

# The JEWISH VOICE & HERALD

SERVING RHODE ISLAND AND SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

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Jewish Federation of Rhode Island

March 5, 2004

## Inside...



## Happy Purim



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**HAITIAN JEWS**—Once there were thousands of Jews in Haiti, now 50 remain. See page 8

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## R.I. Christians, Jews discuss Gibson's film

By Jonathan Rubin

PROVIDENCE — One week before "The Passion of the Christ" hit theatres, members of the Christian community took steps to try and address Jewish-Christian relationship issues, and, in the words of Rev. Maria DeCarvalho, "assist in the digestive process" of the film.

The intense, day-long conference brought more than 300 Christians and Jews who crowded inside the Cathedral of St. John Episcopal Church on North Main Street in Providence to come to terms with "The Passion" on Feb. 18.

Speaking to the Jewish community, DeCarvalho, who is Dean of the Cathedral of St.

John, said "your distress matters to us, and we acknowledge your concern."

Professor Amy-Jill Levine summed up her advance reading of Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ": "We have no reason to believe that Mel Gibson is anti-Semitic... However he could have done more to make sure that the gospel of love would not be perceived as the gospel of hate."

Levine was one of many nationally recognized speakers to take the pulpit on the "Passion", in a special "damage-control" session convened by the Forum for Inter-Religious Understanding, a group of local clergy who endeavor to create

See PASSION, page 3



The Cathedral of St. John in Providence was the site for a community discussion of Mel Gibson's "The Passion." Photo by Jonathan Rubin

## 'Midrasha' Hebrew high school keeps teenagers in the mix



**TASTY TRADITION** — Zoe Tarshis, a Brown University sophomore, takes students through a sampling of fruits at a Jewish Cooking class at the Harry Elkin Midrasha Community High School. Photo by Jonathan Rubin.

By Jonathan Rubin

*Editor's note: In response to Partnership efforts to encourage innovation in outreach programming, the Voice & Herald presents part 2 of a series highlighting four programs that involve Jewish people from a variety of backgrounds.*

PROVIDENCE — The assignment is tricky — How can you use the Passover story of the four sons (wise, rebellious, simple, and he who does not have the capacity to ask a question) to decorate a Passover table for an exhibition?

Someone suggests using a

car to represent each son. "The Hummer is an evil car... it's not environmentally friendly," says Ethan Gnepp, a Providence 8<sup>th</sup> grader.

"Or the car that Hitler drove!" said another.

Michael Feinstein, also in

See TEENS, page 17

## Kerry wins high percentage of Jewish votes

JTA — Sen. John Kerry trended better among Jews than non-Jews in four out of five Super Tuesday states with Jewish exit polling data. Kerry, (D-Mass.) swept nine of the ten states voting in primaries Tuesday, clinching the Democratic nomination.

In New York, exit polls showed Kerry winning 74 percent of the Jewish vote as opposed to the 60 percent of the general vote Kerry had won with 92 percent of precincts reporting.

In his home state of Massachusetts, he performed 5-10 percent better among Jews than non-Jews; in Maryland, he performed 6 percent better among Jews; and in Connecticut, he performed 10 percent better among Jews. In California, Kerry performed as well among Jews as he did among non-Jews — about 65 percent.

"Kerry's better known than Edwards in the community, he's been around longer, he did outreach work among the Jews," said Steve Rabinowitz, a Democratic political analyst. Jewish polling data in Vermont, Rhode Island, Minnesota, Georgia and Ohio was too low to assess accurately.



## The Jewish Voice & Herald

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## CANDLE LIGHTING

For greater  
Rhode Island

March 11 5:22

March 12 5:30

March 19 5:38



## Community Calendar

### Friday, March 5

#### Israeli composer at Beth-El

7:45 p.m. Menachem Zur, Israeli  
composer, President of the Association  
of Israeli Composers, and Dean of the  
School of Music at the Hebrew University  
of Jerusalem will present "Sing Unto the  
Lord a New Song" at Temple Beth-El, 77  
Orchard Ave., Providence. Zur's  
presentation will follow the service.  
Call 331-6070.

### Sat. March 6

#### Chabad & Tamarisk Purim Party

7 p.m. at Tamarisk Assisted  
Living, 3 Shalom Drive, Warwick.  
Megillah reading, wine, hamantaschen  
and more. Hosted by the Chabad CHAI  
Center and Tamarisk Assisted Living.

#### Purim Celebration at B'nai Israel

6:30 p.m., Congregation B'nai  
Israel, 224 Prospect St., Woonsocket.  
Come to services in costume, bring  
noisemakers, musical instruments for the  
Megillah reading. For info, call 762-3651.

#### Torat Yisrael "Megillah Madness"

6:30 p.m. at the temple; 330  
Park Ave., Cranston. Megillah  
reading and Shpiel by the Dalet  
and Hey classes, followed by a  
masquerade ball with DJ. Dancing,  
games, contests, hors d'oeuvres  
and desserts plus Mordechai's rum  
punch. Free and open to the community.  
All those in costume will receive a gift.

#### Purim Festivities at Agudas Achim

7 p.m. Congregation Agudas  
Achim, 901 North Main St., Attleboro.  
A service will include the reading of  
the Megillah. Following the Jewish  
tradition of gifts to the poor at Purim,  
donations to benefit local food pantries  
are suggested.

#### Chabad House celebrates Purim

Megillah reading, music and  
dancing, drinks and Hamantaschen,  
with Yankel the Purim Spieler and  
Rebbe Rafi. 360 Hope St., Providence.

### Sun., March 7

#### Megillah reading

8:30 a.m. Chabad House  
Megillah reading and more  
hamantaschen.

#### Agudas Achim carnival

10 a.m. — 1 p.m. Congregation  
Agudas Achim, 901 North Main St.,  
Attleboro. Purim carnival with  
games, prizes, face painting, arts  
and crafts, food. All children in  
costume receive 5 free tickets. All  
welcome. For more info, call (508)  
222-2243.

#### Am David Purim carnival

11:30 a.m. Warwick-Cranston  
USY and BBOY sponsoring annual  
Purim Carnival at Temple Am David,  
40 Gardiner St., Warwick. Unlimited  
play tickets are \$6 in advance or \$8  
at the door. They are good for all  
booths. Food,

crafts and "jail" are not included  
in ticket price. For more info, call  
463-7944.

#### Chabad "Patriot's Purim Feast"

4 p.m. (Megillah reading at 3:30  
p.m.) at Swift Gym, 111 Pierce St.,  
East Greenwich. Costumes or sports  
outfits optional. Full buffet dinner,  
dancing, & entertainment. Adults, \$18;  
children, \$9; family of 2 adults, 4 children,  
\$50; table sponsor, \$180. RSVP at  
884-7888.

#### Moscow Hasidic Choir

Moscow Hasidic Choir & Brown  
University Chorus at Sayles Hall, Main  
Green, Brown University. Tickets at the  
door \$15, 10, 5. Further info: 863-3234

#### 'Passover Contemplated' at JCC

At Gallery 401, presented by the  
Jewish Community Center of Rhode  
Island and *The Jewish Voice & Herald*.  
Educational and cultural event will  
feature 11 Seder tables that have been  
created by local Jewish organizations to  
commemorate the Passover observance.  
Ritual objects, original serigraphs and  
photographs.

Reception on Sun., March 14,  
at 2:30 p.m. Call Sue Suls at  
861-8800. See Community

### Monday, March 8

#### Women's Center to hold honors luncheon

11 a.m. reception, Noon — 1:30  
p.m. luncheon, at the Providence  
Marriott. 2nd annual event to honor  
exceptional women of R.I. See  
Community.

### Tuesday, March 9

#### 'Annie Jr.' auditions

7 — 8:30 p.m. 'Annie Jr.' auditions.  
The Jewish Theatre Ensemble is  
looking for talented youth from ages  
9 to 16 for the all-youth June production  
of the musical. Another audition will be  
March 11. Call Lisa at 421-3769.

### Wed., March 10

#### Warwick Social Seniors to meet

2 p.m. Tamarisk Assisted Living,  
3 Shalom Dr., Warwick. Carl Johnson  
will speak on Native American artifacts.  
Coffee and refreshments served.

### Thurs., March 11

#### Emanu-El Leisure Club

10 — 10:50 a.m. "Nosh & Knowledge: A Potpourri of Jewish  
Topics." Beth Fine-Nelson, religious  
school director, Temple Torat Yisrael.  
Coffee Break. 11:10 a.m. — noon:  
"Short Stories by New Jewish American  
Writers." Blossom Kirschenbaum will  
speak.

### Friday, March 12

#### Torat Yisrael Shabbat Event

6 p.m. Temple Torat Yisrael:  
"Shabbat Across America" with  
visiting Rabbi Ted Feldman. A traditional  
Shabbat dinner will be served following  
the service. \$13

for adults and \$6.50 for children.  
On Sat., March 13, at 9:30 a.m. with  
Rabbi Feldman. A kiddush luncheon  
and discussion will follow services.

To RSVP for the dinner or  
lunch, call the temple office at  
785-1800 by Friday, March 5.

#### B'nai's 'Shabbat across America'

Congregation B'nai Israel presents  
"Shabbat Across America." The event  
will begin with dinner at 6:00 followed  
by the service and a dessert Oneg Shabbat.  
Admission is \$7 for adults, \$5 for children  
ages 3-12, under 3 free. Congregation  
B'nai Israel is located at 224 Prospect  
Street in Woonsocket, RI. For more  
information and to RSVP call 401-762-3651.

### Sat., March 13

#### Touro Fraternal 'Two fer'

Touro Fraternal presents a "Two-fer"  
(two dinners for the price of one) at  
Twelve Acres Restaurant in Smithfield  
with entertainment provided by the group  
"Good Friends." Cost is \$25 per Touro  
couple and \$50 for non-member couples.  
Reservations required. Check Touro's  
website ([www.tourofraternal.org](http://www.tourofraternal.org)) for  
details and reservation forms.

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for adults, \$5 for children ages 3-12,  
under 3, free. For more information  
and RSVP, call 401-762-3651.

### Sunday March, 14

#### Sen. Reed to speak

10 a.m. — noon. Temple Torat  
Yisrael, 330 Park Ave., Cranston.  
Senator Reed will speak on the war  
in Iraq. Sponsored by the Temple's  
Men's Club.

#### Beth-El film festival

2 p.m. 70 Orchard Ave., Providence.  
First in a series — "Hollywoodism:  
Jews, Movies and the

American Dream," a documentary  
about the men who founded Hollywood.  
Professor Mark Fink of RISD,  
introduction and discussion leader.  
Series to continue on the next two  
Sundays.

### Monday, March 15

#### Case of Ethics

2 p.m. "A Case of Ethics: Should  
a Known Anti-Semite be Licensed  
as a Lawyer? The Case of Roger Root."  
Doug Emanuel, presenter.

#### Israeli actress at Trinity

7:30 p.m. "Flowers Aren't Enough,"  
drama on domestic violence with  
Naomi Ackerman. Trinity Rep.,  
downstairs theater, 201 Washington St.,  
Providence. \$18. For more info,  
call Lana at 351-3059.

### Sat., March 20

#### Passover wine tasting

7 p.m. Congregation B'nai Israel,  
224 Prospect St., Woonsocket.  
Tasting of Passover wines from  
around the world. Participants may  
order wines for their Seders. Program  
is \$15 per person. Tables of 6 or 8  
may be reserved in advance. For  
info. Call 762-3651.

### Sun., March 21

#### Torat Yisrael family photo day

9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Family  
photos will be taken by Visions  
Photography, to be ready in time  
for Mother's Day. Call 785-1800  
by Fri., March 12, for appointment.  
A \$25 non-refundable deposit will  
hold appointment and will be credited  
toward purchase.

#### Corrections & Clarifications:

The same-sex wedding ceremony  
that will be performed on May 31st  
is not scheduled to take place at  
Agudas Achim synagogue in Attleboro,  
as indicated in our Feb. 20 edition.  
This ceremony is planned for another  
location. While it will be officiated  
by Rabbi Elyse Wechterman of  
Agudas Achim, to date, there have  
been no same-sex marriages at  
Agudas Achim.

Due to a typographical error,  
Purim entries from Torat Yisrael  
and Am David were accidentally  
combined in our last issue.

### Send us your Calendar Listings

Send us your calendar listings, along with time,  
date & telephone number. Notices must be  
received 2 weeks prior to publication date.

E-mail to: [voiceherald@jfri.org](mailto:voiceherald@jfri.org); Fax to: 401-331-7961,  
or mail to: Jewish Voice & Herald, 130 Sessions St.,  
Providence, RI 02906 — Attn: Calendar



# R.I. Christians, Jews discuss Gibson's 'Passion'

From page 1

inter-religious understanding.

Levine, an Orthodox Jew, is a Professor of New Testament Studies and Director of the Carpenter Program in Religion, Gender, and Sexuality at Vanderbilt University Divinity School in Nashville. She was part of a select group of scholars who reviewed the screenplay a few months ago. The group, which also included another Jewish scholar and four Christian scholars, decided "unanimously" that the film was "not historically accurate," despite Gibson's continual insistence otherwise.

"They are speaking Latin... they should be speaking Greek," Levine said.

Speaking to the film's somewhat positive portrayal of Pontius Pilate, Levine remarked that he was instead "a conniving brute who killed locals indiscriminately... Only Pontius had a reason to kill Jesus... he wanted to make an example of him."

When Gibson heard of their critical assessment, Levine said, he claimed the copy of the script was stolen and sued them to prevent them from releasing their findings. "He castrated us," Levine said. Rather than taking his historical cues from the gospels as Gibson claims, Levine said he seems to draw more from the writings of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Catholic mystic nun, Anne Catherine Emmerich, who tells the story of Jesus' final hours in a much more graphic and anti-Semitic way than the New Testament.

Nonetheless, the New Testament does indeed have troublesome passages in regard to Judaism. "The New Testament is very clear — the Jews killed Jesus... it actually says that," Levine said. "[But] the movie isn't the problem, it's a symptom [that] Jews and Christians don't understand each other."

"According to Christian theology, Jesus is not killed by Jews but by human sin... The problem is that not everyone knows that."

The question, the speakers said, isn't whether the New Testament or the gospels are anti-Semitic or not, but rather how the text is interpreted.

"There are no facts, only text. You can't get behind the text," said Rev. GERALYN WOLF.

Lutheran Bishop Krister Stendahl, former dean of Harvard Divinity School, concurred, and said that great danger can come out of misinterpretation.

"The bible should maybe have the same warning as cigarettes — it [can] be hazardous to your health," he said.



**BISHOP Krister Stendahl, of Harvard Divinity School**

He challenged Gibson's assertion that the film is a direct interpretation of the gospels, and said that "the gospels are like four portraits by four different artists," and any attempt to combine them will create a "holy blur" rather than a true synthesis.

Stendahl is very aware of the problem of anti-Semitism; as a boy in Sweden he was brought up taught that "Judaism was an exhibition of the inferior way of relating to God."

He said that while Judaism and Christianity are separate theological systems, there are enough similarities to have a fruitful inter-religious existence and conversation. He proscribed a sort of "holy envy" to get closer to other religions — find something in the other that is beautiful and that tells you something about God, and embrace it. Don't compare the weaknesses in one to the strengths of the other, but look for common ground without trying to make the "other" too much like your religion.

Stendahl decried the "obscene magnification of violence" in the film, and said that "the way that Mel Gibson describes [it] as really a celebration of pain and death... rather than a celebration of the triumphant resurrection."

DeCarvalho said that besides working from within her church, they had also undertaken "extensive effort in working with the Roman Catholic community," and featured Catholic religious representatives alongside the Episcopalian ones. Local Jewish representatives, including Mark Jagolinzer from Temple Shalom in Middletown and Selma Stanzler from the Rhode Island Holocaust Memorial Museum, were also presenting.

Mary Jane Lide, of Barrington, said she was very impressed by the speakers. "They've done their homework,"



**PROFESSOR Amy-Jill Levine, of Vanderbilt University Divinity School, speaks with Rabbi Mordechai Eskovitz, of Newport's Touro Synagogue. Photos by Jonathan Rubin**

she said. "Inter-religious dialogue is necessary, [otherwise] they are going to say he's anti-Semitic."

"It's not about the Jews, it's about the Christians. We have the job of putting it in perspective," she added.

