

12-45 Clintonville St. Whitestone, NY 11357



Tuesday, March 26th -- 7:30 PM





WHC Bulletin Staff

Rabbi Steven Axelman, Editor Sharon Samet Patricia Smolker

WHITESTONE

HEBREW CENTRE 12-45 Clintonville St. Whitestone, NY 11357 718-767-1500

Email:

Whitestonehebrewcentre @gmail.com

Website: whitestonehebrewcenter.org



Thursday, March 20th

WHC ADMINISTRATION

2019-19 Officers

Rabbi & Cantor - Steven Axelman President - Bruce Berenson Vice-President - Ellis Rosenblatt Treasurer/Financial Secretary -Barbara Parker Corresponding/Recording Secretary -Ron Kohn Sisterhood Co-Presidents Esther Cohen Rhoda Weinstein

President's Message

By: Bruce Berenson

As we prepare this month to celebrate Purim– I want to make note of one of the stranger departures from Jewish custom and law mandated for the observance of this joyous Yom Tov.

We are commanded to rejoice on all Jewish festivals, but more than any other day, it is Purim that is distinguished by jubilation. In fact, we start celebrating almost two weeks beforehand, when the month of Adar, in which Purim falls, first comes in.

The Talmud - which in general presents a severe view on overindulging (of nearly everything) - exhorts us regarding Purim: "drink until you can't tell the difference between "Cursed is Haman, Blessed is Mordechai" – in other words, to get so drunk that you can no longer tell the difference between the hero Mordechai and the villain Haman. What on earth is behind this?

In Judaism, alcohol (in moderation) is included in all festive occasions. Our Pesach Seders are not legal without the four cups. Weekly Shabbat observance requires the Kiddush. Most holidays, and Simchas such as weddings and circumcisions include a kiddush as well. Yet, getting drunk is the epitome of "unJewish" behavior, and is roundly condemned by the Sages.

Wine is a key factor in the Purim story. It's Achashverosh's drunken demand that Vashti show off herself that brings her downfall and clears the way for Esther to become Queen. It's a wine feast that Esther invites Haman and the King to - which results in Haman's demise.

Each year on this Holiday, when we rejoice (Continued on page 5)

FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY

Rabbi Steven Axelman haxelman@gmail.com 718-208-5059



In this column I would like to present a very brief outline of Jewish history leading up to the events celebrated on Purim, based primarily on two websites: chabad.org and aish.com. The patriarch of Judaism (and related religions), Avraham (Abraham), was born c. 1812. B.C.E. His son Yitzchak (Isaac) was born 100 years later, c. 1712 B.C.E. Yitzchak's son Yaakov (Jacob), also known as Yisrael (Israel) was born 60 years later, c. 1652 B.C.E. The twelve sons of Yaakov are known to us as the twelve tribes. His fourth son was named Yehuda (Judah) from which the name "Jews" originates. The sons moved to Egypt along with their father when they reunited with Yoseif (Joseph) c. 1522 B.C.E. They were subsequently enslaved by the Egyptians until redeemed by God through Moshe (Moses) c. 1312 B.C.E. After wandering 40 years in the desert, they began to settle in Israel c. 1272 B.C.E. The first king of Israel, Sha'ul (Saul) was anointed c. 879 B.C.E. King David became the ruler only a few short years later. Around 836 B.C.E., King David's son, Shlomo (Solomon) began his rule and shortly thereafter began to build a permanent Temple to God, replacing the temporary Mishkan (Tabernacle). Less than 30 years later, with Shlomo's death, the kingdom of Israel was split into two kingdoms, the first of which was conquered by the Assyrians c. 555 B.C.E. With this event the legendary Ten Tribes of Israel were lost. The remaining two tribes of Yehuda and Binyamin, along with Kohanim and Levi'im (Priests and Levites) remained in Israel until conquered by the Babylonians c. 422 B.C.E. (Those with some familiarity with Jewish history have most often learned the date of the destruction of the First Temple to be c. 586 B.C.E. This column follows a more traditional timeline of Jewish history; for elaboration see e.g., aish.com/jl/h/cc/48937787.html.) The Jews

SISTERHOOD

Sisterhood Message

Sisterhood has scheduled a Theatre Party, The Rat Pack of Opera: From Venice to Vegas, on Sunday, March 17th at 3:00 PM at QBCC. (See enclosed flier.) If you have not reserved your tickets, it's not too late. Call Naomi Gukowsky at 718-767-7432.

