Naomi Nachman

for Kosher.com

Bourekas

1 can apple pie filling

1 package: 5-in. puffed pastry squares, thawed

1 c. flour, for dusting surface

1 egg beaten with 2 tbsp. water, for egg wash

Silan-Sesame Drizzle

1 c. sesame tahini

2 Tbsp. silan

1 tsp. confectionary sugar

1/4 c. warm water, for consistency

5 fl. oz. black sesame seeds, for sprinkling

Prepare the Pastry

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper, one side.

2. Place thawed puff pastry on a floured surface. With a rolling pin, roll out so the pastry is an even, thin layer, about one-eighth-inch thick. Repeat with remaining squares.

3. Place a few slices of apple from the pie filling in the bottom right hand corner of each square, leaving a small border.

4. Brush egg wash onto the edges of each square, then fold the dough over, making a triangle. Use a fork to crimp the edges, stretching the dough over the fruit as needed. Just be gentle, so the pastry does not break.

5. Brush additional egg wash over bourekas; sprinkle with sugar.

6. Place bourekas on prepared baking sheets; bake for 30 minutes, or until pastry is golden brown.

7. Remove from the oven and allow to cool.

Prepare the Drizzle

1. In a bowl, using a fork or whisk, combine tahini, silan, confectionary sugar, and one-fourth cup warm water until it is smooth and pourable. As it sets, it will become thicker, so you can add a bit more warm water and mix until desired consistency.

2. Drizzle silan sesame mixture over bourekas. Garnish with black sesame seeds.

Happy Rosh Hashanah

We wish you a year of good health and many blessings.

Ronald Sacks & Ilene Pinsser

Our Family Wishes Your Family a Happy New Year

Jack & Darlene Weber

Matt & Michael

Maria & Doug

Volunteers handed out food at a kosher drive-by distribution site sponsored by the Greater Miami Jewish Federation, Feeding South Florida, Jewish Community Services of South Florida and Temple Emanuel in July. (Photo courtesy of JNS)
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Shofar

Weinger will tell you it all began with his personal “burning bush” encounter in 2003 on Mount Diablo (Devil Mountain) outside of San Francisco. He was 52. “That day, I felt for the first time that there was a supernatural force managing my life,” he says. “It taught me to my knees and I wept like a baby.”

Another awakening came in 2008, when he fell deeply in love with the ancient instrument. The ram’s horn was first referenced in the Torah when God used it some 3,700 years ago to call the Israelites together to hear the Ten Commandments at the foot of Mount Sinai.

By 2009, Weinger was in the shofar business full-time. By 2017, he had made aliya. Throughout this journey, the man will tell you that he was inspired by his father. After all, Jack Weinger was born just before Rosh Hashanah in 1917 and died exactly 10 years later on Rosh Hashanah 2017. His painting, “The Great Shofar,” is now the insignia of the shop he runs 7,567 miles from his California birthplace.

It didn’t take that long to establish Shofar So Great in Beit Hogla, a tiny sand-blown speck on the map in the shadow of the ancient town of Jericho. It was here that the Israelites entered the land and the priests blew the shofars and the people shouted, collapsing the city’s walls.

The shop is stocked with hundreds of shofars in every size and shape, fashioned from the horns of kudu, gemsbock, goat and, of course, traditional rams. Among them are shofars illustrated by Israeli artists. Visitors—be they families or groups—also get to hear Weinger share the history of the shofar or take workshops on the fine art of shofar blowing in the visitor’s center.

“Robert also tells the story of his spiritual search and how it landed him in this small ecclesiastic community—what he’s doing here is attracting people to this somewhat hidden part of Israel,” says tour guide Shalom Pollack who often brings groups here. “The people here are pioners taking a dusty piece of land and making an orchard bloom like our ancestors did thousands of years ago.”

Of course, the pandemic has cooled off many shofars, though not all, of the tours, and most of Weinger’s sales are conducted online these days. He also reports a decided uptick since the Jewish world woke up to the fact that opportunities to hear shofar in synagogues will be limited, and they might need to blow shofar themselves for their family, friends and neighbors this year.