Rev. Pat Harrison drove up from Long Island to see the conference. "I don't think anyone killed Jesus... He gave his life," she said.

Rabbi Mordechai Eskovitz, of Newport, said that the session was "very informative," and agreed with Levine's recommendation for Jews to read the gospels as a way to understand Christians better. He cautioned, however, against doing it alone. "Jews should not read the gospels unless it's under a scholar... you will not understand the Jewish perspective... [and] you can read the gos-

pels as a completely anti-Semitic tract."

He was frightened about the film's release. "A lot of harm will come out of it... and not just here... It will be sent to Muslim countries who will be happy to see it."

Raymond Butero, of Cranston, knows a little bit about religious coexistence — he's Jewish, but plays the organ in an Episcopalian church.

"I think something like this is very useful, but it's preaching to the choir."

Rabbi Baruch Goldstein, a retired Providence rabbi, said, "As a boy, I was called a Christ-killer in Poland... I didn't know what it meant. One must know what hurts the other... with this kind of thinking, there is hope."

He said that he plans to see the movie. "It'll be hard, but I'm not afraid."

## Resource Materials

The Forum for Inter-Religious Understanding currently has discussion groups between Christian clergy and members of the Reform and Conservative Jewish community. They offered the following resources and study guides for the film:

### American Jewish Committee

[www.ajc.org/upload/pdf/AJC\\_The\\_Passion\\_A\\_Resource\\_Manual.pdf](http://www.ajc.org/upload/pdf/AJC_The_Passion_A_Resource_Manual.pdf)

### Council of Centers on Christian-Jewish relations

[www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/partners/CCJR/passion\\_statement.pdf](http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/partners/CCJR/passion_statement.pdf)

### Evangelical Lutheran Church

[www.elca.org/ea/interfaith/gibson\\_statement.html](http://www.elca.org/ea/interfaith/gibson_statement.html)

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★ The Jewish Community Center, which runs preschools in Providence and Barrington, is an agency funded by your gift to the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island's Annual Community Campaign.

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at 401-421-4111, ext. 171  
E-mail: [sbermanpeck@jfri.org](mailto:sbermanpeck@jfri.org)





## Opinion

# A MAJORITY OF ONE Purim Unmasked

If the class will please come to order, we shall proceed with our lesson on the Jewish holiday of Purim.

First, to clear up any misconceptions, Purim is not about how a nice Jewish girl saved a Jewish community by playing house with the king of Persia. Come on now, can you imagine our revered ancestors acknowledging such behavior, let alone publicizing the matter and making a heroine of her?



**Yehuda Lev**

Dear students, Purim is celebrated for far more cogent reasons. Put bluntly, it satisfies a deeply felt need among Jews to deal with our inherent overload of insecurity genes, those tiny globules of doubt that circulate within us and cause us to behave in ways that baffle social scientists accustomed to dealing with more predictable (i.e. rational) behavior.

Consider, for example, how we Jews overcome our concerns about living with non-Jewish neighbors, any one of whom might erupt momentarily in an outburst

of anti-Semitism. I'm not talking about dues paying members of the Aryan Nation or those wackos in white sheets who burn crosses on lawns. (Keep in mind that the man on the original cross was one of ours. If you're looking for examples of anti-Semitism, that just might be the place to begin.)

No, I mean that pleasant fellow down the block who always has a cheery wave for you when he drives by in the morning, or the young couple next door who watch the house when you go out of town. Is that actually a cheery wave or is he pointing out the location of your house to someone crouched in the back seat whose wife is cloaked in a burka and whose children learn in a madrassa about the glories of martyrdom.

And house watching? What are they watching for? A minor crack in the foundation that might provide an entering wedge for an explosive charge when Osama gives the signal? Or perhaps poorly framed windows which could admit anthrax spores into your bedroom at the appropriate moment.

Do I hear members of the class whispering the word "paranoia?" Well, consider the events which lead to Purim.

Here is this settled Jewish community in Persia minding its own business and getting on well with the neighbors when suddenly the villainous Haman shows up and the next thing you know they are building gallows for the Jews in the public parks.

The Jews escaped, of course, apparently because the king's wife, Vashti, pleaded a headache once too often and, by a series of events so absurd as to be acceptable only to someone who has drunk enough schnapps to confuse Haman with Mordechai, Haman was hung on the gallows instead.

Mordechai is regarded by some among us as the true hero of the occasion because he convinced his niece, Esther, to enter a competition to replace the queen and she won. But there are a couple of problems with this scenario. First, what kind of a hero is it who sends a helpless woman to talk a king out of something he wants to do? Kings, in those days, always had their royal executioners standing close by.

Second, by whose standards is Esther the heroine? As stated above, it doesn't make sense. After all, she ended up living with a king although, granted,

he might not have believed in personal hygiene or fidelity in marriage. Yet you must admit that marrying a king certainly beats being wed to a doctor or a lawyer. Upwardly mobile, that was our Esther.

No, the real heroine of the Purim story is Vashti, the discarded wife. She stood up to the king and refused to give in. She defended womanhood and it cost her. Today she would be president of Planned Parenthood or N.O.W., writing books decrying the oppression of women and appearing on the talk shows. In those less benighted times, the only weapon she had was the headache and it wasn't all that effective but give her her due. She was the only one who emerged from the imbroglia with her honor intact.

Still feeling the effects of those insecurity genes, the little globules of doubt? Try this for an antidote — your assignment for our next major holiday, Passover: At the Seder, you defend the Pharaoh.

*Yehuda Lev, a regular columnist, has worked as a journalist in Israel, Europe and the United States. He lives in Providence.*

## Letters to the editor

### Why send teens to Philly? Here's why

In the February 6th issue of *The Jewish Voice & Herald*, a reader asked: "Why do forty Jewish teenagers travel to Philadelphia to help the homeless, when there are many homeless people right here?" There is more than one answer to your question.

For the five years that we have gone on this trip, we have spent one day with a man named Frank Ferrell. When Frank's son Trevor was eleven years old, he was watching the news one winter evening and saw that there were many homeless people on the streets of Philadelphia. He asked his father if they had any extra blankets that they could give to the homeless. The first few nights he delivered blankets, and as time passed, it turned into soup and sandwiches handed out of the Ferrell's station wagon in the winter night.

Now, twenty years later, there are low-cost living shelters all over the United States for families that people have donated in the name of Trevor Ferrell. In Philadelphia, we learn first hand about the difference that a young person can make in the world. We get to know the homeless personally and learn from their stories.

That does not mean that when we come back to Rhode Island our work is done. In addition to working with the homeless, we also engage in educational sessions on the homeless situation in Rhode Island and examine Jewish texts that illustrate our obligation to help those in need.

As a result of their experiences on the Philadelphia trip, a number of past participants have become involved in working with the homeless here in Rhode Island. Jill Teverow started putting boxes in the lunchroom at Moses Brown so



Dena White, of Providence, helps a Philadelphia homeless woman find winter gloves.

that students could donate the uneaten food from their lunches to local shelters. Max Dwares, who sadly passed away, once made 1,500 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches which he brought to Traveler's Aid. Elana Chernick-Kritz and Kelsey Shottek worked with other Jewish students in a project to work with the homeless in South County.

The Philadelphia trip has meant so much to me. I learned how I can make a difference in the world, to treat homeless people with dignity and respect. For so many teens like me, the Philadelphia trip has provided the opportunity for entry into the world of community service and

to what we can do to help others.

**Zachary Lichaa**  
Barrington

*Zachary Lichaa is a senior at Barrington High School and a student in the Harry Elkin Midrasa Community High School of the Bureau of Jewish Education of Rhode Island. He has participated in all five Philadelphia trips.*

### A 'Passionate' warning

Mel Gibson's movie, "The Passion of the Christ," needs to serve as a warning to us that anti-Semitism is not a relic of the past. Released on Ash Wednesday, historically a day that marked the beginning of a season in which anti-Semitism flourished in centuries past, the message of blaming Jews for the death of Christ is a warning to our people that ancient hatreds do not die easily and ignorance flourishes. It is also a libel of the worst sort against the Jews; History is clear on this issue, as it was the occupying forces of Rome that took the actions leading to the crucifixion of Christ.

Movies are a multi-million dollar enterprise and we need to acknowledge that Gibson did not act in a vacuum in creating this particular movie. There were many, many interests that had to sign onto that project to bring it to completion.

We need to recognize that while we are not a monolithic force and do not speak in one voice on all issues, there are alliances that need to be avoided in all instances. Fundamentalists have never been our friends! They selectively pander to some of our concerns, while attacking the values that are the hallmark of our religion.

**Howard Lisnoff**  
Narragansett

### Submission guidelines

The *Jewish Voice & Herald* welcomes letters to the editor and other opinion pieces on topics of interest to the Jewish community. All submissions must be signed and include city of residence and telephone number. Letters to the editor should be limited to 250 words, and viewpoint pieces to 700 words. Submissions may be edited for length or content. Send submissions to: *Jewish Voice & Herald*, 130 Sessions St., Providence, 02906, or e-mail to: [voiceherald@jfri.org](mailto:voiceherald@jfri.org)



# The message behind the movie

By Rabbi Ariel Bar Tzadok

Alright, I have seen the new Mel Gibson film, "The Passion of the Christ." As always Mr. Gibson has made a fine movie, as realistic and riveting as "Gone with the Wind" or "Star Wars." To me, the "Passion of the Christ" is just like every other fictional movie I have ever seen — it is a story. It is not real, it is not history, it is not "the way it was."

There is much to say about the movie's historical inaccuracies, and in spite of all the public statements to the opposite, "The Passion of the Christ" definitely contains subtle anti-Semitic elements. Let me document some of them here.

Mr. Gibson portrays his view of the Sadducean Temple priests, rabbis, and many of the other Jews of the day who condemned, mocked, jeered and beat Jesus as wearing curled peyos (side locks), in accordance to the same style as those worn today by Orthodox Jews from the eastern European Hasidic tradition.

The priests and rabbis are also wearing some kind of cloak or shawl that is made with long black stripes, similar in appearance to the eastern European version of the *Talit* (prayer shawl, worn by religious Jews during morning prayers).

It is a clear and indisputable fact of reality that both the side locks and prayer shawls of eastern European design were totally unknown in the days of Jesus. Mr. Gibson clearly uses modern day forms of Jewish identity to make sure that his audiences will be certain to recognize the relationship between modern day Jews and those whom some Christians hold responsible for the murder of their Lord.

The Jews in the crowd are shown jeering and beating Jesus without cause. Their behavior certainly arouses resentment and anger to anyone watching. By dressing ancient Jews to make them look ever so subtly like modern Jews, Mr.

Gibson is making sure that his audience will have no problem transferring its anger and resentment onto those Jews of today.

Mr. Gibson has, in his own words tried to make the film as historically accurate as he could, including having the characters speaking Latin, Hebrew and

of my belief system, as such it is not an image etched within my psyche. When I see the character of Jesus suffering, I think of the countless real Jews who have suffered just as Jesus does in the movie.

When I as a Jew see the character of Jesus being beaten and his mother



The Last Supper, a scene from "The Passion of the Christ" Photo by Icon Productions

Aramaic. There are many modern day speakers of Aramaic, among them Assyrian (non-Catholic) Christians and Sephardic Jews. I am fully versed and fluent in Hebrew and Aramaic, and every time I heard Aramaic spoken in the movie, it was rife with mistakes in dialogue, grammar, usage and translation. Yes, it was that bad.

Mr. Gibson chose a Jesuit priest to write his Aramaic script when it is clear from the job that he did that the man has absolutely no living knowledge of the language. This indicates Mr. Gibson's allegiance to his religion, right or wrong, as opposed to any true desire to be historically accurate and correct.

When I, an Orthodox Rabbi, see "The Passion" I see it in a different light than your average Christian. You see, the death and resurrection of Christ is not a part

crying over her suffering son, I do not identify with what is considered by many non-Christians to be a fictional account recorded in the Gospels. Rather, I feel the pain of the many Jewish mothers throughout two thousand years of Christian persecution who have cried without comfort over the sufferings and loss of their children.

I identify with the Jewish mothers who cried for their sons, suffering from German Nazis, Russian Cossacks, Spanish Inquisitors, and all types of European Crusaders. All of these persecutors of the Jews held one thing in common — they were all Christians, and they had all at one time or another seen a "passion play," similar to Mr. Gibson's movie that motivated them to, in their eyes, take revenge for Christ against those who killed him.

There comes the time when, for the sake of a greater good, we must put facts aside and instead address matters of faith. Mr. Gibson's movie has the potential to set back good Jewish-Christian relations a long way.

This is why I feel it is most important now that we address matters of camaraderie rather than matters of conflict. As peoples of faith, we Jews and Christians have more in common based upon our faith than we have that separates us based upon our divergent views of historical facts, theology and doctrine.

Christians have adopted our Jewish Bible and placed it alongside their own. Although they call ours the "old" and theirs the "new" Christians still recognize the value and importance of the covenant that God made with us, the Jewish people.

I have heard many commentators on "The Passion of Christ" state that what is needed is a movie about Jesus' life, not his death. Most of Jesus' statements as recorded in the Gospels actually express traditional Rabbinic teachings of the time. If Christians only knew the Jewish source for many of their sacred beliefs, I believe that this would go a long way towards healing a two millennia old conflict that has been nothing other than a desecration of God's Name.

One last point, specifically for my Christian readers. If the story of Jesus as portrayed in the Gospels were actual fact, and Jesus was actually a righteous Jew persecuted by wicked Sadducean Priests and their Roman overlords, I myself would have come to his defense, and even carried his cross. More so, most religious Jews I know would have done the same. We Jews are not Christ killers; we are the victims of those who have accused us of such.

Ariel Bar Tzadok is the founder and head of the Yeshiva of Yeshivat Benei Nivi'im, in Chicago.

## Jews hurt themselves by attacking 'The Passion'

By Rabbi Daniel Lapin

Just over a week has passed since the release of Mel Gibson's "The Passion," and the numbers are staggering. Ticket sales have rung up more than \$110 million in the first few days. One Dallas multiplex has reserved all twenty of its screens for *The Passion*. Besides its continued financial success, I would like to make two predictions about this movie:

One, *The Passion* will become famous as the most serious and substantive biblical movie ever made. It will be one of the most talked-about entertainment events in history — it is currently on the cover of *Newsweek* and *Vanity Fair*.

And two, the faith of millions of Christians will become more fervent as *The Passion* uplifts and inspires them. It will propel vast numbers of unreligious Americans to embrace Christianity.

Those Jewish organizations that have squandered both time and money futilely protesting *The Passion*, ostensibly in order to prevent pogroms in Pittsburgh, can hardly be proud of their

performance. They failed at everything they attempted. They were hoping to ruin Gibson rather than enrich him. They were hoping to suppress *Passion* rather than promote it. Finally, they were hoping to help Jews rather than harm them.

However, instead of helping the Jewish community, they have inflicted lasting harm. I enjoy extensive communication with Christian America and what I hear is troubling. Fearful of attracting the ire of Jewish groups that are so quick to hurl the "anti-Semite" epithet, some Christians are reluctant to speak out. Although one can bludgeon resentful people into silence, behind closed doors emotions continue to simmer.

Many individual Jews have shared with me their embarrassment that many national Jewish organizations, ostensibly representing them, attack *The Passion* but are silent about depraved entertainment that encourages killing cops and brutalizing women. Citing artistic freedom, Jewish groups helped protect sacrilegious exhibits such as the anti-

Christian feces extravaganza presented by the Brooklyn Museum four years ago. One can hardly blame Christians for assuming that Jews feel artistic freedom is important only when exercised by those hostile toward Christianity.

From audiences around America, I am encountering bitterness at Jewish organizations insisting that belief in the New Testament is de facto evidence of anti-Semitism. Christians heard Jewish leaders denouncing Gibson for making a movie that follows Gospel accounts of the Crucifixion long before any of them had even seen the movie. Furthermore, Christians are hurt that Jewish groups are presuming to teach them what Christian Scripture "really means." It's a preposterous proposition that Jews will reeducate Christians about Christian theology and history. Is it any wonder that this breathtaking arrogance spurs bitterness?