Please join us on Tuesday, April 2nd at 1:00 PM for our Passover Program, led by our Program Chairperson, Iris Kirschner. Iris always has great programs. Don't forget to mark your calendar for this program. Refreshments will be served.

Sisterhood's Fifth Joint Fashion Show will take place on Sunday, May 5th at 3:00 PM. Again we will have Vendors (shop for Mother's Day which is the following Sunday, May 12th), Raffle Prizes, a Kosher Chinese Dinner and Fashions by Chico's. (See enclosed flier for more details.)

Sisterhood has a busy schedule for the next couple of months. Please join us for these functions.

THANK YOU

We want to thank everyone at WHC for all the calls, cards, and donations in Mel's memory as well as the visits, which helped get us through this hard time.

Lilian Gradofsky & Family

Making Contributions

For many years Sisterhood has offered the service of sending cards from all those who wish to acknowledge both Simchas and Condolences. The response from the recipients is most heart warming. The following funds are available:

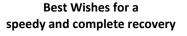
Simcha Fund	\$10
Chai Fund	\$18
Prayer Book Fund	\$10
Inscribed Prayer Books	\$25

The recipient receives an acknowledgement of the contribution and it is printed in the monthly Bulletin so all can share the feelings expressed. To place orders, call Patricia Smolker at (718) 746-7068.

Checks for the above funds should be made payable to "Sisterhood of WHC".

SISTERHOOD DATES TO REMEMBER

Tue.	Mar 5th	Sisterhood Board Meeting	10:00 AM
Sun.	Mar 17th	Sisterhood Theatre Party	3:00 PM
		@QBCC	
		The Rat Pack of Opera -	
		From Venice to Vegas	

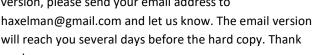


Esther Cohen

Lenny Hartman



If you would like to receive a copy of the bulletin by email, in addition to the printed version, please send your email address to



you!

New WHC Phone System

Due to the increase of business being conducted more on the internet than in the past, coupled with our new virtual phone system, we no longer need someone staffing the office during the day. Anyone phoning the shul will be presented with options to hear hours of services, directions, or to be connected



to me or the Rabbi. If you are not connected directly to me or the Rabbi, please leave a message and your call will be returned in a timely manner. When the calendar states that the office is closed, that means that messages may not be returned on the same day. When you need to conduct business in shul in person, please leave that in your message and we will arrange to meet you.

Sharon Samet

March 2019

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Why Such a Surge of Worldwide Antisemitism

by Alan Dershowitz

Why are so many of the grandchildren of Nazis and Nazi collaborators who brought us the Holocaust once again declaring war on the Jews? Why have we seen such an increase in anti-Semitism and irrationally virulent anti-Zionism in western Europe?

l stand

with Israel

To answer these questions, a myth must first be exposed. That myth is the one perpetrated by the French, the Dutch, the Norwegians, the Swiss, the Belgians, the Austrians, and many other western Europeans: namely that the Holocaust was solely the work of German Nazis aided perhaps by some Polish, Ukrainian, Latvian, Lithuanian, and Estonian collaborators. False. The Holocaust was perpetrated by Europeans: by Nazi sympathizers and collaborators among the French, Dutch, Norwegians, Swiss, Belgians, Austrians and other Europeans, both Western and Eastern. If the French government had not deported to the death camps more Jews than their German occupiers asked for; if so many Dutch and Belgian citizens and government officials had not cooperated in the roundup of Jews; if so many Norwegians had not supported Quisling; if Swiss government officials and bankers had not exploited Jews; if Austria had not been more Nazi than the Nazis, the Holocaust would not have had so many Jewish victims.