On the Jewish New Year, Jews not only pray the unsung, untraditional “Book of Life” for a happy and (this year in particular), healthy new year, but also corone God as the giver of all our life and resolve to make a fresh start in the new year. And the shofar is an integral part of all that.

As sound pierces the listener to the core, it’s a cry of repentance on the day of judgment, hearkening back to the shofar used by the Israelites to battle. Or, as Rabbi Yehuda Lave of Jerusalem puts it, “It’s also no coincidence that it’s on Rosh Hashanah that we read about the near-sacrifice of Isaac and the ram that was sacrificed in his place.”

“The shofar is a prophetic instrument—bearing it awakens the power of Jewish history in every heart,” says Weinger. “It’s as if God speaks through it directly to His people and everyone who hears this sound—young and old, observer and secular—has an intense spiritual experience, of crying to God for mercy as opposed to judgment.”

“I’ve never heard anyone blow the shofar like Robert,” says Rabbi Hagi Ben Artzi who teaches at Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan, as well as a woman’s seminary in Beit Hogla, where he first heard Weinger blow. “You can feel his shofar expressing something very deep, as if the sound comes from the bottom of his heart and spirit.”

In fact, Weinger has developed his own uses for the instrument. Five or six times a year, he hears from people around the world asking him to pray for them or a loved one in trouble. So he sounds the shofar, “petitioning God on their behalf, and God answers.”

“That’s why he’s living so close to Jericho, where the miraculous collapse of these walls occurred through the voice of the shofar,” adds Rabbi Ben Artzi, who has the distinction of being Sara Netanya huah’s primary rabbi (her brother’s rabbi). “Seeing the prophecy of God gathering His people back to their homeland being fulfilled, every time Robert blows, he’s saying, ‘Listen, God is here.”

Smack dab in the season of COVID-19, High Holidays 2020 (5781) are shaping up to be challenging as Jews the world over scramble to plan for these all-important days. Rosh Hashanah, the holiday rivaled by Passover on the family-friendly scale, is expected to find families restricted from gathering. And since, along with Yom Kippur 10 days later, it is historically the No. 1 attendance magnet for synagogues, congregations everywhere are struggling to balance religious traditions and Torah-based succot with government-mandated safety regulations.

Meaning that on Rosh Hashanah, when the primary mitzvah is to hear the shofar, limited seating is likely to pass many shofar honors to smaller neighborhood minyans. “Every neighborhood needs a shofar and someone who can blow the notes,” insists Weinger.

They’re going out in the middle of the night and then they come back in the morning, starting around the month of January and then leave again. They’re hanging around Hadera all winter, but they’re not staying there.”

Biala said the proximity to power stations and other human-altered habitats is potentially detrimental to the sharks’ ecology. “They might be diverted from their natural routes, where they’s supposed to be swimming and reproducing and playing their role as apex predators,” he said. “Instead, they linger at these hotspots. It might function as what we call an ‘ecological trap.’ It’s good for them at the individual level, they’re comfortable, and it’s nice for them temper

A View of Jack Weinger’s painting “The Great Shofar.” (Photo courtesy of Robert Weinger)
of unceasing political warfare needs.

Friedman-Nachalon struck a nerve among Israelis, as settlement movement leader Israel Harel noted in Haaretz, because it was “a speech reminiscent of the days when the spiritual and political leadership – and the entire people – knew to cherish the miracle of building the state, of the gathering of exiles. The days when the leaders knew they had to listen to each other and respect each other’s opinion, and to remember the lessons of history.”

That’s not the stuff of contemporary Israeli politics, as Netanyahu’s followers trash their opponents while those determined to see him locked up use similarly overheated rhetoric and over-the-top charges to discredit the prime minister.

The same is true in the United States, where Trump’s foes are ready to accuse him of every imaginable crime while his supporters use similarly overheated rhetoric, even if there’s no real comparison between the two men in terms of what they are accused of doing. Both sides see the upcoming election in apocalyptic terms. It would be one thing if their talk of the future of American democracy being at stake were cynical electioneering. But it’s clear that one thing if their talk of the future of American democracy illustrates a deeper divide about basic issues that are fundamental to the future of democracy. In such an argument, there doesn’t appear to be any room to split the difference in a culture war about liberty and free speech that transcends the battle between Republicans and Democrats.