Many Christians who, with good reason, have considered themselves to be the Jews' best (and perhaps, only)

friends also feel bitter at Jews believing that *Passion* is revealing startling new information about the Crucifixion. They are incredulous at Jews thinking that exposure to the Gospels in visual form will instantly transform the most philo-Semitic gentiles of history into snarling, Jew-hating predators.

Christians are baffled by Jews who don't understand that President George Washington, who knew and revered every word of the Gospels, was still able to write that oft-quoted beautiful letter to the Touro Synagogue in Newport, offering friendship and full participation in America to the Jewish community.

Today, peril threatens all Americans, both Jews and Christians. Many of the men and women in the front lines find great support in their Christian faith. It is strange that Jewish organizations, purporting to protect Jews, think that insulting allies is the preferred way to carry out that mandate.

Rabbi Daniel Lapin is president of *Toward Tradition*, an educational organization that supports Judeo-Christian unity.



# Purim Briefs

WARNING: PURIM BRIEFS ARE NOT TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY, OR INTERNALLY.

## Purim: the antidote to bad news

By Jonathan Rubin

Purim has become something akin to a Jewish April Fool. The merriment that accompanies the story of the narrow Jewish escape from destruction must have given us our unique sense of humor, and thus was born the idea of Purimschtick.

### So what is Purim anyway?

It's not a major holiday (i.e. you don't get off of work), but in many cases it's the most festive Jewish holiday on the books. Purim commemorates a day that happened many hundreds of years after the Exodus, in the city of Shushan, part of the Persian Empire. It's a story of sticking up for the right thing even in the face of adversity, of a brave heroine and a wicked man who is hanged at the end. And it's about giving to others, celebrating our religious freedom, and, of course, eating and noshing.

In Israel, it's the festive equivalent of Halloween, minus all of the malevolence, trickery and blackness. It's a fun costume holiday, really, where everyone dresses up in masquerade, and the above-mentioned Purim parties take place. There is also the reading from the story of Esther, the Jewish queen who saved Jews from a grisly demise. We also give *misloach manot*, or gift baskets many of fruit and candy, to other people during this time. And, of course, there's the Hamantashen

cookies modeled after the wicked Haman's hat.

In the Diaspora, "Purim Spiels" have become very popular: they are whimsical takes on the story of Purim, often done as a parody of some Broadway musical like *Annie* or movie classics like *Star Wars* or *Grease*. In Rhode Island there are usually between two and five spiels and parties held in honor of Purim, often simultaneously, so call your local synagogue for details.

Some scholars say that you are commanded to drink on Purim, while others say the Torah prohibits excessive drinking, which goes to prove that it is a Jewish holiday after all, due to all that lovely bickering that makes Jews Jewish.

Joining the popular ranks of Purim spiels are Purim spoofs, which brings us to this issue of *The Jewish Voice & Herald*. Once a year, the V&H takes some creative (and journalistic) liberties, and spins some stories that will never happen. Enjoy.

### Local

**Cicilline adds Irish, Zoroastrian to list of his ethnicities**

PROVIDENCE — In a move that is hoped to build broad alliances with some of the "underrepresented" portions of the Rhode Island constituency,

Providence Mayor David Cicilline has announced that, in addition to possessing both Jewish and Catholic roots, and also being Italian and gay, he also has "strong ancestral ties" to Ireland and the lesser known religious faith, Zoroastrianism. "My multi-faceted upbringing has always been a source of pride for me," Cicilline said at a press conference recently. "And, after some digging, I found even more to be proud of." *Happy Purim!*

**Foster / Gloucester Jewish population survey confirms lack of Foster Gloucester Jewish community**

FOSTER/GLOUCESTER — A small Jewish demographic study conducted in the small towns of Foster/Gloucester in Northern Rhode Island has confirmed the number of Jews living in that area at 3. The research was done after wild speculation had resulted in varying figures as to the number, ranging from 2 to 6, or up to a 100% differential. *Happy Purim!*

**"Talking Sharon Doll" to be unveiled?**

MONTREAL — Canadian toy manufacturers are rumored to unveil a new "Talking Sharon Doll" at an upcoming toy fair. The toy, which resembled the stout Israeli Prime Minister wearing a gray business suit, comes with an Atkins Weight Loss

book and a detachable yarmulke. When the string is pulled, the talking Sharon has one of two prerecorded statements to make: "We will never give up the settlements" or "We must remove the settlements immediately." *Happy Purim!*

### Federation

**JV&H to use "news bike"**

PROVIDENCE — It's not a newscopter, but it'll have to do. To boost delivery efficiency, the Jewish Voice & Herald will utilize a customized dirt bike to aid in door-to-door distribution. The "JV&H news Huffy" will contain delivery bags on either side of the frame, will be painted blue and white and will have a range of 7 miles per 200 calories burned. It will also sport a shiny new bell. *Happy Purim!*

**Men's alliance lays out next year's events**

PROVIDENCE — Not to be outdone by the Women's Alliance's recent yoga, "Mar-tea-ni" night or knitting program to clothe Russian Jews, the Men's Alliance has laid out its next year's plans of events, which will include intergenerational paintball matches, interfaith arm wrestling, cigar making (and smoking), and beer brewing (and tasting). See last issue for fewer details. *Happy Purim!*

**Anonymous donor lends name to "Anonymous Jewish Community Campus"**

Taking into account the Jewish belief that anonymous giving is one of the most positive ways to give charity, the newly proposed campus has received a \$10 million anonymous donation. In turn, the campus, which will house many of the major Jewish agencies in Rhode Island, will now be called the "Mr. and Mrs. Anonymous Jewish Community Campus." *Happy Purim!*

### World

**Bush bans carbonated soda, words more than 10 letters long**  
WASHINGTON — Call-

ing it his "clean up house initiative," President Bush has banned the sale of carbonated soda, calling it the "beverage of Beelzebub," and ordered that all words that were 10 or more letters long be removed from the dictionary, which will henceforth be called the "word book." The President remarked at a recent press conference that "American brains have more better things to focus on than tricky words." *Happy Purim!*

**Israel ponders new fence ideas**

ISRAEL — Responding to international pressure on the construction of its "security fence," Israel is entertaining some other options to use as boundaries. Ideas of an "invisible fence" were quickly shot down at a recent Knesset meeting, as were clotheslines and chain link fences with basketball hoops. "The white picket fence has become very popular," a senior Israeli official said recently "because it would be nice if things just settled down on both sides and we had lemonade." *Happy Purim!*

**TOP TEN LEAST FAVORITE BAR/BAT MITZVAH THEMES**

10. The Spanish Inquisition
9. Nature's gifts: brussel sprouts
8. Asceticism
7. The pains of puberty
6. Laundry day
5. 14<sup>th</sup> century Bavarian Rabbi Yoel ben Yitzchok Halpern
4. Jewish Kickboxing Legend(s)
3. Mel Gibson's "The Passion"
2. The Trials of Job
1. Spam

Contributing writers: Sara Masri, Rachel Siegal, Jonathan Rubin



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## 'Exodus II Proposal' shocks community

By Marty Cooper

In a surprising development, organizers of the Partnership program, which is designed to unify the Rhode Island Jewish community, did an about face and have now come up with a new recommendation to build a stronger community.

The proposal, tentatively designated "Exodus II," calls for a majority of the Providence County Jewish population to move south to Warwick, East Greenwich and North

Kingstown. Jews in Cranston will not be asked to relocate. The recently completed demographic study indicates that "southern migration" is already the primary method of Jewish community growth in this area, and will speed up this process fivefold.

Families wishing to participate in the "second Exodus" will be eligible to receive grant money ranging from \$500 to \$2,500, depending upon need and location of move. A move to East Greenwich for instance, may result in a \$2500 grant as real estate is quite high in that region. A move to Exeter, on the other hand, may earn up to \$500. A local moving company has already been contacted and is willing to provide a discount of 5-10% off regular terms to help defray incurred moving expenses.

Under this proposal the Federation, as well as the Jewish Community Center and Bureau of Jewish Education, will remain in Providence so that everyone can "share in the burden of driving north to meetings and social events." However, as part of the greater scheme, Partnership leadership suggests that a new "satellite Federation" building be constructed at Quonset Point in North Kingstown. (Quonset Point is located on Narragansett Bay with easy access from route 4 south).

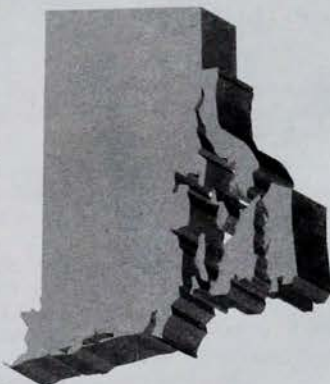
The Exodus II plan also calls for a private new beach located

**WARNING: PURIM ARTICLES ARE NOT TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY, OR INTERNALLY.**

near Bonnet Shores. The beach will include a spa, whirlpool, steam room and kosher snack bar.

The proposal also calls for a new Hillel at URI. This will be located on approximately five acres of land and include a new Jewish Day School, which will incorporate the South County Hebrew School. A Jewish Community Center in Westerly is also being discussed.

*Besides being a very funny guy, Marty Cooper is a Cranston-based business consultant and a member of the Jewish Voice & Herald editorial board and business committee.*



## Purim

### Sava on Aliyah: Get me outta here!

Many of you have become familiar with my owner Alison through her "Alison on Aliyah columns," in the *Jewish Voice & Herald*.



Sava

Well, she's gone to bed for the evening so I feel as though I can speak freely.

I have determined that, while making aliyah (moving to Israel) is a wonderful thing for humans, it stinks for dogs.

For humans, making aliyah means moving to your homeland, learning the language, eating native foods and feeling as though you belong. For a dog - quite the opposite.

First of all, there is this learning the language thing. I am half cocker spaniel and half

poodle, meaning I am half English and half French, but asking me to tackle Hebrew as well is too much to bear.

I cannot make those "ch" noises, reading right to left is too confusing and I do not know why people keep yelling "kelev" at me. At least Alison can go to ulpan classes and practice conversational Hebrew with other people. All she does for me is leave copies of Ha'aretz and the Jerusalem Post around, but I think she wants me to pee on them and not read them.

Now for the food. For humans, the food seems pretty good - lots of fruit, vegetables, yogurt, etc. I, on the other hand, am not amused. I fully understand this whole kosher thing, but kosher kibble... kosher rawhide... kosher pig's ears - this is taking things too far. If I have to eat one more bite of "Ch"ibbles and Bits or Purina Pupik Chow, I think I will go insane.

Last is this feeling of belonging. In the States, I had my

friends, my dog walking park, frequent grooming, etc. Here, the streets are a tough place to be. There are many stray dogs and cats, and, frankly, I think even the kittens could take me in a fight. In the park, all the other dogs speak Hebrew and I do not feel as though I am part of their clique. I yearn to see my friends in the Elmgrove Park once again.

If anyone reading this wants to help me, there are a few things that would make my life here easier (please send any and all of them):

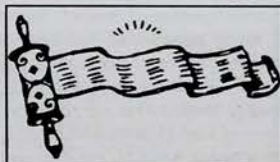
- Real dog food
- Berlitz Hebrew for Hounds tapes
- A one way plane ticket back to Providence

I am counting on you all to lend me a paw!!!!

*Sava, formerly of Pawtucket and Seattle, is a cockapoo living in Jerusalem.*

## Purim is the time to...

### SUNDAY, MARCH 7, 2004



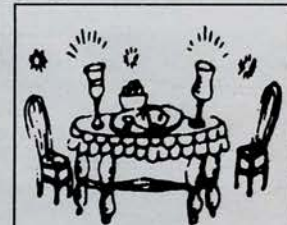
**LISTEN** to the reading of the *Megilla* (Book of Esther) this year 2004, Saturday eve, March 6, and again on Sunday, March 7, thereby recounting and reliving in our own day, the great miracle of Purim.



**SEND** a gift of at least two kinds of prepared food (pastry, fruit, beverage, etc.) to at least one friend. (Each item of food should be at least one ounce or more. 3-1/2 oz. for liquids.



**GIVE** charity to two or more people. If you cannot find poor people, place at least two coins in a charity box. In the Megillah this is called "*Matanos L'Evyonim*".



**EAT** the festive Purim meal and rejoice in the Purim spirit.

The above Mitzvos should be done on the day of Purim

## More Purim information

### FAST OF ESTHER

Because Purim is Sunday, we therefore fast on the Thursday before. (This year March 4.) This commemorates the day of prayer when Jews fasted before their victorious battle. It is customary, before the *Mincha* prayers on this day to give 3 half-dollars to charity. This commemorates the yearly contribution by all Jews to the Temple in the Hebrew month of Adar.

### AL HANISSIM

Remember to add in the *Amidah* prayer and in Grace After Meals, the special part for Purim, beginning "*Al Hanissim*".

### PURIM ON SUNDAY

So as not to desecrate the Shabbos, all Purim activities should begin only after the conclusion of Shabbos, March 6, at 6:40 p.m. in Providence.

### INVOLVE THE CHILDREN

As in all Mitzvot, encourage young children to fulfill the Purim Mitzvot. Boys and girls past Bar/Bat Mitzvah are obligated, as are adults to do all Purim Mitzvot.

The Purim Mitzvos (Precepts) demonstrate the unity and togetherness of the Jewish people. The more charity and Purim presents one gives the better. There is no greater joy than to gladden the heart of the poor, the orphans and the widows.



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## World

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## As Haiti burns, its few Jews choose business over politics

By Larry Luxner

PETIONVILLE, Haiti (JTA) — Haiti today has no more than 50 Jews out of a total population of 8.5 million. Most of the Jews who used to live here have fled to the United States, Panama and elsewhere in recent years in the face of crushing poverty and worsening violence.

In the past week, more than 40 people have been killed and hundreds injured in protests that toppled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, is a former priest who spent four years in Israel studying theology and speaks six languages, including Hebrew. He already was overthrown once before, in 1991, but returned to the presidency three years later under the protection of U.S. Marines.

Not much is known about Haiti's Jewish history except that Luis de Torres, the interpreter of Christopher Columbus, was the first Jew to set foot in Haiti, in 1492.

The first Jewish immigrants came from Brazil in the 17th century, after Haiti was conquered



HAITIAN LEADER — Gilbert Bigio, leader of Haiti's tiny Jewish community, holds a Torah scroll in front of his home in Port-au-Prince, Nov. 12, 2003.

Larry Luxner/JTA Photo

by the French. These Marranos were all murdered or expelled — along with the rest of the white population — during Toussaint L'Ouverture's slave revolt in 1804.

Archaeologists have discovered the remains of a synagogue in Jeremie, a city along Haiti's southern peninsula that was home to many mixed-race families of Jewish origin. There also are vague historical references to Jewish tombstones in the port cities of Cap Haitien and Jacmel.

Gaston Michel, a local tourism official in Jacmel who claims Jewish roots, says, "The Jews in Haiti had to hide their Judaism. You couldn't go to school if you weren't Catholic."

By the end of the 19th century, however, Sephardi Jews began arriving from Lebanon, Egypt and Syria. In 1937, Haitian officials — like their counterparts in the neighboring Dominican Republic — began issuing pass-

ports to Eastern European Jews fleeing the Nazis.

Many of those grateful Ashkenazim stayed until the late 1950s.

Gilbert Bigio, the community's de facto leader, says that at one time as many as 300 Jews lived in Haiti.

"Every Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, our house was completely full," recalled Bigio, who noted that until recently all religious ceremonies were held at his home.

But attendance for the High Holidays has gradually dwindled along with Haiti's Jewish population.

"The last Jewish wedding here was my daughter's, eight years ago, and the last *brit mila* was that of my son, 30 years ago," he says.

Bigio, 68, lives in a big, beautiful house in Petionville, one of the few upscale neighborhoods in

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## World Briefs

### Israel asks U.S. Egypt help in Gaza

The United States and Egypt want to know more about Israel's proposal for Egypt to help secure Gaza after an Israeli withdrawal. Dov Weisglass, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's chief of staff, and Giora Eiland, Sharon's national security adviser, discussed the idea Monday in meetings with Condoleezza Rice, President Bush's national security adviser, and U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell. The Israelis are ready for a total withdrawal, but say they need Egyptian help to keep arms smugglers from crossing the Gaza-Egypt border.

