

BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK

Federation to host virtual tour of Auschwitz on Jan. 23

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton will host a live virtual tour of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp on Sunday, January 23, at 9:30 am. The program is offered in partnership with the Center for Holocaust Education of the East Valley Jewish Community Center, AZ. The tour of the death camp will include historical footage, aerial photographs, drone videos and testimonies of survivors. There is no cost for the tour due to a generous grant from the Victor and Esther Rozen Foundation. The tour is being sponsored by the Sisterhoods of Beth David Synagogue, Temple Concord and Temple Israel. Only 45 spots will be available. To register for the event, visit www.jfgb.org/. Due to the limited number of spots, those interested are asked to sign up only if they can definitely attend the tour.

"We hope the community will take

At right: Part of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp. (Photo courtesy of the Center for Holocaust Education) Part of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp. (Photo courtesy of the Center for Holocaust Education)



advantage of this meaningful experience," said Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Federation. "This January marks the 76th anniversary of the liberation of the camp. Many of us will never have the opportunity

to travel to Europe to visit in person and this tour is the next best way to understand the atrocities of that time. We are very grateful to our sponsors for supporting this Zoom tour."

Barbara Zelter took the tour earlier this

year and called it a "memorable experience." She noted, "I had never visited Auschwitz in person, but taking this virtual tour brought to life all that I have read and seen in the media, newspapers and books. Thanks to Federation for offering this Zoom event to see part of our history that must never be forgotten. I encourage everyone to be part of the virtual tour."

The Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp was the largest of the German Nazi camps and extermination centers, consisting of more than 40 individual camps. More than one million men, women and children died there. Located in Poland, the killing center was open between 1940-45. Estimates on the numbers of those killed are 960,000 Jews; 74,000 non-Jewish Poles; 21,000 Roma; 15,000 Soviet prisoners of war; and 10,000-15,000 other nationalities. (Figures are from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.)

The Reporter matches matching grant for second year

By Reporter staff

The Reporter announced that it matched its \$500 matching grant, raising more than \$1,700. This is the second year the organization has received the grant, which is courtesy of the David and Virginia Eisenberg Fund.

"We are thrilled that we more than made the grant again," said Rabbi Rachel Esserman, executive editor of *The Reporter*. "We owe a special thank you to the David

and Virginia Eisenberg Fund that was gracious enough to offer the grant. We are also grateful to readers of the paper who donated money."

Esserman noted that this support is even more important now than it was in the past. "The pandemic has hit every nonprofit organization hard," she said. "It's also taking an additional toll on newspapers as businesses that might normally advertise

have been closed or are also suffering financial losses."

Esserman offered thanks to Shelley Hubal, executive director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, for helping to arrange the grant and *The Reporter*'s production associate, Julie Weber, for creating the ad that appeared in the paper and on *The Reporter*'s website. She also thanked Federation President Suzanne Holwitt for

her words of support that appeared in the ad.

Although the matching grant is over, Esserman noted that the paper is still accepting donations. "Every penny is appreciated to help keep our paper going," she said. Donations can still be made online through *The Reporter Group*'s website, www.thereportergrgroup.org, or by mailing donations to *The Reporter*, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850.

Jewish Family Service year-in-review

The year 2021 continued to bring many challenges to the local community due to COVID-19, according to Jewish Family Service Director Rose Shea. She noted that many in the community lost their employment, were living in isolation and could not visit their families, all while trying to find

new ways to maintain social connections. Throughout the year, JFS became a source for community referrals for those in need. Shea noted, "We saw the community come together to help their neighbors with things such as grocery shopping, picking up prescriptions, and creating and distributing masks."

The community continued to support the We Remember You program, which delivers grocery gift cards during the Jewish holidays. Shea said, "We have over 15 families that participate in the We Remember You program. The generosity of the community was very much appreciated and welcomed by all."

Working alongside local rabbis, JFS worked to support Jewish individuals in their time of need throughout the year. It also supported local projects, such as the Chabad Sedar in a Box, the Binghamton University Food Bank, CHOW, the Temple See "Service" on page 7

Community celebrated Hanukkah



The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton and the Jewish Community Center celebrated Hanukkah with an outdoor program on November 30. L-r: Rabbi Moshe Shmaryahu, Judaic studies coordinator at Hillel Academy; Sheryl Brumer, executive director of the JCC; and Suzanne Holwitt, Federation president. The event also included the annual JCC Hanukkah video featuring students and staff from area Jewish organizations. (See page 3 for more photos of local Hanukkah celebrations.)



On December 2, the fifth night of Chanukah, students of Chabad of Binghamton University and local community members attended the Menorah Parade starting in downtown Binghamton, driving through Vestal and concluding on campus. They all tuned into the same radio station where Chanukah music was streaming. Forty cars were decked out with menorahs overhead, with passengers waving Chanukah flags and wearing holiday glasses to show their Jewish pride and belonging. (Parade photo by JW Cohen)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Free soup

Hillel Academy will offer community members free lentil soup in January as thanks for their support.

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Ryan Braun

Columnist Bill Simons takes a look at the controversial career of baseball player Ryan Braun.

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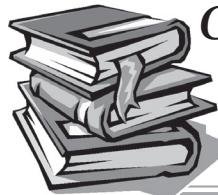
News in brief...

An ADL report on the top drivers of antisemitism on college campuses; and more.

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*Off the Shelf*

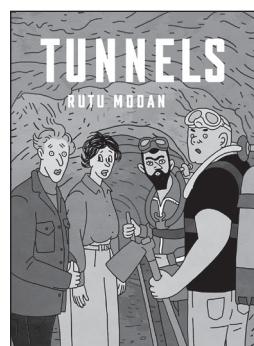
Three genres

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Graphic novel

When I read a novel about the search for the lost Ark of the Covenant, I expect the plot to head in one of two directions: either stark realism or otherworldly mysticism. Rutu Modan's graphic novel "Tunnels" (Drawn and Quarterly) leans toward the former, but some of its characters focus on the latter. What the graphic novel does best is offer a view of the many different facets of contemporary Israeli society.

Nili, the novel's main character, finally sees a chance to continue the archeological expedition her father began decades before, but had to stop for political reasons. He was searching for the lost Ark of the Covenant, which Nili believes she will find if she can continue in the tunnel they explored when she was a child. She doesn't have enough money to hire a regular crew to do the work. Instead, she finds a religious nationalist, who brings with him a group of young men who believe finding the ark will bring about the coming of the messiah. But their work does not go unnoticed: Nili's father's archrival at the university wants Nili's brother to



The cover of "Tunnels" by Rutu Modan, translation by Ishai Mishory (Photo courtesy of Drawn & Quarterly)

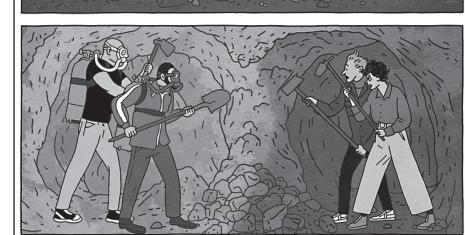
spy on her so he can claim the find. Nili also reunites with a childhood friend, a Palestinian whose father used to work on the dig, something that adds yet another dimension to the work.

"Tunnels" does a wonderful job allowing readers to feel not only a sense of place, but gives insight into some of its characters' lives. The plot is more complex than that of many graphic novels, but it's never too difficult to follow. Its inclusion of Jewish legends and contemporary politics creates an excellent mix. My only complaint is that the print dialogue is smaller than I would have liked, but I found it easier to read as my eyes grew used to it. There are some interesting plot twists and the work's conclusion was a wonderful surprise.

