

JCC holding 100th anniversary celebration campaign

The Jewish Community Center is holding a centennial anniversary celebration campaign to celebrate its centennial anniversary on August 15, 2027. The goal is to raise \$800,000. Donations may be made immediately or pledged over the campaign period through Sunday, October 31, 2027. The David Eisenberg Donor Advised Fund will match all contributions up to \$400,000. There are donor recognition opportunities available. To donate, checks may be sent to the Jewish Community Center, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850. For more information, contact the JCC at 607-724-2417.

Campaign goals including funding cap-

ital improvements to ensure the ongoing safety, efficiency and sustainability of the facility; creating a Building Fund Reserve to provide resources for emergency capital needs without diverting funds from programs and services; and growing the endowment to protect its future and ensure the long-term sustainability of its mission.

"In the enduring spirit of *l'dor v'dor*, from generation to generation, we invite you to join us in shaping the future by ensuring that our Jewish Community Center continues to thrive for the next 100 years and beyond," said organizers of the campaign. "Thanks to the leadership and vision of our founders in

1927 who dared to dream, we are privileged to have a Jewish Community Center that has stood at the heart of our community for nearly a century. For almost 100 years, the JCC has served as a cornerstone of social, educational and cultural enrichment. Generations of children have grown up in the nurturing environment of the JCC, continuing to thrive both within and beyond our community. The Center's enduring commitment to inclusivity – welcoming *everyone*, regardless of age, race, religion, sexual orientation, or ability to pay – has strengthened the fabric of our community and embodied the true meaning of belonging."

They added, "Today, in a rapidly changing world, where the definition of family is constantly evolving, the JCC remains a steadfast haven that embraces the true spirit of community. It is now our responsibility to preserve the traditions of our past, serve the current needs of our community, and prepare for a vibrant future, ensuring that the legacy of our founders continues to inspire. We are deeply grateful to the David Eisenberg Donor Advised Fund, whose extraordinary generosity will match all contributions dollar for dollar up to \$400,000, doubling the impact of every gift received. Help us strengthen our JCC for the next 100 years."

Film Fest to hold virtual showings

"Running on Sand"

By Reporter staff

The Binghamton Jewish Film Fest will hold a virtual showing of the film "Running on Sand." Dora E. Polachek, visiting associate professor of Romance languages and literature at Binghamton University, will moderate a Zoom discussion of the film on Sunday, November 23, at 7 pm. People will be able to register for links to the film and discussion at www.jfgeb.org. Registration is due by Wednesday, November 19. The link will be sent out on Thursday, November 20. The film will be available for viewing from Thursday-Sunday, November 20-23. The film is in Hebrew with English subtitles.

"Running on Sand" tells the story of Aumari, a young Eritrean refugee being deported from Israel who runs away and is then mistaken for the new foreign player for a struggling soccer team. He seizes the opportunity to change his identity as the new key acquisition for the team of Maccabi Netanya, even though he has no talent for soccer.

The film has won several film festival awards, including the Audience Award for Best Narrative Film at the Seattle Jewish Film Festival, the Spokane Jewish Film Festival, the Palm Springs International



L-r: Zvika Hadar and Chancela Mongoza in "Running on Sand" (Photo courtesy of go2films)

Film Festival, the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival and the Boca International Jewish Film Festival. Hannah Brown wrote in *The Jerusalem Post* that "the movie hits the sweet spot between a truly light-hearted comedy and a real drama, with engaging characters you care about and funny situations, but with a strong narrative and a heartfelt message about treating people with respect, no matter where they are from."

"Join us for our first film of the season," said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, which sponsors the film fest. "This feel-good film is the perfect way to begin a season of interesting and exciting films."

Four short films

By Reporter staff

The Binghamton Jewish Film Fest will hold a virtual showing of four short films, "No Harm Done," "The Sacred Society," "Women of Virtue" and "The Father, The Son and The Rav." Rochel Chein, co-director of education at Chabad of Binghamton and a responder for Ask the Rabbi at Chabad.org, will moderate a Zoom discussion of the film on Sunday, December 7, at 7 pm. People will be able to register for links to the film and discussion at www.jfgeb.org/film-fest-2025-26. Registration is due by Wednesday, December 3. The links will be sent out on Thursday, December 4. The films will be available for viewing from Thursday-Sunday, December 4-7.

The films illustrate different parts of the Jewish life cycle:

- ◆ "No Harm Done" focuses on how, a week after giving birth, Mila faces her son's circumcision, a tradition she never questioned, with uncertainty. The 18-minute film is in French with subtitles.
- ◆ "The Sacred Society" is a documentary about the work of the *chevra kadisha* (Jewish burial society) and includes interviews with the volunteers who clean, prepare and dress bodies for burial. The



Mila (Sarah Stern) with her son in "No Harm Done." (Photo courtesy of Seven Arts Releasing)

12-minute film is in English.

- ◆ "Women of Virtue" tells the story of 9-year-old Etel, who is Orthodox, after she gets her first period. While she is glad that her mother now considers her a woman, she is unhappy when she learns that, in her community, women are considered impure when they have their period. The 29-minute film is in French with subtitles.
- ◆ "The Father, The Son and The Rav" is a comedy about Yoel, 30, an Orthodox Jew, who attends synagogue every Saturday with his 6-year-old son. When his son inadvertently disrupts the solemnity of Shabbat, it leads to a humorous and challenging

See "Films" on page 5

Matching grant for *The Reporter*

By Reporter staff

The Reporter announced that it has received a \$5,000 matching grant courtesy of

the David and Virginia Eisenberg Fund. Donations will be accepted now through December 2. Donations may be made several ways:

- ◆ Give online through The Reporter Group's website, www.thereporter.org.
- ◆ Through Giving Tuesday e-mails that will be sent by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton. Anyone who does not

receive Federation e-mails, but would like to be on the list, should e-mail director@jfgeb.org with "Federation e-mail list" in the subject line.

See "Grant" on page 8

Family Hanukkah party at Discovery Center on Dec. 14

By Reporter staff

A Family Hanukkah Party will be held on Sunday, December 14, at 1 pm, at the Discovery Center, located next to the Ross Park Zoo, 60 Morgan Rd., Binghamton. The event is co-sponsored by Hillel Academy, the Jewish Community Center, the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton and the PJ Library. There will be crafts, singing, storytelling, kosher donuts and time to play in the museum. There is no charge to attend, but registration is required by Friday, December 12. Regis-

tration will be at www.jfgeb.org.

"Young families are once again invited to celebrate Hanukkah at the Discovery Center," said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. "This event is a great way to explore your Jewish roots, meet other young families and have a great time at the local children's museum."

Hubal added, "I want to thank Tara Kaminsky, Maren Nasar and Rose Shapiro for taking the lead in organizing this year's event. It is sure to be a special afternoon full of friends and festivity."

