

# NEWSLETTER

RHODE ISLAND JEWISH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Volume XXVI December 2013 Number 2



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Michael Schwartz

I am happy to announce that the Association has received a \$5,000 grant through the RI Foundation to allow us to complete the digitalization of the many oral histories in our possession. A thank you goes out to Ruth Breindel for the work needed to obtain this grant. In the near future, we hope to have a listing of all our oral histories on our web site. When the listing is posted, a member should contact Anne Sherman at our office for an appointment to listen to a particular history.

In addition, Melvin Zurier and the Goldowsky Foundation have agreed to fund a summer internship for a new high school graduate or a college student for the summer of 2014. If you know a good candidate for this office assistant/and research position, please have the student forward a letter of interest to the Association.

We are working to put together another informative and fun Annual Meeting. Please SAVE THE DATE of April 6. As is customary, the program will be held that Sunday afternoon at Temple Beth El.

Once again, I need to urge that you recommend that your friends, associates and relatives join our Association. A gift membership will make a wonderful present for any special occasion. Also, any new member that joins at our \$100 Patron level will now receive a gift copy of our publication, *Jews of Rhode Island*. This is a special limited time offer and will be available for those new members who join in the near future.

Thank you for your support. I hope to see all of you at our April meeting.

## THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION!

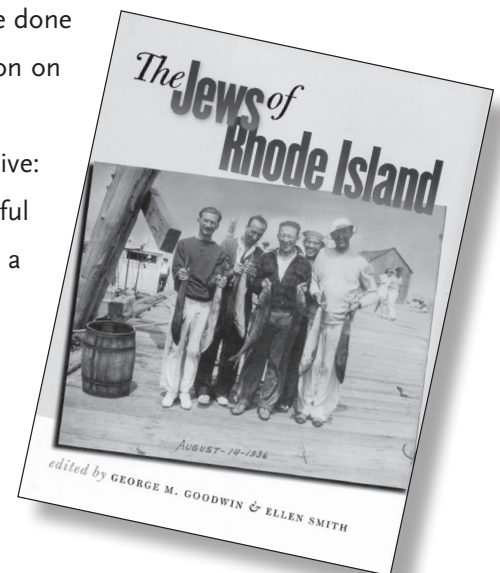
Ruth Breindel

As Michael mentioned in his message, we have a grant for our oral history tapes. That money will allow us to complete their digitization, so that they will be available for researchers. This project should be done by next winter (about 200 tapes to still be done!), so stay tuned for more information on this project.

If you go to our website ([www.rijha.org](http://www.rijha.org)), you will see a new membership initiative: with any new Patron membership (\$100), you will receive a free copy of our wonderful book, *The Jews of Rhode Island*. This would be a perfect gift for family and friends— a limited time offer.

We are also in negotiations with PayPal so that we can offer that service to you for membership payments and donations. This should be available within a month.

If you have any ideas for the website, or projects that you think would enhance our organization, please email Ruth Breindel: [rbreindel@yahoo.com](mailto:rbreindel@yahoo.com).



## IN OUR OFFICE AND ARCHIVES

Anne Sherman

Summer and fall at the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association come with surprises. I never know what will come through the door. Beth Veltri, executive director of Lincoln Park Cemetery found a ledger book from Chased Schel Ames Association dated 1937 to 1947. A photo from the class of 1966 of the Providence Hebrew Day School and a 1943 Temple Beth-Israel confirmation class program and invitation were mailed to the office. A brochure dated 1951 showing the new Miriam Hospital, a 1952 dedication book and a bound copy of the "Miriam in the News," newspaper clippings from 1972 to 1982 were added to the vast amount of Miriam Hospital material we have archived. Ruth Goldstein gave us a copy of a photograph with Joe Galkin and Marie Berkovic Silverman. Marie was a child Holocaust survivor who spent a summer at Camp JORI in 1948.