Spy novel

I don't read many spy novels. The moral ambiguity featured in many of these works often means there is little difference between the good guys and the bad guys' behavior. While moral questions are raised in S. Lee Manning's "Nerve Attack: A Kolya Petrov Thriller" See "Genres" on page 4

At right: A page from "Tunnels" by Rutu Modan, translation by Ishai Mishory (Photo courtesy of Drawn & Quarterly)



Opinion

From the Desk of the Federation Executive Director

With gratitude

SHELLEY HUBAL

It's time for full disclosure. Feel free to judge; I am ready to be honest. It started slowly, probably around January 2017, but did not reach full abdication until a few months into the pandemic. What am I talking about? I have made a conscious decision to give up watching and reading the national and international news. Maybe one night a week I will turn on David Muir while getting in a quick workout, but that is mostly soundbites. I have no idea where to find CNN, MSNBC or FOX news on the television. When I sit down to read the paper, I go straight to the local section. NPR is no longer my companion while cooking dinner. I know in erudite circles this is unacceptable, but I stand by my choice.

Why would I choose to do this? It is simple: I care. I

care too much about the work I do and my own mental health to allow the hostilities of the world into my daily life. We are all limited by the amount of physical, mental and emotional energy we have, and the news was stealing my precious energy. I now choose to start each day not with dread, but with optimism. In order to have a clear mind and honest interactions, I found it necessary to stop giving attention to the chatter. I prefer instead to stay focused on the people around me, to pay closer attention to my heart and to make space for God.

This is not the path for everyone, but it works for me. Through family, friends and a few well chosen podcasts, I have no problem being aware of critical issues in the world. How has this changed my life? In addition to having

more energy and less anger, I feel more connected. More connected to God and more connected to my loved ones. I notice that I am less inclined to judge people based on their politics.

With age comes wisdom about your place in the world and I know that my life's work is to make a difference. At the Federation, this means creating a sustainable community. In my personal life, it means steering the Hubal family ship through life's challenges with as much grace and patience as possible. Giving up the news has enabled me to do these things and created more meaning my life.

Now, that confession felt good! Wishing you all much good news in 2022.

In My Own Words

Being a chaplain, not a theologian

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

I never expected the words to come out of my mouth. But as the only chaplain available, I said the one thing I knew would bring comfort to the person who had told me proudly that he was a regular churchgoer: "Your friend is safe because he is resting in the arms of Jesus."

Wow, that was totally unplanned and unexpected – not what I figured would occur when I set out to lead the memorial service. On the car ride home, I thought about that statement. What first came to mind was that I'm a chaplain, not a theologian. My regular wisdom – "you'll carry the memory of him with you" – was just not working. Then, without really thinking about it, I reacted, trying to bring comfort to a person who had told me of his love for Jesus. What came to my mind next was something my mother would say when I tried to discuss theology with her. After explaining a theological idea, she would ask, "How do they know?"

How do they know? That's a relevant question. Many people would answer, "Because it's written in our holy texts," "it was divinely inspired" or "God spoke directly to [fill in the blank with the appropriate name]." However, every religion claims to be divinely inspired and each has its own

particular theology. What it really comes down to is belief.

My personal definition of theology is very different from the ones found in dictionaries. For me, theology is the belief that keeps you from running out in the night screaming in despair. My own personal theology is not one many people would find comforting. Yet, the most important part of chaplaincy work is bringing comfort to others. I don't have to agree with their beliefs in order to do that: I just have to recognize what is meaningful to them.

This is not the first time I've faced conflicting theological beliefs. When visiting a Jewish woman in the hospital while I was still in rabbinical school, she told me not to worry: she was going to be fine because God would not give her more than she could handle. My personal reaction was that hospitals for those with mental health issues and prisons are filled with people who were unable to handle what God/their lives had given them. Yet, I would never take hope away from someone: It was her belief that gave her the strength to handle what was happening to her. Plus, to echo my mother, "How do I know that's not true?"

When it comes to my personal theology, I'm more than willing to contemplate that I might be wrong. In fact, there

are times when I hope (pray?) that I am. My thoughts on life after death are that we once again become part of the universe – maybe in nothingness or maybe as part of the mystical Ein Sof, considered in Judaism to be God's essence. I don't actually find either of those ideas comforting, but they ring true for me. But, as much as I don't believe it, I would love for there to be a heaven where I exist as myself and am reunited with loved ones who are no longer with us. (And if that heaven has a large library with all books past, present and future, I wouldn't complain either.)

But to be serious: what better purpose can we all have in life than to bring comfort to the mourner, to the sick or to those unlucky enough to have suffered from a natural or manmade disaster? The list of the ills that can happen to people could fill pages. Our personal theology shouldn't get in the way of meeting people where they are and helping them with their needs. After all, the Jewish way of comforting a mourner – "May the Almighty comfort you among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem" – reveals we are never truly alone in our suffering. I'm just willing to expand that comfort to "all those living in our world," regardless of their religion.

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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.

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

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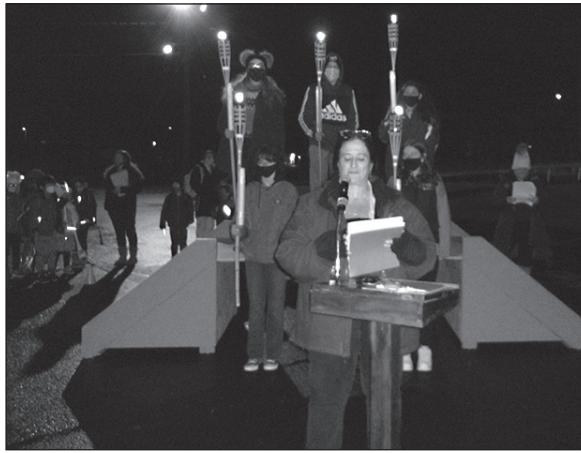
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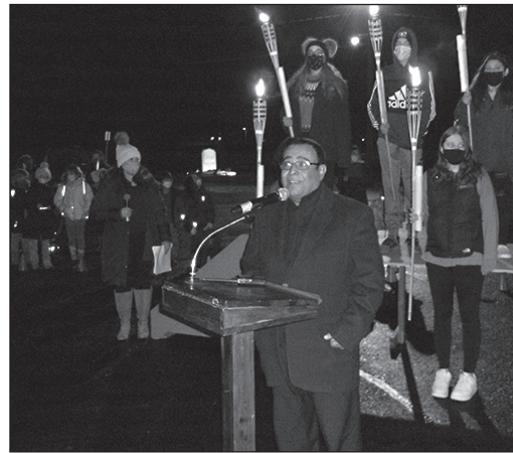
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Hanukkah celebrations throughout the community



At left: After a torch procession at the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton and Jewish Community Center's Hanukkah outdoor program on November 30, JCC Executive Director Sheryl Brumer (in front) talked about Hanukkah.

At right: Rabbi Moshe Shmaryahu, Judaic studies coordinator at Hillel Academy, sang the Hanukkah candle lighting blessings at the Federation-JCC program.



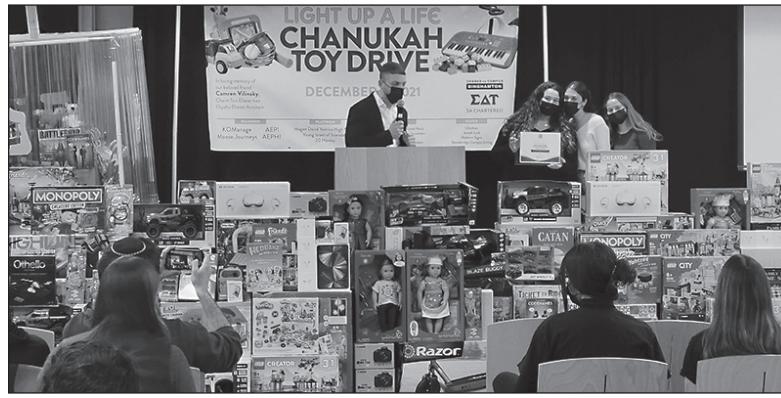
Federation President Suzanne Holwitt (in front) spoke about the meaning of Hanukkah at the Federation-JCC program.