### Israel: Settlers must go

Israeli settlers at six illegal outposts in the West Bank have until Thursday to evacuate, state prosecutors said. After then, the prosecutors told the High Court of Justice on Tuesday, settlers at Hazon David, Tal Binyamin, Bat Ayin West, Ginot Aryeh, Havat Shaked and Havat Maon will be evacuated by force. The prosecution's statement came after the High Court rejected a settler petition against the evacuation order issued in January.



**PAINFUL PREDICTION** — A top Reform rabbi is predicting the death of Conservative Judaism, drawing protests from the Conservative movement's leadership. The objections surfaced this week in response to an essay by Rabbi Paul Menitoff, executive vice president of the Reform movement's Central Conference of American Rabbis. The essay argued that within several decades Conservative Jews likely will move either to the more liberal Reform movement or to the more traditional Orthodox world.

JTA Photo

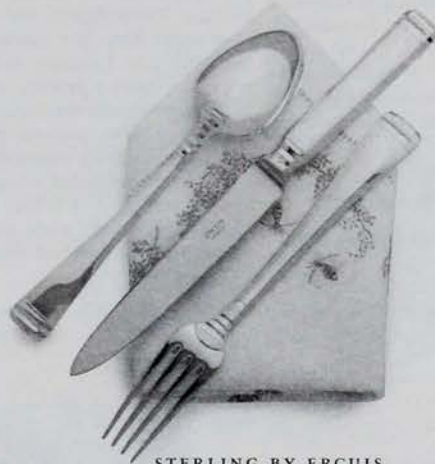
### Let's talk yarmulkes

The French Senate began debating a bill Tuesday calling for the banning of all conspicuous religious signs in state schools. A large majority is expected to support for the bill, which would ban Muslim head scarves, yarmulkes and large crosses from school premises. Senators are to vote Wednesday on a text that was accepted last month by the National Assembly, the lower house of the French legislature. Supported by both government and opposition parties, the bill could become law at the beginning of the next academic year. Muslim and Christian groups have expressed strong reservations about the legislation, but French Jewish groups largely have welcomed it.

### Judas on the air

ABC will broadcast "Judas," a made-for-TV movie, next week. The two-hour movie, to be shown at 9 p.m. on March 8, will focus on the figure who, according to the New Testament, betrayed Jesus.

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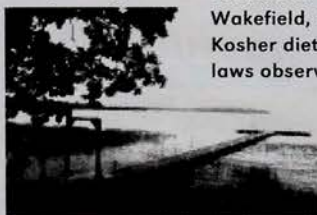


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**APRIL** *Iyar*

Date: Thursday, April 22, 2004

Time: 7:00 - 9:00 pm

Location: Congregation Beth Shalom

275 Camp Street, Providence, RI

Cost: \$5, dessert included

Presenter: Alison Rose, Ph.D.

University of Rhode Island

Topic: "Golda Meir: Mother of a Nation"

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## Israel

### West Bank sweep

Israeli troops killed a Palestinian terrorist in a West Bank sweep. Witnesses described the man shot dead in Tulkarm refugee camp on Wednesday as a member of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, an armed group in Yasser Arafat's Fatah faction. A bystander was hurt in the shooting. The army also arrested 16 Palestinian fugitives in the West Bank overnight.

### Backlash over Tannenbaum

An Israeli businessman suspected of collaborating with Hezbollah while in Lebanese captivity was linked to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. *Maariv* newspaper reported on Wednesday that Elhanan Tannenbaum, who has been under Shin Bet interrogation since the Lebanese militia released him in a prisoner swap in January, was the son-in-law of a former Sharon business partner. Tannenbaum, a reserve artillery colonel and failed entrepreneur, is suspected of falling into Hezbollah's hands while on an illegal business deal and divulging military secrets to the militia.

Upon his release Sharon raised eyebrows by ordering that he be treated gently by the Shin Bet. On Wednesday, the prime minister denied knowing of his indirect ties to Tannenbaum and dismissed the *Maariv* story as a "wild attack".

### Gunned down in Gaza

A Palestinian journalist and Yasser Arafat loyalist was gunned down in Gaza City. Palestinian police had no immediate suspects in the slaying of Khalil Zebin, 59, outside his office Tuesday. The

killing comes amid increasing evidence of lawlessness in Palestinian-populated areas. Palestinian journalists increasingly have come under attack in Gaza by gangs believed to be linked to the Palestinian Authority president's Fatah movement, who are unhappy with media criticism of the dominant faction. Arafat called the incident a "filthy assassination."

### West Bank man killed

Israeli forces killed a Palestinian man who tried to resist arrest. It was not immediately

clear if the 27-year-old man killed in a village near Hebron on Tuesday was wanted by Israel. Witnesses said villagers rioted after his killing, pelting Israeli troops with rocks.

### Unjust desert

The bodies of an Israeli couple were found in the Sinai Desert. On Tuesday, Egypt confirmed that two corpses discovered by Bedouins in a remote area three weeks ago belonged to a pair of missing Israelis. The couple apparently got lost while hiking in the popular vacation spot in January. Authorities said the couple appeared to have died from dehydration, not violence. The bodies were to be repatriated later this week.

### Victim's wedding dress becomes Torah cover

The wedding dress that an Israeli terror victim never got to wear was remade into a curtain for a Torah ark. A ceremony Thursday will mark the transformation of Nava Applebaum's dress, which will be used at Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem. At the ceremony, the Kever Rachel Fund will establish a fund for Israeli couples who are having trouble paying for a wedding and the costs of setting up a house. Applebaum was killed on the eve of her wedding, along with her father and five others, in a September 2003 suicide bombing at a cafe. Checks for the fund can be sent to Kever Rachel Fund, P.O. Box 1181, Teaneck, N.J., 07666.

### Settlements grow

Construction in Israeli settlements increased by 35 percent in 2003, Israel said. The findings published by the Central Bureau of Statistics on Tuesday ran counter to an overall slump in Israeli residential development — as well as the U.S.-led "road map" peace plan, which calls for a halt to settlement expansion. Earlier figures showed that the settler population is growing steadily thanks to a combination of ideological drive and cheap housing.

### Sharon seeking Bush backing

Ariel Sharon will seek U.S. approval this month for his plan to withdraw from the Gaza Strip. Israel's prime minister would like to complete the plan before "his meeting with President Bush at the end of March in Washington," Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom told reporters Monday in London. "He has said he will not do it unless it will be agreed with the Americans first." The Bush administration has responded positively to Sharon's proposal to dismantle 17 of the 21 Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip but cautioned against resettling residents in the West Bank.



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## Community



**CUT IT OUT** — Ried and Mindy Redlich, from Cumberland, work with their children Sarah, 12, and Alysa, 10, making Hamantaschen at the Phyllis Siperstein Tamarisk Enriched Assisted Living facility Feb. 22. The event, which produced more than 1,000 hamantaschen to be distributed to area seniors, was a partnership between the Women's Alliance of the Jewish Federation and the Jewish Seniors Agency.

Photo by Rachel Siegal

## B'nai Israel kicks off membership drive

### Wine tasting, costume party

**WOONSOCKET** — Congregation B'nai Israel in Woonsocket has announced the kickoff to its 2004 membership drive. New members who join through April are being offered special introductory membership rates or free Hebrew School tuition for the first year. Interfaith families are welcome.

March programs include the March 6 Purim Megilla reading and costume party; March 12 "Shabbat Across America" dinner and services; March 20 evening of

Passover wine tasting; and March 28 Rosh Hodesh group "Surviving Passover Cooking" program. See Calendar for details. Congregation B'nai Israel is at 224 Prospect St., Woonsocket. Call the Synagogue office at 762-3651.

#### Jewish Music Group Auditions

A new Jewish musical group is being formed at Congregation B'nai Israel. This group is looking for vocalists and instrumentalists to perform on holidays and special occasions. Performers of

all abilities are encouraged to audition. For more information, call Itzik at (401) 474-4280.

# I Remember.

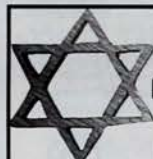


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## Can you tell me how to get to Easy Street?

### Financial planners advise you to start when you're young

By Mary Korr

It's a lot easier to get to Easy Street if you start when you're young and watching "Sesame Street." Prospective parents: Birth is not too early to begin. Setting up a 529 college savings plan offered by most states, in which your investment grows free from federal income taxes, and distributions for qualified higher education expenses are now federal income tax-free, is a good idea.

"By the time a child earns an allowance, he or she should be banking 10 percent of it," said Frederick Harkins, an investment representative at Edward Jones on the East Side.

He has taught his two young sons to budget their allowance: for spending, short- and long-term savings and a portion for charity.

Not that they always follow these rules. He advises parents to let their children make their own mistakes and live with the consequences. "My 10-year-old saves every penny," he said. "My 12-year-old is a spendthrift." When the younger recently saved for three months and bought a

video game, the older learned a lesson. When the older suggested dad use a credit card to buy him a video game system, he learned another. "They have to learn there's real money behind a credit card swipe," Harkins said.

"I have clients who make \$90,000 a year and ask me why they have no money in the bank," he said.

"I tell people to start saving right out of college when they're making

Association of Retired Persons (AARP). When they first contacted her, they asked her to formulate a workshop for those over 55. Too late, she told them. Two years later, they called her again and asked her to give a mother-daughter workshop.

"The younger someone starts,



**Because of the power of compounding interest, the sooner you start to invest, the more likely you'll be able to reach your financial goals.** Edward Jones

money," said Laurie Turchetti, a financial services representative at MBF, Inc. in Providence. She said the first thing a young worker should do is maximize their company's retirement plan and then start an IRA for themselves or their spouse.

She has given financial planning workshops for the American

it's a nice habit they get into. People don't plan to fail, they fail to plan," she said.

#### Time is on your side

Harkins illustrates the power of compounding and tax deferral. If an investor at age 18 put \$1,000 away, it would rise to \$452,901 over 47 years at an 8 percent rate of return. If that same investor contributed \$2,000 over the same time period and with the same rate of return, the figure reaches \$905,802. Triple the contribution to \$3,000 with the same parameters and it rises to \$1.3 million.

See EASY STREET, facing page

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**Financial Planning****How to get to Easy Street?**

From page 12

In "Pocket Watch," a newsletter sent to clients from the law firm of Audette, Bazar, Berren & Gonzalez, Inc. in East Providence, there is a recent article that states many people are afflicted by "Tomorrowitis" (procrastination). "Unfortunately, most people spend more time packing their luggage than they do making proper estate plans."

Most people agree that they

need financial planning, according to Ann B. Diamond, a chartered financial consultant in New York City who conducts corporate seminars in financial management. Some of her clients include: Citibank, Estee Lauder, Coach, Clinique, Time Warner, Swiss Bank, Colgate Palmolive, BBDO, The New York Times, The 92nd Street Y, Speaking of Women's Health and Dress for Success.

"The biggest mistake I hear people say initially is: 'Show me investments that are going to make me a lot of money.'"

Financial planning is life planning and setting

goals. The investment must fit the goal," Diamond said.

**Keep a log**

Her book, *No More Fear of Finance*, suggests keeping a log as the first step in gaining control over your finances. Until you are confident about your cash flow, how can you put aside money to fund the things you want for your future — a home, an education for your children, a retirement fund, she writes. When you know how the money is spent you can make choices; continue on the same path, modify some expenses, eliminate others. "What is important is the feeling of security you get by taking positive steps to make your dreams come true," she said.

Once you have a plan, it must be reviewed at least annually, says Turchetti. The following instances also call for a review: Marriage or divorce; death of a spouse; large change in estate size; death of an executor, trustee or guardian; birth of a child; serious illness of a family member; retirement or change in business interest; change in insurability; or change in tax law.



It can never be too early to start saving for your children and retirement. Photo courtesy of Edward Jones



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# Up, up and away — R.I. home prices soar

By Mary Korr

PROVIDENCE — The Rhode Island real estate market surpassed all previous years in 2003, with a record \$3.4 billion in sales, as compared to \$2.8 billion the previous year.

Most of the sales were for single-family homes.

It topped the nation in price appreciation as well, with many areas up 20 percent and more. Westerly was up a commanding 30.61 percent from the year before; Narragansett home prices appreciated over 29 percent.

Last year there were 118 homes in the state that sold for over a million dollars, said David Godden, president of the Rhode Island Association of Realtors, Inc. He is managing partner of Randall, Realtors/GMAC.

That's one of those good news-bad news scenarios, depending if you're buying or selling.

First, the good news for buyers: Mortgage rates remain low, in the 5.5-5.8 percent range, which should continue during a presidential election year. And the lower the mortgage payment, the more expensive home you can afford. "A first-time buyer in the \$200,000 range with lower interest rates can now afford a \$300,000 home," Godden said.

The median sales price of a home in Rhode Island — with half the prices sold higher and half lower — is \$230,000. The average price is \$282,212.

When asked how children could afford homes in the communities they grew up in, Godden

answered, "Well, they're not going to buy their first home in Barrington (median price, \$359,000)."

Add to that East Greenwich: \$426,250, Little Compton: \$410,000, the East Side: \$392,625, Jamestown: \$385,500, Narragansett: \$347,259.

The realtors' association



David Godden

expects home price increases to moderate somewhat in 2004, but still show strong appreciation. The consensus among housing and mortgage economists is that if the national economy and job market continue on the road to recovery, residential real estate should continue to be a very solid performer.

According to Godden, "This year should be an excellent year for sellers to sell and for buyers to buy. Sellers will benefit from high home prices and the exclusion

of capital gains on home sales while buyers will benefit from the still historically low interest rates, the deductibility of property tax and the consistent steady gain in housing appreciation."

### Inventory

The inventory of homes for sale typically increases as spring approaches, but Rhode Island supply is tight, with many towns having no more land to build on. And it's becoming more competitive. One factor is the Boston buyers, who are coming down here because the house prices there are much higher (median price above \$450,000). "Providence is becoming a suburb of Boston," he said. People drive or take the train in Providence or South Attleboro.

### Warwick tops sales

Warwick was the hottest market in Rhode Island last year, followed by Cranston and Providence.

"People realize we have value in Warwick," said Norman Tobin of Real Estate Masters, Inc., in Warwick; he's been selling houses there for 24 years. "Typically, we are cheaper than neighboring Cowesett and Cranston. We have decent schools, a fair tax and a stable government," he said.

Many of the homes there are three-bedroom ranches built after World War II. "It was called track housing. Prices range from \$180,000-\$220,000," Tobin said anything listed in that price range flies. "People want to live in a nice neighborhood that's safe, close to a school so their children can wait for the bus without worry. A lot of couples are looking for a three-

bedroom with a nice backyard," he said.

Banks are offering favorable packages to buyers with good credit ratings, he said; and some will finance the down-payment as well.

Bonnie Kaplan, sales associate at Coldwell Banker in East Greenwich, recorded a best-in-the-company record last year of \$11 million. She sells primarily in the Warwick, East Greenwich, North Kingston areas.

She uses the example of an Amgen executive who is relocating here. What corporate families look for are upscale, four-bedroom homes with granite countertops, open floor plans, neutral colors, big Jacuzzis; these start in the \$600,000 range. "They buy in North Kingston because they don't want to commute, the homes are new, and the schools are good."

She said most buyers, especially in that market, are savvy shoppers who research the towns and real estate on the Internet. Other realtors interviewed for this article also stated that the Internet is now a very effective consumer and marketing tool. "Especially with young buyers," Tobin said.

When they see the sticker price in Rhode Island, some buyers are depressed, while others are elated. "It all depends on where they're coming from," Kaplan said. "My favorite client is from California, or Connecticut."

She has one client who has been renting for a year in hopes the selling prices in South County will drop. So far, that hasn't happened.

"Most economists believe house appreciation will continue in 2004," Godden said.

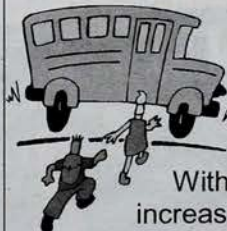


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## Financial Planning

### Shopping for long-term care insurance

By Mary Korr

When Alzheimer's Disease (AD) struck my mother-in-law, we were unprepared. By the time she was diagnosed, she was in the mid-stage of the disease. It seemed to us as if she fell off the planet — one day we were at a family wedding with her and several months later she was in an Alzheimer's unit in a Pawtucket nursing home, where she lived for over seven years.