In light of the widespread European complicity in the destruction of European Jewry, the pervasive anti-Semitism and irrationally hateful anti-Zionism that has recently surfaced throughout western Europe toward Israel should surprise no one. "Oh no," we hear from European apologists. "This is different. We don't hate the Jews. We only hate their nation-state. Moreover, the Nazis were right-wing. We are left-wing, so we can't be anti-Semites." Nonsense.

The hard left has a history of anti-Semitism as deep and enduring as the hard right. The line from Voltaire to Karl Marx, to Levrenti Beria, to Robert Faurisson, to today's hard-left Israel bashers is as straight as the line from Wilhelm Mars to the persecutors of Alfred Dreyfus to Hitler. The Jews of Europe have always been crushed between the Black and the Red victims of extremism whether it be the ultra-nationalism of Khmelnitsky to the ultra-anti-Semitism of Stalin. "But some of the most strident anti-Zionists are Jews, such as Norman Finkelstein and even Israelis such as Gilad Atzmon. Surely they can't be anti-Semites?" Why not? Gertrude Stein and Alice Toklas collaborated with the Gestapo. Atzmon, a hard leftist, describes himself as a proud self-hating Jew and admits that his ideas derive from a notorious anti-Semite. He denies that the Holocaust is historically proved but he believes that Jews may well have killed Christian children to use their blood to bake Passover matzah. And he thinks it's "rational" to burn

down synagogues. Finkelstein believes in an international Jewish conspiracy that includes Steven Spielberg, Leon Uris, Eli Wiesel, and Andrew Lloyd Webber! "But Israel is doing bad things to the Palestinians," the European apologists insist, "and we are sensitive to the plight of the underdog." No, you're not! Where are your demonstrations on behalf of the oppressed Tibetans, Georgians, Syrians, Armenians, Kurds, or even Ukrainians? Where are your BDS movements against the Chinese, the Russians, the Cubans, the Turks, or the Assad regime? Only the Palestinians, only Israel? Why? Not because the Palestinians are more oppressed than these and other groups. Only because their alleged oppressors are Jews and the nation-state of the Jews. Would there be demonstrations and BDS campaigns on behalf of the Palestinians if they were oppressed by Jordan or Egypt?

Oh, wait! The Palestinians were oppressed by Egypt and Jordan .. Gaza was an open-air prison between 1948 and 1967, when Egypt was the occupying power. And remember Black September, when Jordan killed more Palestinians than Israel did in a century? I don't remember any demonstration or BDS campaigns — because there weren't any. When Arabs occupy or kill Arabs, Europeans go ho-hum. But when Israel opens a soda factory in Maale Adumim, which even the Palestinian leadership acknowledges will remain part of Israel in any peace deal, Oxfam parts ways with Scarlett Johansson for advertising a soda company that employs hundreds of Palestinians.

Keep in mind that Oxfam has provided "aid and material support" to two anti-Israel terrorist groups, according to the Tel Aviv-based Israeli Law Group. The hypocrisy of so many hard-left western Europeans would be staggering if it were not so predictable based on the sordid history of Western Europe's treatment of the Jews. Even England , which was on the right side of the war against Nazism, has a long history of anti-Semitism, beginning with the expulsion of the Jews in 1290 to the notorious White Paper of 1939, which prevented the Jews of Europe from seeking asylum from the Nazis in British-mandated Palestine .. And Ireland , which vacillated in the war against Hitler, boasts some of the most virulent anti-Israel rhetoric.