On December 2, students of Chabad of Binghamton University and local community members attended the Menorah Parade starting in downtown Binghamton, driving through Vestal and concluding on campus. Forty cars were decked out with menorahs overhead, with passengers waving Chanukah flags and wearing holiday glasses to show their Jewish pride and belonging. (Parade photo by JW Cohen)



At left: More than 1,000 menorahs were distributed throughout the Binghamton University campus this Chanukah. Students sprawled across campus in the Union, C4, College in the Woods, Hinman, Mountainview and Lecture Hall handing out menorahs to everyone in need of one.



Above and below: Students of Chabad of Binghamton University and Sigma Delta Tau raised a total of \$32,140 for the Light up a Life Chanukah Toy Drive benefiting Chai Lifeline, an organization helping kids with cancer. Students spent the past month tabling on campus, soliciting from friends and family, and making team pages to raise funds for their goal. The toy drive culminated with a celebrity event on campus where President of Student Affairs Brian Rose addressed the crowd and students shared remarks. The mega toy display was an attraction. BU students surpassed their original goal of \$30,000.



Members of community organizations helped light the menorah at the Federation-JCC program.



Community teens held torches during the ceremony at the Federation-JCC event. L-r (back): Katie Sochor, Ari Green and Shayna Foreman. In front, l-r: Rebecca Martin and Colleen Godleski.



A video was played at the Federation-JCC program that featured students from Hillel Academy singing a Hanukkah song. Also included was the annual JCC Hanukkah video featuring students and staff from other area Jewish organizations.

Hanukkah parties held at area nursing facilities

By Sylvia Diamond

This year parties were held at three nursing facilities for Hanukkah. The first one was held at Hill Top on November 22. The second party was on November 23 at Elderwood. The last one was held at Castle Gardens on December 2.

Deb Foreman played Hanukkah music on the piano at Hill Top. I gave out dreidels, and told the story of Hanukkah and the significance of the dreidel. Rev. Joseph Selepoek, from the Council of Churches, came and told the story of See "Parties" on page 7



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The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to Robin Hazen on the death of her sister,

Patricia LaVorgna

The Jewish Community wishes to express its sympathy to Jeff Kleiger on the death of his wife,

Dara Ann Russell

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Edward Segal

DEADLINES

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

ISSUE

DEADLINE

Dec. 31, 2021-Jan. 13, 2022 .. December 22	January 5
January 14-January 27	January 5
January 28-February 10	January 19
February 11-24	February 2

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

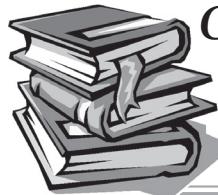
Susan and Howard Herzog and the entire family of Ada Brummer wish to thank our community for the kind expressions of sympathy and the many donations made in Ada's memory. Your sympathy has touched us all.

Thank You

to everyone in the community who contributed to the matching grant, courtesy of the David and Virginia Eisenberg Fund. We raised more than \$1,700 with your help. The community's support is greatly appreciated.

THE REPORTER

Published by the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton



Off the Shelf

The spiritual side of the Mishna

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

Study is considered a spiritual practice in Judaism. Most people study either the biblical text (and the *midrashic* – rabbinic stories – about that text) or the Talmud. Since the Talmud includes much of the text that appears in the Mishna, fewer study the latter text on its own. That's also partly because it's not usually considered a spiritual text in the same way the other two major texts are. However, Rabbi Dr. Yakov Nagen, the senior rabbi at the Otniel Yeshiva in Israel and director of Ohr Torah Stone's Beit Midrash for Judaism and Humanity, believes otherwise. That's the premise of his work "The Soul of the Mishna" (Yeshivat Otniel/Maggid Books). Nagen notes that "when we approach the Mishna with an understanding of its inherent importance and with an awareness of halakha's spiritual implications, we can encounter its soul." By looking more closely at the text, the author uncovers the spiritual lessons it teaches.

Readers should note that "The Soul of the Mishna" is not a work for beginners: it doesn't contain a historical explanation of the Mishna or tell how it developed. The author assumes that readers will already have some familiarity with the text. What Nagen does do is look at specific texts throughout the Mishna in order to explore what they teach not just about the law under discussion, but the important life lessons underlying that law.

For example, when discussing Berakhot 1:2, he notes that the rabbis were trying to determine when it was light enough to recite the morning *Shema*. The text focused on the need for there to be enough light to distinguish between different

types of objects or people. Nagan mentions a discussion in the Talmud about the Mishna where the rabbis speak about distinguishing between different types of animals. There is a spiritual reason behind that discussion: "Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Akiva chose to reference [being able to distinguish between] only pairs of species that consist of one wild animal and one domesticated animal. Symbolically speaking, this means that the time for the mitzva whose import is accepting the yoke of heaven is based on the time when one can distinguish between animals that appear similar but have an essential difference: One has a master and the other does not." Therefore, when someone says the *Shema* at the appropriate time, they are like the domesticated animal: they acknowledge their commitment to God by reciting the *Shema*. By doing this, they also affirm their love of God.

A beautiful interpretation of the text can be found in the discussion of Pe'ah 5:6, which looks at the biblical commandment to leave the corners of one's fields for the poor. Nagen sees the Mishna text as "reflecting that the corner of the field is the property of the poor person rather than the owner of the field." This means the owner is not giving something to the poor; the poor are taking what rightly belongs to them. Those fulfilling the commandment are acknowledging that they have no more right to the field than the poor: everything belongs to God. Nagen continues this discussion by showing how the lesson taught by this Mishna is still relevant in today's society.

While most of the commentary is impersonal, Nagen

periodically offers a story from his own life. When the son of a friend died in a shooting, those attending his yeshiva did not feel that they should focus on their current study text. Instead, they looked at Berakhot 3:1, which discusses what a mourner can and can't do before their loved one is buried. Mourners do not have to say the daily prayers, which are usually mandatory. Nagen notes, "Our studies sparked a fascinating debate.... Some saw the exemption as a way of honoring the deceased by showing that the mourner is devoted exclusively to them. Others suggested that when a person is grappling on a personal level with the most difficult questions regarding faith, evil, and the existence of death in the world, they should not be forced to make declarations and recite prayers that they might not fully identify with.... One student, Aharon Zeff, put forward a novel interpretation... The purpose of praying and accepting the yoke of heaven, he said, was to connect us to God. But when our dead lies before us, we do not need those means for connection to God, for He is right there in front of us." Nagen writes how this resonated with those from the yeshiva who attended the funeral; it also helped them feel God's presence even though they were in pain.

A few of Nagen's interpretations were not completely convincing, although they always were interesting. That is a quibble, though, for a work that will appeal to anyone looking to increase the spirituality of their study and seeking further insights into the Mishna text. While knowledge of, and previous experience with, the Mishna is definitely helpful, other readers may also find themselves intrigued by "The Soul of the Mishna."

Genres Continued from page 2

(Encircle Publications), its hero seeks to do the right thing, even though it's not always clear what that means.

This is the second novel in the series and, although I haven't read the first one, Manning gives enough background that readers won't feel lost. Kolya Petrov, a Soviet Jew who came to the U.S. when he was a teen, used to work for an American intelligence agency. Unfortunately, the agency's actions caused great harm to him physically and mentally, and threatened the life of his fiancé, Alex. Now retired, he's unhappy in his work as a lawyer, but, at least, he doesn't fear for his life. That is, until he and Alex are attacked while visiting her family, which seems to be tied to a recent nerve gas attack. The only way to find answers is for Kolya to return to Russia with his childhood friend Dimitri. There is one problem: he is the agent who put Dimitri in prison 10 years prior. Can he trust his former friend or is this a complicated way for Dimitri to get his revenge?