The worst part for family members of AD patients is to watch the excruciatingly progressive degeneration that can take years. We were happy she was here in Rhode Island. Her environment was homey. The Jewish Eldercare of Rhode Island outreach program paid regular visits; as did our rabbi, Jim Rosenberg of Temple Habonim.

It took several years for her to run through her assets, saved over a lifetime; the federal pension she received each month went directly for her care. She was a brilliant and thrifty woman with a firm economic grasp who lived through the Great Depression. She would have been shocked to see the price-tag of about \$150 a day for a nursing home bed in a semi-private room. That was several years ago; today the average price for a nursing home bed is \$181 for a private room.

By the time she died, the total cost for her care was almost \$400,000.

Currently, the average annual cost for a resident in a nursing home nationwide is above \$54,000. A private room averages \$66,000 a year, according to a survey in 2003 by Metropolitan Life. Alzheimer units are even

more.

According to an article in the February issue of *Fidelity Outlook*, frequently those who buy LTC insurance are "children of parents who have been in nursing homes and know firsthand what can happen when you don't plan ahead."

Count me as one of them.

According to Lynn Pohl, a licensed long-term care insurance agent with an office in Providence, a recent survey by the Center for Aging Research and Education shows that only seven percent of baby boomers in America have purchased the insurance to cover long-term health care needs they may have in the future.

Pohl says many people think Medicare will pay these expenses. "Too often, the answer is no," she states. "Medicare only pays for the first 20 days in a nursing home following a qualifying hospital stay. There is a \$105 daily co-pay for days 21 through 100. After that, the patient pays 100 percent of the costs. Medicaid is only available to those who have exhausted their personal resources."

Here's another rule of thumb — if Medicare doesn't cover, Medigap won't either.

There are penalties if you try to hide assets — you have to supply your income tax information for the previous three years, so assets cannot quickly be transferred when someone becomes ill with a chronic condition.

One of the benefits of LTC insurance, then, is that an individual does not have to spend down their assets to use it. The premiums may be partially tax

deductible. New rules make it hard to qualify for Medicaid.

The Massachusetts Division of Insurance Consumer Service offers the following recommendations when considering if LTC insurance is right for you. You should not buy LTC insurance if:

- You can't afford the premiums.
- You have limited assets.
- Your only source of income is a Social Security benefit (SSI).
- You often have trouble paying for utilities, food or medicine.

You should consider buying LTC insurance if:

- You have significant assets and income you want to protect.
- You want to pay for your own care.
- You want to stay independent of the support of others.

LTC insurance is typically bought by those 45 or older. But LTC costs can arise at any age, from accidents, genetic diseases, etc. Naturally the younger you are, the lower the premium. Someone in their 40s may pay several hundred dollars a year, while someone in their 70s may pay several thousand dollars a month.

In November 2003, *Consumer Reports* looked at 47 policies offered by seven companies in California, the state with the largest amount of elderly persons. It pointed out the pros and cons. "If premiums rise sharply, you may have to abandon the policy," the article stated. "There is no

See LONG TERM CARE, page 16



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## FINANCIAL PLANNING

# Insurers deny life insurance to those traveling to Israel

NEW YORK (JTA) — As a young, newly married professional with a baby daughter, Adam Segal decided to take out a life insurance policy.

A senior associate at the Washington public-relations firm of Rabinowitz Media and a lecturer at Johns Hopkins University, Segal, 26, figured his youth and good health made him a routine candidate.

In October he applied for life insurance from Fidelity Investments. In the process, he was asked if he had recently traveled abroad or planned to do so.

Segal wrote that he and his wife had visited Israel on their honeymoon at the end of 2002.

In early November, a Fidelity senior manager notified Segal that his application had been denied "due to past travel to Jerusalem and Tel Aviv."

It turns out Fidelity will not insure anyone who recently has visited a country where the U.S. State Department has a travel advisory, or who plans to

do so soon, spokesman Vincent Laporchio told JTA.



ADAM SEGAL, 26, was denied a life insurance policy because he had traveled in the past to Israel.

JTA Photo

Fidelity isn't alone: Some other leading insurance providers also refuse to sell life insurance to anyone traveling to Israel or any of the 28 areas on the State Department's advisory list, which includes Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Libya, the Palestinian territories, Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

Fidelity's rejection stunned Segal, who called the policy on Israel "outrageous."

Indeed, officials of several

U.S. Jewish organizations said they had heard recently of American Jews being denied life insurance if they plan to visit Israel in the near future.

The Jewish Council for Public Affairs, the umbrella organization of local Jewish community relations councils, has received reports from about a dozen JCRCs over the past year about insurance rejections, according to Ethan Felson, JCPA's assistant executive director.

In 1996, following criticism from several members of Congress and New York state legislators, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company lifted a ban on policies for people who frequently visit Israel or remain there for extended periods.

Today, Felson and other Jewish officials say they can't object to insurers who deny life insurance policies to those who plan to visit Israel or other U.S.-designated hot spots — but they do object to those that deny policies based on applicants' past trips.

## Yiddish guide to retiring

By Les Abromovitz

When I help my Mom with her banking, she'll invariably talk to me in Yiddish to avoid anyone overhearing the details of her financial situation. Unfortunately, I'm in the dark as well, just as when I was growing up and she and my Dad spoke Yiddish at the dinner table to avoid disclosure of secrets they wanted to keep.

Mom did, however, teach me one Yiddish phrase that I always think about when I'm writing about retirement planning topics, *aroysgesvorfn gelt*. According to Mom and various Yiddish dictionaries, the phrase means "a waste of money," "a useless purchase," or "an investment that did not prove fruitful." You can probably retire sooner and enjoy a more satisfying retirement if you avoid situations that turn out to be *aroysgesvorfn gelt*.

For example, it's *aroysgesvorfn gelt* for employees to pass up their employer's contribution to their 401(k) or some other retirement savings plan. Typically, employers contribute 50 cents for each dollar employees save, up to 6 percent of their salary. You should try to contribute at least enough to receive the full matching contribution. If you pass up this free money, in *mitn dirinen*, you will reach retirement age and won't have saved a dime.

### Take the tax breaks

It's also *aroysgesvorfn gelt* to pass up tax breaks. IRAs, 401ks and other retirement savings plans now have higher limits. If you're age 50 or older, you can put away even more money in these accounts and save more for retirement. The Roth IRA enables you to save for the future and qualified distributions will be tax-free, as long as you're 59 1/2 and you've left the money in your account for

at least five years. Unlike the traditional IRA, you're not required to begin making withdrawals at age 70 1/2.

### Asset allocation

In addition, it's *aroysgesvorfn gelt* to ignore the asset allocation strategy. The asset allocation strategy keeps you from being a *chozzer*, even if you greedily want to ride the stock market to its highest peak. It forces you to diversify your assets, instead of going for broke by putting all of your money in the stock market.

The asset allocation strategy requires you to rebalance periodically and shift assets from one class to another.

Assuming you've bought shares of well-managed companies and mutual funds, it's *aroysgesvorfn gelt* to sell off your portfolio during a bear market because you're short of cash. Let's say you need \$60,000 to live on after taxes each year. If Social Security benefits, a pension check and other income amount to \$40,000 yearly, you have \$20,000 worth of living expenses to worry about. By having five years of living expenses in investments you can get at without losing money, you won't be forced to liquidate your stock portfolio when equities are doing poorly. You'll be able to ride out even a lengthy bear market.

As Mom would say, planning for retirement doesn't have to give you *kopdreyenish*. You can enjoy a long, healthy retirement, *keyn eynbore*, with plenty of *gelt* to pursue your dreams. My dream is to learn Yiddish one day.

Les Abromovitz, an attorney, is the author of a new book, *Protecting and Rebuilding Your Retirement* (AMACOM 2003). He is also the author of *Long-Term Care Insurance Made Simple* (Health Information Press 1999).

## Shopping for long-term care insurance

From page 15

good time to buy. Premiums escalate as you age. For example, a plan that costs a 50-year-old \$1,625 annually will run a 60-year-old \$3,100 and a 70-year-old \$7,575. If you wait to buy at 65, you may not pass the medical exam; 25 percent of people in that age group flunk; at 75 it's one in three.

With those caveats in mind, Consumer Reports recommended:

- Look for a strong insurer with a good rating. Check ratings from A. M. Best [www.ambest.com](http://www.ambest.com); Moody's [www.moody.com](http://www.moody.com); Standard & Poor's [www.standardpoors.com](http://www.standardpoors.com); and Weiss [www.weissratings.com](http://www.weissratings.com). The first three are free sites; Weiss charges \$7.95 for each rating online.

In addition to age, the cost of LTC insurance depends on the lifetime cash benefit, the coverage the policy affords (for ex. 70 percent of daily costs or 100 percent of daily costs); the benefit period you choose (number of years), flexible health care coverage (home care, adult day care, assisted living, nursing home); whether it is guaranteed renewable or non-cancelable, and whether it has non-forfeiture benefits (which returns a portion of premiums or keeps a lesser amount of insurance in force if

you let the policy lapse).

The usual elimination period is 30 days before benefits are payable. There are also inflation riders and cost of living increase riders a consumer can buy. While a longer elimination period may be cheaper, factor in the cost of inflation. A nursing home bed that today costs \$181 a day, could cost \$538 in 20 years. The best policies offer a 5 percent compounded interest rate.

Most insurance kicks in if you are qualified to receive assistance with two or more "activities of daily living" or ADLs (bathing, dressing, eating, etc.). Skilled care is provided on a doctor's order by medical personnel.

Your workplace may offer a LTC insurance policy, as well as fraternal or organizational groups, such as the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), which offers a policy through MetLife.

### Other products

Insurance products to cover LTC are evolving. The Beaulieu Financial group in Warwick is offering a universal life insurance policy with a choice of life-care benefit riders through John Hancock Insurance Co.

"The combination of life insurance and long-term care coverage lets you use all, some, or none of your life insurance ben-

efits to cover your long-term care costs, should the need arise. Any portion of your policy you don't use is paid as a life insurance benefit," said Ruth Baker, marketing representative for Beaulieu.

"As with other means of financing, you should check with your financial planner — either an estate lawyer or a qualified advisor — to determine the best course of action for someone in your specific circumstance," advises the Massachusetts Division of Insurance.

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## Jewish teens

From page 1

eighth-grade, said, "We could do political leaders. Evil could be Saddam Hussein. Simple is... that French guy. No capacity to understand would be George Bush and... I can't think of a wise one."

Discussions at the Harry Elkin Midrasha (HEM) Community High School aren't typical, and neither are the classes. But both are one of the reasons that the HEM is able to draw in 187 high school students from all over the state to learn about what makes Judaism, and Jews, tick.

The school meets in two locations; on Wednesdays, it meets at a synagogue in either Cranston or Warwick (this semester it's Temple Sinai in Cranston), and on Sunday mornings it's at Temple Emanu-El and the Alperin Schechter Day School in Providence. The largest number of students come from Providence (71) and the West Bay (62).

The school draws students from numerous synagogues that have agreed to support a community school for all students rather than work exclusively with members only. So far, five synagogues are participating — Temple Torat Yisrael, Congregation B'nai Israel, Congregation Agudas Achim, Temple Am David, Temple Emanu-El and Temple Sinai. Each donates at least one clergy hour per week in the classrooms. Students do not need to be members of any organization to take classes.

### Unconventional

To understand why so many high school students are eager to learn about Judaism during off-school hours, you need to understand the HEM environment.

A few Sundays ago, class began at 9:30 a.m., and students filed in. The perkier ones were ready to go, but some needed a little pick-me-up, provided by either the Dunkin' Donuts coffee they bring in with them, or the orange juice, muffins, Mountain Dew and Cokes on sale (in the spirit of *tzedakah*, all proceeds

are given to charity).

In between classes, students mill about in the halls, saying hi to one another and hugging the ones they usually only see at HEM. For most of them, it's the most Jewish faces they see all week.

"I go to a Catholic school," said Jessica Louise, 15, of Foxboro, Mass. When it comes to Jewish activity in her life, "this is it." She likes the social aspect of HEM, but also likes the classes.

"You get to hang out with other Jews here," said Andrea Cohen, of Warwick. "It's Jew time."

Rather than make students study the traditional way, with rote memorization and quizzes, HEM focuses on both process and the content. They use role-playing, simulations, case studies and self-evaluation as ways to making learning fun. The "quiet when I'm talking" atmosphere between student and teacher is less severe at HEM, and, because most classes are discussion-based, students have a lot of flexibility to say what's on their minds.

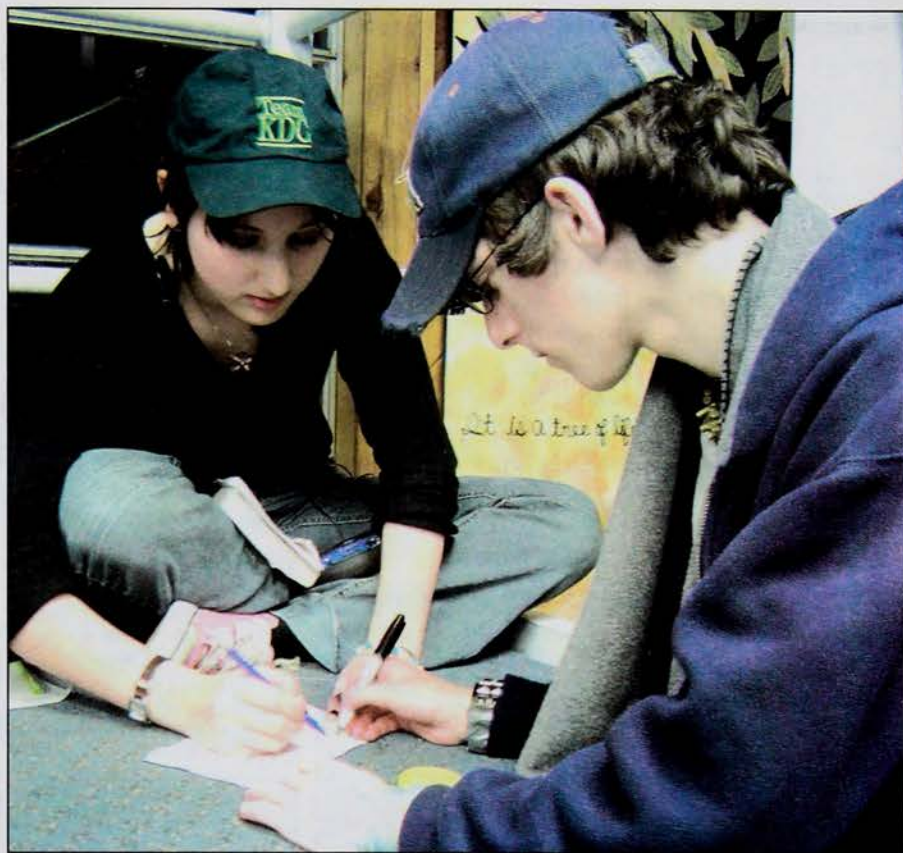
Take Susan Blitzsky's comparative religions class. To get the kids warmed up, Blitzsky, a social worker who lives in Providence, starts up an icebreaker called "a big wind blows," where students pose a question and then stand up if their answer is yes. After some laughs, they settle down and talk about one of the subjects that was brought up — Buddhism. "Why is a combination of Judaism and Buddhism very attractive to many Jews nowadays," Blitzsky asks.

"For some people, Judaism is an identity rather than something you practice," said Shira Adler, 11<sup>th</sup> grade, of Providence.

"My dad wants to be Buddhist, I think," one student added, somewhat sheepishly.

Other classes are much more focused on text study, such as capital punishment or ethics.

Ari Winkleman, 15, of Pawtucket, said he doesn't mind the classes because "You don't mem-



JESSICA LOUISE, left, of Foxboro, Mass., and Ari Winkleman, of Pawtucket, play tic-tac-toe in between classes at Temple Sinai in Cranston.

Photo by Jonathan Rubin

orize facts, you discuss them." Asked what classes he plans to take this year, he gives a typical sort of answer "anything by Steve Jablow."

Many students tend to follow their favorite teachers from class to class, whatever the topic — Jewish mysticism, the dueling between Rabbinic greats Hillel and Shammai, or even a new class, SimJudaism, where students create a theoretical Jewish community and try to make it thrive.

### Choices

Students can either take Sunday classes, Wednesday classes, or both, and receive degrees based on the number of classes attended. Years ago, both days were required, but the school changed its policy in recent years based on the ever-increasing extra curricular workload of students.