The simple reality is that one cannot understand the current western European left-wing war against the nation-state of the Jewish people without first acknowledging the long-term European war against the Jewish people themselves. Theodore Herzl understood the pervasiveness and irrationality of European anti-Semitism, which led him to the conclusion that the only solution to Europe's Jewish problem was for (Continued on page 6)

Prayer for the Sick



It is customary to say a special prayer during the Torah service on Shabbat for the sick. The prayer is one of many that begin with words "*mi shebeirach*" and is thus known by that name. *Mi shebeirach* simply means, "the One who blessed", which are the first two words of

the blessing. Several customs have developed over the years, often in an effort to pray for all the sick without burdening the congregation with a long pause in the service caused by many individuals coming up to the Bima to mention specific names. (The concept of burdening the congregation by spending time on various parts of the service is known as "tircha d'tzibur" and is involved in other issues of communal prayer as well.) Some have the custom to only pray for those in immediate danger. Some do not specify any names but pray in general for all those who need healing. In some congregations, individual congregants silently mention the names of those important to them, while the person reciting the prayer pauses for a brief moment.

Our custom has been to mention each name specifically. Over time we have gathered a lengthy list of names, not limited to Jewish people. Unfortunately, some of the names we pray for we have no way of knowing if they are now well or have passed on. For this reason and in order to make things run as smoothly as possible I am asking everyone to please provide me with a list of those for whom they wish prayers said, preferably with the Hebrew names of the person and their mother. I would like thereby to maintain an up-to-date list both for myself and for the person reciting the prayer on Shabbat.

Please phone the office and leave a message on my voicemail. Thank you very much. In the merit of our prayers, may everyone have a speedy and complete recovery.

Rabbi Axelman

Transportation to and from WHC now available!

Now you no longer have to worry about a ride to and from shul. The Whitestone Hebrew Centre has set up an account with Four Two's. This was set up for our members that are no longer able to drive or find it difficult to drive to shul. The way it works is simple: Four Two's has a list of members' names that will be using this service. You need to call Four Two's, preferably 2 days in advance, 1 day in advance the latest, and tell them your name, address, what time you need to be picked up, and if you will need them to come back to shul to take



you home, at what time. You can use this service anytime you need to come to shul, whether it be for services, an event, or a meeting. The tip is already included, so there is no cost to you! Four Two's phone # is 718 746-2222.

If you think you are not on the list, please call the shul office to ensure that you are.

Sharon Samet



Help us to Direct your Checks and Mail to the Correct Person

When mailing checks and other notes or correspondence to WHC, if for Sisterhood, please write in the lower left hand corner of the envelope: ATTN: SISTERHOOD (and if you know the name of the Sisterhood member, please include it as well).

If you are enclosing multiple checks and/or correspondence in the same envelope, and they are for different people, please include a note as to the distribution of the checks and/or correspondence. This will ensure that the office will direct your checks, notes and/or correspondence to the proper person in a timely fashion. Thank You

President's Message

(Continued from page 2)

in the traditional way it is here that we find our primal love of G-d and renew our loyalty to Him. When the barriers to the Jewish Heart are washed away by the wine of Purim, it is then that we are able to experience heightened awareness of our ties with The Creator and with His Torah and commandments. Maybe in the end we don't have enough wisdom to know the true difference between one who is cursed and who is blessed. Try though we might to plan ahead, attempting to bring order

to our own lives, it is only God who controls the world. The consumption of spirits helps us get beyond the barrier and realize everything comes from the Almighty. We can then carry this higher level of trust and belief in God into all aspects of our lives.

L'chaim. See you in Shul.

Why Such a Surge of Worldwide Antisemitism

European Jews to leave that bastion of Jew hatred and return to their original homeland, which is now the state of Israel ... None of this is to deny Israel's imperfections or the criticism it justly deserves for some of its policies. But these imperfections and deserved criticism cannot even begin to explain, must less justify, the disproportionate hatred directed against the only nation-state of the Jewish people and the disproportionate silence regarding the far greater imperfections and deserved criticism of other nations and groups including the Palestinians. Nor is this to deny that many western European individuals and some western European countries have refused to succumb to the hatred against the Jews or their state. The Czech Republic comes to mind. But far too many western Europeans are as irrational in their hatred toward Israel as their forbearers were in their hatred toward their Jewish neighbors. As author Amos Oz once aptly observed: the walls of his grandparents' Europe were covered with graffiti saying, "Jews, go to Palestine" Now they say, "Jews, get out of Palestine", by which is meant Israel ...