JCC Community Hanukkah Celebration on Dec. 15

The annual Community Hanukkah Celebration will take place at the Jewish Community Center, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, on Monday, December 15, from 5:15-7 pm. The evening will begin with the Hanukkah torch walk and candle lighting. There will be a brief ceremony with music and recitations. The event will then move into the JCC's auditorium and feature performances by the JCC Early Childhood Center and Hillel Academy, as well as a showing of the annual

community Hanukkah video. Reservations are appreciated and can be made by calling the JCC office at 607-724-2417.

The torch walk will take place from 5:15-5:30 pm, followed by entertainment from 5:30-6 pm indoors, at which time the food buffet will open. From 6-7 pm, there will be activities featuring dreidels, gelt, crafts and games. Food tickets will be sold for \$8 per person, and \$6 for seniors and children, with a family maximum of \$28.

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Opinion

One Perspective from Israel

A strange Yom Kippur on the Gaza border – part 1

JEREMY M. STAIMAN

This article originally appeared in the Times of Israel and is being reprinted with permission.

This is the story of one soldier – my son Arky – whose experiences on his base near the Gaza border this past Yom Kippur were too vivid and unusual to go unrecorded. I write them down here, so that the details – the moments that were so Yom Kippur and so not Yom Kippur at the same time – will not fade away. There are no heroic war stories ahead, no tense drama and no profound lessons. Rather, there is a window into one man’s experience – how the topsy-turvy world of war can take the familiar and turn it strangely new and different.

One more thing: there’s a fair bit of Hebrew prayer jargon ahead. If you’re familiar with *davening* (the prayer services), enjoy the ride. If not, you might want to turn back now, before this train leaves the station.

Let’s get to it.

The underlying description would have to be “surreal.” So many things happened before, during – and even after – Yom Kippur this year that felt utterly... un-Yom-Kippurish!

A few days prior to Yom Kippur, Arky was asked to be the chazzan for Yom Kippur *Musaf* on his base. He had done *Mincha* a number of times before, but *Musaf* was a whole different ball game. He felt very unprepared, yet excited by the challenge.

Musaf is filled with twists and detours in the prayers, including soaring religious crescendos (“who shall live and who shall die” is pretty heady stuff!). Some of the different sections feature their own special *nusach* (such as the *Selichot*, the *Avodah*, etc.). The service runs more like 2.5 hours, with no breaks, meaning that more vocal stamina is needed, not to mention a greater variety of tunes.

Leading a group as diverse as theirs – Ashkenazim and Sephardim, Yemenites, Moroccans, etc. – can be daunting.

The upside was that, having gone to yeshiva with boys from a variety of countries, Arky was already familiar with many of their tunes and *piyutim*. But there was still a lot to figure out.

One thing working in his favor was that everyone there was in the same boat – they were used to working with one another, their camaraderie bridging their cultural divides. They laughed together. They confronted the ugliest faces of war together. They had each others’ backs. They were like family – possibly tighter than family.

In the big picture, Yom Kippur *Musaf* – even if it turned out to be different than what they knew from their homes and childhood – was not going to make or break the unit. But it was still his first Yom Kippur *Musaf*, and he wanted it to be as memorable as possible for as many of his fellow soldiers as possible.

To whatever degree attainable, they tried to keep life regular on base. There is a long-standing custom of men going to the *mikvah* on *erev* Yom Kippur, which they didn’t want to miss. Their commander was sympathetic and allowed a group of them to commandeer a Hummer to drive to the nearest Jewish city and find a *mikvah*.

Imagine the face of the man in charge of the ritual bathhouse as a military vehicle pulled up, soldiers piling out in uniform, rifles in tow, marching straight into his sacred space. Surreal.

The olive-skinned older gentleman couldn’t have been more gracious. “None of you is paying – it’s on the house! Here are fresh towels for all of you! Hashem should watch over you always!”

Their unit, which deals with search and rescue for fallen soldiers, has, thankfully, not been too busy lately. But that doesn’t mean they’ve been sitting around all day playing

cards. The IDF has kept them busy with various drills, both in their specialty and in general army techniques. So while Arky had expected more downtime to prepare himself for the *davening*, it just didn’t happen. He arrived hot at Yom Kippur’s doorstep without everything firmly worked out – either in his head or in notes scribbled in his *machzor*.

Evening approached, and as the solemn day commenced, a 30-40-strong group assembled in the repurposed dining hall for *Kol Nidre*. Awaiting them were decorative cards with a custom *Hineni Muchan* prayer to be recited by soldiers who are required to fulfill their mitzvah by eating on Judaism’s most famous day of fasting.

A special prayer for those doing the mitzvah of eating on Yom Kippur. Surreal.

As per the instructions of the IDF Rabbinate, they were ordered to spend Yom Kippur eating and drinking *shiurim* – small amounts not *halachically* considered eating – so that if they needed to suddenly leave for a mission, rather than being depleted, their bodies would be in a state of readiness for the grueling and gruesome intensity required of their work. They would grab a quick bite on their way out the door, and that, combined with the *shiurim*, would leave them in good stead.

The nighttime *tefillah* began. It was strong and meaningful.

Part two of this column will be featured in an upcoming issue of The Reporter.



Looking for this issue’s “Jewish Resources”? Visit www.thereportergroup.org/jewish-online-resources to find out what’s happening online.”

In My Own Words

Deflection

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

I fell for it, which is not the first time something like this has happened. It was hard to ignore because of the numerous news reports on the web: President Donald Trump was telling our military to prepare for war with Nigeria. My first reaction was, “Why would we be going to war with a country in Africa?” My next was, “Why is the man who claims he deserves the Nobel Prize for peace talking about going to war with a country in Africa and who previously mentioned fighting a war with Venezuela?”

Now, I could waste space here explaining why the claim that Nigeria is persecuting Christians is false or that our president’s problem with Venezuela is mostly based on his dislike of its current government, but I’m not. I confess that it’s difficult to ignore this topic because these wars would be illegal, inappropriate, a waste of American resources and a senseless waste of the lives of the soldiers who would die in battle. However, it’s also clear these matters are being used as distractions from the internal problems our country is facing.

◆ Freedom of the press: Our democracy depends on reporters willing to write and newspapers/websites/tv stations being willing to publicize what government officials want to be kept hidden. I’m not talking about information that would endanger U.S. operatives across the globe (although Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth already did that when he released information in a Signal group chat). I’m talking about information we need as citizens to make educated decisions. That’s why I’m proud of the 40 journalists who turned in their press credentials rather than sign a document – issued by Hegseth, the same person who

released classified information – that basically said they would only be able to write material that was considered acceptable by the government. The press protects us from governmental malfeasance – from *both* parties – and no such promises should ever be made. That’s their job, to uncover what politicians and others don’t want us to see. Those restrictions are dangerous to all American citizens.

