



Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association

NEWSLETTER

August 2019 | Number 2

REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT

I'm very pleased to report that our new Office Secretary, Jaime Walden, joined us in June. The position of Office Secretary was approved by the Board about three years ago as a part of RIJHA's plan to professionalize the operation of our office, a plan that continues to be extraordinarily successful. Jaime, who holds a B.S. from East Carolina University in North Carolina, has over 20 years' experience in office operations, including at South County Baptist Church in North Kingstown and West Bay Christian Academy, also in North Kingstown. Jaime's experience in the use of many software applications such as Excel, QuickBooks and Microsoft Office will contribute greatly to the ongoing process of keeping the RIJHA efficient and up to date.

Among the RIJHA's major projects is the digitizing of our collection of Rhode Island Jewish newspapers, of which we have by far the most complete collection. That project is nearing completion under the excellent oversight of Director Kate-Lynne Laroche. We'll be moving forward to digitize other collections, including obituaries. We're also in the process of updating our website, which will allow easier access, worldwide, to our digitized collections.

Our major projects are being financed in part through grants, with many thanks to past President Ruth Breindel for taking initiative in applying for grants. As RIJHA expands its programming, we expect grants to become a significant way of supporting them. Hence the Board last November approved the creation of a permanent Grants Committee. I'm happy to note that three dedicated Board members agreed to serve on the committee—Ruth Breindel, George Goodwin, and Linda Levin. Any RIJHA member (Board member or not) may join our committees, so if you are interested in joining the grants committee, just call our office—331-1360.

My thanks to all RIJHA members for your membership and support. It's what keeps us going! Enjoy the rest of the summer.

Mel A. Topf
President

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR

I hope you are enjoying this beautiful summer, and are ready to begin the “busy season” as we call it here in the Regensteiner Offices of the RIJHA.

In June we hired our new secretary, Jaime Walden, and she is wonderful! Jaime is enjoying learning about the RI Jewish community, and is certainly making my job as director easier. Please read her “about me” in this newsletter!

We are continuing to move along in our project with the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities. This is the “walking tour” app that allows you, the user, to view historical landmarks, and places of interest related to Jewish history in Rhode Island from your phone, tablet, or computer at home! We currently have two “write-ups” that are ready, with four more to complete this fall. Since there is no set deadline for finishing this project, we are not necessarily in a rush to complete it, but hope to launch our portion of Rhode Tours in Spring 2020.

In September of this year, G. Wayne Miller’s sequel (and prequel) to *Toy Wars* titled *Kid Number One: A story of heart, soul and business, featuring Alan Hassenfeld and Hasbro* is being released. The RIJHA assisted Wayne in some of his research for the book, and as thanks, he and Alan will be attending an event (date TBA) later in the fall at the JCC. More information on this exciting event will follow later this summer!

As always, we have been busy with continuing to digitize portions of our impressive archive. Most recently, we digitized our obituary collection - over 12,000 obituaries! These obituaries will be added to the Digital Archive portion of the site and will be available to you, the public. This is a major resource for researchers using our materials, and having this source online makes it so much easier to use!

Our past president Ruth Breindel and longtime office manager Anne Sherman have been working tirelessly to reorganize the recently named *Anne Sherman Photography Collection* here in the Segal Family Archives. The goal of this project is to identify as much information about the photo as possible, record it in an online database, and file it accordingly so it is easily retrievable. Once the collection is completely reorganized, we plan to digitize it and make the images available on our website for all to see.

As always, research requests are coming in regularly. It seems the more resources we have available, the more researchers we have contacting us with requests. If you would like to have us conduct research on your family, a long lost relative, someone your family lore says you are related to but have never been able to prove, or just have unanswered questions about where your family came from, please don’t hesitate to contact us; that’s why we are here! As we have mentioned many times, we no longer have a standard charge for research, but simply ask that you consider making a donation to the Association in appreciation for the research done for you.

We thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Kate-Lynne Laroche

Announcements



One of our Board members, Lowell Lisker, had this Ad from The Community Voice dated Sept 23, 1975. We thought it would be fun to “run it” in this newsletter considering the message is still relevant!

If you do wish to donate any items to the Association, please either send me an email at info@rijha.org, or call the office at 401-331-1360.

Research Services

Research your family’s history in Rhode Island using our extensive archive and research services! We are happy to assist with genealogy and any other research request you may have pertaining to RI Jewish history. Send us and email at info@rijha.org or call the office at 401-331-1360.

Committee Volunteers

We now have several operating committees, as our president Mel mentioned in his letter. If you would like to serve on one, please let me know, we would love to have you! Our existing committees are:

- Programs/Events
- Membership
- Grants
- Finance
- Publications
- Acquisitions

Postcards

Jorie Burnhardt—Director of Youth & Family Programming at Temple of Aaron Congregation in St. Paul, Minnesota recently sent the Association a request. Jorie is writing curriculum for students in the Shabbat School program grades 1-4, and this year the children will be learning about other Jewish communities and people all over the world. Her request to us is to have members of the community write about their lives in the community on Rhode Island related postcards. For example: what does your family do for certain holidays, if you grew up in a certain neighborhood—what was it like, what are your customs, etc.

If you are interested in participating in this project, please send me an email at info@rijha.org.

INTRODUCTION FROM THE SECRETARY

Jaime Walden joined the staff of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association this past June, as the office secretary. Jaime is a native Rhode Islander, born and raised in Coventry. She lives with her husband, Jason, and their three children in Lincoln. She most recently served as admissions director for a private school in southern RI, and worked in medical administration prior to that. All three of Jaime's kids are very active, competitive swimmers, so much of the time she can be found near a pool in southern New England, counting laps and tracking times.

If you have any questions for Jaime, or would like to send her a personal welcome, please feel free to send her an email at office@rijha.org.

Donations, Grants, and New Members

New Members: Cynthia Benjamin, Paul Silver & Katherine Haspel, Masha Ushomirsky

Grants: Ross & Deborah Grossman, Bernhardt Foundation, Victor & Gussie Baxt Fund, Harold A. Winstead Charitable Foundation Trust Fund

General Donations:

Leonard Granoff
Jerrold Salmonson
Robin & Jim Engle
Richard & Bernice Kumins
Robert Renck
Marc Seifer
Ilya Vinarbsky
Jacob & Maybeth Lichaa
Barbara Feldman

Donations in Honor of:

Lillian Schwartz—in honor of Banice Bazar's 90th Birthday
Jill & James Tobak—in honor of George Goodwin's 15 Years as Editor of the RIJH Notes
Harold Gever—in honor of Mel Zurier's 90th Birthday
Barry & Elaine Fain—Barbara Harris' Birthday
Harold & Janice Gadon—Sumner Alpert's 93rd Birthday
Betty Kotlen—Sumner Alpert

Donations in Memory of:

Marcia & Stanley Blacher—in memory of Rosalie Beloff
Andrea Losben—in memory of Stephen Jay Losben, M.D.
Stephen & Dana Sholes—in memory of Leonard & Anna Sholes

*** If you would like to make a donation to the Association, you can do so on our website www.rijha.org or by mailing your donation to 401 Elmgrove Avenue Providence RI 02906**

2019 Membership Reminder

A general reminder:

If you have not sent in your dues for 2019 please do so as soon as possible.

If you do not pay your 2019 dues, you will not receive the 2019 *Notes* when they are sent out.