Who do these western European bigots think they're fooling? Only fools who want to be fooled in the interest of denying that they are manifesting new variations on their grandparents' old biases. Any objective person with an open mind, open eyes, and an open heart must see the double standard being applied to the nation-state of the Jewish people. Many doing so are the grandchildren of those who lethally applied a double standard to the Jews of Europe in the 1930s and 1940s. For shame!

This column appeared at drnaomionisrael.com

FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY

(Continued from page 2)

were then exiled to Babylon. Within about 50 years Babylon was conquered by the Persians and Medes. The Persian ruler, Coresh (Cyrus) soon issued a decree allowing all the indigenous peoples that had been exiled by the now-defunct Babylonian empire to go back to their homeland. As related in the Biblical Book of Ezra (1:3): In the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, ... the Lord aroused the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, and he issued a proclamation throughout his kingdom – and in writing as well, saying, "Thus said Cyrus the King of Persia, 'All the kingdoms of the earth has the Lord, God of heaven, given to me and He has commanded me to build him a Temple in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of His entire people – may his God be with him – and let him go to Jerusalem which is in Judah and build the Temple of the Lord..." Only approximately 42,000 Jews actually returned to Israel, the rest, presumably, were comfortable in exile by then. They began to rebuild the Holy Temple but this rebuilding was held up for 18 years as a result of the Samaritans reporting to the Persian ruler that the Jews would rebel if allowed to continue this venture. The story of Purim as related in the Megillat Esther (Book of Esther) takes place during this time period.

Briefly, the new ruler of Persia, Achashveirosh had calculated that the prophesized period of 70 years of the Jews' exile had come to an end, and confident that they will no longer be redeemed by God, he throws a party lasting 180 days, followed by a seven-day party for all the inhabitants of his capital, Shushan. Though the party is at least in part celebrating the hopelessness of their situation, the Jews attend his party per his invitation. While inebriated, Achashveirosh orders his wife Vashti to appear (nude, per the Talmud) and when she refuses, he has her executed. He follows the counsel of his advisors and picks a replacement queen through an empire-wide beauty pageant, which is how Esther, a cousin of the Jew, Mordechai, comes to be Queen of Persia.

Achashveirosh's top minister is a man named Haman HaAgagi, a descendant of the nation of Amalek, who are sworn enemies of God and the Jewish people. Haman persuades Achashveirosh to agree to issue a secret decree to annihilate the Jews of Persia on the 13th day of the Hebrew month of Adar. Haman arrived at this date by drawing lots, or purim, hence the name of this holiday. Mordechai learns of this decree and approaches Esther to do her utmost with Achashveirosh to rescind it, reminding her that the only reason she ever became Queen of Persia was to be in a position to help the Jews in time of need. Eventually Esther reveals to Achashveirosh that she herself is Jewish and that Haman is plotting to kill her and all her people. Haman ends up hanging on gallows that he had planned to use for his arch-enemy, Mordechai. Achashveirosh then issues a new decree allowing the Jews to avenge themselves from those who would have destroyed them.

Curiously, the name of God is never mentioned in the Book of Esther. Some comment that this was to specifically illustrate that even though the era of prophesy and direct encounters with God was coming to an end, God will continue to act on the Jews' behalf in a more hidden way, keeping his promise that they will eternally be His people, never allowing them to be fully annihilated.

PURIM LAWS AND CUSTOMS

Purim 5779 begins on the evening of Wednesday, March 20th and ends at dark on Thursday March 21st. Though sometimes thought of as a "minor holiday", because one is allowed to do work on that day unlike Shabbat and "major holidays", Purim celebrates the Jewish people being saved from total annihilation throughout the Persian empire. These events, described in the Megillat Esther, which we read publicly on Purim, took place some time between the 6th and 4th centuries B.C.E. (there are sources for several different time periods) before the Jews were allowed to return to Israel from exile and re-build the Temple. (For more detail see "From the Rabbi's Study on page 2.)