□ Marc Port who lives in California sent material on the Hebrew Educational Institute. This Institute preceded the Jewish Community Center. He also informed us his great-grandfather was Dr. Albert Pobris, the first Jewish dentist in Rhode Island.

□ Carl Salzman sent a copy of "The Original Amateur" a book written by his late wife Judith P Salzman. It is the story of anti-semitism in the United States before World War II. The setting of the book is in Providence. Mrs. Salzman has written articles for the *Notes*.

□ Again we want to thank Florence Markoff for another wonderful and informative oral history. This time she interviewed Kenneth Block. We are in the middle of digitizing all our oral history tapes.

□ Researchers are always coming in the office. Paul Foer from Maryland is writing a book on Jews in the Maritime and seafaring. He will be including a full chapter on Newport. David Einstein called to ask about the information we have on his grandparents, Arthur and Essie Einstein. While in Rhode Island, researchers from Arizona, Long Island and Ohio have come in the office. I often get requests to find information and photos in the old "Jewish Heralds." These Heralds are one of the most important tools in the archives.

□ Rabbi Asker Oser, past Rabbi of Congregation Beth Shalom, now living in Hong Kong, came into the office looking for information on Rabbi Israel Rubinstein and his involvement in writing the first Jewish Encyclopedia. He found very

interesting material in the files, but nothing on the Encyclopedia. Most of Rabbi Rubinstein's papers are in Hebrew.

□ On October 6, there was another tour of Congregation Shaare Zedek. This tour was for anyone who could not get on the first tour in May because of size limitations. Thank you to Nathaniel Weisenberg for conducting the tours and explaining what he and his group plan to do with the building.

Thank you to Mel Zurier and the Seebert J. and Bonnie N. Goldowsky Fund for providing the office with a summer intern. Hannah Zurier was a delight to work with and she is so organized. Hannah completely redid the library. The books are now cataloged and in an order that makes them easier to find. She also started scanning pictures into the computer. In the future, we are hoping to have all but the last ten issues of *The Notes* on the website. Hannah scanned Volume 10. She accomplished so much in the ten weeks she was here. *Thank you Hannah.*

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## NEW ISSUE OF THE NOTES

During the 1950s, when our journal began publication, there were many short articles and hardly any photos. Issues ran about 75 pages. In recent years, however, a typical issue, including more than a dozen articles and 100 photos (some in color), can number 200 pages.

Having endured and flourished for 59 years, our journal has probably earned a more substantial title. *Chronicles* sounds pedantic, as does *Epochs*.

By contrast, *Rhode Island Jewish Stories* may sound childish. But our authors, whether drawing on extensive, documentary research or vivid, personal memories, tell stories. Indeed, it is often intriguing and exasperating to determine which are closer or farther from the truth—whatever that is.

Fortunately, the 2013 issue of *The Notes* will present many such tantalizing puzzles. For example, there will be several autobiographical stories by writers who are now at least 85 years of age. These focus on old or vanished neighborhoods, be they in South Providence, Olneyville, Pawtucket, Attleboro

or Tokyo. The new issue will probably be the first to have articles by two sisters-in-law. One of these articles, overflowing with passion, consists of love letters.

Another article will present an unusual juxtaposition—George Washington and Henry Longfellow— who were not only visitors to Newport but resided (at different times) in the same house. An article about Jews and Freemasonry focuses on the aspirations, achievements and anomalies of Redwood Lodge (named for a gentile). Two articles, profiling mid-20th century leaders, juxtapose two Brown alumni who studied for but also abandoned legal careers. One was a pillar of the Jewish community; the other wanted little or nothing to do with it. And there will be plenty of photos— from RIJHA's splendid collection and others sources— presented in a stylish manner.

Perhaps our journal should be called *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Wonders or Treasures*. Then again, *Rhode Island Jewish Stories* may suffice.

George M. Goodwin, *Editor*

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### NEWSLETTER

RI JEWISH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION  
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