

The JEWISH VOICE & HERALD

SERVING RHODE ISLAND AND SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

22 Adar 5762

Jewish Federation of Rhode Island

March 6, 2002

As we debut, a letter from the editors

Shalom! Welcome to the pages of a new newspaper, the *Jewish Voice & Herald*.

As our name implies, it is our hope to be both voice and herald — to build a forum for the clash and clang of ideas, while passing along news, information and advertising that, like the Shabbat candles, will illuminate the Jewish part of your life.

It's a legacy that we take seriously, given that one of our predecessors, *The Jewish Herald*, was part of the community for nearly three-quarters of a century, and the other, *The Jewish Voice*, rose from the fires of the 1973 Israeli-Arab war.

Now that was news — and we intend to continue bringing you the context behind developments in the Middle East

Continued on page 2

Assisted living center in Warwick moving closer to construction

By Gerry Goldstein

The Jewish Seniors Agency of Rhode Island is about to seek construction bids on the 66-unit, kosher assisted living center it will build at its Shalom Apartments complex in Warwick, and anticipates that work will begin in June.

The three-story building, which will include 20 apartments for residents with dementia, such as Alzheimer's disease, is expected to be completed a year from this spring, according to Susette Rabinowitz, the agency's executive director.

Although bids will determine the actual figure, the agency has estimated the project's cost at \$13 million.

The 64,000-square-foot complex, which features landscaped walking paths and courtyards, is expected to change the face of the 28.5-acre site off Greenwich Avenue that the agency began developing in 1980 with the initial phase of Shalom Apartments. Including Shalom II, which opened in 1994, the complex, near the



AN ARCHITECT'S SKETCH shows a courtyard at the assisted living center planned for the Shalom campus in Warwick.

former Apex store, contains 154 subsidized apartments designed for independent living.

The planned assisted-living center will maintain two kitchens, one for dairy and one for meat; all the meals it serves

will be kosher. The building will also include a function room, available to the community.

The 66 units will be a mix of one- and two-bedroom apartments and efficiencies, with the

largest offering 824 square feet of living space.

Rabinowitz said that although a fee structure has not yet been established, the complex will be competitive with

Continued on page 3

Rodney Driver gives Israel a slap

R.I. Jewish community chooses a measured response

By Jonathan Rubin

Rodney Driver, one of Rhode Island's more vocal Palestinian supporters, came to a South County library Feb. 20 and served up a two-hour presentation criticizing Israel. The event, wrapped in controversy even before it took place, seemed certain to provoke a confrontation between Driver and the Jewish community.

But if Driver was counting on conflict, he was disappointed; his anti-Israel comments, literature and video clips drew silence from the organized Jewish com-



Driver

munity. And that was the plan, agency leaders said.

Still proving that he can draw a sizeable crowd, Driver attracted more than 120 people to the presentation by Friends of the Kingston Free Library — five times the attendance at other programs in the library's series, "Avenues in a Perilous World." Driver, a retired mathematics professor at the University of Rhode Island, has run twice for state representative, unsuccessfully.

His talk received widespread advance coverage in two South County newspapers when the library abruptly cancelled

it after Town Councilwoman Karen Asher suggested that the program should include an opposing viewpoint, as had other talks in the series. Even though the library reversed the cancellation, Asher, who is Jewish, came under fire in one of the local papers, *The South County Independent*.

In a subsequent letter to the *Independent*, she wrote that canceling the lecture was not her intention.

"My only desire was to help the Friends plan the best possible program, and I felt having only one speaker on a topic as controversial as the Middle East was inappropriate and must have been an oversight on their part that could have been easily corrected."

The library has since scheduled a March 6 talk by Prof. Alan Zuckerman of Brown University. Zuckerman, who is Jewish, has given talks in the past on the situation in the Middle East. The talk was arranged by the Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island.

During his presentation, Driver showed dramatic video clips of houses being demolished, men throwing stones, army units, and speakers criti-

Continued on page 11

Israeli court OKs Reform, Conservative conversions

(JTA) Non-Orthodox Jews both inside and outside Israel are celebrating a historic court ruling recognizing Reform and Conservative conversions as valid and binding upon the Jewish state.

Given the complexity of Israeli society, however, the Feb. 20 ruling by Israel's High Court of Justice is not binding on the Israeli rabbinate.

The result is that the Interior Ministry must now reg-

Continued on page 9

The Jewish Voice & Herald

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The Jewish Voice & Herald encourages synagogues and members of the Jewish community to submit announcements of weddings, bar- and bat-mitzvahs, obituaries and other life cycle events.

Announcements and opinions contained in these pages are published as a service to the community and do not necessarily represent the views of The Jewish Voice & Herald, or its publisher, the Jewish federation of Rhode Island.

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Jewish Federation of Rhode Island

Robert Mann, President
Janet Engelhart, Executive

The Jewish Voice & Herald offers its gratitude to Jessica Berlin for her graphic design assistance, and David Dudek, who, in addition to offering his graphic expertise, also designed the front page masthead, or nameplate, for the new paper.

From the Federation, greetings to our readers

Some thoughts as we publish our first edition

Dear Friends,

The first edition of the *Jewish Voice & Herald* is a milestone for our community and for the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island. It is the first time that we will merge Jewish newspapers to have one paper to serve the community.

Mat Shuster worked with a small committee to look at the best way for our newspaper to serve the Jews of Rhode Island. We thank Mat for being instrumental in putting this merger together. It has been a pleasure to work closely with Arthur Lemoi, publisher of the *Jewish Herald*, who had the foresight to suggest that, under current realities, we would better serve the community with one newspaper.

With the emergence of one paper, we take very seriously the responsibility to provide timely, accurate news and information for you. The *Jewish Voice & Herald*, published by the Jewish Federation, is an independent publication. One of its primary

focuses, based on feedback from our community planning process, will be to represent organizations located around the



Janet Engelhart

state. The *Jewish Voice & Herald* will enable organizations and synagogues across the state to "hear the voices" of one another and those they serve.

You will see changes in style and coverage from past newspapers. Jonathan Rubin, editor; Gerry Goldstein, consulting editor; Leah Camara, graphics and layout director; and the editorial board, ably led by Eleanor Lewis, will be featuring their creative new ideas in upcoming issues. We hope you enjoy the *Jewish Voice & Herald's* evolution, and we welcome and encourage your feedback along the way.

Special thanks to Amir Cohen, publisher of the *Jewish News of New Jersey* and a member of the Rhode Island

community, who has devoted countless hours and provided volunteer leadership in getting our new paper off to the right start.

The business success of the paper depends upon a flourishing advertising program. Encourage family and friends to contact Cynthia Loux for introductory ad rates. The *Jewish Voice &*



Robert D. Mann

Herald is a perfect opportunity to reach the entire Jewish community directly.

A Jewish paper is the reflection of a community's direction, milestones, values, history and opinion. The *Jewish Voice & Herald's* editorial leadership is dedicated to excellence in all areas.

We salute them and support them in their efforts!

Robert D. Mann,
President
Janet H. Engelhart,
Executive Vice President

'Tradition, tradition...' but a new path, as well

Dear Readers,

The editorial board of the *Jewish Voice & Herald* welcomes you to the first edition of our new newspaper. Like anything authentically Jewish, it relies on tradition and will change over time.

We are delighted that editor Jonathan Rubin, consulting editor Gerry Goldstein, graphic designer Leah Camara, advertising director Cynthia Loux and editorial assistant Alla Goman are working together to put out a paper to serve the community.

We're counting on your help, too. We need to know what appeals to you, what you want to see more or less of, and whether there is something spe-

cial you might be interested in writing for publication.

How can you be in touch? Send a letter to the editor or contact the editors or members of the editorial board. We will listen (of course, that doesn't mean we will always agree).

Please remember to send us news of your simchas! Let the whole community rejoice with you. We already get the sad news from the funeral homes, but we need you for the good news!

The *Jewish Herald* was 73 years old, *The Jewish Voice* was 29, and we hope for *The Jewish Voice & Herald* to be 120!

Eleanor L. Lewis
Chair, editorial board

Letter from the editors

Continued from Page 1

and in Jewish communities the world over.

But it's our view that the stories affecting you most directly aren't in a newspaper — they're stuck to your refrigerator door with little magnets: a daughter's birth notice, a 25th anniversary card, a grandson's bar mitzvah picture.

These are the events that light our lives; the joys that we at the *Voice & Herald* can help you share through our new Simchas section. Send us information about births, bar- and bat-mitzvahs, weddings, anniversaries — there's no charge for publication.

Likewise, our opinion pages are meant to reflect not so much our own thoughts as those of our diverse — and always lively — Jewish community, comprising nearly 9,000 homes in Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts.

We're looking for your letters to the editor and for longer opinion columns on topics of interest to the Jewish community; we hope that

you'll consider the *Voice & Herald* a two-way means of communication.

We are eager to send our new, twice-monthly newspaper to as many Jewish homes as possible, so if you know a family that is not receiving it, please call us (421-4111) or e-mail us at voiceherald@jfri.org. and we will add the name to our subscription list.

We are working to combine the two subscriber lists so that all subscribers will receive a paper. Please bear with us as we sort through the many thousands of names.

Above all, as we move from this first edition into regular publication every other week, we welcome your comments on what you enjoy in your new newspaper and your suggestions on ways we can improve it.

Best regards,

Jonathan Rubin,
Editor

Gerry Goldstein
Consulting editor

Table of Contents

Opinions	4-5	Obituaries	22-23
Federation	6-9	Special Feature	12-13
Community	10,15-19		
Classifieds	20		

Congratulations and Best Wishes to the Jewish Voice & Herald

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Alan M. Gilstein, CPA, PFS
Partner

Assisted living center nears construction

Continued from page 1

other assisted living facilities in the area. Stressing that the figures are estimates, she said monthly costs should range from \$2,000 to \$4,400, depending on the apartment selected. The higher figure would be for a dementia unit, she said.

Although the complex will be non-sectarian and "will welcome anyone and everyone," she said that the kosher meals and an adherence to Jewish tradition will probably result in applications and acceptances that run 80 percent Jewish, whereas the federally subsidized Shalom complex is about 48 percent Jewish.