Quoting Yehuda Amichai’s poem about “Miracles,” Friedman-Nachalon said that, “From far away everything looks like a miracle, but up close even a miracle doesn’t look like one. Even a crosser of the divided Red Sea saw only the sweating back of the walker in front of him.”

Like Israelis who seem to have lost their ability to appreciate the miracle of the birth of Israel, many Americans also seem, in their zeal to denounce the faults of the past, to be blind to the miracle of the constitutional republic the genius of the Founding Fathers created.

We can only hope that when the dust eventually settles, in the arguments about Netanyahu and Trump that Israelis and Americans will both be capable of listening to calls for unity, rather than continuing to settle scores with each other in a fight to the death in which opponents must be destroyed rather than listened to and respected. If Friedman-Nachalon’s message isn’t heeded, the cost of the impulse to partisan warfare may be higher than most of us can imagine.

Jonathan S. Tobin is editor-in-chief of JNS – Jewish News Syndicate. Follow him on Twitter, @jonathans_tobin.

Saudi Arabia says flights between UAE and Israel can cross its airspace

Saudi Arabia announced on Sept. 2 that all flights between Israel and the United Arab Emirates can traverse its airspace.

An official at the Saudi General Authority of Civil Aviation stated that it had approved the request by the aviation authority of the United Arab Emirates to allow all flights arriving and departing from the country to fly through Saudi airspace, the state Saudi press agency reported.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud said after the report was published that the country’s support for a Palestinian state with eastern Jerusalem as its capital had not changed, according to Reuters. The flight from Tel Aviv to Abu Dhabi takes approximately three hours via Saudi airspace, but up to eight hours if forced to use a roundabout route. Israelis can now purchase tickets on the UAE’s national carrier, Etihad Airways, to destinations in the Middle East, Asia, Australia and elsewhere, following the U.S.-brokered normalization agreement between Jerusalem and Abu Dhabi. The flights offered to Israelis will not take off from Tel Aviv, however, but from Abu Dhabi, Israel’s business daily Globes reported on Sept. 1.
At challenging times, it’s natural to feel angry or frustrated, and all too often the blame starts to fly. However, it’s precisely at these times that it’s most crucial for us to be there for each other, to support each other and to assist in any way that we can. It is precisely at these times that it’s most crucial that we enter the covenant of the Lord, your God, and His oath, and your woodcutters and your water drawers, that you may strive to always remember how much we need each other.

At the end of the day, judgment is fast approaching. In the midst of a global pandemic, we may feel uncertain about what the future will bring. As always, we turn to the Torah to look for direction.

This week’s double Torah portion, Nitzavim-Vayelech, begins: “You are all standing this day before the Lord, your God: the leaders of your tribes, your elders and your officials, every man of Israel, your young children, your women and your servants who are with you in your camp, both men and women, the Levites, the strangers, the fatherless and the widows, who are in your midst. Enter the covenant of the Lord, your God, and His oath, and your woodcutters and your water drawers, that you may strive to always remember how much we need each other.

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which the Lord, your God, is making with you this day, and in the words of the prayers, pray of Him: “Bless us, your Father, all of us as one.” May God bless us and grant each and every one of us a sweet new year and a year of revealed goodness, health and blessings.

Happy New Year!

from

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Volunteers handed out food at a kosher drive-by distribution site sponsored by the Greater Miami Jewish Federation. Feeding South Florida, Jewish Community Services of South Florida and Temple Emanuel in July. (Photo courtesy of JN)

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is much different than the current situation.” She noted that Federation’s annual Campaign is down slightly, just 8 percent. That was nowhere near the 50 percent reduction some had feared. They’ve also raised $2.7 million for a COVID-specific fund with much of the monies going to the local Jewish Family Service and those most in need of aid.

The Jewish nonprofit world is not alone in its needs. The National Council of Nonprofits reports that “individual giving in the first quarter of the year was down 6 percent compared to the same time last year.”

“The state of nonprofits right now is challenging, to say the least, and it doesn’t matter what sort of nonprofit it is. They are facing unprecedented obstacles right now,” said Rick Cohen, chief communications officer and COO for the National Council of Nonprofits.