◆ The government’s shutdown: As I write this, the government’s shutdown looks to be the longest ever. What I write here is relevant, though, even if the shutdown is over by the time you read this. There are so many parts of this to consider, but I’d like to look at one aspect in respect to the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) and that’s feeding the poor. The fact that this administration chose to freeze the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as SNAP, benefits belies its claim that the U.S. is a Christian nation. (The idea that our nation has any specific religion goes against our Constitution, but that’s a subject for a different column.) According to news reports, approximately 42 million Americans rely on that program for food. The recipients are white, Black, Asian, Hispanic, Republican, Democrat, young and old. Fortunately, some states have chosen to fight for continued funding and, as of this writing, two federal judges have said those payments must be made. The Trump administration has given into those demands in a limited way, but the fact that this program was not being funded goes against religious values.

◆ Punishing those who don’t vote the way the Trump administration prefers: The New York City mayoral race will be over by the time you read this. Right now, I have no idea

who won and it’s irrelevant for what I want to discuss here. The president is certainly allowed to tell people for whom he wishes them to vote. That is perfectly acceptable. What is not acceptable is suggesting (well, more than suggesting) that federal funding for New York City will be severely restricted if people don’t vote for his choice. What matters here is that the president is once again threatening people who don’t follow his desires. That is completely inappropriate. The reason voting is anonymous is that people are supposed to vote according to their conscious, not because they are worried they will lose their jobs, their friends will be mad at them or their religious community would prefer the other candidate to win.

These are only three in a long list of things the current administration would like us not to think about. That list includes its attempts to restrict voters’ rights, to place severe restrictions on those who can legally immigrate to our country, to ignore due process protection when it comes to ICE officials, to reject birthright citizenship, to erase aspects of American history they find distasteful and way too many more to list here. I don’t want a war with Nigeria; I don’t want a war with Venezuela. I do care about what kind of country the United States is and will become. We used to stand for *something* – freedoms that people so greatly admired that they were willing to risk their lives to start anew on our shores. Slowly but surely, this administration is changing and destroying those American values. If there is a heaven, the founders of our country are looking down in despair and crying over the destruction of their dreams.



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

LETTERS

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

ADS

The Reporter does not necessarily endorse any advertised products and services. In addition, the paper is not responsible for the kashruth of any advertiser’s product or establishment.

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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www.thereportergroup.org

TC/TI Adult Ed. program to feature “The Exciting Lives of Small-City Jews” on Dec. 7

The Adult Education Committee of Temple Concord and Temple Israel will hold a program and light brunch on Sunday, December 7, from 10 am-noon, at Temple Concord, 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton. Benjamin Kellman will introduce aspects of his Ph.D. dissertation in progress, “The Anxious Americanization of Small-City Jews: 1939-1979.” The community is invited to attend. There is a suggested donation of between \$5-20 per person. For more information and to RSVP, contact Temple Israel at 607-723-7461 or office@templeisraelvestal.org, or Temple Concord at 607-723-7355 by Monday, December 1, so enough refreshments can be prepared.

“Constituting small and highly visible minorities, small-city Jews recognized their dependency on the good graces of their non-Jewish neighbors in their social and economic interactions and behaved accordingly,” said organizers of the event. “Their self-conscious concern to balance an impeccable Americanness with an authentic Jewishness led to different experiences from those living in either of the two more-studied locales: large urban centers and small towns.”



Benjamin Kellman
(Photo courtesy of Benjamin Kellman)

Kellman will discuss answers to some of the following questions: How did two San Francisco Jews come to own most of the valuable property in Alaska, and how did Jewish women build an Alaskan community? How did Jewish fur traders manage the extremes of the Alaskan wilderness, and how did a Jew in Alaska help the Palmach (the Jewish paramilitary force in British Mandate Palestine) survive? How were southern small-city Jews’ experiences different from those of Jews elsewhere and different from those of southern non-Jews? What happened when a northern, progressive rabbi came south and advocated desegregation? How did Las Vegas Jews make their city into a tourist destination, and how did they attract Jews from around the country? How did a Las Vegas Jew come to supply the Israeli Air Force in 1948?

Kellman will also offer a few vignettes of Binghamton’s Jewish history, including a story, along with newspaper clippings, that few of the current Binghamton Jewish community may know, even though they may have been alive when it happened. Kellman will also say a little bit

about Binghamton’s first resident rabbi, his “abnormally talented” son and other stories.

Kellman received his undergraduate degree in history from the State University of New York at New Paltz and his M.A. in history from Binghamton University. He is currently working on his Ph.D. in history at Binghamton University. He was the 2024-25 recipient of the Rabbi Harold D. Hahn Memorial Fellowship at the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, affording him a month of research in its collection. He recently returned from a

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

BD Shabbat luncheon on Dec. 13 on mushrooms and Judaism

Beth David Synagogue’s December Luncheon will be held on Saturday, December 13, and feature Adam Carlin speaking on “From Blessing to Bias: An Exploration of Mushrooms in Judaism.” The community is invited to attend. Morning services will begin at 9:30 am, with the luncheon and program following the conclusion of services. The luncheon is free and open to the public.

Carlin is the co-founder of the new Jewish Mycological Society. A branch of biology that focuses on the study of fungi, mycology is the subject of his forthcoming book “Dust and Ashes and Spores.”

“In my research for the book,” Carlin said, “I found a surprising and profound relationship between mushrooms and Jewish culture that spans millennia. I was amazed to discover their revered status in talmudic texts,



Adam Carlin (Photo courtesy of Adam Carlin)

as well as their complex role in Jewish law and contemporary spiritual practice.”

The talk will look at how fungi have served as both symbols of wonder and vehicles for antisemitic persecution, including how Nazi propaganda exploited them. He will also answer the questions about how Jewish communities developed rich traditions of mushroom foraging throughout the world and the scientific mycological research that is taking place in Israel today. “These are just some of the fascinating issues that Carlin will address in his talk,” organizers said. “We are sure to come away from his talk knowing more about mushrooms than we had ever considered before. Come and join us for a

captivating presentation, where you can get answers to all your questions about mushrooms and more!”
See “BD” on page 7

BD Sisterhood and Men’s Club to hold Hanukkah Party on Dec. 17

The Beth David Sisterhood and Men’s Club will hold a Hanukkah party on Wednesday, December 17, at 6 pm, in the Beth David social hall. A donation of \$15 will be requested from attendees at the door. The entire community is invited to attend. Reservations should be made by Friday, December 12, by contacting Stacey Silber at 607-727-9738, or silbercreations@gmail.com. Drop-ins will not be turned away.

Steve Gilbert, professor emeritus of psychology at SUNY Oneonta and past president of Temple Israel, will provide musical entertainment during the party. He noted that he learned to play a soprano ukulele (the smallest size) at the age of 4 before graduating to the baritone ukulele, which he will be playing at the party.