The action in "Nerve Attack" is fast paced and the pages turned quickly. The plot twists and turns made for interesting and enjoyable reading. I also liked that, while characters did make morally ambiguous decisions at times, there were at least a few who considered both the means and the end. However, the results of some of the most debatable decisions were my favorite moments.

Short stories

Misunderstanding, miscommunication and misogyny underlie many of the stories in Corie Adjmi's excellent "Life and Other Shortcomings" (She Writes Press). This work of semi-connected stories (some characters appear in more than one story) take place from the 1970s through contemporary times. What seems clear is that the difficulties women face in life and relationships has not changed for the better.

A perfect example of this is in the collection's first story, "Dinner Conversation." In order to maintain her relationship with her husband and his friends, Callie monitors her every move so as not to make waves. Even after the birth of her children, she gave into her husband's demands, rather than following her own instincts. While at first she wonders if she's living a double life (her real feelings and her public feelings), she realizes that what's happened to her is far worse: She no longer knows what she feels.

Not every story features a man ruining a woman's life. In "All You Touch," a younger Callie finds herself exploring her life and sexuality with (a man who is not looking to take advantage of her. The despoiler in "Happily Ever After" is a woman who is "enchanted" by a young man in love with his Porsche, a car that brings him joy. That story reads like a reverse fable, one that offers no happily ever after. "Shadows and Other Partially Lit Faces" tells of Callie's husband Dylan, who, while he loves his family, is some nights unwilling to go home. That is understandable, although readers may not forgive what he does at the end of the story.

"The Devil Makes Three" is the most positive of the works and the one with the most Jewish content. Iris is an Orthodox Jew, married with six children, who finds herself using the computer for the first time. While online, she joins a chat room and converses with someone who causes her to rethink parts of her life. Rather than making her want to leave her life, she now looks for ways to improve it, particularly her connection to her husband.

Most of the stories are not especially cheerful. I found myself thinking, "Boy, am I glad I'm not married if this is what married life is like." Adjmi focuses on the less pleasant aspects of life, but her work is so well done, I still found myself appreciating these well-crafted tales.

SAFE DRIVING

Six quick tips for winter driving

(NAPSI)—When it comes to winter car care, many motorists tend to think of antifreeze and batteries – but vehicles need extra attention in winter, especially when the temperatures drop.

"Making sure your vehicle is properly prepared for all of winter's elements will help you avoid the aggravation of an unplanned road emergency," says Rich White, executive director of the Car Care Council.

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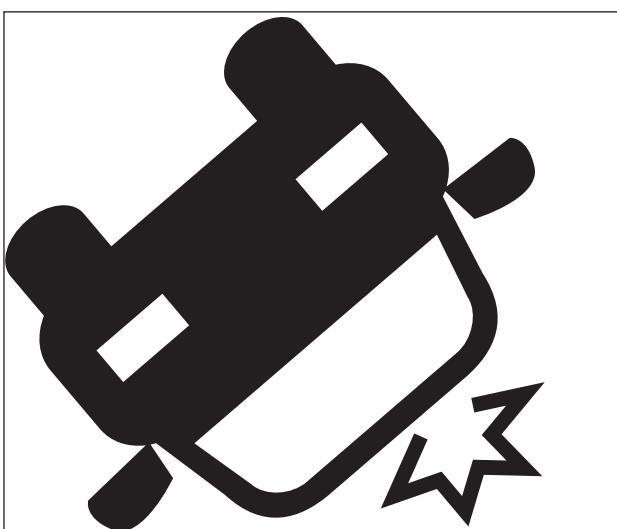
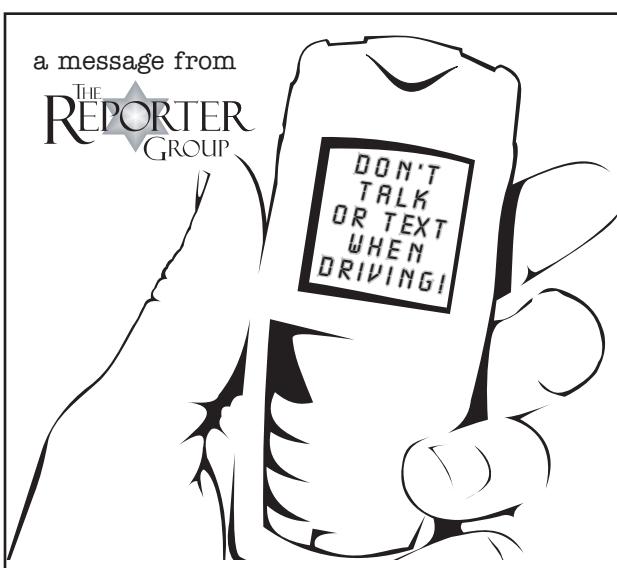
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DON'T DRINK & DRIVE

A community service message from

Binghamton Police

Benevolent Association

Hillel Academy to offer free soup starting in Jan.

Hillel Academy will offer free lentil soup on Fridays beginning in January to show its gratitude to the Binghamton community and everyone who has been

supporting it. The soup, which will be vegan and kosher, will be prepared under the supervision of Rabbi Moshe Schmaryahu in the Temple Israel kitchen. The hours

of pick-up will be 10 am-1 pm since the school closes at 1:30 pm in the winter for Shabbat.

Donations are appreciated. There is no

deadline for reservations, which can be made by calling the school office at 304-4544 or e-mailing frontoffice@hillelacademyofbc.org.

On the Jewish food scene

Food for the secular New Year

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN

I've given up trying to stay awake to midnight on the secular New Year. The last time I came close was by accident: I was watching the last few episodes of the previous season of the British sci-fi show "Primeval" on DVD before the new season started the next night. On New Year's Eve 1999, I was tempted to stay awake to see if the power went out for Y2K, but figured there was nothing I could do if it did and getting a good night's sleep would be all the more important if the electronic world imploded.

My family never went out on New Year's Eve, except for a few times when my parents were invited to a party. What we normally did when I was growing up was buy some not-quite-junk food that we didn't regularly keep in the house and enjoy that during the evening. I can't remember most of what we bought, but the frozen kosher mini egg

rolls stand out. (If this doesn't seem like a treat in the 21st century, remember that there was only one Chinese restaurant in Broome County when I was young.) I'm also pretty sure there were chips (the one time of the year we had potato chips in the house) and dip to go with them. (This was before corn chips and salsa were prevalent. Yes, I really did grow up in the Ice Age.)

In the past, I've had friends encourage me to go out for the evening to celebrate, for example to see the fireworks on the Delaware River when I lived outside of Philadelphia in the 1990s. Large crowds have never been my favorite thing so I stayed home instead. My treat at that time (which is still among my favorite things) was to open a bottle of Martinelli's Sparkling Cider. I love bubbles (which explains all the seltzer cans in my house) and the taste is wonderful. In

case you're wondering, it's non-alcoholic. However, if you want to see me get silly and/or giddy, just give me enough of that cider: the drink can give me a sugar high, which affects me more than alcohol (which usually just makes me sleepy).

I'm trying to remember if I did anything special the last few years on New Year's Eve and it's really hard to remember. In 2019, I did have a lovely afternoon on December 31: it was the first year my mom was in a nursing home. I took off from work early and spent the afternoon with her. It reminded me of when she still lived at home because we did the same thing we would have done there: she watched TV while I read. The timing also worked because one of my cousins called and I was able to get the phone so he could speak to her.

