



RHODE ISLAND JEWISH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

Volume XXXI | Spring 2018 | Number 2

LETTER FROM THE NEW PRESIDENT

Becoming president of the RIJHA after Ruth Breindel, is, as they used to say, a tough act to follow. I see as my main job as president to continue the initiatives that Ruth so superbly took up. Under her leadership:

- We completed our most successful capital campaign in 2017, raising over a quarter million dollars, applied in part to cover the cost of the move to our new quarters. The move itself, a major task, was overseen by Ruth.
- We began a major culling of our excess holdings, something not done for many years. Over the course of several months, Ruth, and those who helped her, were able to eliminate some 40% of our holdings, all redundant or not related to our mission. Now our collections focus carefully on Rhode Island and on nearby New England (and, inevitably, somewhat on New York City).
- Ruth also undertook a major reorganization and cataloging of our collections. Both the culling and cataloging are of course continuing projects, and I hope Ruth will continue her valuable work on this.
- We received a grant to fund one of our most important projects—the electronic scanning of the Jewish Voice newspaper (and its ancestors) so that we'll soon have the most complete digital collection of RI Jewish newspapers. Researchers will be able to scan digitally for any subject.
- During Ruth's tenure we completed digitizing the *Notes*. That journal, one of the oldest of its kind in the US and superbly edited by George Goodwin, is now accessible on our website through 2012. Also on the website is an important find: the *Providence Passover Journal*, some 1500 pages of a newspaper published, on and off, between the 1920s and the 1960s.
- Ruth also regularly writes articles for the Voice, including on fascinating discoveries she made as she went through the archives.

I hope to use my time in office to support both these initiatives as well as the continuation of the RIJHA's many accomplishments. I hope to expand role of our Board and its committee structure, and to continue the professionalizing our operation that our new Office Manager and Executive Director, Kate-Lynne Laroche, is actively and effectively engaged in.

Our website has been greatly improved. Do try it! Also, visit our new digs and be sure to meet Kate-Lynne Laroche.

Lastly, contact me through the RIJHA office or at mtopf@rwu.edu.

Sincerely,

Mel Topf, President

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & OFFICE MANAGER

Spring greetings to the fine members of the RIJHA! Much has happened since our last newsletter in January when I left for maternity leave, and even more is scheduled to take place within the next several months. As usual, there is always something happening here!

As you know, we mailed another successful *RIJH Notes* publication in February. If you have not received your copy of the *Notes*, please contact the office and we will send one to you promptly. During my leave, my mother took over for me in the office and enjoyed her time with us. In addition to my return, we have resumed research requests, which have been coming in at a very regular rate! We are continuing to digitize the printed parts of our collection and add them to our website so feel free to peruse through them.

Our 64th Annual Spring meeting held at the Dwares JCC Social Hall was a major success. There have been some changes to our leadership. Our previous President, Ruth Breindel, now holds the position of Secretary, while Prof. Mel Topf has taken her place as President. A list of the current Board of Directors is on the next page of this newsletter.

Rabbi Joshua Breindel, our guest speaker, gave an eloquent lecture titled *Most of Us Live Off Hope – Memories of a Jewish Childhood*. The title comes from a 1978 poster by the Mad Peck. Rabbi Josh recounted growing up on Hope Street, and talked about cornerstones of the Jewish “East Side” community. He got everyone’s mouths watering, remembering food staples such as Kaplan’s Bakery, Korb’s, Bagels East, and Davis’ Dairy. He recalled fondly his time spent attending “Friday group” at the Brown/RISD Hillel, and being taught by the beloved Mrs. Eliash at Temple Emanu-El, as well as feeling at home here at the JCC on Elmgrove Avenue. All in all, it was a heartwarming experience to hear him talk so fondly of the city we know and love.

We have much to look forward to in the second half of 2018. We are collaborating with Rabbi Raphie Schochet on a short series called *Communities of Rhode Island—Historic Synagogues* which began with the Sons of Jacob Synagogue on Tuesday June 6th, and will continue at Touro Synagogue on Tuesday July 10th. The official invite is right here in the newsletter, so be sure to check it out. We are also hoping to send you an email reminder, so be sure to read through the entire Newsletter for information about that!

We are also collaborating with the Rhode Island Historical Society on August 23rd from 6-7:30 through their series *R & R in Rhode Island*. The talk will focus on Jewish summer camps, country clubs, beaches, and many other fun and exciting activities geared towards the Jewish community in Rhode Island. We will provide more information and a reminder of the event to you in late July/early August.

On a more personal note, since you all know I was out on maternity leave per our last newsletter, I thought you might like to know after an arduous sixty hour labor, my daughter, Madeline Kay Laroche was born on January 27th at 11:22pm, weighing 7lbs 8oz. She is now four and a half months old, and is the most beautiful, happy baby! She is the light of our lives and my husband and I are so proud to be her parents.