“The community is invited to join the members and friends of Beth David Sisterhood and Men’s Club as they celebrate Hanukkah with lots of food, dreidels to play with



Steve Gilbert (Photo by Denise Gilbert)

(bring your own if you like), entertainment and, of course, the lighting of the Hanukkah menorah,” said organizers of the event. “We would like to thank the Eisenberg Foundation that will again be covering our major expenses.”

Organizers added, “Please let us know if you plan to attend, so we can be certain to have enough food for everyone. Being a Jewish event, there probably will be enough food for you even if you show up and forgot to RSVP, but please do. See you at the party.”

Donations for CHOW will be accepted, as will payment for Sisterhood dues or for mitzvah cards.

Anyone on Sisterhood’s e-mail list or who receive Rabbi Zev Silber’s weekly newsletter should receive a flyer designed by Rabbi David Serkin announcing the party. Anyone who wants to be added to either list should send their request and e-mail address to the Beth David Synagogue office at bethdavid@stny.rr.com.



DEADLINES

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

ISSUE	DEADLINE
November 28-December 11 ...	November 19
December 12-25	December 3
December 26-January 2026	December 17
February	January 7

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

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“Thank you for remembering me.”

Please help fund this program with monetary contributions by **Dec. 8** to:
Jewish Family Service,
500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal NY 13850.

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Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025 at 3:30pm • Forum Theatre

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Off the Shelf

Siblings and in-laws

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Distance creates far better relationships with siblings and in-laws than does traveling or living together. At least, that’s the lesson that could be learned from two recent novels: “Serge” by Yasmina Reza (Restless Books) and “Good Grief” by Sara Goodman Confino (Lake Union). However, the strength of those connections is also portrayed in these works. Reza shows the difficulties of traveling with siblings, in this case to visit Auschwitz and Birkenau, while Goodman notes the problems that occur after a mother-in-law moves in with her widowed daughter-in-law and two grandchildren.

“Serge” is narrated by Jean, the middle son, who, with his older brother, Serge, and younger sister, Nana, faces life after the death of their mother. The family doesn’t come across as particularly pleasant: their late father was physically abusive to Serge and their mother seemed not to have much interest in her children. The parents didn’t talk about their lives before moving to France, but the siblings are aware that members of their extended family perished

in the Holocaust. However, they have no interest in learning more about them. It’s only when Serge’s daughter, Joséphine, decides that they should visit Auschwitz and Birkenau to pay their respects to those family members who died there that the siblings agree to revisit the past.

However, rather than appreciating what they might learn, the siblings squabble, complain and, in general, behave rather badly. Most of the fault belongs to Serge, who clearly did not want to make the trip. His behavior – particularly with women – also makes him less than admirable. Jean seems to try, but his life appears lackluster, at least relationship-wise. Nana is the only one happily married, although her brothers dislike and ridicule her husband.

While the characters in “Serge” are not ones readers might want to know personally, reading about them was interesting. Although the fact they didn’t find their trip to the concentration camps meaningful might be disturbing, it did feel very realistic. Parts of the novel are humorous, at least for those

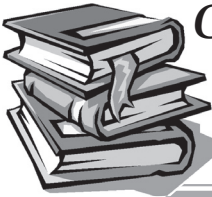
who don’t mind dark humor. The ending does show a different and welcome side to the family: the pull of their connection proves stronger than one might think.

While the humor in “Serge” might make one nod in recognition, parts of “Good Grief” are laugh-out-loud funny. Two years after her husband died, Barbara Feldman, who is in her 30s, is finally ready to stand on her own two feet. Her mother has been helping out, but Barbara feels that she and her two children – Susie, age 8 and Bobby, age 6 – are prepared to live this new version of their life. However, it’s 1963 and opportunities for women are limited. Fortunately for Barbara, a volunteer position at a nearby hospital has turned into a permanent part-time position. Everything seems set, that is, until her mother-in-law Ruth shows up to permanently move in with them, claiming finances have caused her to give up her own home.

Ruth is not a particularly pleasant person and takes over in ways that make Barbara feel unwelcome in her own home. However, some of what Ruth does is very funny – ev-

erything from getting a dog for the children, putting up horrible wallpaper in the kitchen and complaining about Barbara’s cooking. The children, however, love having her around since she pampers them. Barbara complains to her good friend, Janet, and depends on Janet’s brother, Eddie, to help her through her difficulties. Barbara then decides the best way to get rid of her mother-in-law is to find her a husband. However, Ruth has the same idea for Barbara and the results of their actions are wonderfully good fun. The plot does have its serious aspects connected to the hospital: the resolution to those problems is completely unbelievable, but will leave readers cheering with joy.

“Good Grief” was great fun to read, even though regular readers of romance will figure out the romantic aspect of Barbara’s journey almost immediately. That didn’t spoil the fun, though: watching her finally understand the person’s feelings will leave readers sighing with relief. This excellent feel-good novel is perfect for those who love rom-coms.



Off the Shelf

Childhood zingers and bad dates

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Reading “My Childhood in Pieces: A Stand-up Comedy, a Skokie Elegy” by Edward Hirsch (Alfred A. Knopf) and Rachel J. Lithgow’s “My Year of Bad Dates” (She Writes Press) for this review left me with a question to ponder: What’s the point of writing a memoir? I’m not asking that because these books weren’t worth reading, but rather because the authors not only focused on very different parts of their lives,

but they also approach the material from very different points of view. For example, when authors write about difficult times in their lives – I’ve yet to read a memoir where someone focuses on a good period – they are usually processing the traumas that occurred. However, Hirsch is accurate when describing his work as “stand-up comedy”: the mostly very short vignettes about his childhood left me expecting to

hear a drum rimshot highlighting the punch line. While Lithgow does include humor in her work, her focus is more on the anguish and distress she felt. Hirsch seems to be distancing himself from the pain, while Lithgow highlights those feelings. The dates she describes are really a jumping-off point for her in-depth review of her past in order to understand her present.

I was not familiar with Hirsch’s poetry when I asked for his book, although I have enjoyed several poems since finishing his memoir. His prologue, which made me laugh, immediately introduces his stylistic choice: “My grandparents taught me to write my sins on paper and cast them into the water on the first day of the New Year. They didn’t expect an entire book.” His work, though, is more about the sins of his family, or, perhaps more accurately, their foibles.

His parents’ marriage was an unhappy one. His father was a gambler and a run-around. At one point, he moved with his new girlfriend to a different state and didn’t see his two children for years. After Hirsch’s mother remarried, her new husband became a father figure to the author and his sister. The child from that new marriage is treated by Hirsch as a full sibling, although the children from his father’s second marriage were strangers. Hirsch defies the stereotype of a typical poet: he is a jock in high school, participating in several sports. Although he did start writing poetry in high school, his interest is mentioned only a few times in passing.