Emily Weintraub, 17, is active in theater and the school band. "[Midrasha] is fun, but I'm very busy," she said.

"It's more like college than anything else — you pick your own classes based on your interests" said Richard Walter, director of teen education at HEM. And, like college, classes are broken up into categories such as Bible, community service, ethics, arts & culture, Hebrew and history, and there are required classes such as Talmud as well. A few classes can be taken for college credit at Rhode Island College, although "some kids drop out of those when they see how much

work there is," Walter said.

Class size is in constant fluctuation, and Walter actively recruits at synagogues and at parlor meetings and open houses. "We need to do a better job of talking to the parents," Walter said. "Even as teenagers, kids still value their parents' opinions."

One of the challenges of the school, Walter said, is showing people that the school can handle a wide variety of Jewish backgrounds, from students with advanced instruction to those who have had less exposure. Besides clergy, HEM uses Brown students, educators, and professionals from a variety of backgrounds to teach.

Transportation is currently provided by bus from the Jewish Community Center in Providence to the Cranston / Warwick location on Wednesdays.

Besides striving to be enjoyable, many of the classes are used as preparation for other events, or for real life experiences. "Signs" focuses on Jewish approaches to hearing-impaired individuals, and while another focuses on events in the Middle East on a weekly basis, with two Israelis offering their opinions as well.

One class prepares students for the March of the Living trip, which joins Rhode Island teens with Jews from all over the United States in a powerful march through the concentration camps in Poland, and then takes them to Israel to see the Jewish

state so they can see Judaism thriving today.

"There are definitely some good classes," said James Rotenberg, of Providence. "They create an opportunity for kids to think about things without too much pressure."

### Fast Facts

**The Harry Elkin  
Midrasha Community  
High School**

**Established:** 1983

**Enrollment:** 187

**Classes meet:** Wednesdays 6:30 to 8:10 p.m. in Cranston, Sundays 9:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. in Providence

**Ages:** 8<sup>th</sup> grade to 12<sup>th</sup> grade

**Tuition:** Varies from \$275-\$415 annually for one class per week, and from \$440 to \$590 for two classes per week. Does not include registration fee. Discounts and scholarships are available.

**For more information:**

Richard Walter, 401-331-7961, or [rwalter@bjeri.org](mailto:rwalter@bjeri.org)



TAKE IT FROM THE TOP — Cantor Brian Meyer, of Temple Emanu-El, conducts at a choir practice class.

Photo by Mike Meyerheim



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## ASDS to host veteran religious educator

Veteran educator and author Dr. Saul Wacks will speak at the Alperin Schechter Day School edu-



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The keynote topic will be "The Dignity of Words."

Born in Philadelphia, Wacks has a BA in religious education from the Jewish Theological Seminary, earned a PhD in education at Ohio State University, and has completed post-doc studies at Hebrew University. His vast teaching experience spans more than five decades, and he is featured in "Whos' who in the world," "Who's who in America,"

"Who's Who in Religion" and "Who's who in American education."

He is also the author of "Talking to little children about God," "Teenagers, Spirituality and Prayer," and of many articles

concerning quality in both day school and non-day school Jewish education.

The event will be from 2 to 4 p.m. It is open to the community and is free. For more information, call 751-2470.



RICHARD JOEL, right, president of Yeshiva University, cracks a smile during a speech by Michael Steinhart, Co-Chairman of International Hillel Board of Governors, at the dedication of the Glenn and Darcy Weiner Hillel Center at Brown University. Center is Michaela Matt, and left, is Reverend Janet Cooper Nelson.

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## Community

# 'Passover Contemplated'

*Educational art exhibit opens March 7 at JCC*

PROVIDENCE — Gallery 401 of the Jewish Community Center of Rhode Island and *The Jewish Voice & Herald* will present "Passover Contemplated" March 7-31. Precious ritual objects from The Natalie and Abraham Perceley Museum of Temple Emanu-El, original serigraphs by Alan Metnick and photographs by David Lewis will be on display. The centerpiece of this show is eleven seder tables that have been created by local Jewish organizations to commemorate the Passover observance.

The seder table displays will be by Daniel Gourmet Kosher Catering, Highland Court, Na'Amat USA, JCCRI Early Childhood Center, Jewish Elder-care of Rhode Island, The Alperin Schechter Day School, JCCRI Kidspac and Preteen Connection, Providence Hebrew Day School, Bureau of Jewish Education of Rhode Island, and the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island.

Consul General of Israel Meir Shlomo and Senator Jack Reed will speak at a reception on Sun., March 14 at 2:30 p.m. The JCC's Passover workshop will begin at 3 p.m. with the Matzoh Factory available for those who pre-register. Songs with Cantor Remmi Brown and craft activities for families will begin at 3:30 p.m. Passover haggadot, seder plates and other holiday items will be on sale at the JCC Gift Shop.

The gallery is open Mon. through Thurs., 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and by appointment. The exhibit is open to the public and group tours will be available by appointment. Call Sue Suls at 861-8800 to schedule a tour.



PASSOVER PREP — Julia Birnbar, 4, and Kyle Shuman, 5, both of Providence, work on preparing their seder table for the Jewish Community Center's showcase "Passover Contemplated."

Photo by Jonathan Rubin

## Women's Center holds Second Annual Awards presentations

PROVIDENCE — The Women's Center of Rhode Island is planning its Second Annual Exceptional Women Awards Luncheon, in celebration of International Women's Day, on March 8, at the Providence Marriott. A reception will held from 11 a.m. to noon. Tickets are \$50.

This event aims to inspire all women who face challenges in their lives. Honorees are women who have overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles to reach personal achievement and success, or who have dedicated their lives to breaking down barriers for women.

This year's honorees are: Nancy Gewirtz, Founder, The Poverty Institute; The Right Rev. GERALYN Bishop Wolf; Susan Whipple, CEO, Cedar-Crest Subacute and Rehabilitation Center; Talk Show Host Arlene Violet; the National Council of Jewish Women — RI Section; Edna Mojica, domestic violence survivor; and Cheryl Watkins Snead, President and CEO of Bancker Industries.

For tickets and information, contact Marisa Poli at 861-2761 ext 134.

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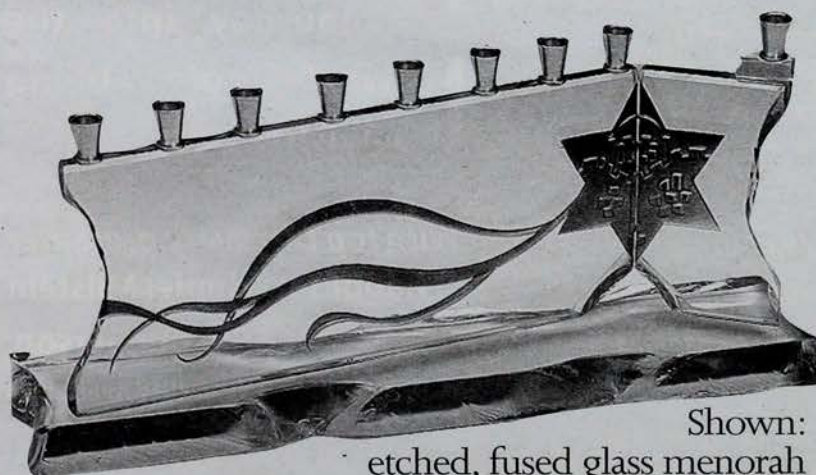
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## Community

# Spring Adult Enrichment at Beth El

PROVIDENCE — The Temple Beth-El Adult Enrichment Committee announces its spring semester offerings, which will run from March 23 through May 12.

Most courses will take place on Wednesday evenings from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (unless otherwise noted) at Temple Beth-El.

The kick-off event will be a talk by Roger I. Abrams, renowned baseball historian and author, on Tuesday, March 30, (7 p.m.-8:30 p.m.) titled *Jewish Immigrants and the First World Series: Would You Believe It, Bubeleh? Boston won!!* This special event is free and open to the public, with no preregistration required.

tion required.

**Biblical Images in Art and Text: Visual Exegesis** (March 24-April 21, 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.) Rabbi Sarah Mack and Providence College art historians Dr. Joan Branham, Dr. Deborah Johnson, and Andre Breaux. Join Rabbi Mack and three art historians through Biblical text and

the art that it has inspired.

**Crafts with Jewish Meaning** (March 24-April 28, 7 p.m.-8:30 p.m.) Paula Bodo.

Each participant will make their own *chamsa* (an ancient and still popular amulet for magical protection from the evil eye) using a variety of materials including malleable copper sheet and

ceramic beads.

**Beginning Hebrew Reading** (March 24-May 12, 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.) Helen Salzberg.

**Science Fiction, Fantasy and Theology** (Sundays, 3 p.m. - 5 p.m., April 4-18) Lev Poplow.

Using film clips from science fiction and fantasy films, as well as traditional Judaic text, we will explore the nature of God and humans, prophecy, fate vs. free will, good and evil, death and the afterlife, and the end of days.

**Intermediate Hebrew Reading** (Sundays, 9:30-11:00 a.m.) March 21 - May 16) Stanley Freedman.

**"American Judaism: A History"** (April 20, 7:30-9 p.m.) Jonathan Sarna. Co-sponsored by the RI Jewish Historical Association.

Sarna presents the history of individuals struggling to remain Jewish while also becoming American.

Temple Beth-El Adult Enrichment Programs receive funding from the Bernice and Sanford White Fund, the Helen and Aaron Caslowitz Fund, the Benefactors Fund, the Brotherhood and Sisterhood.

All courses are open to the public and meet at Temple Beth El, 70 Orchard Avenue, Providence. The cost is \$36 for temple members and \$72 for non-TV temple members.

Scholarships are available.

To register or for additional information, call the temple 331-6070.

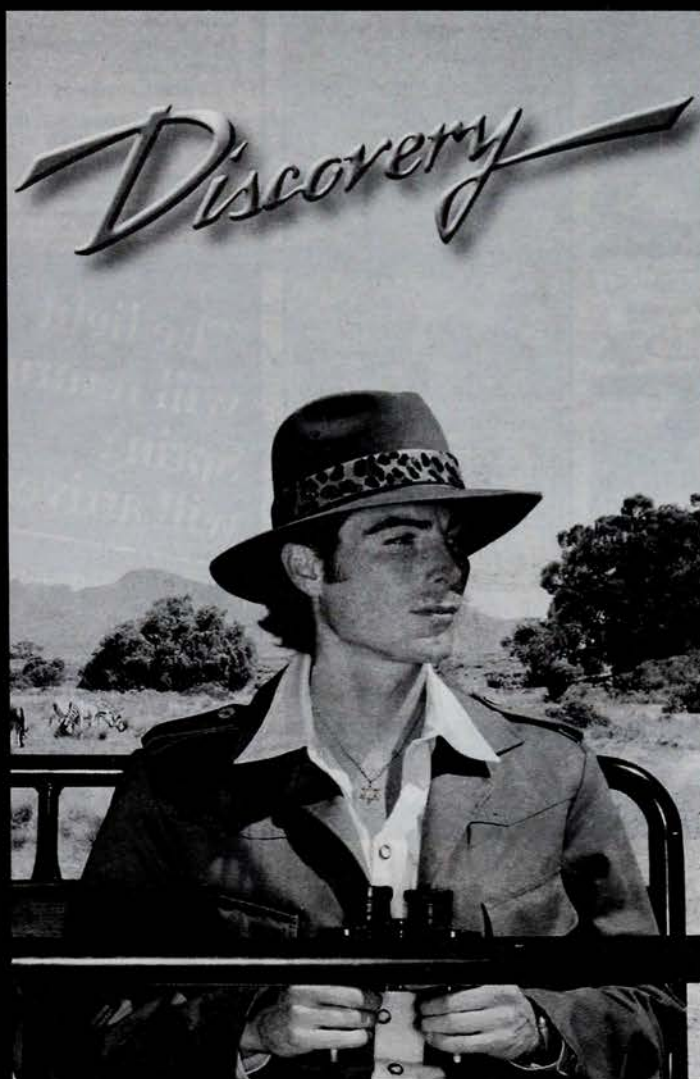
## Camp Gan Israel season opens in August

WARWICK — Camp Gan Israel in the West Bay will hold its 2004 sessions from Aug. 2 through Aug. 20. The three weekly programs target children from ages three to thirteen.

"Mini Gan Izzi" is for three- to four-year-olds and has half days from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. or full days from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Camp Gan Israel, for five- to 10-year-olds meets from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Girls Pioneers Week is for Jewish girls ages 11 to 13 and runs from Aug. 16 to 20.

Extended hours are available. The camp is located at Temple Am David, 40 Gardiner St., Warwick. For fee schedule and info call Shoshanah Laufer, director, 884-7888.



## PROVIDENCE'S JEWISH RETREAT OF THE YEAR!

Discovery is a one-stop extraordinary presentation that combines philosophy, psychology, history, and computer science to take audiences on a journey into the "why" of being Jewish.

### Event highlights include:

- 5 wonders of Jewish history
- What really happened at Mt. Sinai
- Hidden codes

With top Discovery presenter Rabbi Yerachmiel Milstein

**\$50/ per person**

(home hospitality available)

Friday, March 26th - Saturday, March 27th  
Providence Hebrew Day School - 450 Elmgrove Avenue

**Call 1-888-883-4726 to RSVP**

Discovery is sponsored by the Dan Family of Canada - [www.discoveryproduction.com](http://www.discoveryproduction.com)



# Community



## In the spirit of Purim

**TINY PARADE** — Providence Hebrew Day School Pre-Kindergarten students parading through the lunchroom with their instruments in the spirit of Purim.

*Photo by PHDS*

## Chabad House to distribute Purim kits

**PROVIDENCE** — As part of a nationwide campaign, the Chabad Lubavitch of New England is distributing Purim kits to university students, families and hospitals. Each kit contains two kinds of food, as prescribed by

tradition. Pennies for charity and a brochure describing the Purim holiday are included. Hundreds of these kits will be distributed in the Providence area.

Chabad representatives will share the holiday spirit with

patients and residents of Rhode Island Hospital, Charlesgate and Oak Hill nursing homes, and with senior citizens at the Jewish Community Center.

For more information on how to help, call 273-7238.

## Temple Beth El holding spring film festival

The following films will be screened at Temple Beth El, 70 Orchard Avenue, Providence:

March 14, 2 p.m. — "Remember When" (also showing March 21, 28)

March 14 — "Hollywoodism: Jews, Movies, and the American Dream" (documentary).

March 21 — "The Jazz Singer."

March 28 — "Marlene Dietrich—Her Own Story."

To register or for additional information, call the temple at 331-6070

## REGISTER YOUR DAUGHTER FOR CAMP!



**Girl Scouts.**  
Where Girls Grow Strong.

Girl Scout Camps offer exciting, fun-filled activities in an all-girl environment! Girls can learn to ride horses, surf, produce theatrical sketches, explore nature and much, much more!

**Assorted Day and Resident Camp Sessions Available!**

CALL 1-800-331-0149 FOR GIRL SCOUT CAMP INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER YOUR DAUGHTER NOW!