Considering how we appropriately mourn the various times in Jewish history when the Jewish people were subjected to slaughter and genocide, I often think that the celebration of avoiding such a catastrophe should be more deeply felt.

Purim is celebrated with four Mitzvot and several customs

(1) Reading of the Megilla, preferably with a minyan in a synagogue, on both the evening and the day of Purim.



(2) Shalach Manot (or Mishloach Manot): sending gifts of food to a friend. This Mitzvah is fulfilled by delivering two food items to at least one person, each requiring a different



Bracha (blessing) before eating. For example, an orange and an apple are both fruit, the blessing before eating them is the same and therefore this does not fulfill the Mitzvah. Luckily, chocolate has a different

blessing. Always a good thing to send along with the fruit! Same with wine or liquor.



(3) *Matanot La'evyonim* (gifts to the poor): this Mitzvah is more important than *Shalach*

Manot but unfortunately often receives less attention. This mitzvah is fulfilled by giving monetary charity to at least two poor people. This is often accomplished collectively by giving money beforehand or on Purim to the Rabbi (or anyone so designated) who will turn the money over to poor people. (4) Seudat Purim: having a festive meal on the day of Purim. This custom has been neglected in many communities, but is alive and well in many places in Israel as well as in the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox communities in N.Y. and

elsewhere. The Mitzvah of getting drunk "until one does not know the difference between Haman and Mordechai" during this meal, cited in the Talmud, has been interpreted literally and has also been interpreted



as drinking more than one is accustomed to and going to sleep.

(5) Among the other customs of Purim are making noise when Haman's name is mentioned during the reading of the megilla, eating Hamantashen and wearing masks or costumes.





February Family Shabbat Sponsors



The Berenson and Slutsky families in memory of the yahrzeit of Bruce's grandfather and Seena's father, Louis Goldberg

Esther Cohen in memory of the yahrzeit of her father, Yeshayah Lerea

Ellis Rosenblatt in honor of Shirley Safran's birthday

Alex Ratner and Liliya Berezovsky in honor of the birthday of their granddaughter, Julia and in memory of the yahrzeit of Liliya's father, Moishe Berezovsky

Condolences

To the Splain family on the loss of Dr. Shepard Splain

המקום ינחם אתכם

בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

May his memory be a blessing

THANK YOU

I want to express my sincere appreciation to the WHC community for their support, following the passing of my brother, Dr. Shepard A. Splain. A very special thank you to the Rabbi and Rebbetzin Sharon, as well as the following congregants, who helped me make a daily minyan and recite Kaddish according to Jewish law and custom:

Bruce Berenson, Jill Dee, Ron Kohn, Barbara and Barry Parker, Liliya and Alex Ratner, Ellis Rosenblatt, and Patricia Smolker. A donation has been made in their honor.

Michele Splain

March Happy Birthdays

- Evelyn Apter Jill Dee Naomi Gukowsky Danielle Hoffmann Gloria Keller Ronald Kohn
- Saul Osdoby Eric Pinsdorf Ellis Rosenblatt Joshua Samet Madison Skow Seena Slutsky

*Editor's note: If your birthday should be listed on this page and is not, please call the office at (718) 767-1500 and give them your date of birth.

Thank you.

SCHEDULE OF WHC CLASSES

(led by Rabbi Axelman)

Sundays @12:45 PM -- Talmud Class

The goal of this class is to reintroduce people to the wisdom of the Talmud. As Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz writes in <u>Essential Talmud</u>:

"The Talmud is a very hard book to define ... from content to style, every definition is incomplete or contradictory. ... The Talmud is completely unique--a book that has no parallel anywhere.... If the bible is the cornerstone of Judaism, then the Talmud is the central pillar, soaring up from the foundations and supporting the entire spiritual and intellectual edifice.... In many ways the Talmud is the most important book in Jewish culture, the backbone of creativity and of national life. No other work has had a comparable influence on the theory and practice of Jewish life, shaping spiritual content and serving as a guide to conduct.... [t]he Jewish people have always been keenly aware that their continued survival and development depend on study of the Talmud.

