

THE REPORTER

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Jewish Federation International Film fest

“Walk on Water” on Oct. 1

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton’s 2017 Jewish International Film Fest will continue with “Walk on Water,” an Israeli-made dramatic thriller, on Sunday, October 1, at 7 pm, at the Jewish Community Center, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal. Tickets will cost \$10. To purchase tickets in advance or for more information, call 724-2332.

Following the screening, a discussion of the film will be led by Jonathan Karp, associate professor in the History and Judaic Studies Departments at Binghamton University.

Starring Lior Ashkenazi (“Late Marriage,” “Footnote”), Knut Berger (“The Edukators”) and Caroline Peters, “Walk on Water” was directed by Eytan Fox (“Yossi and Jagger,” “The Bubble”), New York-born Israeli director, and features a screenplay by Gal Uchovsky.

In the film, Ashkenazi stars as Eyal, a Mossad agent and the son of Holocaust survivors. Berger and Peters play German siblings Axel and Pia Himmelman, who are the grandchildren of a Nazi, Alfred Himmelman. Pia lives on a *kibbutz* after falling in love with an Israeli man, while Axel is a happy gay man who teaches the children of immigrants in Berlin.

Eyal and the Mossad are seeking to learn if their Nazi grandfather is still alive and in hiding, so when Axel visits Pia in Israel, Eyal poses as a guide, befriending Axel and touring the country with him.

Phil Cali, a Film Selection Committee member, pointed out that the film “is



L-r: Pia (Caroline Peters) and Eyal (Lior Ashkenazi) in “Walk on Water.” (Photo courtesy of Israel Films)

current and provocative; Holocaust-related, but in current times.” He added, “The acting is excellent and the storyline very interesting.”

According to the film-makers, “This colorful and very contemporary road movie... examines the role the past still plays in the lives of the young people of Israel and Germany.”

The film’s running time 103 minutes. Dialog is in English, with Hebrew, German and other languages presented with English subtitles.

Following “Walk on Water” on Sunday, October 1, the film festival will conclude with “The Women’s Balcony” on Sunday, October 8.

Community members are welcome to bring their own chair if they wish, and the Federation has offered to store these chairs from film to film.

“The Women’s Balcony” on Oct. 8

By Reporter staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Binghamton’s 2017 Jewish International Film Fest will conclude with the film “The Women’s Balcony” on Sunday, October 8, at 7 pm, at the Jewish Community Center, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal. Tickets will cost \$10. To purchase tickets in advance or for more information, call 724-2332.

Following the screening, a discussion of the film will be led by Dr. Dora Polachek, a member of the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, and director of undergraduate studies at Binghamton University. “‘The Women’s Balcony’ is a box office hit for many reasons,” she noted. “It offers us a clear sighted vision of how a close-knit community whose members are all on the same page, religion-wise, can be torn apart when a charismatic outsider with different religious values comes into their lives and starts to take control.”

Emil Ben-Shimon and Shlomit Nehama’s dramatic comedy “The Women’s Balcony” offers a story about community and tradition, and the power of women to keep them together despite modern extremism.

Called a “rousing, good-hearted tale about women speaking truth to patriarchal



Dr. Dora Polachek (Photo by Nancy Basmann)

power,” the Israeli film focuses on a gender rift in a devout Orthodox community in Jerusalem caused by an accident during a bar mitzvah celebration. When the women’s balcony in an Orthodox synagogue collapses, leaving the rabbi’s wife in a coma and the rabbi in shock, the congregation falls into crisis.

Though a young rabbi appears to be a savior after the accident, he soon begins forcing his fundamentalism on the community and attempts to seize control. This tests the women’s friendships and divides the community’s women and men.

“We chose ‘The Women’s Balcony’ because it is humorous and comedies are hard to find,” noted Susan Hubal, a Film Selection Committee member. “It is current and very clever, has won numerous awards and it is about factions of current day Israeli life.”

Ben Kasper, another committee member, explained that “the film, among other issues, explores the gender relationships within the congregation” while being “a fascinating, revealing [and] humorous portrayal.”

Added Polachek, “The film sparkles with its humor, while dazzling us with its thoughtful reflections on how particular religious practices define different Jewish See “Balcony” on page 6

Building on “strong” bond, U.S. opens first-ever permanent military base in Israel

By Yaakov Lappin
JNS.org

Amidst Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s declaration that the U.S.-Israel alliance has “never been stronger,” the two countries recently made history by opening of the first permanent American military base on Israeli soil. The base, which is located inside the headquarters of the Israeli Air Force Air Defense School in southern Israel, will house dozens of U.S. military personnel who make up a task force designed to assist Israel’s air defense missions, IDF Spokesman Lt.-Col. Jonathan Conricus said.

“[The American military] will assist and improve the ability of the state of Israel and IDF’s air defenses,” Conricus told JNS.org. “They will strengthen the IDF’s defensive capabilities” and their assistance would be continuous and felt during “routine times.”

The task force will also help Israel “improve detection, interception and deployment in aerial defense while strengthening cooperation,” Brig.-Gen. Tzvika Haimovich, commander of the IAF’s Air Defense Array, said. “This extends to day-to-day life for the task force as well – the American facility is a U.S.

military zone that will operate under IDF guidelines and regulations.”

The close ties between Washington and Jerusalem that forged the base opening were apparent recently when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with President Donald Trump in New York to discuss key issues ahead of the United National General Assembly. After the meeting, Netanyahu said, “I want to say that under your [Trump’s] leadership the alliance between America and Israel has never been stronger, never been deeper.”

The committed partnership of both countries is key to enabling the U.S. base to function smoothly in an Israeli military facility, Haimovich said, adding, “I appreciate the way the Americans respect the state of Israel.”

Establishing the base is really a continuation of the long trend of U.S.-Israeli military cooperation, the IDF spokesman said. “What we are seeing here is an expression of this alliance tightening, its power and the level of commitment by both sides. This is the first time that U.S. [military] will be present here permanently,” Conricus said.

Maj. Gen. Josh Gronski, deputy commanding general for the U.S. Army National Guard, during a visit to the base, said that he

believes it “symbolizes the strong bond that exists between the United States and Israel.”

Jewish groups in the U.S. were supportive of the new military base opening, with the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations calling the development “historic.”

“We welcome the first-ever perma-

nent U.S. military base in Israel that will improve the ability of military personnel from both countries to work side-by-side every day,” said the group’s president, Stephen M. Greenberg, and Executive Vice Chairman and CEO, Malcolm Hoenlein, in a joint statement.

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Sukkot across Greater Binghamton

There will be a progressive Sukkot Community Nosh and Shmooze held on Sunday, October 8, beginning at 2 pm. The event is sponsored by Temple Concord, Temple Israel, Beth David Synagogue and Hillel at Binghamton.

“Join us as we journey from sukkah to sukkah for discussion, food and schmoozing in the *sukkot* of the three congregations,” said organizers of the event. “Enjoy the congregational *sukkot*, their decorations, sitting in the sukkah and shaking the lulav and etrog.”

There will be seven species (*shivat min-*

im) noshes at each sukkah and participants will have the opportunity to explore one of the “biblical guests” who are invited to the sukkah each night. The schedule for visits will be:

- ◆ 2 pm – Temple Israel with Aaron
- ◆ 3 pm – Beth David Synagogue with Joseph
- ◆ 3:45 pm – Temple Concord with Abraham and Sarah

The event is part of Sukkot Across America, a program of the National Jewish Outreach Program.

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