Rabinowitz said that her agency plans to begin accepting deposits after Passover. Until then, she said, prospective tenants or family members can call (401) 351-4750 to be added to a mailing list that provides periodic information on how to apply for residency.

Rabinowitz said that enough land remains at the site for future development of a synagogue, day-care centers or offices. Her agency does not plan to build those, but would work with other organizations that show interest, she said.

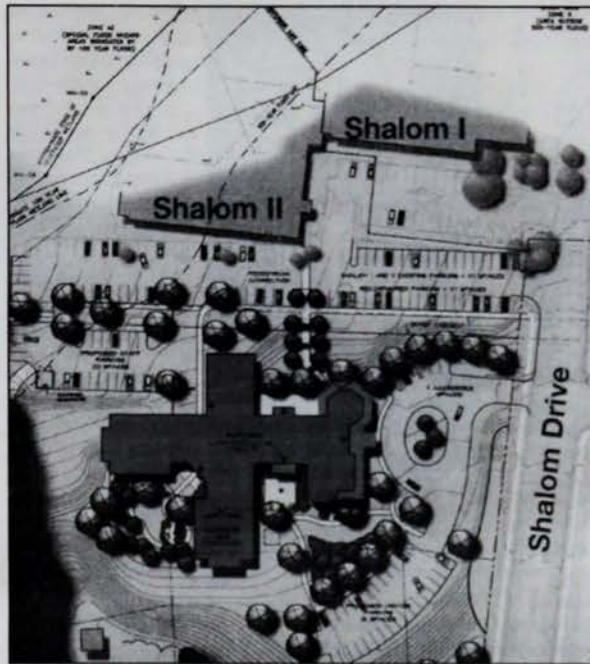
Plans for the eventual development of stores on one section of the property have been scrapped, she said, because not enough land is available.

The nonprofit Jewish Seniors Agency, which will own the new complex, is the former Jewish Home Corporation, which operated the Jewish Home for the Aged in Providence before the home's closing in 1993.

In addition to the apartment complex, the agency sponsors an adult day care center in its headquarters at 229 Waterman St. in Providence; Jewish Eldercare of Rhode Island, a statewide outreach program; and, in cooperation with other agencies, InfoQuest, a telephone service (888-593-2293) that answers questions on a variety of Jewish and secular programs for the elderly.

The agency, which adopted its new name in 1999, operates on an annual budget of about \$900,000. Rabinowitz said the money comes from interest on its estimated \$11-million endowment, made up of the Jewish Home's former endowment and proceeds from the home's sale; state and federal aid; program fees; and a stipend from the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island.

While the agency normally spends only the interest gener-



A SCHEMATIC DESIGN shows the new assisted living complex at center.

ated by its endowment investments, it plans to withdraw \$3.2-million from the principle to pay consultants and get construction started in June.

Rabinowitz said the agency has hired a financial consultant, Chicago-based Ziegler Capital Markets Group, which will recommend the best way to develop long-term financing for the project — which is expected to become self-supporting in a few years through tenant fees.

Details of a planned fundraising campaign are being

completed by Ohio consultants Charles Wolfe & Assoc. The money will be used to create a \$4-million to \$6-million endowment to subsidize residents who exhaust their assets while living in the complex, and to cover the cost of preparing kosher meals, which Rabinowitz estimates will cost \$100,000 more a year than conventional meals.

The complex is being designed by JSA Inc., a New Hampshire architectural firm

that specializes in designing care facilities for the elderly.

Rabinowitz said the firm was chosen over 12 others around the country after agency officials visited several of its existing complexes and were impressed.

She said of the firm, "They were haimish — they felt elder services; they knew it and they understood it."

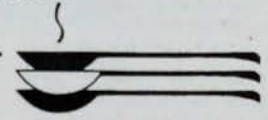
Construction manager will be O. Ahlberg & Sons, a Rhode Island firm.

Jewish Senior Services operates with a 105-member board of directors headed by Maurice Glicksman of Barrington, retired provost of Brown University, who is also president of the 12-member executive board. The agency's other officers are Patricia Cohen, of Providence, vice president; Joan Gray, of Cranston, treasurer; and Martin Dittleman, of Cranston, secretary.

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Mark Loomis, Proprietor

Wanted: 'special name for a special place'

It's going to be home, sweet home to many elderly folks who need a little assistance in their lives. Now, the Jewish Seniors Agency, which is building a kosher assisted-living center in Warwick, needs some assistance itself — in choosing a name for the building.

The agency is asking the public for suggestions, hoping for a name that will have "a Jewish connotation," but will be easy to pronounce, according to Susette Rabinowitz, executive director.

"We're looking like crazy for the right name," she says, but so far, nothing has struck a chord for the facility, to be built on the same parcel as the agency's Shalom Apartments.

No particular guidelines apply, says Rabinowitz; the name can be generic, as is Shalom, or can refer to a specific person.

"For a special place, we need to find a special name," wrote agency President Maurice Glicksman in a recent newsletter, noting that other such facilities have invoked the names of heroic figures past and present, or Biblical figures such as Abraham, Sarah and Ruth.

(Don't try the House that Ruth Built, though — Yankee Stadium has dibs on that one).

Suggestions may be sent to Glicksman at the Jewish Seniors Agency, 229 Waterman St., Providence, 02906, or, via e-mail, to jewishseniors@aol.com.

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Opinion

Debating intermarriage: a newspaper sets policy

Editors' note: As the single source of exclusively Jewish news in our two-state circulation area, the Voice & Herald serves a widespread community with diverse viewpoints. We cannot promise that you will always agree with our policies, but we pledge reflection and discussion in the decision-making.

For example, here's an edited glimpse at an inside e-mail exchange as we debated whether to publish wedding stories involving intermarriage.

The correspondence played out among editorial board members Alan Zuckerman, Eleanor Lewis (chair), Judith Romney Wegner, Rabbi Alvan Kaunfer (rabbi at Temple Emanu-El in Providence) and Robert Reisman, and was discussed at length at several meetings of the full 13-member board. Also asked to contribute to the e-mail discussion were Calvin Goldscheider, professor of Judaic Studies at Brown University, and David Resnick, a member of the Voice & Herald Business Committee.

Here's what they had to say:

Alan Zuckerman

You may recall that I expressed concern to the editorial board about publishing life-cycle events, including intermarriages.

While I understand that families need to deal with the reality of these marriages and that some local synagogues have decided to recognize them, I believe that it is a mistake for the Jewish community at large, through the actions of the Voice, to legitimize them.

I suggest that individuals pay for announcing life-cycle events of all kinds, and that the Voice include a disclaimer (much as we do about advertisements from non-kosher restaurants).

Eleanor Lewis

As I see it, the Voice is the official paper of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island. With regard to marriages and



ZUCKERMAN: "I ask that... the Voice not celebrate or sanction intermarriages"



REISMAN: "If we're seeking a way to alienate members of the community, Alan has found it"

than 10 percent of the Jewish population of Rhode Island. Following their logic is not likely in any way to reduce the rate or consequences of intermarriages for the Jewish community.

My own bias is to be inclusive and welcoming, with the goal not of sanctioning intermarriage or suggesting a preference, but in celebrating events that are joyful with those in our community. I know of very few Jewish families who see such announcements in a community newspaper as

the source of preference or legitimacy, and many who have been offended and feel rejected when they are not included.

The Jewish community of Rhode Island should be in the forefront of welcoming newly formed families with the expectation that welcoming is better than rejection for the future vitality of our community.

Alan Zuckerman

I would like to reply to two of Calvin's points:

First, it is a mistake to see this issue as one of the Orthodox versus everyone else, and an even bigger mistake to wave away the Orthodox because they are "only" 10 percent of the community, or even 15 percent. To frame the issue this way is to divide and to politicize the matter. You can do that, and you will win, but what will you win?

Second, a comment on one of Calvin's statements: "My own bias is to be inclusive and welcoming with the goal not of sanctioning intermarriage or suggesting a preference, but in celebrating events that are joyful with those in our community." When the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, acting through the Voice, "celebrates" intermarriages, it "sanctions" them. I ask that the Federation and the Voice not celebrate or sanction intermarriages.

Calvin Goldscheider

A short note in response to Alan Zuckerman's response to my notes.

I do not see the issue as the Orthodox versus everyone else, although I suspect that many in the Orthodox community may

Continued on next page

Letter to the editor

Herald was always a special delivery

By Hannah Reich Berman

Like many people, I hate good-byes. But the time has come to say adieu to a treasured friend.

I first became intimately involved with *The Rhode Island Jewish Herald* in 1954, when I was 12; until then we'd had only a passing acquaintance.

For years, I paid it no attention as it lay tucked away in the magazine rack next to our living room couch. I was too young to be interested in a newspaper and I subconsciously resented the fact that once my mother opened *The Herald* she never put it down, or directed another word to us, until she'd read to the very last page.

Regardless of when the paper arrived, Mom never read it until Friday night, after our Shabbos dinner. Without the distraction of a radio,

television, or telephone, she was totally focused on every word.

Now and then she'd let out a, "Tsk, tsk, isn't that a shame!" That's when we knew she'd read an obituary. Other times she'd smile warmly and exclaim, "Isn't that nice?" That meant she was reading about someone who had received an award or was announcing the birth of a new baby.

When we heard her murmur, "I wonder where they met," we knew someone had gotten engaged, and when she looked surprised and said, to no one in particular, "I didn't even know they were engaged," we knew she was looking at a wedding announcement.

Hard news usually elicited no comment, but if we tried to speak to her we

Continued on next page

A MAJORITY OF ONE

Taking wing, our leaders flap to right

By Yehuda Lev

If there was one thing of which American Jews could be certain as our community grew and prospered, it was the success of our organizations in representing us to the larger community, politically and socially. This will sound strange to those who think of organized Jewish life as being an alphabet soup of conflicting and sometimes superfluous bodies, but the facts tell us otherwise.

The effective organization of our communal life was among the factors (our stress on education and America's free public schools being two others) that made possible the rapid and successful integration of Jews into the American mainstream.