The most interesting sections describe the author’s very colorful relatives and the many family fights and disagreements, although the specifics started to blend together as the pages turned. Hirsch’s writing career takes place after the close of his memoir; if readers didn’t know he was a published poet before starting the book, they might still be unaware after finishing the work. The memoir left me with mixed feelings. It was easy to read and entertaining. However, it reads more like a series of snapshots, rather than a full portrait. Or, to use another metaphor, it feels like a puzzle that’s missing some of its pieces. Perhaps those who know more of Hirsch’s writing might be able to fill in those blanks.

While readers need to piece together Hirsch’s life, Lithgow offers a technicolor view of hers, even though most of it is less than pleasant. One thing is noticeably missing: the author never mentions the name of her almost ex-husband (at the time of writing, they were separated, but he had yet to sign the divorce papers) and his very famous actor father. That is understandable because her comments come very close to libel, although, from what she writes, I doubt a) that they’ll read her book and b) they would simply treat it with the same disdain they treat her life.

Lithgow notes the abuse that occurred in her family of origin, which led her to accept abuse from her college boyfriends and husband. The memoir takes place during

See “Dates” on page 7

CHANUKAH Greetings

Deadline: December 4 (December 12 issue)

Once again this year, *The Reporter* is inviting its readers and medical professionals to place personal Chanukah greetings to the community. These Chanukah greeting ads will appear in our December 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 E and F), the medium one is \$40 (style A and D) and the largest one (not shown, style G) 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 D - \$40
Actual Size: 3.22" x 1.975"

May the lights of Chanukah shine in your hearts forever
Your name(s)

Wishing you a Happy Chanukah
light • peace • love

Your Name(s)

Style A - \$40
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CHANUKAH Greetings

Deadline: December 4 (December 12 issue)

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Checks can be made payable to
The Reporter, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, New York 13850.

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

Warm Chanukah wishes to you and your family!

Your Name(s)

Style F - \$21
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Book Club hosted talk by Jennifer S. Brown



Judy Whiteman introduced Jennifer S. Brown to Book Club members.



Jennifer S. Brown discussed her book "The Whisper Sister" on October 21.

At right: Members of the Book Club listened as Jennifer S. Brown discussed her work "The Whisper Sister" on October 21 at Temple Concord.



Hillel Academy celebrated fall holidays



Students from Hillel Academy of Broome County showed the Rosh Hashanah cards they made. (Names held on request)



Students at Hillel Academy of Broome County celebrated Rosh Hashanah with a meal. (Names held on request)



A Hillel Academy student used the lulav and etrog during Sukkot. (Name held on request)



A Hillel Academy student used the lulav and etrog during Sukkot. (Name held on request)



The students at Hillel Academy of Broome County learned about how bees make honey. (Names held on request)



Students from Hillel Academy of Broome County gathered in a portable sukkah. (Names held on request)

FINANCIAL PLANNING

Did you know

(NAPSA) – To help teens make informed choices about their financial futures, from buying a car to paying for college, Junior Achievement launched JA My Way, a free, interactive online resource that provides valuable information on how money works. Learn more at www.JAMyWay.org.

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Films Continued from page 1

interaction with the community's rabbi. The 16-minute film is in French with English subtitles.

"The Film Fest Committee is excited to present these four short films as a combined 'package,' each highlighting a different

view into Jewish life," said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, which sponsors the Film Fest. "We hope you will join us for what will be an interesting and meaningful conversation."

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Donations may be made several ways:

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• Through Matching Grant e-mails that will be sent by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton. Anyone who does not receive Federation e-mails, but would like to be on the list, should e-mail director@jfgb.org with "Federation e-mail list" in the subject line.

• Mail donations to The Reporter, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850 with "matching grant" in the check's subject line.



Create a Jewish Legacy

Strengthen the Jewish community you care about for generations to come. Consider a gift to the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton in your estate. For further information or assistance, please contact Shelley Hubal at 724-2332 or director@jfgb.org



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Shabbat Hebron

RABBI ZEV SILBER, BETH DAVID SYNAGOGUE

This week is a special Shabbat in a very special town in the West bank. Ever since 1967, when the West Bank was liberated during the Six-Day War and the students of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook re-established a Jewish presence in Hebron, the residents there have marked the Shabbat when we read the portion of Chaye Sara as Shabbat Hebron. The reason for this is that this week’s *parasha* is the proof and testament to Jewish rights and ownership in Hebron. The Torah reading begins with the description of Abraham’s purchase of the Cave of Machpela as a burial place for his wife, Sarah. Subsequently, he is also buried there, as are Isaac and Rebecca, and Jacob and Leah. This became the family plot for our patriarchs and matriarchs. Additionally, Hebron was the capital of Israel during King David’s monarchy and remained the capital until his son Solomon built the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and established Jerusalem as the everlasting capital of the Jewish people, of Israel. Our history in these two special cities is long, and their importance and sanctity have been engraved in the Jewish consciousness for thousands of years. We must know our history and our claims in order to refute the rewriting of history and facts by the propagandists of the Palestinian Authority, who attempt to deny any Jewish

history in Hebron, in Jerusalem and in all of Israel. In a certain sense, this portion is reminiscent of the first Rashi in Chumash. Rashi’s commentary begins by quoting the question raised in the *midrash*: Why start the Torah with the story of creation? The Torah is not a history book; rather, it is a code of behavior that will enable the Jewish people to establish a society based on truth and justice. Stories are not necessary to accomplish this goal. Rashi and the *midrash* answer that the reason the Torah begins with God’s creation of mankind and the universe is to put the lie to the claim that the Jews stole someone else’s land. Perhaps the reason for the inclusion of the story of Abraham’s purchase of property in Hebron in this week’s portion is for the very same reason. Rashi’s answer does not, however, explain why the Torah must report all the stories in the book of Genesis. One explanation is that “*ma’asey avot siman l’banim*” – the stories of the patriarchs are supposed to teach us lessons in behavior and action. What happened *then* has a bearing on what we need to know *now*. The story of the purchase of the Machpela Cave is not the only story in this week’s reading. Another episode, reported in painstaking and intricate detail, is the instruc-

tion to Eliezer to find a wife for Isaac and how that is accomplished. These events happened. But why does the Torah bother to relate them to us? I propose that they are included in the Torah in order to teach us a lesson. Through analyzing these events, we may learn something that we need today. Abraham received two promises from God. The first is that he will receive the land in which he is residing as an everlasting inheritance; this promise is mentioned five times in the book of Genesis. The second is the promise of children, also stated five times. The land, the entire land, will be Abraham’s as an everlasting possession, he is told. He is also promised that he will have as many children as the stars in the sky, father of many nations. The reality, however, as Sarah dies, is that he owns no property in the land, not even one parcel. And all he has is one child who will be the bearer of the covenant. First, Abraham begins to negotiate for the purchase of the land. The Hittites who live in Hebron have no desire to sell him land. They are willing to let him use it for the burial of his beloved wife, but not to take possession of it. The difficult bargaining results in Abraham paying an See “Hebron” on page 8