I couldn't see my mom last New Year's Eve

because the nursing home was on lockdown. Did I buy myself something special? I can't remember. I think I got some takeout during that week, but the timing doesn't register. It also doesn't seem that important. In fact, after making sure that I had a really good Hanukkah this year, the secular New Year pales in comparison. For me, the real new year is Rosh Hashanah. That's when I do my life review, so other than the fact I'll have to start writing 2022, rather than 2021, on my checks and letters, January 1 is just another day.

But I'm always up for an excuse to have something fun to eat, so now that I've written this, I'm thinking I should enjoy something different that night. Eh, then again, maybe not. I'll see closer to the time. However, whatever you do or don't do on that night, I want to wish you all a happy secular New Year.



Winter.....

and transmission circulate and get warm.

5. Change to low-viscosity oil in winter as it will flow more easily between moving parts when it is cold. Drivers in sub-zero temperatures should drop their oil weight from 10-W30 to 5-W30, as thickened oil can make it hard to start the car.

6. Consider using cold weather washer fluid and special winter windshield blades if you live in a place with especially harsh winter conditions.

Drivers should also stock an emergency kit with an ice scraper and snowbrush, jumper cables, flashlight, blanket, extra clothes, bottled

water, dry food snacks and needed medication. In addition, the Car Care Council recommends a thorough vehicle inspection by a trusted professional service technician, as winter magnifies existing problems such as pings, hard starts, sluggish performance or rough idling.

The Car Care Council is the source of

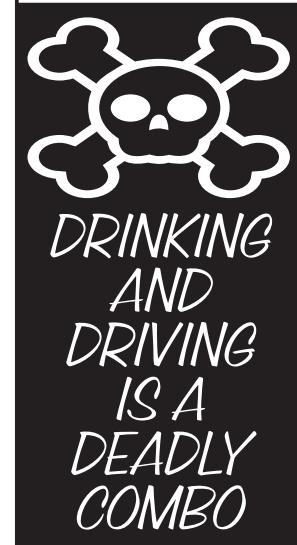
Continued from page 4

information for the "Be Car Care Aware" consumer education campaign promoting the benefits of regular vehicle care, maintenance and repair to consumers. To order a free copy of the Car Care Guide, visit the council's consumer education website at www.carcare.org.

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

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Being like Ephraim and Manasseh

RABBI GEOFFREY BROWN, TEMPLE ISRAEL

Vayechi ("He lived") is the final Torah portion in the book of Genesis. Jacob/Israel is nearing death. As he prepares, he calls Joseph to promise that he will be returned to the land of Canaan and be buried in the Cave of Machpelah along with Abraham, Isaac, Sarah, Leah and Rebecca. (Rachel, Jacob's most beloved, was buried "on the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem." [Genesis 35:19])

Additionally, Jacob blesses Joseph's two sons and finally, in what is considered a poetic end foretelling-speech, he quasi blesses his own 12 sons and then dies. The portion ends with Joseph's death.

From *parashat Vayechi*, we are wonderfully incumbered with a weekly ritual. Every Shabbat evening following candle lighting, Shalom Aleichem singing and partner kvelling exchanges (some recite "Eishet Hayil – Woman of Valor" and/or "Mi Ha-ish – Who is the person?"), we then bless our children. The Torah text introduces the blessing with, "By you shall Israel bless, as if to infer that when the future people of Israel want to invoke a blessing, they will do it by reciting the words." ("The Hebrew Bible," Robert Alter, p.191)

"May God set you as Ephraim and Manasseh."

Does the Torah tell us who these two Joseph sons are?

What are their attributes such that even to this day, we bless our children invoking their names? Couldn't Jacob rather have said that the Israelites will bless their children on Friday night or any other time by saying, "May God make you like our patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and our matriarchs, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah," or "May God make you like Judah and Joseph"? But Jacob chooses Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Why?

When the Torah does not reveal answers, our rabbis construct *midrash*, the stories between the text, to conjecture See "Being" on page 7

Congregational Notes

Temple Israel

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

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

On Saturday, December 18, Shacharit services will be held at 9:30 am via Zoom and in-person (masks are required). The Torah portion is Genesis 47:28-50:26 and the haftarah is I Kings 2:1-12. At 5:45 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom.

On Wednesday, December 22, Torah study will be held from 4-5 pm.

The temple office will be closed Friday, December 24; Monday, December 27, and Friday, December 31.

On Saturday, December 25, at 9:30 am, Shacharit services will be held at 10 am via Zoom and in-person (masks are required). The Torah portion is Exodus 1:1-17 and the haftarah is Isaiah 27:6-28:13 and 29:22-23. At 5:45 pm, there will be Havdalah services via Zoom.

On Wednesday, December 29, Torah study will be held from 4-5 pm.

There will be an Executive Board meeting on Tuesday, January 4, at 7 pm on Zoom.

Penn-York Jewish Community

President-Treasurer-Secretary: Harvey Chernosky, 570-265-3869
B'nai B'rith: William H. Seigel Lodge
Purpose: To promote Jewish identity through religious, cultural, educational and social activities in the Southern Tier of New York and the Northern Tier of Pennsylvania, including Waverly, NY; Sayre, Athens and Towanda, PA, and surrounding communities.

Kol Haverim

Affiliation: Society for Humanistic Judaism
Address: P.O. Box 4972, Ithaca, NY 14852-4972
Phone: 607-277-3345, E-mail: info@kolhaverim.net
Website: www.kolhaverim.net
Chairwoman: Abby Cohn
Kol Haverim: The Finger Lakes Community for Humanistic Judaism, is an Ithaca-based organization that brings people together to explore and celebrate Jewish identity, history, culture and ethics within a secular, humanistic framework. KH is part of an international movement for Secular Humanistic Judaism and is affiliated with the Society for Humanistic Judaism, a national association with over 30 member communities and congregations around the country. Established in the spring of 1999, it offers celebrations of Jewish holidays, monthly Shabbat pot-lucks, adult education, a twice-monthly Cultural School for children, and a bar and bat mitzvah program. KH welcomes all individuals and families, including those from mixed religious backgrounds, who wish to strengthen the Jewish experience in their lives and provide their children with a Jewish identity and experience.

Temple Brith Sholom

Affiliation: Unaffiliated
Address: P.O. Box 572, 117 Madison St., Cortland, NY 13045
Phone: 607-756-7181
President: Carol Levine, 315-696-5744
Cemetery Committee, 315-696-5744
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Temple-Brith-Sholom-114006981962930/>
Service leaders: Lay leadership
Shabbat services: Either Friday evening at 7:30 pm or Saturday at 10 am from Rosh Hashanah to Shavuot. Holiday services are also held. Check the Facebook page or weekly e-mail for upcoming services. Contact the president to get on the e-mail list.
Religious School: Students are educated on an individual basis. Temple Brith Sholom is a small equalitarian congregation serving the greater Cortland community. Congregants span the gamut of observance and services are largely dependent on the service leader. The Friday night siddur is "Likrat Shabbat," while the Saturday morning siddur is "Gates of Prayer." The community extends a warm welcome to the Jewish student population of SUNY Cortland, as well as the residents of local adult residences.

Synagogues limit face-to-face gatherings

For specific information regarding services (including online services), meetings and classes at any of the area synagogues, contact them by phone or e-mail.

Beth David Synagogue

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

Norwich Jewish Center

Orientation: Inclusive
Rabbi: David Regenspan
Address: 72 South Broad St., Norwich, NY 13815
Contact: Giulia Greenberg, 336-1523
Purpose: To maintain a Jewish identity and meet the needs of the Jewish community in the area.
Adult Ed.: Saturday morning study is held at 10 am. Call for more information and to confirm.