Adding to concerns about decreasing donations, non-profits run programs that receive funds from local, state or federal governments. In some cases, those payments that have not been reduced, Cohen noted, the PPP loans did help nonprofits that were eligible, more is needed.

“Without something more and quickly, we will see a lot more nonprofits going out of business and abandoning their community. There is only so far they can stretch, and they’ve passed that point. They are doing everything they can, but there are limits,” he said. “Some of the stories we have been hearing over the last few weeks are heartbreaking.”

Knowing how crucial it is for people to step up and doate to nonprofits, a bipartisan delegation from Congress is pushing for a change to the federal tax code. The Universal Giving Pandemic Response Act would allow people who do not itemize deductions to donate charitable contributions made in 2019 and 2020 on their taxes.

“Nonprofits and charitable organizations have long been leaders on the front lines of this pandemic, putting Americans first and aiding recovery efforts in our community,” Rep. Mark Wangler (R-NY) said in a statement announcing the bill. “By making incentives for charitable giving, we can embolden our citizens to give back to those who have repeatedly given to us in this time of need.”

Rep. Chris Pappas (D-NH) added that “expanding the charitable giving tax credit is the easiest way to support nonprofits in this difficult time.

If there is any bright spot to be had, it may be that in the Jewish community at least, donors are stepping up. In a survey conducted by researchers from Brandeis University of Jews living in 10 mid- to large-size Jewish communities in the United States and the impact the pandemic has had on them, “lots of people said their philanthropy will increase because they know the need is now greater,” said Leonard Saxe, director of the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies and director of the Steinhardt Social Research Institute at Brandeis University in Waltham, MA.

He noted that overall, those surveyed had fared relatively well during the pandemic. However, those who were already “living on the edge or just making it” prior the pandemic “are in many respects worse off.”

That many in the Jewish community are willing to boost their charitable giving is likely welcoming news to Federations, which are concerned about whether or not they will have enough communal support to address the growing demands for services.

Key to getting the buy-in from communal donors is making personal connections. “Some donors are saying, ‘You guys are doing a great job, and I am happy to give my gift again this year,’ ” related Miami’s Solomon. “Others say we want to be supportive, but we are not in a position to do so.”

The United Jewish Federation of Utah, which has a $750,000 budget annually and serves a Jewish community of between 6,500 to 9,000 people, is currently 15 percent ahead of its fund-raising goals that usual at this time of year. This comes despite the fact that its annual fund-raising gala was canceled. “We found the community was ready and willing to help others and open their wallets,” said Federation director Alex Shapiro.

He noted that the biggest needs they’ve seen so far are requests for rent assistance and food from their food bank. “Our Jewish Family Service has been pouring out since day one. The need has been great and enhanced, and fortunately, the community and individuals and Federation rose to the occasion, making sure there is enough funding to meet their significant increases now and for the foreseeable future.”

All told, the Jewish Federations of North America raised some $175 million for communal needs in just three months. That number does not include the $90 million Jewish Community Response and Impact Fund, created by a group of donors to provide zero-interest loans to Jewish institutions nationwide. It also provided grants to support critical and groundbreaking work in American Jewish communal life and communal organizations that focus on Jewish education, engagement and leadership.

Recently, JFNA announced the creation of a $54 million fund for human-services agencies serving the Jewish community. Moneys for the fund will come from seven different foundations and Jewish Federations nationwide. Since mid-March, Federations have been in active crisis-management mode as the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted agencies’ “traditional way of doing communal life,” said JFNA Board Chair Mark Witt. “They have used their endowments and launched emergency campaigns to support Jewish life and maintain their local agencies, yet the longevity of this downturn remains unknown. We believe this effort will help alleviate Jewish families, seniors and others who have been hard hit by this pandemic.”

That news is music to the ears of Jewish-human-service agencies grappling with individuals’ needs – needs that may well continue to grow as the pandemic drags on and government assistance, including unemployment payments and PPP loans, come to an end. As Saxe noted, “The fact that we didn’t uncover widespread spread devastation” could be due to the availability of federal aid. “We will need to see what happens…” We’ve heard anecdotaly that some federated communities put money aside to help people in desperate need, but were surprised they didn’t need to use those funds.