Fight anti-Semitism? We have the ADL. Help protect the immigrants? There is HIAS. Make us presentable to the upper classes? The American Jewish Committee. Help Jews in the Diaspora? The AJDC. Fight for social and economic justice? The American Jewish Congress. Represent our veterans? The JWV. Lobby for Israel in Washington? AIPAC.

This is in addition to dozens of others, Zionist, sectarian and assorted, the listing of which, with brief descriptions, takes up 70 pages in the annual American Jewish Yearbook.

From most of these Jewish bodies, the gentle community could expect solid support for liberal positions on political and social issues. But recently, like a giant underground tectonic plate that moves continents and disrupts all who live above it, an invidious ideological force is pushing the organized American Jewish community further and further to the political right. The shift is occurring not among the rank and file, except perhaps for the Orthodox community, but within its leadership.



Yehuda Lev

It is part of a similar worldwide phenomenon; witness the decline of social democracy in Europe, the growing strength of militant fundamentalism in Islam and the global spread of a winner-take-all society spearheaded by the United States under the overall heading of a "free market" economy.

The most blatant example of this within our community has been the transformation of the American Jewish Congress. Unlike the more conservative American Jewish Committee, the Congress reflected the idealism of many of the east European Jews who flooded into the United States beginning in 1881. Until very recently, the Congress could be counted upon to support causes which Jews list under the heading "tikun olam," the repair of the world.

But in recent years a change has taken place. First the Los Angeles chapter departed, then the San Francisco chapter and now the Boston chapter, all charging that the Congress has

Continued on page 21

Opinion

The Herald was always a special delivery

Continued from page 4

were met with a resounding, "Shhhh, wait 'till I finish." I could have been strangling my younger sister and my mother would never have known. The house could have been on fire and she would have debated about putting that paper down and getting out. Even my father took advantage of the fact that her head was in the *Herald* — he'd tiptoe into the kitchen for a second helping of cake and Mom never had a clue.

By the time I was 12, I was curious to know what was so captivating about the *Jewish Herald*. Once I started to read it (also on Friday nights, because I am my mother's daughter, after all), I understood. From then on I read it every week and enjoyed it as much as Mom did.

When I got married, my folks did what all good parents

do for their daughters — and more. They hosted a lovely wedding celebration, bought a beautiful trousseau for me and a watch for my husband, bought all our linens, gave me a personalized Siddur, and even handed

ing a paper that was addressed to me — because my Mom had thoughtfully bought me a subscription. The year was 1962 and I renewed that subscription every year since.

The *Herald* was my touch-

"By the time I was 12, I was curious to know what was so captivating about the Jewish Herald. Once I started to read it... I understood."

me a mahjong set.

They sent me on my way, and I thought I was set for life. I confess that, in the excitement of becoming a new bride and setting up housekeeping, I forgot about my faithful weekly reader.

One week later, even before I realized that I'd be missing it, I received my very own copy of the *Rhode Island Jewish Herald*. For the first time, I was read-

stone for 47 years. In addition to keeping me up to date with all the Rhode Island news, from time to time it published pictures of the community from half a century ago. In recent years I enjoyed reading news articles about Israel, and opinion pieces by people who had returned from a visit there.

Suddenly, the rug is being yanked out from underneath my feet, and it's not a good feel-

ing. While I have no doubt that the *Jewish Voice & Herald* will be a wonderful paper, I confess to being nervous about going without a paper for almost a month; I think it's called withdrawal.

The next issue will be out on March 6, which means I should be getting it on the 10th, and I'm anticipating its arrival in much the same way a parent awaits the birth of a child. True, I won't have labor pains but I'm as nervous about how I'll

respond to this new paper as an expectant mother is about how she'll bond with her infant.

So, good-bye old pal, you've served me long and served me well and I promise not to forget you. And hello and welcome to a new friend that I'm sure will prove to be not only informative, but also as consistently comforting as the old one.

Shalom to you both.

Hannah Berman lives in New York. She can be reached at SavtaHannah@aol.com

Debating intermarriage

Continued from page 4

see it that way. To help create a more unified and cohesive community (the Zuckerman goal which I applaud), inclusiveness is essential. The issue is not winning, but tolerating diversity and welcoming newly Jewishly committed (or potentially committed) families.

Judith Romney Wegner

I find myself in agreement with Calvin rather than Alan. Here's why:

A mixed marriage that is not rejected by family or community may very possibly result in Jewish children (I mean children raised as Jews, with no other religious identification, who can always undergo a formal conversion if that ever becomes necessary).

A mixed marriage that is frowned upon by family or community will be most unlikely to produce that result. We need more Jews, not fewer!

Rabbi Alvan Kaunfer

The recording of these life cycle events in the paper is more a matter of record than an endorsement. The paper will be the only documentation of life cycle histories — that is why we feel we must do it. I am not in favor of intermarriages, but no one will change his view on it, nor will the statistics change if we do (or do not) print these announcements. Indeed, Judith is correct in saying that the only impact restrictions have is to make families feel resent-

ful. Though it is anecdotal, I see evidence of "welcoming" as having the result of the non-Jewish partner becoming more involved and supporting the child's Jewish upbringing.

Alan Zuckerman

Let me continue to disagree:

On the paper of record, the *Voice* cannot serve that function, because it does not systematically canvas for information. Rather, it depends completely on the announcements sent to it. I can't see the justification for the claim that the *Voice* is or will be a paper of record.

My proposal is that all announcements be "vetted" by synagogues and temples, leaving to rabbis the decision as to who counts as a Jew.

Robert Reisman

Why does Alan think that printing the announcement of a life-cycle event "celebrates" it? What's celebratory about a death notice? Or should we print the death notices only of certified Jews? How about the death of the non-Jewish spouse of a Jew? How about the birth of a child of an unconverted mother?

If we're seeking a way to alienate members of the community, Alan has found it. I still remember my bitterness (and that's the word) when the Temple Emanu-El Bulletin refused to print the announcement of our son's engagement.

David Resnik

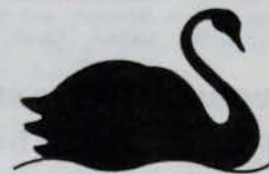
While I do not advocate or endorse intermarriage, if such an event takes place, I think public notice is expected and deserved. A legal joining of two individuals is a matter for community knowledge, regardless of our opinions on the wisdom of the action or the choices of the individuals involved.

Regardless of what I think of it, as the law of the land recognizes the deed, I think it is part of our charge to deal with the matter.

However, I feel that a position statement on this and several other matters should be published annually (or perhaps as often as the circulation notice is required to be printed) to make such policies clear. There are many who will infer the best or worst, regardless of the intention behind a policy.

At least, putting such policies on the record will provide notice that a discussion was held and the matter considered by those responsible, which is probably a part of their fiduciary responsibility.

Editors' note: Our resulting policy states that we will indeed print stories and pictures of mixed marriages. A note in our staff box will explain that publication of such news items implies neither approval nor disapproval by the Voice & Herald.



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Roberta Bell-Kligler from Project Oren in Israel; Linn Freedman, representing Temple Shalom in Middletown, Laura Pedrick, President of Touro Synagogue in Newport, and Susan Sussman, President of Congregation Agudas Achim in Attleboro.

Women's council hears stories that strengthen Jewish bonding

Roberta Bell-Kligler, who moved to Israel 22 years ago, is now paying a price in anxiety: One of her sons is currently in the army, and the other, 13, faces a similar future.

Despite her fears for her children, she says that she and her husband did the right thing in relocating to their adopted land.

Her story caught the attention Feb. 13 of women presidents, and other representatives of various Jewish organizations in the community. They were gathered for the President's Council sponsored by the Women's Alliance of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island.

Besides the Alliance, organizations represented included Na'Amat, Miriam Hospital Women's Association, the National Council of Jewish Women, the Bureau of Jewish Education/RI, the Holocaust Museum, the Community Relations Council and numerous Jewish congregations.

The intent of the President's Council is to give women leaders an opportunity to network while at the same time bringing their organizations closer together. The theme of the gathering quickly became focused on building Jewish "peoplehood." Guests Dr. David Mittelberg, and Bell-Kligler, from Project

Oren, kicked off the morning's discussion.

Dr. Mittelberg, whose work is focused on connecting Jews in Israel with Jews in the Diaspora, emphasized the many ways Jews can enrich each other. By bringing together Israelis, who experience Jewish life as part of the public domain, with Diaspora Jews, who experience Jewish life privately and with a greater degree of choice about how they will be Jewish, we take steps towards building Jewish community and Peoplehood for the future, he said.

Esther loses some glitter

Rosh Chodesh event takes new look at Purim heroine

The story of Purim is usually seen as being straightforward when it comes to categorizing good and evil; for instance, on the side of good you have Mordechai, and on the not-so-good side you have the infamous Haman. However, how do the female characters hold up under modern scrutiny?

"Esther and Vashti: Of Wine and Women in the Persian Court" was the subject of the third annual Women's Alliance Rosh Chodesh event, part of the series "Women of the Bible: How do they relate to our lives?"

The Jan. 31 discussion at Temple Emanu-El in Providence was led by Marcia Lapidus Kaunfer, longtime Chumash teacher and former director of Judaic studies at the Alperin Schechter Day School in Providence. The event was chaired by Wileen Rosner Snow; associate chair was Marilyn Wolicki.

The program brought in more than 120 Jewish women from all over the state to discuss the finer points of Purim poli-



MORE THAN 120 women attended the JFRI's Women's Alliance Rosh Chodesh Event, which was held at Temple Emanu-El.

tics. Kaunfer said that the story of Purim is unique. Not only is it one of only two books in the Bible — along with the Song of Songs — that does not mention God by name, but also, "There's no piety, no rituals... nobody even prays."

Kaunfer got everyone rethinking how we look at Purim's influential female characters, Esther and Vashti. The discussion left Esther appearing not as brave and selfless as is commonly thought, since she goes to the king only when Mordechai tells her, essentially, that if she doesn't, she'll most likely be killed. Circumstance, rather than heroism, forced her to take action.

Vashti, on the other hand, was seen as a much stronger

figure, more willing to risk everything to abide by her principles.

