



Presidents Message

By David Leach

I recently returned from the Jewish Council for Public Affairs Annual Plenum held this year in Dallas. Having arranged to go a day early, I was able to take in some of Dallas' cultural highlights. I went to the Holocaust Museum and Tolerance Center, the Dallas Art Museum, and the nearby Nasher Sculpture Garden. I noticed the names of many Jewish benefactors. At one of the Plenum dinners we learned of the rich Jewish history of these institutions. We are all aware of such Jewish merchants as Neiman and Marcus. Well, of course, there were others. Ironically, Dallas has its Jewish Historical Society tucked away in its JCC. Unfortunately, I did not get a chance to stop by and compare notes.

It all reminded me of many Jewish merchants in Rhode Island: the founders of the Outlet Company in the 19th century and smaller family businesses such as Weintraub Fabrics, Adler's Hardware, and Benny's Auto Supply begun in the early parts of the 20th century. And can we forget that Consumer Value Stores (CVS) were started by the Goldsteins?

Well, our job, all of our jobs as Rhode Islanders and history buffs, is to collect and preserve this, our Jewish history. If you have any questions about what we collect, call Anne at the office, 331-1360, or e-mail her at rjhist@aol.com. Also feel free to call me at 421-9523 or e-mail me at dhl196@aol.com.

I am pleased to report that Ruth Breindel and I have had discussions with the Bureau of Jewish Education and its Midrasha about some joint activities. The possibilities look promising.

The annual Florida meeting was well attended. We thank Steven and Susan Brown, as always, for their

efforts. In addition, we are almost up and running with our new software. It will allow us to track our members, their multiple addresses, phone and e-mail addresses, and their gifts and other donations. We are grateful to the Goldowsky Foundation and Mel Zurier for their assistance.

And by the way, we are looking forward to the new issue of *The Notes*, which will soon arrive in our mailboxes. Make sure Anne has your dues or you will not receive a copy. I'm the nice guy. She's tough.

It is hard to believe but it is almost Annual Meeting time again. Save the date of Sunday, April 18. I'm waiting expectantly to see if the nominating committee gives me another chance. See you at Temple Beth-El at 2 P.M. to find out. The speaker will be our own fascinating board member, Professor David Gitlitz.

SAVE THE DATE ANNUAL MEETING

SUNDAY, APRIL 18, 2010
TEMPLE BETH EL
2:00 PM

SPEAKER: DAVID GITLITZ, Ph.D

CUMULATIVE INDEX UPDATE

Thanks to Ruth Briendel for adding volumes 12, 13, and 14 to our cumulative index. It is a very large undertaking and we appreciate all the weeks of hard work she has put into this. The index is available on our website under RESEARCH. If you were to print out the index, it would be 284 pages.

IN OUR OFFICE AND ARCHIVES

By Anne Sherman

Thanks to Mel Zurier, we have received a grant from the Gertrude N. Goldowsky and Seebert J. Goldowsky Foundation to upgrade our membership software. This new software will also enable us to better understand the needs of our members. We will also be able to track donations.

The office has been busy with many inquiries. A student from Brown University called looking for information on the beginnings of the *Jewish Herald of Rhode Island* and the merger of the *Jewish Voice and Herald*. Gerald Goldstein, writer for the *Observer* in Smithfield needed material on Benny's for the grand opening of the Smithfield store.

Temple Beth David in Narragansett will be celebrating their 50th anniversary. They needed material on their beginnings, and early newspaper clippings were the only information available in the archives. We also helped Lincoln Park Cemetery with an obituary to help them find a relative of a deceased.

Calls continue to come in from all over: Santa Monica, CA, New Jersey, Sarasota, FL, Bethesda, MD and Montclair, NY. We even received an e-mail from Vancouver Canada. Some inquiries can be answered in one response and others take telephone calls and e-mails that continue for weeks. A Rabbi from California was looking for a family tree. He saw a name listed in our cumulative index. A woman from Florida was looking for the two articles on Newport and thought she may be related to an early Newporter.

The e-mail from Vancouver, BC was most interesting. A young woman working on the Strasmich family tree and is related to Erwin Strasmich, one of our past presidents. We have been working on this genealogy for weeks. Erwin called the office. Besides talking about his family, he wanted to know how RIJHA was doing and what was going on.

RIJHA has also received some very interesting acquisitions. From the estate of Aaron Cohen we received a graphic by Sid Chafetz and his book "Perpetrators Prints." Sid is a member of RIJHA and his work is found in more than 20 museums. He also has an article in Volume 14, number 3.

Su Zucker, granddaughter of Reverend Meyer Smith, brought in his Mohel kit and the tiny yarmulke and tallis he used in the ceremony. She also had his appointment books from 1917 to 1950. This will be added to other material we have on Reverend Smith.

Geraldine Foster obtained the Yiddish copy of the *EZRA*, a monthly journal issued by the Order of Ezra beginning in January of 1911. Rabbi William Braude, of Temple Beth El, had translated sections of the journal into English in Volume 7-3 of the NOTES.