There is, as always, so much going on in the organization, and we hope to continue to collaborate with other groups and hold events to further the longevity and reach of the RIJHA. If you have any questions, concerns, comments, or suggestions, please feel free to give the office a call, or send me an email.

Sincerely,

Kate-Lynne Laroche

Executive Director & Office Manager

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE RIJHA

Communities of Rhode Island

Historic Synagogues

Please join us for a special talk given by Rabbi Raphie Schochet at Touro Synagogue **July 10th at 7:00pm**. This free event will shed light on historical gems in the Jewish Community that have a rich and colorful history. We hope to see you there! You can read a bit more about Rabbi Schochet's hopes for this series in a recent article in *The Jewish Voice*, by Fran Ostendorf.

Member Email & Mailing List

In our best efforts to keep the most up to date records, we have recently updated our mailing list, and have had some returned mail for several members over the past year. If you would, please send us an email at info@rijha.org with your current and seasonal (if applicable) mailing address, as well as an email address with which we could contact you. If you do not have an email, please note a new address on any mail you send us in the near future. you.

RIJHA Website

Please feel free to check out our website! www.rijha.org has gone through a major new web design in the past year, and we want to hear your feedback on how it's working for you. Check out the complete collection of our *Notes* publications via PDF, or look into our recently digitized historical newspapers: *The Jewish Voice & Herald* and *The Providence Passover Journal*.

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 office@rijha.org or call the office at 401-331-1360.

Library Collection

The RIJHA Library Collection is now viewable online thanks to extensive cataloging work by our previous President Ruth Breindel! Take a look at the collection and let us know if you'd like to look at anything interesting!

Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association

Board of Directors

OFFICERS

President: Mel Topf
1st Vice President: Harold Foster
2nd Vice President: Lowell Lisker
Secretary: Ruth Breindel
Treasurer: David Bazar

BOARD MEMBERS (Voting)

Elizabeth Bakst
Michael Fink
Lauren Motola Davis
Larry Parness
Michael Schwartz
Bailey Silechnik
Marlene Wolpert
Maxine Goldin
Linda Lotridge Levin
Marilyn Myrow
Rabbi Raphie Schochet
Esta Yavner
James Waters

HONORARY BOARD MEMBERS (Non-Voting)

Harold Gadon
Lillian Schwartz
Philip Segal
Melvin Zurier

PAST PRESIDENTS

Ruth Breindel
Bob Berkelhammer
Geraldine Foster
George Goodwin
David Leach
Michael Schwartz
Eugene Weinberg

Donations & Memberships

January 2018 - May 2018

General Donations

New Members

Anonymous

Neal Bromley & Zelda Goldman

Banice & Beverly Bazar

Cornelis & Kathryn deBoer

DeRabbanan Fund

Barbara & Walter Feldman

Donations Given in Memory

Jewish Federation Foundation

Neal Bromley

In memory of

Sylvia Bromley

Patricia Kaplan

Harold & Janice
Gadon

In memory of

Sylvia Denhoft

Barbara & Farrel Klein

Ellen Kleinman

Richard & Bernice Kumins

Beverly Goldberg

In memory of

Jerome Magner

Lowell Lisker

Ronald & Karen Markoff

Betty B. Kotlen

In memory of

William Lewis

Herbert Meister

Larry & Shelley Parness

Allan B. Martin

In memory of

Rhoda Warenback Martin, Melvin
Warenback, Abraham Silverman
Warenback, Rosalyn Sundlun Warenback,
& Ethel Sundlun Tabor

Michael L. Penn

Warren & Susette Rabinowitz

Barbara & Morris
Schwartz

In memory of

Robert Dubinsky

Frances C. Sadler

Ellen & Harold Schein

Lillian Schwartz

The Penn Family

In memory of

Jack & Estelle Fradin

Lawrence R. Soforenko

Selma Stanzler

Ruth Fishbein-
Salkin

In memory of

Dr. Joseph G. Fishbein

Joshua Teverow

Florence Tilles

Morris & Barbara
Schwartz

In memory of

Dr. Jeffrey Kramer

Naida D. Weisberg

Melvin & Janet Zurier

Erwin Summer

In memory of

Barbara L. Shulkin

Donations Given in Honor

Marilyn & Benjamin Eisenberg

In honor of

Harold Gadon's Special Birthday

Bessie Lindenbaum

In honor of

Robert Lindenbaum

Lillian Schwartz

In honor of

Beverly Bazar

Allan B. Martin

In honor of

Dolly Misch

Ellen & Harold Schein

In honor of

Gerald Finkelman's 90th Birthday

Eugene Weinberg

In honor of

Harold Gadon's Birthday & George and Betsey
Goodwin's new granddaughter Chloe Madeline