Leonore Sones, educational director at Cranston's Temple Sinai, will lead the third and final Women's Alliance Rosh Chodesh program for the year April 22 from 7 to 9 p.m. at Touro Synagogue in Newport. Sones will discuss "Ruth and Naomi: Love Beyond Eden — the Love Relationship in the Bible," which will address whether there can be a love relationship between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law.

The fee for the program is \$5. Contact Sylvia Berman-Peck at 421-4111, ext. 171, for more information, or e-mail sberman-peck@jfri.org.

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Federation overseas grants feed hungry bodies, minds

By Sara Ende

Feeding the hungry in the former Soviet Union, and teaching Israeli and Arab children to understand one another, are among projects that won support Feb. 21 from the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island's Executive Committee.

The funding, recommended by the Overseas Review Committee, comes through the allocation of "elective dollars" that will enable the local Jewish community to help finance more than 20 programs, from Rhode Island to Israel to Tbilisi, Georgia in the former Soviet Union.

The contributions are possible because a few years ago, the United Jewish Communities (the umbrella organization for Jewish federations) decided that local communities should have the opportunity to allocate a percentage of overseas funds directly to specific programs, as opposed to going through traditional channels.

The JFRI set aside \$133,306, 10 percent of its overseas allocation, toward elective programs.

The Overseas Review Committee, chaired by Bruce Wolpert and vice chaired by Eleanor Elbaum, set priority areas as:

- Support of programs in Israel that aid absorption.
- Social services and hunger relief in the former Soviet union.
- Programs that focus on education and on intensifying Jewish identity.
- Programs that strengthen the connection between Rhode Island and Israel (particularly in Afula/Gilboa, a Partnership 2000 region).

• Crisis intervention and social service programs in Israel.

The two largest allocations are \$59,806 for the Southern New England Consortium for Partnership 2000, and \$25,000 for the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee to provide hunger relief in Tbilisi. Both programs, funded previously, support thousands of individuals.

The consortium is a grouping of 13 communities in Connecticut, southern Massachusetts and Rhode Island who are partnered with the Afula/Gilboa region in Israel. Its initiatives including coexistence projects and youth and community leadership programs.

One initiative, in the Gilboa region, brings together

students ages 9 to 14 from "twin" schools to learn about each other's holidays, traditions, and culture. The program emphasizes what the children have in common.

The hunger relief effort is critical, as well. Throughout the former Soviet Union, 250,000 elderly people receive food packages and other services. Currently, there are 10,000 Jews living in Tbilisi, more than half of them elderly and in need of food, medicine and home care.

Among other programs that will receive funding are:

• Eshet Chayil: Women of Valor (\$16,000) — Provides job and life skills training, support and guidance to more than 1,000 Ethiopian-Israeli women throughout Israel.

• After-school tutorial centers in Afula (\$10,000) — The centers provide educational and cultural intervention to ensure that all Israeli children have equal opportunities to reach their potential. Last year, the program funded by the local Federation served 245 children at seven schools.

• Young Emissaries (\$6,000) — Brings young Israelis from the local Part-

nership 2000 region to communities in the Southern New England Consortium for a one-year stay

• Volunteer training program (\$10,000) — Offers a 24-hour help line for Israelis who are alone, depressed or in crisis.

Sara Ende is the director of planning and allocations at the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island.

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Young Leadership brings R.I. Jews to Washington

by Rebekah Raz

This year the Young Leadership Council sent 21 young adults to the national United Jewish Communities Washington 13 Conference. For most of these young adults, this was their first introduction to the world of Federation. This conference is part of a challenge to create a new and invigorated Young Leadership in our community.

The theme of this year's conference was "Abracadabra," an ancient Aramaic word meaning, "I create with my words." Through this impetus, the conference challenged the Rhode Island young adults to use their words to create change in their own communities, and throughout the world.

As part of the leadership training for this conference,



RHODE ISLANDERS who traveled to Washington, D.C. with the United Jewish Communities National Young Leadership Conference stand with R.I. Senator Jack Reed.

the participants collected countless Jewish ritual objects from Jews throughout Rhode Island, which, through the Joint Dis-

tribution Committee, will be distributed to Jewish communities in Eastern Europe.

Participants also lobbied their politicians on Capital Hill. Led by Yoni Braude, Asher Kaplan, Ellen Brosowsky, and Gail Auger, the Rhode Island delegation talked about Israel and the war on terrorism, replenishing aid to the Social Service Block Grants, and supporting Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities.

Rebekah Raz is the director of the Young Leadership Council at the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island.

Jerusalem Post Reporter to Speak At JCCRI

Join the Community Relations Council on March 13 at 7 p.m. at the Jewish Community Center in Providence as we invite Allison Sommer, a senior journalist at the *Jerusalem Post*, to share with us a collection of anecdotes and stories culled over the course of the peace process of the last decade. She will reflect on how the personalities of Israeli, Arab, and American leaders, and the changing political forces, affected the course of peace in the Middle East, as well as discuss prospects for the future.

Call Rebekah Raz at 421-4111 ext. 172 for more information.

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Israeli conversions go liberal

Continued from page 1

ister Israelis who had Reform or Conservative conversions as Jews on their national identification cards — but the rabbinate will not consider them Jews for "personal status" issues such as marriage or burial.

Orthodox leaders have condemned the ruling, and it is not clear if the Interior Ministry, which is run by the fervently Orthodox Shas Party, will abide by it.

In addition, efforts are already under way in the Knesset to undermine the ruling through legislation.

Still, leaders of the non-Orthodox streams rejoiced after Wednesday's ruling, which decided some 50 cases that had wended their way through the court system for years.

"The ruling has historical consequence because it strengthens Jewish pluralism in Israel," said Rabbi Uri Regev, head of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, the umbrella agency for Reform and other liberal organizations in 40 countries.

"It effectively repels the Orthodox establishment that holds that Reform and Conservative converts aren't worthy of being recognized because of the liberal identities of the rabbis that convert them," he said.

The conversion issue has sparked vicious fights over the question of "Who is a Jew" and strained relations between Israel — where the Orthodox largely control religious life — and the Diaspora, where the liberal streams are stronger.

It has also threatened the stability of previous Israeli governments, when Orthodox parties vowed to leave the governing coalition if changes to the so-called religious status quo were enacted.

Outlining the court's reasoning in its 9-2 decision, Chief Justice Aharon Barak wrote: "Israel is not a state of a Jewish community, Israel is the state of the Jewish people."

The ruling also said, "Our basic concepts grant each individual the liberty to decide his or her affiliation to one stream or another."

"It's obviously a complete and total victory," said Rabbi Andrew Sacks, executive head of Israel's Masorti Movement, as the Conservative movement is known in Israel.

The court's language emphasizes the importance of not enshrining one stream of Judaism above others, Sacks said. "All those people who converted with us and are listed as Ukrainian or Peruvian or what-

ever, now they can have Jewish listed on their identity cards."

The ruling pertains to conversions performed in Israel; those converted by non-Orthodox rabbis outside of Israel already are being registered as Jews.

The laminated, light green ID cards, carried in blue plastic billfolds, are a staple in every Israeli's wallet. An Israeli ID number is used for paying bills, receiving insurance benefits, even buying a cellular phone.

Nevertheless, the decision carries no weight with Israel's powerful Orthodox establishment. The court's decision recognizes the concept of religious pluralism in Israel, but Reform and Conservative conversions still are not recognized by the Israeli rabbinate, which maintains its monopoly on issues such as marriage.

"So what if they have an identity card that says they're Jewish," said Avraham Ravitz, leader of the fervently religious United Torah Judaism bloc.

"It doesn't mean they're recognized by Jewish law as being Jewish. It's just bureaucratic."

"The decision will very much confuse these 'converts' whose conversions, in my view, do not hold," Israel's chief Ashkenazic rabbi, Yisrael Meir Lau, told Army Radio.

Under the bill, conversions would not be finalized until they received the Chief Rabbinate's approval — even if they were performed overseas.

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The Bureau of Jewish Education of Rhode Island recently purchased Attractive Land, a unique and versatile educational activity that draws on learners' intellectual, social, and emotional skills to create a total Israel experience.

The Attractive Land model is a 380 square foot super-model of Israel offering a wide range of activities and can serve as a valuable resource for schools and community activities involving Israel.

The activities, which include many interactive games and original slides, can be integrated with the map to bring another dimension in making Israel come alive for students and community members. It also explains Israel's strategic challenge to non-Jewish groups and discussing Israel's meaning to Jews.

The Attractive Land made its official debut at the BJE/RI Board Meeting held on Feb. 4. Board members were invited to

take off their shoes and put their "soles in the Promised Land." A few members shared their favorite experiences in Israel while onlookers watched them navigate the map. They learned all about the usefulness of the map in helping individuals learn about the history, geography and current events in Israel.

Attractive Land was shared with our religious and day school principals, educators, and lay and professional leaders at the annual Zelniker Conference

for educators. Within hours, several of our principals reserved the map and activities for Holocaust Remembrance Day and Israel Independence Day programs. Program coordinators of URI Hillel expressed interest in using Attractive Land for those students planning Israel trips.

On April 28, Attractive Land will be the highlight of a Family Education program "Journey 4 Israel," a collaborative effort being sponsored

by Temple Sinai, Temple Torat Yisrael, Temple Am David, and the South County Hebrew School. Participants can interact with Israel through music, art, food, and dance, and can also learn about charitable programs in Israel at informational Tzedakah booths.

The map, which was purchased by the Gift of Israel Grant of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island Endowment Fund, is available to both Jewish community and secular schools and programs. In-service programs will be announced at a later date for those interested in learning how to use the map to its fullest advantage. For additional information on the Attractive Land program, call Robin Kauffman or Duffy Page at the BJE/RI at 331-0956.

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Driver gives Israel a slap; Jewish community gives measured response

Continued from page 1

cizing Israel. Although the residents shown in his clips were largely unidentified, Driver said they were Palestinians. The clips themselves did not indicate their sources, but Driver contended they included C-SPAN footage and video shot by Driver himself on a visit to Jerusalem.

The library crowd showed overwhelming support for Driver, loudly applauding speakers who agreed with his views. Three Driver supporters, including a man describing himself as a Palestinian, decried what they asserted were Israel's discriminatory policies. One man characterized Israel as "a theocracy based on lies." Only a few supporters of Israel spoke; they drew restrained applause and even some boos.