## Save the Date

**Saturday evening  
March 20th at 7:30 PM  
Temple Emanu-El**

**An evening of Jewish music with Yom Hadash**

to support the Harry Elkin



Midrasha  
Community  
High School of the  
Bureau of Jewish  
Education of RI

Tickets: \$18 Adults,  
\$5 Students,  
\$45 Family maximum



For information on tickets or gift opportunities please contact Richard Walter at 401-331-0956 or [rwalter@bjeri.org](mailto:rwalter@bjeri.org)



**WEST  
SIDE  
STORY**

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of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island  
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**WEST SIDE STORY**

won't you join us...

at **TRINITY REPERTORY COMPANY**

**Tuesday, April 27, 2004**

*Enjoy a Gourmet Dinner before the play!*

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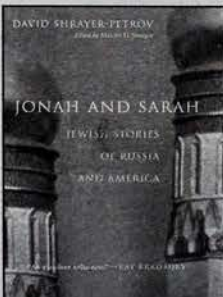
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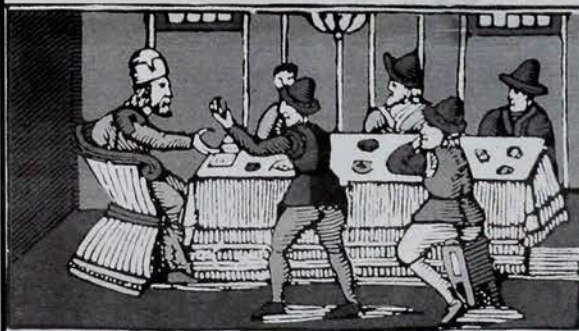
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Mr. David Shroyer-Petrov's  
wonderful collection of Jewish stories of  
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The Jewish Voice & Herald  
&  
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of the Jewish Community Center of Rhode Island  
present

**Passover Contemplated**  
March 7 - 31



*Original Serigraphs by Alan Metnick*

*Photographs by David Lewis*

*Ritual Objects from Our Community*

Eleven tables set by local organizations for the Passover Seder:

Daniel Gourmet Catering  
Highland Court  
Na'Amat USA  
JCCRI Early Childhood Center  
Jewish Seniors Agency  
Alperin Schechter Day School

JCCRI Kidspace & Preteen Connection  
Providence Hebrew Day School  
Bureau of Jewish Education of R.I.  
Harry Elkin Midrasha Community High School  
Jewish Federation of Rhode Island

Judaic Traditions at the "J" will feature Passover items for sale

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GUEST SPEAKERS — SENATOR JACK REED AND MEIR SHLOMO, CONSUL GENERAL OF ISRAEL

Special Passover Workshop featuring:

CHABAD MATZOH FACTORY — 2:45-3:30 P.M. (PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)

PASSOVER SONGS WITH CANTOR REMMI BROWN 4:00 P.M.

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## FILM REVIEW

## 'The Passion of the Christ'

By Jonathan Rubin

Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ" is excruciating to watch. Which, of course, is one of the points of a Passion Play—to take the audience through the final 12 hours of Jesus' life, in order to help us understand the suffering he willingly endured for the sake of humanity, and, at the same time being able to simultaneously forgive his persecutors.

However, I found this noble teaching was lost somewhere inside the film's veritable orgy of blood, brutal sadism, and vicious torture that makes up the majority of "The Passion." Some parts were so extreme that I saw many audience members covering their eyes or gasping, and during one particular scene where a prone Jesus is whipped relentlessly for ten minutes, and his attackers are spattered with his blood, I myself had to turn away.

Equally disturbing to me was the fact that many children were in attendance at this 9:30 p.m. showing — some as young as five, who cried during parts of the movie. At one point, a boy next to me, who must have been eight years old put down his hot dog and hid his face from the screen. (When the movie was over, he told me: "It was sad.")

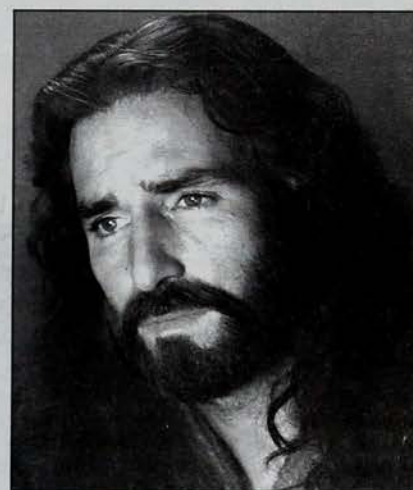
The movie is shot entirely in Italy and contains very convincing scenes of ancient Judea. In the beginning, we are introduced to a wounded and despairing Jesus (played by Jim Caviezel) in the Garden of Olives, as he fights to resist Satan's temptations and struggles to bear the weight of humanity's sins. He succeeds, and his wounds are healed. Meanwhile, Judas Iscariot betrays Jesus to the Pharisees, the holy upper class of the Jewish people, who dress in fine robes and carry gold staves. These grinning, scheming, obviously evil men are out to find and destroy Jesus, and they almost reminded me of a group of calculating Mr. Burns' from The Simpsons. With almost cartoonish derision, they throw Judas's payment in silver at his feet, and soon the Roman guards capture Jesus. Despite their brutal treatment of Jesus and his disciples, Jesus demonstrates remarkable resilience and compassion towards his attackers.

Jesus is brought in chains to the Pharisees, and undergoes a witch-trial of sorts before the Jewish community, where a ruthless and senseless mob screams accusations at the condemned man. It's basically a kangaroo court, and many of the Jewish leaders leave in disgust at the unfairness of the trial (painful

divisions between the Jewish people are a common theme throughout the movie). When he claims that he is the Messiah, he is struck by a priest and spat upon.

He is brought before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of ancient Israel, and once again the mob condemns him. Pilate, who is shown to be a compassionate and sensible man, is put off by the blood-thirsty violence of the Jewish mob. He refuses to judge Jesus based on the paltry evidence presented by the Jews, as does King Herod. Pilate finally succumbs to the Jewish bloodlust, and reluctantly agrees to their demand that Jesus be crucified.

During this time, Roman goons begin their deplorable torture of Jesus, and do not stop until his graphic crucifixion on Golgotha. During this lengthy



Jim Caviezel as Jesus

Jewish faces that seem to revel at the sight of a weakened, bloody man wrapped in chains. I felt shocked and insulted while viewing it, but, then again, I don't feel it matters what I think nearly as much as it matters what non-Jews think.

To give myself a more objective view of the movie, I saw it with two friends — one an atheist and one a devout Catholic. Neither of my friends left the theater with the feeling that the film engaged in Jew-bashing. The atheist wasn't really moved one way or the other — he just thought it was a bad movie. The Catholic "didn't learn anything she didn't know already." She didn't feel it cast Jews in a bad light — "that's pretty much what happened," she said.

"Did the Jews kill Jesus? No, she said, sin killed Jesus, but Jews were the principal actors in Jesus' demise. They had to be, after all, because 'there weren't many other people around besides Jews and Romans,' she said.

However, the shocking impact of the excessive gore did have one positive impact — the Roman violence overwhelms the senses to such a point that Gibson's Jewish slander is somewhat overshadowed.

As oft-reported in the media, the movie was Gibson's expression of thanks on how the Passion of Christ saved him during some of his darkest moments. The movie tried to show Jesus's courage and compassion and sacrifice, but all I came away with were visions of pain, blood, betrayal and death. This is not a movie that you "like," whether you find it inspiring or not.

Jonathan Rubin is editor of the Jewish Voice & Herald.

**The shocking impact of the excessive gore did have one positive impact — the Roman violence overwhelms the senses to such a point that Gibson's Jewish slander is somewhat overshadowed.**

and agonizing sequence, Jesus is whipped and stoned as he carries his heavy cross up a mountain, and he is so covered in gore that he is almost unrecognizable. The Pharisees, who have been following him like ghouls this whole time, are unable to bear the sight of his final agonies and leave. At the moment of his death, a tear-drop falls from the heavens and a massive earthquake strikes. His mother Mary weeps by his side. The movie ends with a very brief scene of his resurrection, and then fades to black.

Because Passion plays are meant to focus on the final hours of Jesus's life, they purposely omit the context of Jesus' life, and are slim on the subject of his teachings and his ministry after the resurrection. These omissions are instantly apparent in the movie — it begins at the end of Jesus' life, and we receive only snippets of his teachings (shown mostly in flashbacks).

Is "The Passion" anti-Semitic? Without a doubt, the Jews are portrayed in the worst possible light and are only redeemed when they are swayed by Jesus's example, or become his followers. It is hard to feel anything but scorn towards the many



## Book Review

## Purim books to delight youngsters

By Judith S. Greenblatt

This Purim we have been treated to a new title from Kar-Ben to add to older titles still worth reading. The new book is:

**The Purim Surprise**, by Lesley Simpson. Kar-Ben, 2003.

If you've ever been a child who moved, or a child whose parent seems to have forgotten your birthday, or if you love the Purim custom of delivering sweet gifts, you'll be drawn into this story. In spite of all of Naomi's complaints and objections, her mother insists that they are going to make and deliver *shalach manot* to all the Jews in their new town.

Drawn in by being allowed to stay up late, Naomi is the one that comes up with an intriguing container for the hamantashen and other goodies. But she's still unhappy that no mention has been made of her birthday. Don't worry — mother has a plan. That I wondered about her usually strict — about-bedtime mother not only letting her stay up late but she also let her skip school to help bake hamantashen, I'm sure says more about me than about the story. And I did wonder, looking at the illustrations, if, for all those Hamantashen, she really rolled the dough out on a cutting board, and ground her own poppy seeds and spices.

Naomi also seems to have an unexplained change of clothing. These are minor matters. The story has great warmth and presents a strong and thoughtful role model who has great concern for her daughter, and who celebrates Purim with care for *mitzvot* and joy. And along the way there's the bonus both of getting to know the community, and bringing the community closer together. Fun with a gentle message for primary schoolers and anyone reading to them.

Also too good to miss:

**CAKES AND MIRACLES**, by Barbara Diamond Goldin. Viking, 1991. Herschel discovers that although blind, he can still help his mother by shaping cookies for her to sell.

**A COSTUME FOR NOAH**, by Susan Remick Topek. Kar-Ben Copies, 1995. Noah spends the whole week in his class is preparing for Purim and trying to come up with a special costume.

**GOLDIE'S PURIM**, by Jane Breskin Zalben. Henry Holt, 1991. In which Goldie, one of our favorite bears, overcomes stage fright to play Queen Esther in the synagogue's celebration of Purim.

**MAKE NOISE, MAKE MERRY, THE STORY AND MEANING OF PURIM** by Miriam Chaikin. Clarion Books, 1983. Get the facts about Purim here, including a retelling of the story and information on the celebration of the holiday.

**THE PURIM GOAT**, by Yuri Shul. Four Winds Press, 1980. This children's story about Purim takes place in Europe. Hoping to earn some money so his pet goat won't be sold, a poor Jewish boy teaches it to dance.

**PURIM PLAY**, by Roni Schotter. Little, Brown, 1998. Frannie is upset because an elderly neighbor is going to play the part of Haman in this year's Purim play, but Mrs. Teplitzky surprises everyone with her acting ability. Story compares discrimination with Haman's behavior. Includes facts about Purim and a recipe for hamantashen.

**RAISEL'S RIDDLE**, by Erica Silverman. Farrar Straus & Geroux, 1999. A Jewish Cinderella tale, in which a poor but educated young woman enchants her "Prince Charming" by using her wits.

Judith S. Greenblatt, is the Director of Library Services, Bureau of Jewish Education of Rhode Island.



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Get Passover Tips from Izzy's Catering

Time: 10:30 a.m. — Noon

Where: Temple Sinai  
30 Hagan Ave., Cranston, RI

Upcoming BKK Sessions:

Friday, April 16, 2004

Friday, May 14, 2004 (Temple Habonim, Barrington)

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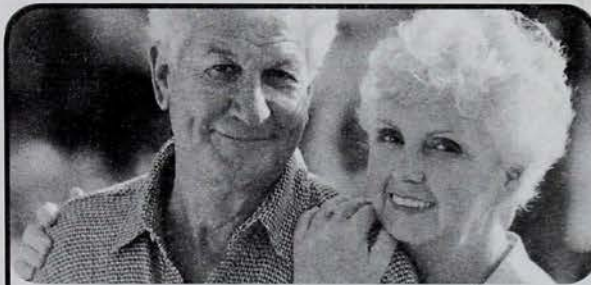
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## Health



### Heart Disease and Cognitive Function

If you have heart disease, are between the ages of 60 and 85, and speak English you may be eligible to participate in a study at The Miriam Hospital. The research is being conducted to study the effects of heart disease on thinking and memory and to better understand how heart disease alters the brain.

You will not be asked to take any new or additional medications.

You will receive information concerning your memory, results of cardiac tests will be sent to your doctor, and you will be compensated for your time.

For more information, or to volunteer please call (401) 444-4800.



**The Miriam Hospital**  
A Lifespan Partner

### HAPPY 1000TH!

## Jewish Family Service celebrates Lifeline milestone



CELEBRATING the installation of the 1000<sup>th</sup> Lifeline personal emergency response system, members of Lifeline Rhode Island at Jewish Family Service present the unit to 92-year-old Cranston resident Marguerite. From left are Maxine Richman, Lifeline Rhode Island program director; Beth Kovar, Lifeline Rhode Island program assistant, Christine Boc, Lifeline Rhode Island Program assistant and John Shallet, executive director, Jewish Family Service of Rhode Island.

## A Gathering for all People Touched by AIDS

### 10th Annual Seder of Hope

**Sunday, March 28th, 2004**

**5:00 PM**

**Jewish Community Center of RI  
401 Elmgrove Avenue  
Providence, RI**

For information call  
401-421-4111 X161

Sponsored by the  
AIDS Task Force of the Community Relations Council  
Jewish Federation of Rhode Island

**\$15 per person includes complete dinner**  
Space is limited. Reservation deadline is March 19th.

For reservations, mail your check

JFRI/AIDS SEDER  
Jewish Federation of Rhode Island  
130 Sessions Street  
Providence, RI 02906

Reservations are handled on a first-come-first-served basis, paid in advance.



Panels from the AIDS Memorial Quilt  
will be on  
Display courtesy of  
"AIDS Quilt RI"

### By Jonathan Rubin

Last month, an elderly woman in Woonsocket took a fall in her house. She lived alone, and wasn't expecting visitors. But, thanks to Jewish Family Service, she wasn't alone — she pressed a small button on a Lifeline pendant around her neck, and soon she was speaking to an emergency response person who alerted a neighbor to help her up. She was lucky — a bit shaken up but otherwise felt fine and didn't need an ambulance. Problem solved.

Jewish Family Service celebrated the installment of its 1000<sup>th</sup> Lifeline unit last month, and was recognized by the president of lifeline, Dan Strange. "This isn't a job, it's a calling," said Strange. "Social isolation is

what shuts people down, and you help make an important connection in their lives."

"As the population continues to age and government-funded social services continue to be cut, Lifeline Rhode Island steadfastly works to enrich the lives of at-risk elders and the physically challenged so that they may live safely and independently and, most importantly, with dignity in their own homes," said Program Director Maxine Richman. The gratitude people feel when they know they are being caring for is unreal, she said. "One man said he felt that he had a guardian angel looking over him."

The "help at the push of a button" Lifeline program has its

See, LIFELINE, next page

**Joseph C. Ellerin**  
**Doctor of Acupuncture**  
announces the expansion of his

**Pain Clinic**  
to  
**295 Angell Street**  
**Providence, Rhode Island**

Dr. Ellerin has been in practice for 15 years, and uses Acupuncture, Chinese Herbs, Homeopathy, and Craniosacral Therapy to treat a range of disorders, which include:

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Providence, RI



**Lifeline milestone**

From page 24

Rhode Island roots in the Jewish community: In 1986, the Miriam Hospital convened a meeting with the Jewish Community Center, the Jewish Home for the Aged and Jewish Family Service about the problems Jewish elderly face



The Lifeline alert pendant

while living alone, and the struggle to keep older folks in their homes and outside of the nursing home industry. The Jewish Federation of Rhode Island and The Miriam donated the start-up funds, and the program was born.

In 1992, JFS took over the program entirely and began offering it to the non-Jewish community as well, and the units began selling at a rapid clip. The RI program has fielded more than 5,600 calls since its inception. They have three paid employees, and the system can be ordered over the phone, although one personal visit is required.

I was given a demonstration of the system at JFS offices in the United Way Building. I pressed a small button on a white pendant that I'd normally wear either around my neck or on my wrist. Instantly, the communicator (it looks like an intercom) which

is attached to the phone line sprang to life and told me to wait. After about 20 seconds, Sonia Verroto, a dispatcher in Framingham, Mass., answered and asked me if I was OK and needed an ambulance. If I had said no, or hadn't answered, they would have either called a pre-selected list of nearby neighbors, friends and family members with house keys to stop by and check on me. "Most of the time friends and neighbors are 1-3 minutes away," said Richman. Failing a quick response from these individuals, Verroto would have called for an ambulance.

"Sometimes, I'm the only person they speak to in a week," Verroto said. "We make them feel like they're the only people in the world when we talk to them."

The system costs between \$30 and \$40 a month depending on income and special services requested, and consists of an alert

pendant and a remote transmitter that hooks up to the phone line. "We haven't raised our fees in 10 years," said Richman, "because we want it to be affordable." It runs 24 hours a day and the system supports 120 languages.