We have acquired books including Dr. Stanley Aronson's "Perilous Encounters" and "Stranger than – An Autobiography of Louis N. Gilbert." Congregation Beth Jacob in Plymouth, MA celebrated its 100th anniversary with a book "In Celebration of 100 Years – 1909-2009." The book was given to us by Meredith Hoffman. We also now have the video "The Tent: Life in the Round" the story of the Bonoff family.

As I told the representative from Temple Beth David in Narragansett, we only have the material that we are given. If you are a member of an organization or temple, please have newsletters and notices of important events sent to our office – or even better, make sure we are on their mailing list.

The following letter was received in our office and we decided to share it with you.

December 30, 2009

Dear Anne and Company,

This is Harriet (nee) Feinstein the name by which anyone who might remember me would recall. Reading this most interesting issue of the newsletter (December 2009) had brought so many wonderful memories to me that I felt compelled to write.

As it happens, my very dear and beloved late friend, Evelyn S. Block Goldstein urged me to write you with some of my memories. My late father was Isaac E. Feinstein, the "Superintendent" of the Jewish Home for the Aged, formerly 99 Hillside Avenue in Providence, from 1935-1944, if I remember those dates correctly! (at 87, dates occasionally become lost, especially since I've not been in Providence for many years).

At the Home, my father, mother, Dora, Sister Berenice and yours truly, lived on the third floor. During the War (WWII) since Dad was unable to hire anyone to be the waitress, I became that waitress, because most young women worked for the War Effort – regardless the job, and because those jobs paid very well.

Some year ago, I took almost all the data I had about our years at the Home to the late Eleanor Horvitz. She was a wonderful archivist, and seemed quite pleased with what I had brought. She found some photos where she was unable to recognize certain individuals, and I, luckily for her, was able to still recognize those people, so she then had names to those faces.

Some of you might recall that my late sister, Berenice, sang at Roger Williams Park on Sunday afternoons during the summer. Both Berenice (known as "Bun") and I sang, having studied in Boston with a prominent voice teacher. As a matter-of-fact, our mother, Dora, from whom we inherited the nice voices, sang with the Choir at Temple Emanu-El, where both of us were confirmed. Incidentally, the late Irving R. Levine (of bow-tie fame), was Confirmed with me. Rabbi Dr. Israel M. Goldman, was the Rabbi at the time.

I was very active in Young Judea, Jr. Hadassah, Masada, and other organization for young Jewish people. I served as Secretary to Governor Frank Licht, when he was President of the Zionist District.

Both Berenice and I graduated from Hope High---I in January 1940, and Bun in June, 1944. Seeing some names in this issue reminded me, that Flo and Buddy Trinkle (whose father was also on the Board of the JHFA) were classmates of mine, as well as Charlotte Finkler (Penn). Her husband, the late Matt Penn, happened to be one of my bosses when I lived in NYC and he was on staff of the Jewish Welfare Board.

Bob Kotlen was a classmate of Berenice. He lived on at little street just behind the JHFA. Our parents (his and Mine) were good friends. Estelle (nee Goldin) Rosen, sister of the late Eddie, Frances and Betty, is still a dear friend of mine, and she lives in Delray Beach, FL.

I've noted also that a Rabbi Landa is writing a book. He might be interested in knowing that on MOST Shabosim and especially for Yom Tovin, Rabbi William Braude, after services at Temple Beth El used to WALK to attend Services at the little Shul at the JHFA!!! He and my father were good friends, and the good Rabbi rarely missed that walk to our little Shul.

Before closing, I just want to say congratulations for joining that Genealogical group. I have belonged to a few Genealogical Groups, and have learned much more

that I can ever tell you, regarding Family and relationships. I have attended conventions as well as being in Salt Lake City to personally view the records.

ALL GOOD wishes to you and your members for a New Year of GOOD Health, Much Happiness, and continued SUCCESS! And Good Luck to the new President of RIJHA!

Cordially,
Harriet F. Baskin

The Rhode Island-British Columbia Connection

Do you remember the article about three New World synagogues (Recife, Newport, and Victoria) in the 2007 issue of *The Notes*? A shorter version of Barry Stiefel and George Goodwin's article appeared in the 2009 issue of *The Scribe*, the journal of the Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia. This impressive publication, which began in 1979, mirrors our Association's early efforts. But British Columbia's Jewish history commenced almost two centuries after Rhode Island's. Both Jewish communities began on islands, however.

New Members

Lowell Lisker, Harvey Michaels, Martin Rothman, Bonnie and Mark Sweberg

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FROM NOVEMBER 1, 2009 – FEBRUARY 1, 2010

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David H. Leach	Gail Putnam
Rabbi Emily Losben marriage to	Ruben Ostrov
	Dr. Stephen & Andrea Losben
Bonnie Brier-Rosenfield appointment to NYU	
	Sandra & Stanley Abrams
Lila & John Sapinsley's 67 th anniversary	Jane S. Nelson
Leonard J. Sholes Birthday	Gloria & Max Kolodoff
Evelyn Saltzman's birthday	Maxine Goldin
Arline Weinberg's birthday	Dorothy Kerzner Lipsky

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