Congregational Notes

Temple Israel

Orientation: Conservative
Rabbi: Micah Friedman
Address: 4737 Deerfield Pl., Vestal, NY 13850
Phone: 607-723-7461 and 607-231-3746
Office hours: Mon.-Thurs., 8:30 am-3:30 pm; Fri., 8 am-3 pm
E-mail: office@templeisraelvestal.org
Website: www.templeisraelvestal.org
Service schedule: Tues., 5:30 pm; Fri., 5:30 pm; Sat., 9:30 am
On Fridays and Tuesdays at 5:30 pm, services will be led by Rabbi Micah Friedman via Zoom and in-person.
On Saturday, November 15, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person. The Torah portion is Genesis 23:1 -25:18 and the haftarah is I Kings 1:1-31. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 5:30 pm.
On Saturday, November 22, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person. The Torah portion is Genesis 25:19 -28:9 and the haftarah is Malachi 1:1 -2:7. A Zoom Havdalah service will take place at 5:30 pm.
Upcoming events:
A Shabbat dinner will be held on Friday, November 14, following services
Hebrew School will be held on Wednesday, November 19, from 4-6 pm. There will be no school on Wednesday, November 26.
The Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 18, at 7 pm.
The temple office will be closed Wednesday-Friday, November 26-28.

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.

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.



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.

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.

Rohr Chabad Center

Affiliation: Chabad-Lubavitch
Rabbi Aaron and Rivkah Slonim, Directors
E-mail: aslonim@binghamton.edu
rslonim@chabadofbinghamton.com
Address: 420 Murray Hill Rd., Vestal, NY 13850
Phone: 607-797-0015, Fax: 607-797-0095
Website: www.Chabadofbinghamton.com
Rabbi Zalman and Rochel Chein, Education
E-mail: zchein@Jewishbu.com, rchein@Jewishbu.com
Rabbi Levi and Hadasa Slonim, Downtown and Development
Chabad Downtown Center: 60 Henry St., Binghamton
E-mail: lslonim@Jewishbu.com, hslonim@Jewishbu.com
Rabbi Yisroel and Goldie Ohana, Programming
E-mail: yohana@Jewishbu.com, gohana@Jewishbu.com
Regular service times: Daily 7:30 am, Friday evening 6 pm, Shabbat morning 9:30 am, Maariv and Havdalah one hour after candle-lighting time, Sundays 9:30 am.
To join the mailing list, for up-to-date information on adult education offerings or to arrange for a private tutorial, for details concerning the Judaica shop and resource center, or for assistance through the Piaker Free Loan Society or Raff Maasim Tovim Foundation, call Chabad’s office at 797-0015.
Chabad will be holding pre-Shabbat virtual programs. For more information, visit www.JewishBU.com/S2020Partnership.

Temple Brith Sholom

Affiliation: Unaffiliated
Address: P.O. Box 572, 117 Madison St., Cortland, NY 13045
Phone: 607-756-7181
President: Mark Suben
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.
Friday, November 14, light candles before 4:24 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, November 15..... 5:24 pm
Friday, November 21, light candles before 4:19 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, November 22..... 5:19 pm
Friday, November 28, light candles before 4:15 pm
Shabbat ends Saturday, November 29..... 5:15 pm

Temple Concord

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism
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, October 24 and November 7: At 7:30 pm, Friday Shabbat services are in person, on Zoom and on Facebook.
Fridays, November 17 and 24: At 7:30 pm, Friday Shabbat services are in person, on Zoom and Facebook.
Saturdays, November 18 and 25: 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, November 19 and 26: At 5:30 pm, evening prayers in person only. At 6 pm, adult education class in person and on Zoom.
Upcoming events:
Sunday, November 16: Whale of a Sale final day from 10 am-4 pm.
Tuesday, November 18: At 7 pm, Social Action Committee meeting. For details, contact the temple office.

Temple Beth-El of Ithaca

Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
Rabbi: Caleb Brommer
Address: 402 North Tioga St. (the corner of Court and Tioga streets), Ithaca, NY 14850-4292
Phone: 607-273-5775
Website: www.tbeithaca.org
Presidents: Jerry Dietz and Ariel Avgar
Director of Education and Angiel Education: Calle Schueler
Services: Friday 6:30 pm; Saturday 9:30 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 Sundays from 9 am-noon and Wednesdays from 4-6 pm. Teen Midrasha meets Tuesdays from 6-8 pm.
Adult Ed.: Numerous weekly courses, several semester-long courses and a variety of lectures are offered throughout the year. Call the temple office or email secretary@tbeithaca.org for more information.

Norwich Jewish Center

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

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.



Jewish Baseball Players

Jewish baseball roundup, 2025

BILL SIMONS

As the 2025 baseball beckoned, the biggest Jewish baseball stories of the off-season involved pitcher Max Fried and third baseman Alex Bregman donning new uniforms. Free agents Fried and Bregman, today’s pre-eminent Jewish major leaguers, signed lucrative contracts with new teams.

After building a career won-loss percentage higher than that of Sandy Koufax during eight seasons with the Atlanta Braves, Fried joined the New York Yankees, baseball’s most fabled franchise, situated in the capital of American Jewry.

Contemporaneously, after nine years, nearly 200 regular season home runs (HRs) with another 19 in the post-season and stellar defense at the hot corner as an Astro, Bregman departed Houston for the Boston Red Sox.

Fried went on to have a terrific season, but the specifics of his 2025 triumphs will await my next column, given that the detail and significance associated with those feats require a stand-alone article.

Boston finally came to an agreement with Bregman on February 12. His Red Sox contract called for \$120 million over three years. When Rafael Devers, a formidable slugger, but mediocre fielder, radiated negativity at moving from third base to make way for 2024 Gold Glove winner Bregman, the Red Sox ultimately traded him.

In an interview with *The Boston Herald*, Bregman spoke of his Jewish pride despite push back when he affixed the Star of David to his Astros’ cap: “I got more hate for that than anything else in my entire career.” Networking with Boston’s Jewish fans and organizations, Bregman discussed possibly joining Team Israel for the 2026 World Baseball Classic.

Rejuvenated in the friendly confines of Fenway Park, Bregman emerged as the Sox’ most valuable position player. Superb on defense, his offensive statistics after 51 games – .299 batting average (BA) 11 HRs, 17 doubles, .553 slugging percentage, 35 runs batted in (RBIs) – elicited hope amongst the Boston faithful that Bregman would lead the team to the World Series. Alas, a serious right quad game injury on May 23 kept him out of the lineup until July 11 and necessitated Bregman turning down his All-Star Game selection. Upon return, he never regained his punch at the plate, finishing with disappointing offensive statistics – .273 BA, 18 HRs, 62 RBIs. After the Red Sox were eliminated in the first round of the playoffs, credible sources claimed that Bregman would opt out of his contract and exit Boston.