Rohr Chabad Center

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

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

Temple Beth-El of Ithaca

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

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

Temple Concord

Affiliation: Union for Reform Judaism
Rabbi: Barbara Goldman-Wartell
Address: 9 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905
Office hours: Tues.-Fri., 10 am-2 pm
Phone: 723-7355, Fax: 723-0785
Office e-mail: TempleConcordbinghamton@gmail.com
Website: www.templeconcord.com
Regular service times: Fri., 7:30 pm; Sat., 10:35 am, when religious school is in session.
Hebrew school: Hebrew school meets at 4:15 pm and 5:15 pm on Tues. and Thurs. during the school year unless otherwise noted.

Some services and programs are online only.

Friday, December 17: at 7:30 pm, Shabbat services with Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell. All are welcome to come in person wearing a mask and physically distancing. Join via Zoom at <https://bit.ly/37UQSpK>, meeting ID 829 9450 3102 and passcode 708450, or on the Temple Concord Facebook page.

Saturday, December 18: Shabbat school at 9 am, Torah study at 9:15 am, Shabbat family service at 10:30 am; and "Havdalah with a Bonus" at 7 pm on Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3zd0atv>, meeting ID 897 4179 1260 and passcode 408279.

Sunday, December 19: Temple Concord Sisterhood's "Kahoot and Kookies!" will be held at 2 pm. Kahoot is an interactive trivia game participants can play using their smartphones. This free event is in-person only and required a reservation by December 16 to Deb Daniels at ddaniels2@stny.rr.com or 607-743-1427.

Friday, December 24: Shabbat services at 7:30 pm with Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell (online only) via Zoom at <https://bit.ly/37UQSpK>, meeting ID 829 9450 3102 and passcode 708450, or on the Temple Concord Facebook page.

Saturday, December 25: There will be no Shabbat school or service, and no Torah study. At 7 pm, "Havdalah with a Bonus" will be held on Zoom at <https://bit.ly/3zd0atv>, meeting ID 897 4179 1260 and passcode 408279.

Friday, December 31: Shabbat services at 7:30 pm with Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell. All are welcome to come in person wearing a mask and physically distancing. Join via Zoom at <https://bit.ly/37UQSpK>, meeting ID 829 9450 3102 and passcode 708450, or on the Temple Concord Facebook page. There will be a New Year's toast following services in the social hall.

Temple Beth El of Oneonta

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

Friday night services will be held on January 7; February 4; March 4; April 1; May 6 and Saturday morning, May 7; and June 3.

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: Denice Cassaro and Nomi Talmi
Rabbi: Shifrah Tobacman
Education Director/Admin. Coordinator: Naomi Wilensky
Bnai Mitzvah Coordinator: Michael Margolin
Services: Fridays at 7:30 pm unless otherwise noted. Contemplative morning services every Tuesday. Saturday mornings, Gan Shabbat, and other special services at least once a month. Call for the weekly schedule.
Jewish Learning Experiences (JLE) for kindergarten through seventh grade meets on Sunday mornings. Sixth and Seventh grade also meets on Wednesday afternoons.
Adult Education: Available throughout the year. Check the website or call the office for details.

Friday, December 17, light candles before 4:15 pm
Saturday, December 18, Shabbat ends 5:16 pm
Friday, December 24, light candles before 4:19 pm
Saturday, December 25, Shabbat ends 5:20 pm
Friday, December 31, light candles before 4:24 pm
Saturday, January 1, Shabbat ends 5:25 pm



Jewish Baseball Players

Ryan Braun redux: home runs and controversy

BILL SIMONS

On September 14, Ryan Braun, the Milwaukee Brewers' All-Star leftfielder, formally announced his retirement as a Major League Baseball player. Since he sat out the entire 2021 season and Milwaukee declined to pick up its option on him during the off-season, the announcement was not a surprise even though the 37-year-old Braun had teased the possibility of a late season comeback. It was, however, a benchmark. With 352 career home runs, Braun is the Brewers' all-time career home run leader. Braun is also the Jewish all-time career home run leader, having passed Hank Greenberg's mark of 331 round trippers.

A pre-game 24-minute ceremony before the Brewers' home finale on September 26 at American Family Field saluted Braun's achievements on the diamond and contributions to the community. The festivities featured warm tributes and video highlights. Braun also offered his own words of appreciation. Despite the emotional farewell, Braun generated considerable controversy. The end of his MLB playing career merits assessment.

Make no mistake, Braun is a major figure in the history of the Brewers. He spent his entire 14-season MLB career (2007-20) with Milwaukee. During his first six seasons, Braun was one of the pre-eminent players in the game. As National League Rookie of the Year in 2007, he recorded a stellar .324 batting average, 34 home runs and 97 runs batted in in only 113 games. Due to defensive problems at third base, Braun was moved to left field in 2008 and that remained his primary position. Braun then bloomed as five-tool player who could catch, throw, run, hit frequently and hit with power.

From 2008-12, he was a perennial All-Star and Silver Slugger recipient, winning the Most Valuable Player Award in 2011, finishing second in MVP voting in 2012 and third in 2008. With a league-leading 41 home runs and 30 stolen bases in 2012, Braun became only the ninth player in MLB history to achieve a 40-30 season. With Braun in the lineup, the Brewers resurged

Service.....

Concord food pantry and the Temple Concord Afghan resettlement fund. Grocery gift cards were also provided to families in need throughout the year. Two camp scholarships were given to children so they could attend Jewish sleepaway camp. JFS also played "an integral role in financially supporting

Parties.....

his ancestors coming to America with the stamp of being Jewish on their passports. Fay Clark, activities director, and her crew passed out latkes with applesauce and sour cream. They also provided cookies and drinks. We sang Hanukkah songs from song sheets that were passed out.

The party at Elderwood was different in some respects. A three-piece band played music, including Hanukkah music. Rabbi Geoffrey Brown, from Temple Israel, talked about Hanukkah and some of the customs. He taught the guests a holiday song and the band was able to provide background music. Nicole Wolk and her group also served latkes.

The party held at Castle Gardens included snacks, but no latkes. Activities Director Paula Franciosca and her helpers

Being.....

and pose thoughtful what-if scenarios to the text. Lacking details about Joseph's son's, the *midrash* tried to say that Ephraim represents Torah study and was a Torah scholar, while Menasseh represents worldliness and was Joseph's interpreter. Although this is a nice interpretation, I am not buying it. Perhaps the Torah in its infinite wisdom is making a distinct point about our children and their individual capacities to lead and change the world. The details of Ephraim and Menasseh's personalities are absent of content. Could it be that every succeeding child in our orbit

after many losing seasons.

A Braun home run against the Chicago Cubs in the season finale on September 28, 2008, ensured Milwaukee its first post-season niche in 26 years. Through his first six Brewer campaigns, the right-handed batter had an impressive cumulative .311 BA while averaging 34 home runs and 107 RBIs per season. Popular and respected by teammates, fans, and management, it appeared that the 6'2", 205 pound, black-haired, 28-year-old Braun was on the cusp of baseball greatness.

Instead, precipitous declension followed. During Braun's remaining eight seasons (2013-20), he reached the 30-home run and .300 batting average standard only once more and never again had a 100 RBI season. Still, atop his Brewers and Jewish record 352 home runs, he finished with a noteworthy .296 career BA. Although chronic back pain eroded durability, neither injury nor age decisively bifurcated Braun's playing career: it was PEDs (performance-enhancing drugs).

In December 2011, MLB issued a stunning announcement. In a mandatory, standard urine test, Braun, the reigning NL MVP, had tested positive for highly elevated levels of testosterone, evidence of banned PED use, and was sentenced to a 50-game suspension. Given Braun's wholesome boy-next-door image and status as one of the game's top stars, this sent tremors throughout the sports world. With indignation and apparent sincerity, Braun proclaimed his innocence.