"It was perfect demagoguing," said Bernice Krantz, a Charlestown resident who challenges Driver's depiction of Israel as an "occupying" country.

Of Driver, she said, "He's low-key, he's charming... he had three charming, intelligent skills [and] a marvelously sympathetic audience."

Krantz, who said that she has been an activist all her life, called the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, the Anti-Defamation League, the University of Rhode Island Hillel and other groups to spread the word in advance about Driver's talk.

Krantz, who moved to that area eight years ago, said that the majority of South County residents "are decent, middle-of-the-road people." She said that most of her friends in town are not Jewish, but were trying to understand Israel's position in the Middle East. She felt that Driver's "one-sided, unbalanced presentation" was taking advantage of what she felt was a largely liberal audience, who "are usually on the side of the underdog, and this time they see the underdog as the Palestinians."

"He never mentioned the Israeli deaths, only these poor Palestinians," she said.

Amy Sapherstein, director of Jewish student life at URI, said that a confusion about dates may have prevented a larger student showing at the library.

"We actually didn't find out he was going to speak until the day before... we didn't have enough time to tell students what was going on."

Although Driver had given a similar presentation against Israel just a few months earlier



RODNEY DRIVER, left, answers questions after his Feb. 20 presentation at the Kingston Library. Photo by Jonathan Rubin

at URI, she felt there was a general lack of interest in Israel advocacy on campus. Citing a post-Sept. 11 decline in club activity, she said that at URI, "students haven't been asking" about how to become Israel activists.

The decision to monitor the lecture and to minimize full-scale debate came from numerous departments in the Jewish Federation, under advice from the national Jewish Council for Public Affairs. Rebekah Raz, director of the Community Relations Council at the local Jewish Federation, described what she saw as an overwhelming bias in Driver's presentation.

"The images that they showed were completely out of

context... Israel is a democratic society, not like in the Palestinian territories," she said. "Of course, they didn't mention Arafat's role in the violence in the region."

Raz said that Jewish organizations are in a difficult position when speakers like Driver come to town.

"If we went there with a large contingent from the Jewish community and had a loud confrontation, it would just produce noise and excess media attention... it wouldn't be useful to anyone," she said.

Janet Engelhart, executive vice president of the Jewish Federation, explained that, given Driver's past statements and the audience's attraction to his position, "we were advised that an

organized response would likely turn into a shouting match. We had no intention to legitimize his position in that way."

Minna Ellison, executive director of the Bureau of Jewish Education of Rhode Island, said Driver's presentation was "brilliantly orchestrated." She believes that many of the speakers there that night were either invited by Driver or were acquaintances of his.

In addition, she said, while the audience was asked to either occupy seats or listen in the hall after the room filled up, the three pro-Palestinian speakers were allowed to stand so they were visible to everyone in the room, and were called on disproportionately.

Ellison said that events are happening so quickly in the Middle East that the political map is shifting on a daily basis, and that those who don't keep up won't be able to compete against someone who does.

"Other people are out there educating themselves on the sit-

uation... What are we going to do about it?"

Elision recommended that members of the Jewish community should take steps to learn more about Israel. She said that the Bureau has numerous resources for helping people to educate themselves about Israel and the intifadah.

She also acknowledged that in researching the Middle East, people sometimes find it difficult to keep the truth from blurring in the face of what may appear to be contradictory information.

"It's okay to be conflicted," she said. "If there were simple solutions, we wouldn't be in this situation."

Krantz echoed Ellison's opinion that an organized group of Israel activists is needed. She said she hoped that some supporters of Israel would attend the March 6 discussion.

The CRC has established an Israel Advocacy Group to respond to media criticism. They are planning an educational forum in the spring to further educate leaders and community members.

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New attitudes reshaping old rituals

Celebrating womanhood through ancient rites

By Avis Gunther-Rosenberg

When Rabbi Elyse Wechterman's mother was a girl, bat mitzvah boys were showered with congratulations for becoming men.

But when her mother became a woman — when she had her first menstrual period — all she got was sharp slap across the face, delivered by the grandmother of her rabbi.

The blow was part of an ancient ritual that Rabbi Wechterman deplores, for the hurt and humiliation it inflicted on young women.

The slap was a custom for hundreds of years among Jews who believed it would awaken a girl from her childhood to assume her role as a Jewish woman.

Other ancient Jewish superstitions forbade menstruating women to ferment wine or bake dough, because of beliefs that they would turn the wine sour and keep the bread from rising.

In actuality, Rabbi Wechterman says, these practices were teaching women to be embarrassed about their bodies.

"To me, slapping has a lot to do with shame," Rabbi Wechterman says. Daughters

should be greeted with a blessing rather than a curse.

Today, a mother might choose to invite female friends and relatives to a blessing circle honoring this special time in her daughter's life. This new ritual is part of a growing trend to provide meaningful ways to mark the passage of time beyond naming ceremonies, bat mitzvahs, marriages and funerals.

The feminist movement of the 1960s and '70s was an impetus for Jewish women to examine the role of ritual in their lives; traditionally women have not participated in the same way men have. The bat mitzvah, for example, is a relatively new ritual, begun in 1922 by the daughter of the founder of the American Reconstructionist movement, Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan.

More recently among liberal Jewish movements, several new rituals have emerged — elaborate formal naming ceremonies for baby girls as well as rituals for pregnancy and menopause, and even for hysterectomies.

The croning ceremony, or *simchat chochma*, is one such rite, celebrating the wisdom a woman has gathered over the years. Croning is used to mark the beginning of menopause or a woman's 60th birthday.

Rituals can be invoked when women seek spiritual ways to mark new life-cycle events, and can offer comfort even beyond that, says Rabbi Wechterman.



Rabbi Elyse Wechterman

Photo by William K. Daby

For instance, the *mikvah*, or ritual bath — used since Biblical days as a way of purifying women after the monthly men-

strual cycle — has taken on new uses.

"The mikvah ritual was basically for the benefit of men," Rabbi Wechterman says. "It's

about when a man can sleep with his wife. What else can it be used for? I've used it for women recovering from sexual abuse or survivors of rape. It's not what the mikvah was originally intended for, but why not? It makes sense."

Several women's rituals have developed surrounding the celebration of the new moon, Rosh Chodesh.

Rosh Chodesh has always been associated with women. In ancient times, beliefs connected the cycles of the moon and the tides to women's menstrual cycles. Rosh Chodesh was said to be a holiday specifically given by God to women, rewarding them for refusing to surrender their gold jewelry to be made into the golden calf.

More recently, feminists have used the occasion of the new moon to celebrate women's roles in Judaism, with monthly discussion groups or prayer circles. Locally, there is a Rosh Chodesh lecture series at the Jewish Community Center and a Rosh Chodesh study group at Temple Am-David in Warwick.

"Feminism and the changing role of women in society have had a tremendous effect on Judaism," Rabbi Wechterman says, noting that the number of women enrolled in rabbinical schools now approaches 50 percent in the Reform, Conservative and Reconstructionist movements.

Continued on next page

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New attitudes reshaping Judaism's rituals

Continued from previous page

"When I was in high school, it was possible for me to consider becoming a rabbi. I'm in the first generation of women who can say that," says the 34-year-old Rabbi Wechterman.

She grew up in a Reform congregation, becoming a rabbi after first studying journalism and holding jobs in several other fields. She was installed in January as the new rabbi of the Agudas Achim Reconstructionist synagogue in Attleboro. She is the third female rabbi to hold a pulpit at Agudas Achim.

The Reconstructionist movement, founded in America in the 1940s, emphasizes finding a way to apply religion to the rigors of modern civilization. Reconstructionists see a need for Judaism to "change and grow based on surroundings," Rabbi Wechterman says.

While the focus of worship is deeply connected to ritual, Reconstructionism is considered by many to be the most liberal of Jewish denominations, having been the first to condone gay and lesbian relationships and to allow gay and lesbian rabbis and cantors.

Rabbi Wechterman believes that the decision by liberal movements to include women in the rabbinate has led

to an increased leadership role for women in services and in the Jewish community. More women are becoming temple presidents than ever before, she says.

Despite the progress that women have made in liberal congregations, Rabbi Wechterman says she still faces chal-

"It's amazing how many people ask me who is with my 6-year-old son when I lead services." "No one asks male clergy that question."

lenges that male rabbis do not.

"It's amazing how many people ask me who is with my 6-year-old son when I lead services," she says. "No one asks

male clergy that question." The rabbi's husband, who works at Brown University, shares child-care responsibilities.

The role of *rebbitzin* (the traditional role of a rabbi's wife) has changed as more and more women enter the clergy, she says.

"The stereotypical view was that the male was the wise father of the community and the rabbi's wife was the one who cooked for the *oneg*" (the light meal after the service), Rabbi Wechterman says.

"There's no conceived notion of what a rabbi's husband is. Ask me what I call a rabbi's husband? I call mine 'lucky.' That doesn't mean he doesn't have a role here. He is a member of this community. But it's not his job to be here; it's *my* job to be here."

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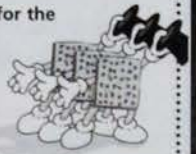
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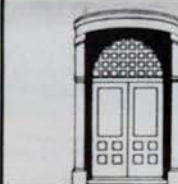
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Discussions to examine Judaic view of morality

Students and members of the community will come together at Brown University March 15 to 17 for a series of lectures, workshops and panels addressing ethical questions from a Jewish perspective.

Presenting the keynote address will be Rabbi David Teutsch, president of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, and Marc Sternfeld, former executive of Deutsche Bank and a rabbinical student at the

Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.

They will speak at 8:30 p.m. March 15 in MacMillan 117, and at 2 p.m. March 16 in Solomon 101.

The two topics will be "Religion Confronts Public Policy: Abortion in Jewish Medical Ethics," and "What the Talmud says about Enron."

Also on March 16, at 3:30 p.m. in Solomon 101, Rabbi David Teutsch, Rabbi Andrea

Gouze and Dr. Carol Winograd will present a panel entitled "Ethical issues in End of Life Medical Care." Following the panel will be a series of small workshops.