Matching the 2023 record, 18 Jews appeared on MLB rosters in 2025, nearly enough for a double minyan. Thanks

BD.....Continued from page 3

Carlin received a B.F.A. from California College of the Arts and an M.F.A. in art and social practice from Portland State. He is an American/Israeli curator, educator, arts administrator and socially engaged artist living in Central New York. He is currently the executive director of Women of the Shoah, a non-profit that brings together Holocaust education and the arts, and co-director of A Contemporary Jewish Museum, which “establishes innovative and experimental Jewish museums in off-the-beaten-path Jewish communities.” Carlin was previously the owner of Talkrot Gourmet Mushroom Farm in Tully, NY.

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 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.

to Jacob Gruvis, the stellar Jewish Telegraphic Agency sportswriter, for generously sharing his compilation.

As a starting pitcher for the dismal Baltimore Orioles, righthander Dean Kremer, a dual U.S.-Israeli citizen, won a team high 11 games against 10 losses. Another tall, Jewish right-handed starting pitcher, Houston Astros rookie Colton Gordon posted a 6 W-4 L record.

MLB’s corps of relief pitchers included five Jews. Jake Bird – 4 W, 2 L, 0 saves (SV), 5.53 earned run average (ERA) – split the season between the Colorado Rockies and the Yankees. In addition to Fried and Bird, a third Jew, Scott Effross, pitched briefly for the 2025 Yankees (0 W, 0 L, 0 SV, 8.44 ERA). The Philadelphia Phillies’ Max Lazer (1 W, 1 L, 0 SV, 4.79 ERA), Chicago White Sox’ Jared Shuster (0 W, 0 L, 0 SV, 8.04 ERA) and Red Sox’ Robert Stock (0 W, 0 L, 0 SV, 10.13 ERA) rounded out a struggling Jewish relief pitcher contingent.

Catchers CJ (Washington Nationals, hitless in three at bats) and Garrett Stubbs (Philadelphia Phillies, hitless in one bat) constituted a Jewish MLB brothers act.

A dislocated left shoulder cost Oakland Athletics second baseman Zack Gelof (.174 BA, 2 HRs, 30 games) most of the season.

Miami Marlins’ first baseman Matt Mervis (.175 BA, 7 HRs) has yet to realize the hitting potential he demonstrated in the minors. In 364 at bats, Pittsburgh Pirates first baseman Spencer Horwitz (.272 BA, 11 HR) was a steady presence on a hapless team. Another first baseman (Seattle Mariners/Texas Rangers), Rowdy Tellez wacked 17 HRs in only 289 at bats, but failed to hit for average (.228 BA).

A former outfielder now at 33 primarily used as designated hitter, the colorful Joc Pederson, a longtime Team Israel stalwart and the leader in career HRs (218) amongst active Jewish players, endured a difficult season (.181 BA, 9 HRs) with the Texas Rangers. Conversely, Harrison Bader, after joining the Philadelphia Phillies for the stretch run, hit a robust .305 and provided impressive defense in centerfield. Unfortunately, he suffered a disabling groin injury in the first round of the playoffs.

Despite resurgent antisemitism and escalating criticism of Israel, Jews also remained prominent beyond the foul lines. At Boston’s invitation, former Hamas hostage Omer Shem Tov, a veteran of the Israeli military, threw out the ceremonial first pitch on May 19 at Fenway Park. Retired Boston All-Star Kevin Youkilis, a Team Israel coach, spoke about his solidarity trip to Israel and castigated “radical mobs chanting for intifadas in NYC.” Various major and minor league teams sponsored salutes to their Jewish fans. On July 20, I attended a Jewish Heritage Night, sponsored by the Tri-City Valley Cats of the independent Frontier League, at Joseph L. Bruno Stadium in Troy, NY. As CEO of Israel Baseball Americas, Nate Fish labored to enlarge the Jewish American “pipeline of talent for the Israel National Team Program.”

Of the MLB coaches, managers, executives and owners, none could match the *tsuris* of New York Mets owner Steve Cohen. Determined to bring a championship to long suffering Queens fans, Cohen has suffered futility since acquiring the team in 2020 despite spending a fortune on big-name free agent stars. Finally, slugger Juan Soto appeared poised to lead the Mets to the promised land. At mid-season 2025, their 45 W-24 L record was the best in MLB. Then, true to form, an epic collapse undid Cohen’s Mets.

Hitting only .209 in 43 at-bats prior to his release by the Texas Rangers, Jewish centerfielder Kevin Pillar (career: .255 BA, 114 HRs) officially ended his 13-year MLB career with a retirement announcement on July 2. Still strong defensively, Pillar aspires to play for Team Israel in the 2026 World Baseball Classic. Unexpectedly, he peaked this reporter’s baseball season. In a video shoutout, Pillar wished me a “Happy Father’s Day,” referenced my publications on Jewish ballplayers and expressed appreciation for my fan support. My attorney son Joe had covertly arranged for Pillar to contact me.

Jewish Community Center

JCC Friendship Club

The JCC Friendship Club met on October 22. Sue Herzog, program chairwoman, introduced Merryl Wallach, director of Jewish Family Service, who co-sponsored this program. She then introduced Jill Lukach, who led us in a program of chair yoga. Jill is a fitness teacher at the JCC.

The next program will be held on Wednesday, November 19, at 1 pm, when Amanda Giannone, from the firm of Levene, Gouldin and Thompson, will return to talk about Medicaid rules and nursing care options. Please register by calling the JCC at 607-724-2417. We welcome you whether you register or not.

The date for the December meeting has been changed so we can participate in a Hanukkah party. It is planned for Monday, December 8, at 2 pm, at the Castle Gardens nursing facility in Vestal.

We hope to see you on Wednesday, November 19, at the JCC, at 1 pm, and at the Castle Gardens nursing facility on Monday, December 8, at 2 pm.

Sylvia Diamond, President

Dates.....Continued from page 4

a difficult time: her father is dead, she is turning 50 soon and her 22-year marriage is over – but still affecting her life. Plus, she’s been dumped by Joe, her boyfriend for most of the past year, who was a) moving to another state to marry a woman he just met and b) still claims that she is the love of his life. Does Lithgow block his number? No. She continues to carry on a dialogue with him, even though she knows their relationship is over. At least he has a job: she is still supporting her husband, who has never held a real one or contributed money to help finance their life. Even better, he seems completely undependable when it comes to their two children who are now teenagers and who have difficulties of their own.

Although Lithgow injects humor into her work, particularly when describing the various bad dates she has, it will be clear to most readers that she has mental health issues. It, therefore, came as no surprise when, toward the end of the memoir, she is diagnosed with PTSD. While successful in the work world, she has never dealt with her emotions, locking them into some mental closet as if that would make them disappear.

At the end of “My Year of Bad Dates,” the author finally seems to be coming to terms with her life, but that still feels like a work in progress. What may surprise readers is her noting that she wouldn’t have changed a thing in her life. At least, it surprised me. Maybe that’s mentally healthy for her since she can’t change the past, but I certainly hope she has learned from it. Otherwise, she risks making the same bad choices the rest of her life.