Braun charged that the urine sample was contaminated by collector Laurenzi Dino Jr. storing it in his home refrigerator over the weekend rather than immediately submitting it. Based on the technicality of delayed submission, an arbitration panel revoked Braun's suspension, its first reversal in a PED case. Braun went on to have a landmark 2012 season and continued to defend his reputation by impugning Dino's competence and character.

Ultimately Braun's name surfaced in

Continued from page 1
a family with a parent living with cancer," Shea noted.

She added, "Looking toward the year to come, Jewish Family Service is prepared to meet the needs of our community once again. We thank everyone for their generous support throughout the year."

Continued from page 3

provided doughnuts with apple sauce and a drink. Rabbi Barbara Goldman-Wartell, from Temple Concord, told the story of the holiday and stressed that Hanukkah has no connection to Christmas. The only connection is that they both occur in December. When I gave out dreidels, one of the residents started to explain what the letters on the sides meant. I brought a piano player with me, but there was no piano available, so we listened to holiday music played on a CD. We also sang songs from song sheets that were passed out.

Many of those attending the parties said they had a good time and look forward to the next party. A Jewish calendar was given to each activities director and the Jewish residents at each place.

Continued from page 6

is tasked with reimagining Ephraim and Menasseh in their own image? As parents, we all hope that our children will have positive and meaningful goals and aspirations in their lives. Could we endow our children with the hope that they will be great like Joseph's sons? What does that even mean?

Well, it is up to our children to decide! Our children are tasked with imagining Ephraim and Menasseh in their own image.

May all our children be so imbued with their own greatness and may God set them like Ephraim and Menasseh.

the investigation of Biogenesis of America, and it was determined that Dino's handling of the urine sample did not alter the test result. Apologizing for his mistakes, acknowledging use of testosterone cream and lozenges to facilitate recovery from injuries, and apologizing to Dino, Braun agreed to accept a 65-game suspension for the 2013 season. Although he was an above average player for most of the remainder of his career, Braun never again regained his former level of sustained excellence. Critics questioned whether he benefitted by PED use during prior seasons.

Many Jewish fans felt betrayed by Braun, whom they had previously designated as the Hebrew Hammer and a standard bearer. Critics asserted that Braun surpassed Hank Greenberg as the Jewish home run leader only because Greenberg lost nearly five prime seasons – and possibly 200 home runs – to World War II military service. Some suggested that there was always an ambiguity about Braun's Jewishness. The son of an Israel-born Jewish father who lost relatives during the Holocaust and a Catholic mother, Braun, early on, provided two different self-descriptors, "half-Jewish" and "Jewish." There was cringing when his mother Diane asserted, "He's totally not Jewish... My mother would be rolling over in her grave if she heard that."

Although Braun acknowledged that he did not receive a religious upbringing, have a bar mitzvah, or attend synagogue services, he purported to embrace an ethnic connection and felt honored that Jewish youth regarded him as a role model and for his election to the Southern California Jewish Sports Hall of Fame. When first accused of doping, Braun attributed the charge to antisemitism on the part of the urine col-

lector. While Dino was not an antisemite, many who attacked Braun with vicious online canards concerning his Jewish lineage were. On an All-Star Game bus trip, Braun reached out to second baseman Ian Kinsler, also the son of a Jewish father and Gentile mother, by asking, "You're Jewish, right?"

Alongshot Hall of Fame candidate, Braun is still a young man. A good husband and caring father, Braun is active in philanthropic and benevolent activities. Time might ultimately grant him a generous judgment. And, like Kinsler, Braun may find a new baseball connection with Team Israel.

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

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Poll: eastern Jerusalem Arabs prefer Israeli rule

Some 93 percent of the Arab residents of eastern Jerusalem prefer living under Israeli rule, according to a new poll by the Palestine News Network. The survey offered the choice between ongoing Israeli rule of the city or a transfer of rule to the Palestinian Authority. Of the 1,200 Arab residents queried, 1,116 said that they preferred the former. A total of 84 respondents answered that they would prefer the latter, although they also noted that they would refuse to give up their Israeli identity cards. Only five answered that they would prefer to carry P.A. identity cards.

Annual Campaign 2022

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3) Fill out the form in this ad and mail it to the Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850

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500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850

■ Name: _____

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NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Leader of Islamic Movement released from prison in Israel

The head of the northern branch of the Islamic Movement in Israel, Raed Salah, was released from Megiddo prison on Dec. 13 after serving time for incitement to terrorism. Salah was greeted with fireworks and a crowd of around 1,000 supporters chanting, "Raed, the sheikh of Al-Aqsa," upon his return to his home city of Umm al-Fahm near Haifa, reported Ynet. He served 17 months of a 28-month sentence, though it was not his first time in jail. Opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu tweeted a news report stating that senior members of the southern branch of the Islamic Movement's political party, the United Arab List (or Ra'am in Hebrew), which serves in the current government, blessed the release of the radical cleric. "The [Naftali] Bennett [coalition] government and the Islamic movement are breaking another record of shame," tweeted Netanyahu. The Islamic Movement in Israel, which Salah founded in 1971, has been outlawed by the Israeli authorities since 2015.

Bennett returns to Israel after positive meeting in UAE

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said that he was "very optimistic" after his recent two-day trip to the United Arab Emirates and four-hour meeting with Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Abu Dhabi's crown prince. "I'm flying back to Israel very optimistic that this relationship can set an example of how we can make peace in the Middle East," said Bennett. This was the first official visit by an Israeli leader to the UAE with more than half of the extended meeting being one-on-one talks, reported the AP. A joint statement said it marked "another milestone in the development of warm relations and a tremendous partnership." Issues on the table involved cooperation in trade, technology, the environment, tourism and a research-and-development fund. While the Iranian threat that centers on nuclear development was not mentioned publicly, it was likely discussed at some point. Bennett was expected to present information about the deployment of pro-Iranian militias and drone units recently discovered by Israeli intelligence.

ADL report: Anti-Israel student groups top drivers of antisemitism on campus

In the last academic year, pro-Israel college students have felt vilified and ostracized as anti-Israel and anti-Zionism sentiment proliferates at schools nationwide, according to a report by the Anti-Defamation League. Findings included in "The Anti-Israel Movement on U.S. Campuses, 2020-2021," identify the campus anti-Israel movement as being led by student groups and certain professors. Students for Justice in Palestine and Jewish Voice for Peace continue to be two of the most influential anti-Israel campus groups, allied often with like-minded organizations such as Young Democratic Socialists of America, Palestinian Youth Movement and American Muslims for Palestine. SJP – which has 180 chapters and organizes protests, BDS resolutions and "disseminates propaganda" through social media and other outlets – is by far the "most active" anti-Israel group on university campuses in the United States and Canada. Also very active in spreading anti-Israel and anti-Zionist sentiment on campus, the report said, is the group Jewish Voice for Peace. Seventeen colleges brought BDS measures up for a vote by the student government in 2020-21, and 11 have passed them, adding to the ongoing rise of anti-Israel activism on campuses. The report noted that some of the most strident anti-Israel activists called for Israel to be dismantled or denied its right to exist; expressed support for violent resistance to Israel; and called for Zionists and pro-Israel students to be excluded from campus life. Among antisemitic tropes the ADL found repeated by anti-Israel college activists were those alleging Jewish or Zionist power and control over the media and political affairs. "Such language," the report said, "can create a corrosive climate for many Jewish students on campus." Israel's 11-day conflict in May with Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad in the Gaza Strip, which launched more than 4,000 rockets at population centers in Israel, proved a flashpoint in the uptick of antisemitic activity. Jonathan A. Greenblatt, ADL's national director and CEO, said his organization documented how "the anti-Israel movement's drumbeat of rhetorical

attacks on Zionism and Zionists can truly hurt and offend many Jewish students, leaving them feeling ostracized and alienated. Freedom of speech does not mean freedom to harass and intimidate. While all students have a right to express their views about Israel openly, expressions of antisemitism under the guise of Israel criticism are unacceptable."