Mondays @7:30 PM -- Judaism 101 Explores Your Questions: Why?... Because...

A class at which you can ask any question, dispel misconceptions, and discuss any current issues and concerns relating to Jews, Judaism or Israel, in a non-judgmental, open and candid forum. This is an ideal venue for individuals who wish to discuss basic principles of Judaism and express their views, questions, etc.

Refreshments are served at every class. Your donations are greatly appreciated. March 2019



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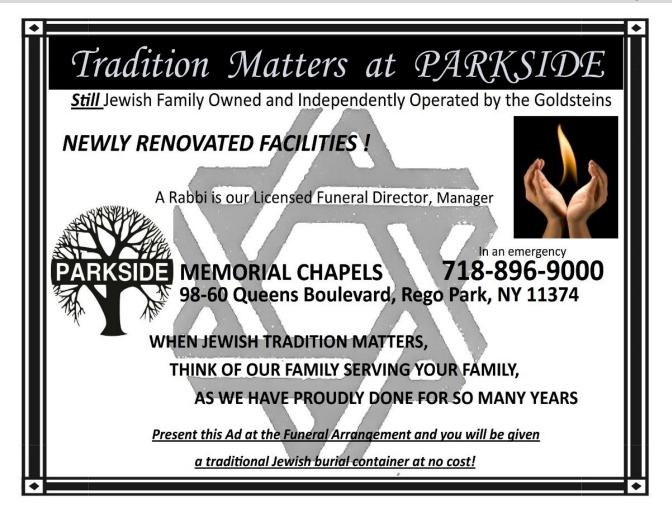
Kosher meals are prepared on premises, under the strict religious supervision of the Rabbi Avrohom Friedlander. Pas Yisroel, Cholov Yisroel, Bishul Yisroel.



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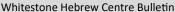
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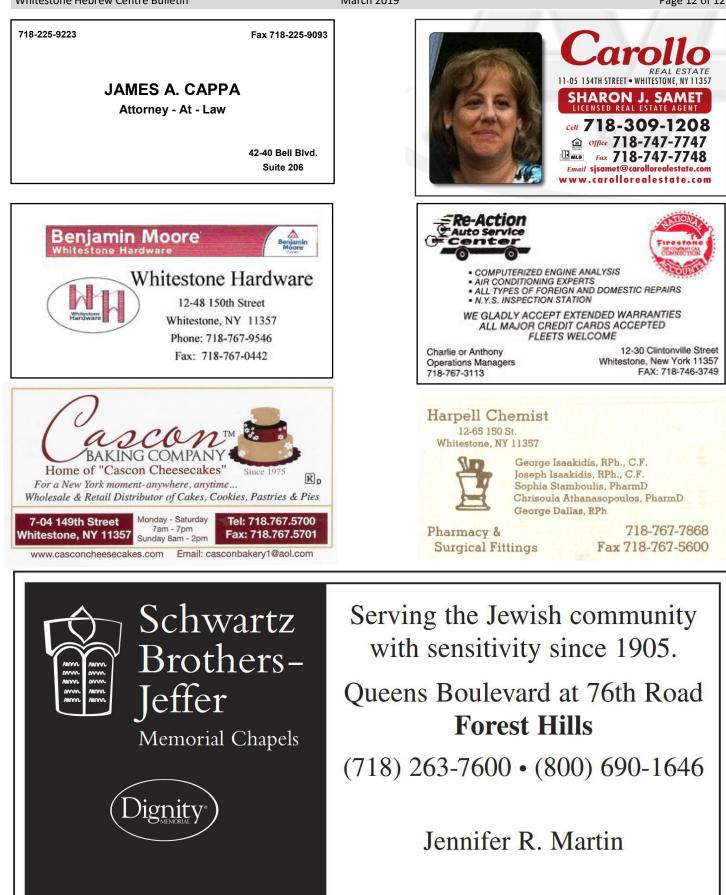


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March 2019



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