On March 17 at 10:30 a.m. in MacMillan 117, a panel will discuss "Is There Such Thing as an Ethical War?"

All programs are free and open to the public. Register for meals at ethics@brown.edu or by calling Shoshana Winograd-Hutner at 867-2805.

They'll tell of their children In Israel

Several Rhode Island parents who have children living in Israel will relate some of their experiences at a March 20 open meeting of the Rhode Island Section, National Council of Jewish women.

"Dreams and Realities: Reflections on their children in Israel," will be held at 12:30 p.m. in the senior lounge of the Jewish Community Center, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence. Ruth Page of the Bureau of Jewish Education of Rhode Island will be the moderator. Refreshments will be served.



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Architecture, Bible among topics for Temple club

The Temple Emanu-El Leisure Club has announced a series of March events that focus on a variety of topics, including the Bible, architecture, and archaeology.

March 11 and 18 — "Jewish and Modern Architecture," with Dr. George Goodwin, from 10 a.m. to 10:50 a.m. Learn why the last half of the 20th Century was a golden era for Jewish architects and their clients. After a coffee break: "The Minimal and Maximal Views of the Bible," from 11:10 a.m. to noon, with Dr. Michael Sheff. He will speak about the current debate on archaeological findings related to Biblical history.

March 7, 14 and 21 — "Biblical Archaeology," from 10 to 10:50 a.m.;

March 7, "The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls," with Prof. Katharina Galor; March 14, "Herodian Jerusalem," with Prof. Katharina Galor; March 21, "Archaeology and Society: A Case Study," with Prof. Ernest S. Frerichs.

After a coffee break, Florence Markoff will speak on each of the three days in a program entitled, "A Word, a Story, a Drama," from 11:10 a.m. to noon. Each week a different topic will be addressed — one focusing on words, one on a Jewish personality, and one the reading of a short story.

Leisure Club membership is open to all adults at least 60 years old. Temple Emanu-El is located at 99 Taft Ave., Providence. Call 331-1616 for more information.



STUDENTS and teachers at the Alperin Schechter Day School join alumni for a musical number during the school's annual Zimriah song festival.
Photo by Jonathan Rubin

Beth-El to celebrate women and freedom at annual seder

Temple Beth-El's seventh annual women's Passover seder, "Women's Celebration of Freedom," will be held April 1 at 5:30 p.m.

The gathering offers an opportunity for women of all ages to participate in a seder that emphasizes the freedom enjoyed by Jewish women throughout the world.

The traditional seder service, with dietary laws observed, is chaired by Sharon Teich-Ricci and conducted by Cantor Judith Seplovin and Debbie Waldman.

Attendance, by reservation only, is \$36 a person. Sponsors are welcome at \$50 or \$100. The cost for students ages 6 to 18 is \$18. Early reservations are suggested, since the seder sells out quickly.

Call Gloria Jarcho at Temple Beth-El, 331-6070, for additional information.

Biography of Singer among fare at Beth El's film festival

The Sisterhood of Temple Beth-El, and Adult Enrichment, will present their third annual film festival at the temple, 70 Orchard Ave., Providence, March 10 and March 17, at 2 p.m.

The documentary "Making a Killing," to be shown March 10, traces a family's quest to recover its missing art collection. A discussion will be led by Prof. Deborah Johnson.

"Isaac in America," a biographical sketch of author Isaac B. Singer, and "The Cafeteria," a mystical tale of two Jewish refugees who meet in one of New York's cafeterias, will be shown March 17. Michael Fink will lead a discussion.

The showings are free and open to the community. Refreshments will be served. Call 331-6070 for more information.

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— Simchas —

The Mazel Tov column

Births

Rhonda and Kevin Ward, of Newport Beach, Calif., announce the birth of their first child, Adin William. Adin's grandparents are Judy and Arthur Bergel of Providence, and William Ward of Selinsgrove, Pa. and Tish McKelvey of Nantucket, Mass.

Engagement



Halper — Greenfield

Jonah Halper and Chai Greenfield recently announced their engagement. Jonah, 21, is the son of Amitai and Sara Halper of Providence. He is working toward his bachelor's degree in organizational communications at Providence College, and is an intern at the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island.

Chai, 20, is the daughter of Jay and Phyllis Greenfield attends Touro College in New York and is majoring in biology.

The wedding is planned for June 25, 2002.

Mazel Tov:

Jamie Leiter was recently accepted to the Rabbinical Program at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. Leiter, 24, of Providence, is considering deferring in order to study for a year at a Conservative Yeshiva in Israel. He is currently director of Perspectives, the Jewish young adult program, and also teaches at Temple Emanu-El in Providence and at the Harry Elkin Midrasha.

Jordan Konisky was recently elected chairman of the John Nick Foundation Board of Directors, whose offices are in Sebastian and West Palm Beach, Fla. The John W. Nick Foundation is a not-for-profit educational foundation dedicated to promoting awareness of male breast cancer. Konisky, the son of Norma Sandler of Warwick, is a 1959 graduate of Cranston High School and a graduate of Providence College.

Rina Sky Wolfgang has received the prestigious Shofar Award for her contributions to Jewish scouting. Wolfgang served as Jewish chaplain at Camp Yawgoog in Richmond, R.I. for 11 years and is currently a teacher at the Alperin Schechter Day School in Providence. The award was presented at Temple Am David in Warwick.



Aaron Katchen was recently accepted into the Smicha program at the Pardes Institute in Jerusalem. Katchen, director of Jewish campus life at Brown /RISD Hillel, will begin studying in Israel in September.

Shoshana Winograd-Hutner was accepted to the five-year rabbinical program at the Jewish Theological Seminary. Hutner, who is originally from California and who lives in Providence, is a student at Brown and plans to start in the fall.

Kvelling? Tell us!

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Don't keep it a secret — Share your Simcha with the entire community! Here are the guidelines to get your Simcha into our pages:

Births: Include date of birth and the names of the child, parents, grandparents, and where everyone is from. Hebrew names are encouraged as well.

Bar / bat Mitzvah: Include the child's name and other names as above, the date and place of the event, where the child attends school, and any other significant family involvement in the event.

Engagements and Weddings: Include names, dates, place of ceremony, the couple's education and place of employment, and names of bridesmaids.

Other Simchas: Please send a note explaining the honor or award, and a little background information so others can understand its significance.

Send your announcement to Simchas, The Jewish Voice & Herald, 130 Sessions Street, Providence, 02906, or e-mail voiceherald@jfri.org

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New center will add flourish to Jewish life in South County

By Susan Kirschenbaum

This is the first in a series of columns chronicling the Jewish scene in South County. The Jewish population here is growing and active — and not just during the summer. It's not surprising that many Rhode Island Jews think of South County as being foreign territory during the winter months, but we are here!

Active Jewish organizations include the South County Jewish Collaborative, the South County Hebrew School, a Geshet teen group, Congregation Beth David, URI Hillel, and Camp JORI. Many individuals are also members of statewide organizations such as Hadassah.

Perhaps the most exciting recent development for South County Jewry is the purchase of land on which the Collaborative plans to build a new home for many of our organizations. The Hebrew school has been renting classrooms at URI for many years, but the temple has outgrown its building. The Collaborative hopes that existing South County organizations as well as groups from other state organizations can use space at the new facility.

The land is at the rotary where Routes 1 and 108 intersect, on the South Kingstown-Narragansett town line. We have our planning done and are actively raising money; we'll report more about fundraising

in the near future for this true 'home' for the Jewish population of South County.

Even before the first spadeful of dirt is turned over, we are participating in numerous community events there. Young and old came together to build a Sukkah last fall, and a community-wide yard sale will be held there in the spring. The Hebrew School celebrated Chanukah with a party.

Gesher, the Hebrew High School in South County, is a satellite of the Midrasha program in Providence. It meets once a week for two six-week sessions. Marla Dansky, the director of the Rhode Island Holocaust Museum, is the instructor. The students, with the assistance of the instructor, have selected the areas of study. So far they have discussed kabbalah, have attended a talk by Elie Weisel, volunteered at and attended sessions of Renaissance Night at the JCCRI, and created some very interesting holiday treats.

Special Events

The Collaborative will hold a pre-Passover pot luck dinner and wine tasting at the home of Deb Chernick March 9 at 7 p.m. A wine connoisseur will guide guests through a selection of wines perfect for the holiday. You can taste, select, and purchase your wines, share your favorite Passover foods, and collect new recipes. The cost

is \$10 a person or \$18 for two. Also, bring a dish and copies of the recipe. To reserve tickets, e-mail mom3benica@hotmail.com, stramay51@hotmail.com or jmlives@cox.net.

The South County Hebrew School is planning a family swim March 10, from 1 to 3 pm at the URI pool. The cost is \$3 per person.

Regular Events

Congregation Beth David, on Kingstown Road in Narragansett, holds a regular schedule of services including a Shabbat service on the first Saturday morning of every month. The service is followed by lunch and a Torah study group, now in its second year. Kabbalat Shabbat services are held on the second and fourth Fridays of every month. Additional services include holidays and special events. All events are open to the public.

The South County Jewish Collaborative has launched a book club that meets the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at the Peace Dale Library. If you want to join the group, or learn more about what is happening in South County, send e-mail to kirschss@hotmail.com.

Susan Kirschenbaum, of Kingston, is publicity chair for the South County Jewish Collaborative.

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Dr. Joseph and Ceil Katz (left) and Deana Litwin (right), members of the Jewish Seniors Agency Women's Association, prepare gift packages of hamantaschen that were delivered to 227 Jewish residents in nursing homes throughout the state. Photo by JSA

Ram coach to headline Touro Fraternal Open house

University of Rhode Island coach Tim Stowers will be guest of honor at the annual open house meeting of the Touro Fraternal Association on March 20 at Touro Hall, 45 Rolfe Square, Cranston.

The meeting is sponsored annually by the Association's membership committee and is designed to give prospective members information about the association. Steve Labush, committee chair, said this year's event is patterned after previous open house meetings that have attracted large crowds and have resulted in substantial increases in Touro's membership ranks.

The association meets monthly for fraternal and charitable purchases.

"We're adding one wrinkle this year," Labush said. "We will waive the initiation fee for all prospective regular members signing applications this night."