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Israel sends medical team to Jamaica for hurricane relief

By JNS staff
(JNS) – An Israeli medical delegation planned to head to Jamaica to provide humanitarian assistance to the Caribbean island nation in the aftermath of Hurricane Melissa, Jerusalem’s health and foreign ministries announced on November 5.
Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu directed the team to help the local population recover from the devastating Atlantic Ocean storm, which according to Reuters took the lives of 32 people in Jamaica and 43 in Haiti as of November 5,

with billions in economic damage.
The team, led by Health Ministry Deputy Director Dr. Sefi Mendelovich and Shaare Zedek Medical Center Director/Professor Ofer Marin, will provide emergency medical care alongside Jamaican staff in two hospitals serving evacuees from the hardest-hit regions. The 30-member delegation includes doctors, nurses and paramedical staff from hospitals across the country.
The mission follows a formal request from Jamaica’s Health Ministry. Israel’s ambassador to the Dominican Republic,

Raslan Abu Rokan, and an additional diplomatic team were also dispatched to coordinate humanitarian operations with Jamaican authorities.
“The delegation represents the spirit of mission and professionalism of the Israeli health system in Israel, our willingness to assist other countries in times of crisis,” said Israeli Health Ministry Director General Moshe Bar Siman Tov. “The Israeli health system is highly skilled in disaster situations and mass casualty events, experience gained in Israel and through numerous delegations

that have gone to disaster areas around the world. Our medical personnel are answering the call to assist where needed.”
Israeli Foreign Ministry Director General Eden Bar Tal called the operation an expression of Israel’s ethical commitment to disaster aid and noted longstanding ties between the nations. “Jamaica is one of the leaders of the Caribbean region, and we are committed to continuing to strengthen relations between Israel and these countries,” said Bar Tal.
Israel sent an aid delegation to Haiti in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake there.

Cornell SJP reinstated as student organization

By Aaron Bandler
(JNS) – The suspension of the Students for Justice in Palestine chapter at Cornell University from campus has been lifted, a university spokeswoman told JNS. “After serving six months on temporary suspension, SJP resolved their conduct case and was recently reapproved as a registered organization at Cornell,” the spokeswoman said. “The organization is on disciplinary probation through the end of the spring semester.”
In a October 28 op-ed published in *The Cornell Daily Sun* (www.cornellsun.com/article/2025/10/students-for-justice-in-palestine-at-cornell-we-re-back-sort-of), the SJP chapter stated it was suspended over a walkout conducted during a March event on campus because it featured Tzipi Livni, former Israeli vice prime minister, and Ryan Crocker, former U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan. Other speakers at the event were Salam Fayyad, former prime minister of the Palestinian Authority, and Daniel

Shapiro, former U.S. ambassador to Israel. Michael Kotlikoff, the president of the university, stated at the time that “the event was marred by disappointing disruptions” and SJP faced suspension “for advertising and organizing this disruption.”
The SJP chapter stated in its op-ed in the SUN that “we’re excited to be back on campus.”



McGraw Tower and Uris Library at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY, with Morrill Hall and Cayuga Lake in the background. (Photo by Dantes De MonteCristo via Wikimedia Commons)

Lives..... Continued from page 3

research trip to Anchorage, AK, where he perused the archive of the Alaska Jewish Museum, spoke with longtime Jewish residents and supplemented the cost by teaching soccer tricks to Alaskan soccer clubs. Since moving with his family to Binghamton from Monsey in 2015 to work with Meor Upstate, he has been active in the Binghamton Jewish community, including sitting on the Boards of Beth David Synagogue and the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, and serving

as *mashgiach* for the Jewish Community Center and the Kosher Korner at Binghamton University.
“The entire community is welcome to attend what promises to be an informative and most-interesting program,” said organizers of the event. The TC/TI Adult Ed. Committee acknowledges a gift from The Community Foundation for South Central New York – The David and Virginia Eisenberg Fund that helped to underwrite this program.

Hebron..... Continued from page 6

inflated and exorbitant price for the field and the cave. But finally, he does purchase it and the ownership is transferred in a precise legal verse. At last, Abraham owns part of the land – one parcel, a very small part. But this fulfills some of God’s promise in Abraham’s lifetime.
Abraham has a child, but no grandchild, for posterity. His son is not even married yet. Difficult negotiations result in acquiring a daughter-in-law. Patience pays off and Rebecca leaves her home and marries Isaac. Abraham does live to see the birth of grandsons. The covenant continues.
Abraham will have a land, “The Land,” and countless children, God promised. But this will not happen soon, or easily. The statements of promise do not describe what God will do, rather what human effort must accomplish. God’s promise will only be fulfilled with total commitment by Abraham’s family against what sometimes will be seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

Four thousand years later, these same two concerns – land and children – are the most pressing issues for us, as they had been for Abraham. The land, Israel – will we have security, peace and safety in Israel as a Jewish home, the home of Jewish people?
And children – Jewish continuity. Will we have Jewish grandchildren is the question that occupies many a mind. There is a divine promise, but the challenge for the fulfillment of the promise is not God’s. It is our challenge. We must be committed to act in a way that ensures the safety of Israel. We must act in a way that ensures that we will have Jewish children and grandchildren. The best way to ensure this is by giving the children a solid and intensive Jewish education, so they can learn our history, our traditions, and understand why it is important to choose to remain Jewish. The fulfillment of the covenant is in our hands and we are the one’s who must bring it about.

Grant..... Continued from page 1

♦ Mail donations to *The Reporter*, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850 with “matching grant” in the check’s subject line.
“We are thrilled to once again receive a matching grant from the David and Virginia Eisenberg Fund,” said Rabbi Rachel Esserman, executive editor of *The Reporter* Group. “They have been so generous over the years, and we deeply appreciate all they have done and continue to do.”
Esserman added, “If you are thinking about making a donation to the paper, this is the perfect time to do it. Every penny counts in this economic climate. So many Jewish newspapers are either going under or turning into online publications only. Although *The Reporter* will be going monthly, I am pleased we are still able to produce a hard-copy newspaper for our readers. I know that I prefer to read offline. Plus, a hard copy is great for those of us

who like to read the paper on Shabbat, but don’t get on the computer that day. We try to be the one-stop shop for those interested in learning about Jewish events in our community.”
Esserman also noted, “Over the past three years, *The Reporter* has received Syracuse Press Club awards and American Jewish Press Association Simon Rockower awards. That is pretty impressive for a small community newspaper.”
Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation, was also pleased that *The Reporter* received the grant. “I think the paper is a valuable addition to our community,” she said. “It not only lets me know what local organizations are doing, but helps keep us connected. Thank you to the Eisenberg Fund for its gift. I know the generosity of our community will make this fourth Giving Tuesday mini-campaign a success.”

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