“I don’t think it was because there wasn’t an underlying need, but because the government stepped in,” he said.

With the pandemic still in full swing, many questions remain, even though Jewish communal leaders assure that they will be ready for whatever needs arise. “I really think this is a teachable moment for the community of why Federation exists,” said Solomon. “This is the reason Federations were created, and it’s very important that we do our job and do it well, and identify the needs to make sure people don’t go hungry and have a safety net under them.”

Volunteers packed food for distribution as part of a kosher drive-by distribution site sponsored by the Greater Miami Jewish Federation. Feeding South Florida, Jewish Community Services of South Florida and Temple Emanuel in July. (Photo courtesy of JN)

Happy New Year!

from

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EU warns Serbia, Kosovo Jerusalem embassy move could endanger membership bid

The European Union warned Serbia and Kosovo on Sept. 7 that they could be hurting their chances for EU membership if they move embassies to Jerusalem. "There is no U.E. member state with an embassy in Jerusalem. Any diplomatic steps that could call into question the U.E.'s common position on Jerusalem are a matter of serious concern and regret," said European Commission spokesman Peter Stano, according to AP. In a surprise move the previous week, U.S. President Donald Trump announced that Serbia and Kosovo had agreed to normalize economic ties as part of U.S.-brokered talks, and that Serbia had agreed to mutually recognize each other, as part of which Belgrade would move its embassy to Jerusalem. Serbian officials downplayed the embassy move, with Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic saying the final decision depended on the Serbian parliament's vote on the matter, which would happen Monday. The move, along with Kosovo's, will establish embassies in Jerusalem. Serbia and Kosovo have agreed to establish diplomatic relations, and that is why the two countries will move their embassies to Jerusalem, said Stano. The Haras was leader in a week-long visit to meet with other Palestinian factions over the warming relations between Israel and some Arab states, AJaccared. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the Trump administration's special representative for international economic development, Jared Kushner, are expected to go to Jerusalem and Baghdad to develop a plan to "Peace to Prosperity" vision. According to Ahmad Majidiala, a member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, speaking in Ramallah, the talks aim to "achieve peace with all Arab countries and build a national partnership between all factions," according to the report.

Malawi to move embassy to Jerusalem

Malawi’s President Lazarus Chakwera said on Sept. 5 that his country intends to establish an embassy in Jerusalem to begin a new chapter of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, speaking in Ramallah, the talks aim to "achieve peace with all Arab countries and build a national partnership between all factions," according to the report. "Malawi has had a diplomatic relationship with Israel since 1958, but this move is a new step in our relations," he said. "We believe that by establishing an embassy in Jerusalem, we will be able to strengthen our ties with the Palestinian people and support their struggle for self-determination and statehood."

Malawi's President Lazarus Chakwera said on Sept. 5 that his country intends to establish an embassy in Jerusalem. Chakwera, who promised reforms to Islam and the Muslims, humiliate polytheism and the polytheists, and destroy the enemies of Islam and save the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. "Oh Allah, give strength to the Muslims and the Palestinians, polytheism and the polytheists, and destroy the enemies of Islam. Oh Allah, save the Al-Aqsa mosque, Oh Allah, make it stand tall and glorious until the Day of Judgement," said al-Sudais.

Malawi, Palestinian Islamic Jihad leaders meet in Beirut to coordinate activity

Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh met with Palestinian Islamic Jihad leader Secretary-General Ziad al-Nahala in Beirut on Sept. 2 to discuss cooperation between the two terrorist groups. The two organizations held talks about how they can coordinate their actions in light of the restrictions on movement into and out of Gaza and the normalization agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, and the Trump peace plan, Ynet reported. The Haras was leader in a week-long visit to meet with other Palestinian factions over the warming relations between Israel and some Arab states, AJaccared. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the Trump administration's special representative for international economic development, Jared Kushner, are expected to go to Jerusalem and Baghdad to develop a plan to "Peace to Prosperity" vision. According to Ahmad Majidiala, a member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, speaking in Ramallah, the talks aim to "achieve peace with all Arab countries and build a national partnership between all factions," according to the report.