The evening is open to all Touro current and prospective members and begins at 6:30 p.m. A deli dinner is included. Reservations are required and may be made by calling Touro at 785-0066.

Women's group to hear about solidarity trip

Na'Amat, formerly Pioneer Women, will hold its next meeting at Highland Court, 101 Highland Ave., Providence, March 19 at 7:45 p.m. The speaker will be Betty Adler, who will highlight her experiences on the recent Jewish Federation of Rhode Island solidarity mission to Israel. For more information, call Marilyn Kagan at 453-9643.

'Shalom, Amigo' on way to Temple Am David

On March 17, Looking Glass Theater will bring a musical theatrical program entitled "Shalom, Amigo" to Temple Am David, 40 Gardiner St., Warwick. The event is open to the public at a cost of \$5 per person, which includes a kosher luncheon to be served at 12:30 p.m. The performance begins at 1:15 p.m.

Looking Glass theater programs are designed to promote reading, to entertain and to inform. The program is aimed at children from kindergarten to eighth grade, but is also open to parents and teachers.

"Shalom, Amigo" was adapted and is performed by Diane Postojan, with original music by Paul Kolesnikow. The program includes stories for people of all ages.

Tickets are available by from the temple at 463-7944.



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Our leaders flap to right

Continued from page 4

abandoned its traditional positions in support of social and economic causes.

Examples? The Los Angeles chapter of the Congress took up the cudgel against sweatshops in Los Angeles, some of which are owned by Jews. The national office opposed this. The Boston office objected to the appointment of John Ashcroft as attorney general. The national office did not take a stand. Ten years ago, working conditions and civil rights would have been cut-and-dried Congress issues, but today they are not its priorities.

The seal on this sea change was set recently when the Philadelphia branch was taken over by Joseph Puder, one of

whose past Jewish organizational posts was in the leadership of Americans For a Safe Israel. This organization is as far right as one can get in Jewish politics without tripping over the supporters of the late Rabbi Meir Kahane.

A second major change in direction has befallen the ADL, that grand dame of Jewish respectability which, since the memory of man knoweth not, has been headed by Abraham Foxman. Last December, without a word of warning, Foxman fired David Lehrer, an attorney who has directed the West Coast office of the ADL for the past 17 years. Lehrer, who was on vacation at the time, learned of his forced departure from a

reporter. Lehrer is immensely popular with his lay people, who were stunned by the firing.

Two reasons were suggested, the first being that Foxman felt threatened by Lehrer's evident popularity, not a rare phenomenon in organizational Jewry. But the second is more worrisome. Lehrer has been a leader among Jews in promoting good relations with the Muslim community in California. In particular, Lehrer came to the support of Salam al-Marayati, a California Muslim leader who was nominated by President Bush to be a member

private schools, homophobia and increasing separation from the American mainstream. On these issues they make common cause with the Christian Right.

The Reform movement is the most concerned with social justice and has devoted much time and effort to working with others in its behalf. The Conservatives are, as ever, in-between but their rabbinical students are increasingly politically right wing, both as regards religious observance and Israel. So I observed during many years on the staff of the University of Judaism in Los Angeles.

Tectonic plates proceed slowly but they move with great force and can cause enormous damage. So far the Jewish community,

as distinct from some of its leadership, retains its belief in social justice. It still gives 80 percent of its vote to liberal Democratic candidates for president, supports liberal senators and congressmen, and contributes its money to organizations devoted to bettering mankind.

But the warning signs are up. It is time we took a good look at where some of our leaders are trying to take us and tell them that tikkun olam is not a concept to be reserved for Yom Kippur sermons.

Yehuda Lev is a retired journalist who worked in Europe, Israel and the United States. He lives in Providence, and can be reached at Yehuda@etal.uri.edu.

of a national counter-terrorism commission, and with whom Lehrer had worked in pursuit of common goals. Foxman opposed the nomination. Goodbye Lehrer.

Is this happening elsewhere? What of the Zionist organizations? With the exception of Hadassah and Na'amat (Pioneer Women) it seems fair to ask "What Zionist organizations?" They are reduced to shells of their former selves, surviving largely because of the insurance and death benefits coming to their aging memberships.

As for the sectarian bodies, the Orthodox continue to emphasize so-called family values, government support for

This organization is as far right as one can get in Jewish politics without tripping over the supporters of the late Rabbi Meir Kahane.

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Dr. Reuben Alexander

CRANSTON — Dr. Reuben L. Alexander, 72, of 63 Mauran St., a retired physician, pharmacy owner, and square-dance caller, died Feb. 10 at Hillside Health Center Nursing Home, Providence. He was the husband of Norma (Kastal) Alexander.

Born in Fall River, a son of the late Yuddah and Rivka (Soorkis) Alexander and stepson of the late Molly (Soorkis) Alexander, he had lived in Cranston for 33 years.

Dr. Alexander maintained a private practice in Warwick for more than 15 years. He was also the director of emergency medicine, director of medical education and medical director at the former Cranston Osteopathic General Hospital, and staff physician at CODAC, a Providence substance abuse treatment center, for 25 years. He also owned the former Alexander's Pharmacy in Pawtucket.

He served in the Air Force in 1948 and 1949.

He was a 1953 graduate of the former Rhode Island College of Pharmacy, and received his medical degree at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine in 1969.

He was a past president of the R.I. Society of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons, and received a Life Achievement Award from the society in 1998.

He was a member of Temple Beth-El and its Brotherhood, Reback-Winston Post 406, Jewish War Veterans, and Doric Lodge AF & AM.

A square-dance caller for 20 years, he was a past president of the Narragansett Callers Association.

Besides his wife, he leaves a son, Richard Alexander, of Cranston; a daughter, Judi Ferry, of Warwick; a sister, Leah Alexander, of Taos, N. M.; and two grandchildren.

The funeral was held at Shalom Memorial Chapel, Cranston. Burial was in Beth-El Cemetery, Providence.

Contributions may be made to the Sunday School Education Fund, Temple Beth-El, 70 Orchard Ave., Providence, 02906, or the Square and Round Dance Foundation, Box 689, Exeter, 02822.

Dorothy Shaw

WARWICK — Dorothy (Tolchinsky) Shaw, 92, of Kent Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, a former salesperson at the old Boston Store in Providence, died Feb. 5 at Kent County Memorial Hospital. She was the wife of the late Louis Shaw.

Born in New Brunswick, N.J., a daughter of the late Morris and Sarah (Grossman) Tolchinsky, she had lived in Providence, Cranston and East Providence before moving to Warwick.

She also worked as an assembler in the jewelry industry for many years before retiring 34 years ago. She was a member of Temple Am David and the Cranston Senior Guild.

She leaves two sons, Sanford Shaw, of Cranston, and Barry J. Shaw, of Warwick; a brother, Martin Tolchinsky, of Melbourne, Fla.; two sisters, Celia Levy, of Cranston, and Freida Sperling, of Silver Spring, Md.; four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

She was the sister of the late Harry Tolchinsky, Sophie Ped-

likin-Horovitz and Gertrude Jacobson.

Funeral services were held at Shalom Memorial Chapel, Cranston. Burial was in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick. Contributions may be made to Temple Am David, 40 Gardiner St., Warwick, 02889.

Helen Chase

PROVIDENCE — Helen (Newburger) Chase, 96, of Harian Road, died Feb. 9 at Miriam Hospital.

She was the wife of the late Martin Chase, co-founder of Ann & Hope.

Born in Providence, she was a daughter of the late Samuel and Clara (Klemer) Newburger.

She was a member of Temple Beth-El and its Sisterhood, the Miriam Hospital Women's Association, Hadasah, and the Ledgemont Country Club.

She leaves two sons, Irwin Chase, of Providence, and Samuel Chase, of Barrington; a daughter, Marjorie Alpert, of Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.; a sister, Selma Flanzbaum of Longboat Key, Fla.; nine grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. She was the sister of the late Nathan Newburger and Madeline Newburger.

The funeral service was held at Temple Beth-El, Providence. Burial was in Beth-El Cemetery. Contributions may be made to the Newburger Fund, Temple Beth-El, 70 Orchard Ave., Providence, 02906.

Pearl Scherer

SMITHFIELD — Pearl "Babe" Scherer, 97, of Austin Avenue, died Feb. 10 at Cortland Place.

She was the wife of the late Louis Scherer. Born in Providence, a daughter of the late Myer and Esther (Russian) Cohen, she had been a lifelong resident of Rhode Island.

Mrs. Scherer worked in department stores throughout the city for many years. She was a member of Temple Am David, Warwick.

She leaves a stepson, Stanley Scherer, of Laguna Hills, Calif., and three step-grandchildren. The funeral was held in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick.

Rose Cohen

PROVIDENCE — Rose L. Cohen, 86, of Wilcox Avenue, a retired office manager and bookkeeper, died Feb. 15 at Miriam Hospital, Providence.

She was the wife of Ernest Cohen. Born in Central Falls, she was a daughter of the late David and Frances (Buckler) Shlevin.

Mrs. Cohen was office manager at the former Cadillac Textiles, and later worked as a bookkeeper at the former Bond Food Co.

She was a lifelong member of Congregation Ohave Shalom, and its Sisterhood, and a board member of Hadassah. She was a 1933 graduate of Pawtucket High School.

She lives two sons, Irwin H. Cohen, of Lafayette, Calif. and Warren S. Cohen, of Walnut Creek, Calif.; a sister, Charlotte Weinbaum, of Cranston; and a grandson. She was the sister of the late Samuel Shlevin.

The funeral service was held in Sugarman-Sinai Memorial Chapel, Providence. Burial was in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick.

Elizabeth Bear

JAMESTOWN — Elizabeth (Corcoran) Bear, 85, of 155 Beacon Ave., a retired physical therapist, died Feb. 17 at home. She was the wife of the late Leonard M. Bear.

Born in Rhineback, N.Y., a daughter of the late John Paul and Genevieve (Hagerman) Corcoran, she had lived in Buffalo and Syracuse before retiring to Jamestown in 1981.

Mrs. Bear was a physical therapist for 40 years. She was a graduate of Boston University.