Miss India wins Miss Universe title in Eilat

Harnaaz Sandhu of India was crowned the 70th "Miss Universe" in the resort town of Eilat on Dec. 12. This is the first time the "Miss Universe" competition has been hosted by Israel. The event was broadcast live to more than 600 million viewers in 172 countries in English, with a parallel broadcast in Spanish. Sandhu was crowned by the previous winner, Andrea Meza of Mexico. Sandhu said she felt "overwhelmed because it's been 21 years since India got Miss Universe crown and it's happening right now," AP reported. Miss Paraguay was the runner-up. Israel had been on the shortlist of countries to host the competition "due to its rich history, beautiful landscapes, myriad of cultures and appeal as a global tourist destination," said Paula M. Shugart, president of the Miss Universe Organization, which runs the competition, according to the report. There had been some controversy over Israel hosting the pageant, with anti-Israel protesters condemning the move. The South African government withdrew its support for its contestant because she refused to abide by a boycott against Israel. The contestant, Lalela Mswane, decided to compete despite pressure to withdraw, finishing as second runner-up. Despite politics and the pandemic, the contest went off without a hitch.

Jewish online resources

By Reporter staff

A variety of Jewish groups are offering educational and recreational online resources. Below is a sampling of those. *The Reporter* will publish additional listings as they become available.

- ◆ The Gratz College Scholars Program will offer a variety of virtual classes for spring 2022 from January-March. Classes include "The Path to Modernity: The Jews of Galicia"; "History of Antisemitism," taught by Rabbi Lance Sussman; "Authentically Orthodox: A Tradition-Bound Faith in American Life"; "Abraham Joshua Heschel and Mordecai Kaplan"; "Six Perspectives of the American Civil War"; and "Jews Who Came Before the Courts." There is a charge for the classes. For more information, visit www.gratz.edu/academics/degree/continuing-education/gratz-scholars-program.
- ◆ The Jewish Publication Society and HUC-JIR are working together on the College Commons Podcast. JPS speakers will include Kari Tuling ("Thinking about God: Jewish Views") on Thursday, December 23; Helen Plotkin ("In This Hour: Heschel's Writings in Nazi Germany and London Exile") on Thursday, January 20; and Noam Sachs Zion ("Sanctified Sex: The Two-Thousand-Year Jewish Debate on Marital Intimacy") on Thursday, February 17. For information about how to subscribe to the podcast, visit <https://collegecommons.huc.edu/bulky-pulpit/>.
- ◆ Orange County Jewish Community Scholar Program will hold a variety of programs in December, including England as the "Custodian of the Jewish Past – Part 2: The Cairo Geniza: Discovery and Documents" on Sunday, December 12; "A Virtual Tour: A Jewish Odyssey in Mainland of Greece Leshets" on Monday, December 13; "The Rabbis Confront Death: Four Stories from the Midrash, Part 1 – The Death of Moses" on Tuesday, December 14; "Enter Laughing; Exit Stage Left: Does the Bible have its Own Set of Stage Directions?" on Thursday, December 16; "Here All Along: Finding Meaning, Spirituality, and a Deeper Connection to Life-in Judaism (After Finally Choosing to Look There)" on Sunday, December 19; and more. The times listed online are Pacific Time. For more information or to register, visit <https://occsp.net/>.
- ◆ YIVO's Shine Online courses are now available at no charge. The courses allow users to study at their own pace. Courses include "A Seat at the Table: A Journey into Jewish Food"; "Oh Mama, I'm in Love! The Story of the Yiddish Stage"; "Folksong, Demons, and the Evil Eye: Folklore of Ashkenaz"; and "Discovering Ashkenaz: Jewish Life in Eastern Europe." For more information or to register, visit <https://yivo.org/Online-Classes>.
- ◆ The YIVO-Bard Winter Program on Ashkenazi Civilization will hold a variety of classes in January, including "Conquering the Space: Symbolic Topography of the Former Warsaw Ghetto"; "Grace Paley and Philip Roth: Writing Jews in America"; "Victory over the Sun: The Revolution Before The Revolution"; "Reviving European-Jewish Thought and Culture after 1945"; "The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity"; "History of the Yiddish Language"; "Jews, Anarchism, and the Pursuit of Radical Freedom"; and "Jews and Science

Fiction." All classes are six sessions. To learn days and times, and to register, visit <https://yivo.org/Winter-Program>.

◆ The Yiddish Book Center will hold two events in January: "The Letter's Project: A Daughter's Journey," with Eleanor Reissa on Thursday, January 20, at 7 pm; and "Shakespeare & Yiddish," with Ilan Stavans on Thursday, January 27, at 7 pm. For more information or to register, visit www.yiddishbookcenter.org/events-and-store/virtual-public-programs-calendar,

◆ Keeping It Sacred will hold the Zoom class "Balancing Your Inner Life: Based on Rabbi Bachya Ibn Pakuda's 'Duties of the Heart,'" on Sundays, January 9-March 6, at 1 pm. His book is considered the basis for the Mussar Movement. For more information or to register, visit www.keepingitsacred.com/event-details/duties-of-the-heart-reflection.

◆ Elmad presents a new podcast by Rabbi Dr. Levi Cooper, Pardes faculty and "A Shot of Torah Podcast" host, called "This Covid Life: Corona Kaddish Conundrum." The podcast can be found at <https://elmad.pardes.org/2021/02/this-covid-life-101/>.

◆ The Jewish Museum will hold the virtual concert "Nefesh Mountain: YouTube Video Premiere" on Thursday, December 23, from 4-4:45 pm. The band will perform original melodies from their albums "Songs from the Mountain" and "Beneath the Open Sky," in addition to other music such as Woody Guthrie's "Hanukkah Dance." For more information or to register, visit <https://thejewishmuseum.org/calendar/events/2021/12/23/nefesh-mountain-122321>.

◆ Kung Pao Kosher Comedy will hold its "Christmas Eve in a Virtual Chinese Restaurant" from December 24-26, on Zoom or YouTube Live Livestream. There is a cost to view and the times listed are Pacific Time. For more information or to register, visit www.koshercomedy.com/.

◆ Valley Beit Midrash will hold the virtual class "Rabbinic Inferno: Hell in Classical Judaism" on Thursday, February 17, from 3-4 pm. The cost to attend is \$18. For more information, visit www.valleybeitmidrash.org/event/rabbinic-inferno-hell-in-classical-judaism.

◆ Aleph, the Alliance for Jewish Renewal, will hold the virtual class "Exploring the Parables of Jesus: An Interfaith Perspective" on Wednesday, February 16, at 7:30 pm. The class will be taught by Rabbi Debra Smith and Sister Eleanor Francis, and will cost \$18. It will explore the parables of Jesus and their roots in Judaism. To register, visit <https://aleph.org/civicrm/event/register/?reset=1&id=424>.

◆ The Jewish Theological Seminary will hold two book talks: "Between the Lines: Remember KHURBM: The Forgotten Genocide" with Alexander Gendler, author of "KHURBM 1914-1922: the Prelude to the Holocaust," on Monday, January 10, at 1 pm (www.jtsa.edu/event/remember-khurbm/); and "Between the Lines: Embers of Pilgrimage" on Tuesday, January 11, at 7:30 pm, with Dr. Eitan Fishbane author of "Embers of Pilgrimage," a poetry collection that incorporates imagery from Jewish mystical works (www.jtsa.edu/event/embers-of-pilgrimage/).

For additional resources, see previous issues of *The Reporter* on its website, www.thereportergroup.org.

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