She leaves three daughters, Velma Schwartz, of Estero, Fla., Paula King, of Jamestown, and Ellen Brylawski, of Oakland, Calif.; a sister, Francis Wright, of Gainesville, Fla.; ten grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. She was the mother of the late Marsha Bear, and sister of the late John Paul Corcoran.

The funeral service was held in Temple Shalom, Middletown.

Contributions may be made to The Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association or the Jamestown Library.

Sally Chorney

MIAMI, Fla. — Sally (Portman) Chorney, 84, of Boynton Beach, Fla., formerly of Cranston, died Feb. 14 at the Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center.

She was the wife of Sanford Chorney. Born in Woonsocket, she was a daughter of the late Jacob and Anna Portman.

She was a member of the Morse Geriatric Womens Group, the Ledgemont Country Club, Temple Torat Yisrael and its Sisterhood, Temple Emeth, and the Miriam Hospital Women's Association, and a life member of the Women's Association of the former Rhode Island Jewish Home for the Aged.

Besides her husband, she leaves two sons, Alan Chorney, of Atlanta, Ga. and Harris Chorney, of West Hartford, Conn.; a daughter, Nancy Chorney, of Boynton Beach, and two grandsons. The funeral was in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Post Road, Warwick, with arrangements by Shalom Memorial Chapel, Cranston.

Reyna Habif

LEBANON, N.H. — Reyna Habif, 48, of White River Junction, Vt., formerly of Providence, a teacher, librarian, and musician, died Jan. 31 at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, Lebanon, from injuries she suffered in an automobile accident.

Born in Alexandria, Egypt, a daughter of Albert J. Habif, of Providence, and the late Stella (Levy) Habif, she had moved to Rhode Island in 1959, lived in California for a few years before returning to Providence in 1994, and relocated to Vermont last year.

She was a French and Spanish teacher, but her passion was teaching music, composing, and writing poetry.

She was a member of Temple Emanu-El.

She was a graduate of Brown University.

Besides her father, she leaves a brother, Jack Habif, of San Diego, Calif.

The funeral was held in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick.

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Bella Mendelovitz

PROVIDENCE — Bella Mendelovitz, 95, of 75 East St., Providence, honored for her volunteer work, died Feb. 5 at the Tockwotton Home. She was the wife of the late Benjamin Mendelovitz.

Born in Malden, Mass., a daughter of the late Philip and Fanny (Rosensweet) Shuman, she had been a resident of Providence and Cranston most of her life.

Mrs. Mendelovitz was a member of Temple Emanu-El, a life member of Hadassah, Pioneer Women, Mizrahi Women's Association, Miriam Hospital Women's Association, and the former Jewish Home for the Aged.

She received the Governor's Award for her dedication as a nursing home volunteer, and the Light of Torah Award from the Women's League of Conservative Judaism.

She leaves a son, Sam Mendelovitz, of Cranston; a daughter, Harriett Frank, of Pawtucket; four grandchildren and a great-granddaughter. She was the mother of the late Myron D. Mendelovitz, and the sister of the late Mary Levine, Jennie Marder, George Shuman and her twin, Rose Decker.

The funeral was held in Sugarman-Sinai Memorial Chapel, Providence. Burial was in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick.

Contributions may be made to Temple Emanu-El, Temple Torat Yisrael or Tockwotton Home.

Morton Grossman

PROVIDENCE — Morton A. Grossman, 91, of Clarendon Avenue and West Kingston, former owner of a garden-supply wholesale business, died Feb. 13 at home.

He was the husband of Ruth (Abeldon) Grossman.

Born in Providence, a son of the late Benjamin and Anna (Sackett) Grossman, he had been a lifelong resident of Providence, and a summer resident of West Kingston for 50 years.

He was the founder and former owner of Crawford Garden Supplies on Atwells Avenue, which he established in 1948 and sold when he retired in 1988.

Through their generosity, Mr. Grossman and his wife helped make possible the building of the surgical wing at Roger Williams Hospital, and they established scholarships through the University of Rhode Island Foundation.

Mr. Grossman was a 1933 graduate of URI. He and his wife were the first couple to receive honorary degrees there together; they were awarded the

degrees, in the humanities, in 1982.

Mr. Grossman was a member of Temple Emanu-El.

Besides his wife, he leaves a daughter, Harriet Miller, of Providence; a son, Edward Grossman, of Narragansett; a sister, Edythe Siegal, of Woodbridge, Conn.; five grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. He was the brother of the late Samuel Grossman.

The funeral service was held at Sugarman-Sinai Memorial Chapel. Burial was in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick.

Esther Lubosky

FALL RIVER — Esther C. Lubosky, 91, of the Fall River Jewish Home, a retired teacher, died Feb. 14 at the home.

She was the wife of the late Louis Lubosky.

Born in London, a daughter of the late Nathan and Celia (Warren) Friedman, she had lived in Warwick for 25 years, previously living in Fall River.

Mrs. Lubosky was a teacher at Lincoln School, Fall River, retiring 36 years ago. She was a graduate of the former Rhode Island College of Education, now Rhode Island College.

Mrs. Lubosky was a life member of Hadassah and a member of Temple Beth-El.

The funeral was held at Temple Beth-El Cemetery.

Contributions may be made to the Esther C. Lubosky Endowment Fund, Providence Hebrew Day School, or the Fall River Jewish Home.

Robert Miller

WARWICK — Robert David Miller, 53, of Aurora Drive, a retired laboratory technician, died Feb. 17 in Kent County Memorial Hospital after a long illness.

Born in New York City, a son of Rhoda (Lipkin) Miller, of Warwick, and the late Murray Miller, he had lived in Baltimore, Md., for many years before moving to Warwick in 1980.

A graduate of Northwestern High School in Baltimore, he had attended Community College of Baltimore. He had been a lab technician in a medical office for 10 years before retiring.

Besides his mother, he leaves a sister, Sandra Haas, of Warwick.

A graveside service was held in Lincoln Park Cemetery.

Contributions may be made to the National Kidney Foundation, 1865 Post Rd., Warwick, 02886.

Arthur Berger

WARWICK — Arthur Berger, 87, of West Shore Health Center, a retired poetry therapist, author, and college professor, died Feb. 21 in Kent County Memorial Hospital.

He was the husband of the late Harriet (Meltzer) Berger. Born in New York City, a son of the late Max Berger and the late Tienne (Pagowitz) Moscovitz, he had lived in Rhode Island for 20 years.

Mr. Berger was a poetry therapist for the State of Rhode Island for 20 years, retiring in 1997. He worked in the school system at the Adult Correctional Institutions, at the former Institute of Mental Health, and the Veterans Administration Hospital.

He taught at the University of Rhode Island and in various colleges in New England and New York. He received a bachelor's degree from Queens College, a master's degree in education from Rutgers University and a Ph.D. from Boston University.

He was the author of several poetry books.

He was a founding member of the Miramar Yacht Club and the Miramar Ski Club.

He was a member of the merchant marine in World War II.

He leaves two sons, Marc Berger, of Staten Island, N.Y., and Karl Berger, of Los Angeles; a daughter, Karen Berger-Bernier of Paris; and four grandchildren. He was the brother of the late Stanley Ira Berger.

A graveside service was held in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick.

Sarah Lichaa

Sarah Lichaa, 83, of Hope Street, died Feb. 17 in California.

She was the wife of the late Dr. Leon Lichaa. Born in Egypt, a daughter of the late Solomon and Stronkila (Yafet) Cohen, she had lived in Cairo and Paris before moving to Providence in 1966.

She leaves three daughters, Henriette Mordecai, of Augusta, Ga.; Simone Levy, of Providence; and Josette Marzwell, of Claremont, Calif.; seven grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. She was the sister of the late Joseph and Simon Cohen.

The funeral service was held at Sugarman-Sinai Memorial Chapel, Providence. Burial was in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick.

Joseph Wexler

PROVIDENCE — Joseph A. Wexler, 81, of 159 Western Promenade Street, a retired sheet metal worker, died Feb. 26 in Rhode Island Hospital, Providence.

He was the husband of Jeanne (Resnick) Wexler. Born in Providence, a son of the late Philip and Lena (Sugarman) Wexler, he had lived in Cranston for 47 years.

He was a sheet metal worker for the Navy at Quonset Point for 30 years, retiring in 1973. He later worked for BIF Industries.

He was an Army veteran of World War II, a member of the American Legion, the Jewish War Veterans, and was a past president of the Cranston Veterans Council.

He was a former member of Temple Torat Yisrael, and Temple Am David.

Besides his wife, he leaves two sons, Philip Wexler of Cranston and David Wexler of Sonoma, Calif., a daughter, Marilyn Wexler-Kingsbury of Marblehead, Mass.; a brother, William Wexler of Boynton Beach, Fla.; and two grandsons. He was the father of the late Todd Wexler, and the brother of the late Saul Wexler.

The funeral was held at Shalom Memorial Chapel. Burial was in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick.

Contributions may be made to the Todd Wexler Memorial Cancer Research Fund, c/o

Mass. General Hospital, Development Office, 100 Charles River Plaza, Boston, MA. 02114.

Abraham Abelson

MIAMI, Fla. — Abraham "Al" Abelson, 94, of 174th Street, Sunny Isles, Fla., formerly of Providence, a retired restaurateur and a former Rhode Island state representative, died Feb. 18, at Mt. Sinai Hospital, Miami Beach.

He was the husband of Anne (Sutton) Abelson. Born in Worcester, a son of the late Arthur and Mary Abelson, he had lived in Worcester for many years before moving to Rhode Island in 1940 and Florida in 1970.

Mr. Abelson had owned the former Al Abelson's Deli on Hope Street for many years before retiring. He was the 5th District representative for 10 years. During the 1930s he was co-owner, with his late father, of the Little Hungarian Restaurant in Worcester.

He was active in civic and political organizations and was a past president and former member of Temple Beth Shalom.

Besides his wife, he leaves a son, Kenneth Abelson, of Weymouth, Mass.; a brother, Alan Abelson, in New Jersey; a sister, Charlotte Parker, in California; and two granddaughters. He was the brother of the late Marion Swidler, Frances Whitestone, and Ruth and Philip Abelson.

A graveside service was held in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick.

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