Bernie Beider was one of the JFS volunteers honored at the banquet reception. For the last 14 years, Beider and his wife Audrey have helped JFS install the machines in people's houses, and to periodically check on the batteries (they all have back-ups, just in case). He puts about 1,500 miles a year on his car visiting homes in Warwick, Cranston, Exeter, Bristol, Coventry, and elsewhere in Rhode Island.

"I carry a lot of screwdrivers," said Beider, who is in his late 60s. "Taking the machine apart is easy, but putting it back together is not so easy."

At one point the Beiders handled all of the installations, but

now that are so many they are looking for more volunteers. "If we only had five more people..." he said.

For more information call 331-1244.

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*A Lifespan Partner*



FILENE'S

**Women's Wellness Workshop 2004**

*A conference on The Heart Truth*

There are simple things every woman can do to reduce her risk of heart disease. The first step is to attend Women's Wellness Workshop 2004.

The Miriam Hospital is sponsoring this daylong event to empower you with the information you need to keep your heart healthy. You will have the opportunity to learn about heart health, weight loss, sensual wellness, nutrition and exercise from nationally and internationally recognized professionals. View the exclusive **The Heart Truth: Red Dress Collection and Swarovski's Little Red Dress Collection**, and enjoy a spring fashion show sponsored by **Filene's** and **Swarovski**. Attendees will receive a Whole Body gift bag compliments of Whole Foods Market.

**The Heart Truth and the Red Dress Collection**

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) and partner organizations have teamed up to sponsor *The Heart Truth*, a national campaign to raise awareness about women and heart disease. The Red Dress is the centerpiece of *The Heart Truth* campaign, serving as the national symbol for women and heart disease awareness. *The Heart Truth* brought the symbol to life with a collection of stunning red dresses from the nation's top fashion designers. You don't want to miss your chance to see *The Heart Truth*'s red dresses when they make their Rhode Island debut at Women's Wellness Workshop 2004.

**Women's Wellness Workshop will feature:**

Rebecca Radcliffe, a national speaker, workshop leader, consultant, and author on women's issues, is Women's Wellness Workshop's keynote speaker. Her books include *Dance Naked In Your Living Room: Handling Stress and Finding Joy* and *Hot Flashes, Chocolate Sauce, and Rippled Thighs: Women's Wisdom, Wellness, Body Acceptance, and Joy*. Radcliffe is executive director of EASE™ Publications and Resources,

which has been dedicated to enhancing women's self-esteem and personal growth since 1988.

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**Simchas****Weddings****Mr & Mrs. Bradd Mellion**

**Rachel Daniels**, daughter of Stuart and Leah Daniels of Cranston, and **Bradd Mellion**, son of Douglas and Arlene Mellion of Providence and Palm Desert, Calif., were married at Temple Beth-El, Providence on August 3, 2003.

The bride has a bachelor of science degree in elementary education and a master's in reading. She teaches English as a second language and is a reading consultant.

The bridegroom has a bachelor of arts degree and is employed as a pharmaceutical representative.

The couple are making their home in North Providence.

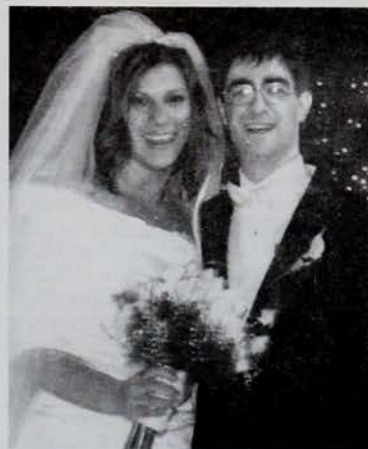
**Mr. & Mrs. Matthew B. Bromberg**

**Matthew B. Bromberg**, son of Susan and Howard Bromberg of Providence, and **Julie R. Hirsch**, daughter of Dr. Robert and Amy Hirsch, were married on Nov. 1, 2003 at the Willard Hotel in Washington, D.C. Rabbi Alvan Kaunfer and Dr. Joshua Gutman officiated.

The bride is a graduate of Syracuse University and received her master's degree in Public Health from Boston University. She is employed with Lifespan of Providence.

The bridegroom is also a graduate of Syracuse University and is currently enrolled in the MBA program at Bryant College. He is employed with Benny's, Inc., of Esmond.

The couple honeymooned in Hawaii and is residing in Providence.

**Mr. & Mrs. Joshua Harlan Harris**

Mr. and Mrs. Mark H. Freedman of Warwick announce the marriage of their daughter, **Shelby Blair**, to **Joshua Harlan Harris**, son of the Honorable and Mrs. Jonathan N. Harris of Upper Saddle River, N.J., on Jan. 3. The bride is the granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. Sydney I. Brown of Coconut Creek, Fla.

The ceremony was at Temple Sinai in Cranston with Rabbi Peter W. Stein, Rabbi George J. Astrachan and Cantor Remmie J. Brown officiating. A reception followed at the Providence Westin Hotel.

The bride graduated magna cum laude with a bachelor of arts degree in psychology and music from Brown University. She earned a master's degree in clinical psychology at Yeshiva University in New York City, where she is a third-year doctoral student at the Ferkauf School of Psychology.

The bridegroom is a graduate of Brown, earning a bachelor of science with honors in biophysics. He is a third-year law student at Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law in New York City. He will join the law firm of Morgan and Finnegan as an associate in September.

The couple honeymooned in Hawaii and is making their home in Riverdale, N.Y.

**Bar Mitzvah**

**Daniel DiPiero**, son of Glenna and Anthony DiPiero of Orange Park, Fla., celebrated his Bar Mitzvah on Feb. 14 at Congregation Ahavath Chesed in Jacksonville, Fla.

His grandparents are Sandra and Fred Brown of Boynton Beach, Fla., formerly of West Warwick, and Anthony S. DiPiero of Orange Park.

His great grandmother is Ida Castleman of Delray Beach, Fla.

**Local writer wins prize**

Zan Nordlund of Cranston has won the Grand Prize in the Chicken Soup for the Soul 10th Anniversary International Writer's Contest.

She has served as a professor in English, and is a member of a writer's consortium at Brown University. Her works have appeared in *The Back Bay Beacon*, *The Boston Globe*, and with *TimeLife Publications*, as well as with *Retrozine*, a *Journal of Memories*, *Mipoesias*, and *Zoetrope Artists Studio*.

She has received several literary awards, and her first novel *Altered Reality* is currently under contract.

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## Obituaries

## Justin L. Benharris

RUMFORD — Justin L. Benharris, 74, a retired jewelry designer and company executive, died Feb. 16. He was the husband of Muriel "Mimi" (Gordon) Benharris.

Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., a son of the late Moses Charles and Rose (Braverman) Benharris, he lived in Rhode Island for most of his life, and in Rumford since 1957.

He was a graduate of Hope High School, and the former Vesper George College of Art in Boston.

An Army veteran of the Korean War, he was a member of the American Legion and the Jewish War Veterans.

Mr. Benharris worked for Klitzner Industries of Providence as a jewelry designer, and later as vice president of sales before retiring in 1991. He was a former member of the Manufacturing Jewelers and Silversmiths Association.

He was a former member of Temple Beth-El.

He was a Shriner, a 32<sup>nd</sup> degree member of the Overseas Lodge 40, F & AM in Cranston, and a member of the Knights of Pythias, the Benevolent Protective Order of Elks, and the Loyal Order of the Moose.

Besides his wife, he leaves a son, David Benharris of Wrentham, Mass.; a daughter, Mona Iacovino of Rumford; a stepson, Michael Gordon of East Providence; two stepdaughters, Ellen Segal of Barrington and Barbara Johns of Harrison Township, Mich.; a brother, Albert J. Benharris of Cranston; a sister, Jeanne DiLella of Jersey City, N.J., and seven grandchildren.

Burial was in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick. Contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society, 222 Richmond St., Providence, RI 02903.

## Laura Cable

PROVIDENCE — Laura (Chakrin) Cable, 50, a clinical social worker, died Feb. 18.

She was the wife of Robert Cable.

Born in New York City, a daughter of the late Aaron and Toby (Sirota) Chakrin, she lived in Pawtucket before moving to Providence.

A 1975 graduate of Union College, she received a master's degree in social work from Simmons College in 1980.

Mrs. Cable worked at Butler Hospital for 10 years before starting a private counseling practice in 1992. A member of the National Association of Social Workers, she

had published articles for professional magazines and also contributed chapters in several textbooks. She was a founding member of the Rhode Island Chapter of Second Generation, an organization for children of Holocaust Survivors.

Mrs. Cable was a member of Temple Emanu-El, was active in its youth program and chaired its Youth Commission for several years. She was also an accomplished poet.

She completed the Danskin Triathlon for breast cancer survivors.

Besides her husband, she leaves a son, Adam Cable, and a daughter, Anna Cable, both of Providence; and two brothers, Michael Chakrin of Long Island, N.Y. and Robert Chakrin of Sacramento, Calif.

Burial was in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick. Contributions may be made to the Chakrin Cable Family Youth Fund, c/o Temple Emanu-El, 99 Taft Ave., Providence 02906.

## Frieda Corris

PROVIDENCE — Frieda Corris, 90, a former social worker, died Feb. 13. She was the wife of the late Harold Corris.

Born in Providence, a daughter of the late John and Etta Lisker, she lived in Providence and Pawtucket most of her life.

A 1935 graduate of Simmons School of Social Work, she worked at Traveler's Aid, Vocational Resources and Pawtucket Family Service for many years before retiring, and had also been a volunteer at numerous community organizations.

Mrs. Corris was a member of Temple Beth-El.

She leaves two sons, Edward A. Corris of Waban, Mass., and Robert B. Corris of Hartland, Wis.; a sister, Rose Flink of Palm Beach, Fla.; and five grandchildren. She was the sister of the late Hyman Albert, Abraham and Nathan Lisker.

Burial was in Temple Beth-El Cemetery, Reservoir Ave., Providence.

## Maureen E. Gilstein

PROVIDENCE — Maureen E. Gilstein, 66, a retired secretary, died Feb. 9. She was the wife of Morton Gilstein. They had been married for 34 years.

Born in Providence, a daughter of the late William J. and Mabel (Wilkey) McCormick, she was a life-long resident of the city.

She was a 1955 graduate of St. Mary Academy-Bay View, and a 1956 graduate of the

Katharine Gibbs School.

Mrs. Gilstein was an executive secretary at Amica Insurance for 14 years, and later worked for the Providence School Department for 18 years as a secretary to the director of federal programs before retiring last year.

She was a member of the Ovarian Cancer Support Group at Women and Infants Hospital.

She was a communicant of St. Patrick Church and of St. Pius V Church.

She enjoyed knitting, and spending time with her grandchildren and friends.

Burial was in Swan Point Cemetery, Providence. Contributions may be made to Hospice Care of R.I., 169 George St.; Pawtucket, 02860, or St. Patrick Church, 244 Smith St., Providence, 02908.

## Bertha Harriet

PROVIDENCE — Bertha Harriet, 100, a retired sales associate, died Feb. 12. She was the wife of the late Max Harriet.

Born in Russia, the daughter of the late William and Gussie (Steinberg) Kolodney, she lived in Providence from the age of five when she emigrated from Russia.

Mrs. Harriet had been employed as a sales associate at various retail stores in Providence until retiring.

She leaves two daughters, Arline "Bunny" Feldman of Providence and Grace Hirsch of Fla.; two brothers, Samuel and Harry Kolodney, both of Providence; four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. She was the sister of the late Dr. Joseph Kolodney.

Burial was in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick. Contributions may be made to Temple Emanu-El, 99 Taft Ave., Providence.

## Bernice Hoffman

STUART, Fla. — Bernice Hoffman, 69, of Stuart, formerly of Somerset, a retired career counselor, died Feb. 15. She was the wife of Bernard Hoffman.

Born in Cambridge, Mass., a daughter of the late Jacob and Helen (Zukov) Balanoff, she moved to Florida last year.

A graduate of Rutgers University, she received a master's degree from Bridgewater (Mass.) State College.

She was a member of Temple Beth El, Fall River.

Besides her husband, she leaves a son, Dean Hoffman of Shrewsbury, Mass., a daughter, Dorene Hoffman Morris of Perrysburg, Ohio and Tequesta, Fla.; and four grandchildren.



## Max Gold Dwares

CRANSTON — Max Gold Dwares, 20, a student, died Feb. 18.

Born in Providence, a son of Kevin D. and Barbara R. (Gold) Dwares, he lived in Providence before moving to Cranston with his parents 18 years ago.

He was a graduate of Cranston West High School, class of 2001 and of the Harry Elkin Midrasha, class of 2001. He was attending Rhode Island College.

Mr. Dwares was a member of Temple Emanu-El in Providence and Temple Am David in Warwick and was involved with many programs at both temples.

He was a member of VICA. He was a volunteer for the Tomorrow Fund at Hasbro Children's Hospital and Travelers Aid, once making 1,555

peanut butter and jelly sandwiches in a day. He wrote for the Rhode Island College newspaper and was also writing his biography with Lev Poplo, a noted author.

Besides his parents, he leaves a brother, Jacob Gold Dwares, at home; his paternal grandmother, Shirley Gold Dwares of Warwick and his maternal grandparents, Sumner and Estelle Gold of Warwick. He was the grandson of the late Robert Dwares.

Burial was in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick. Contributions may be made to Temple Am David, In Memory of Max Dwares, 40 Gardner Avenue, Warwick, RI 02888, or to Hasbro Children's Hospital, The Tomorrow Fund, In Memory Of Max Dwares, 593 Eddy St, Providence, RI 02903.

She was the mother of the late Neil Adam Hoffman.

Burial was in Temple Beth El Cemetery, Fall River.

## Madlyn Kahr

PROVIDENCE — Madlyn Kahr, 90, a professor and art historian, died Feb. 24. She was the wife of the late Dr. Sidney Kahr.

Born in Trenton, N.J., a daughter of the late Frank and Rose (Vine) Millner, she lived in New York City for many years before moving to Providence.

She was a 1933 graduate of Barnard College, where she was editor of the Barnard Bulletin, and received master's and doctorate degrees from the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University in 1966. She then worked as an assistant to Horace Kallem, a philosophy professor at the former New School for Social Research, and as a Chesterdale Fellow at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

Mrs. Kahr was chair of the department of fine arts and professor of art history and criticism at the University of

California, San Diego for several years, retiring in 1982.

She had previously been an assistant professor of art history at Manhattanville College and a visiting professor at Columbia University and Stanford University.

After retiring, she became a visiting professor of art history at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Tex.

She published numerous scholarly papers and two books, "Velasquez: The Art of Painting," and "17<sup>th</sup> Century Dutch Painting."

Mrs. Kahr was a former member of the College Art Association and had served as president of the alumni association of the NYU Institute of Fine Arts.

She leaves two sons, Dr. Andrew S. Kahr of San Francisco and Paris, France, and Dr. Frank M. Kahr of Providence; three brothers, Irvin Millner of Pompano Beach, Fla., Dr. Bernard N. Millner of Wolfeboro, N.H., and Lawrence Millner of Boynton Beach, Fla.; and five grandchildren.



## Obituaries

### Rose Marks

From page 29

### Rose Marks

WARWICK — Rose (Sacarovits) Marks, 93, a retired saleswoman, died Feb. 19. She was the wife of the late Edward Marks.

Born in Providence, a daughter of the late Rubin and Rebecca (Sinenberg) Sacarovitz, she lived in Providence and Cranston before moving to Warwick.

She was a sales woman at Jean's Women's Apparel in Providence for more than 30 years before retiring.

Mrs. Marks was a former member of the Majestic Guild Senior Citizens Group in Cranston.

She leaves a son, Herbert E. Marks of Cypress, Calif.; two daughters, Sheila F. Kaufman of Providence and Helene E. Shatz of Warwick; a sister, Eve Klbanoff of Providence; six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. She was the sister of the late Ralph and Louis Sacarovitz.

Burial was in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick.

### Evelyn Pritsker

CHICAGO, Ill. — Evelyn Kapstein Pritsker, 98, of Chicago, formerly of Providence, a retired business owner, died Feb. 13. She was the wife of the late Jacob Pritsker.

Born in Chicago, a daughter of the late Bernard and Fannie (Silver) Kapstein, she lived in Providence for almost 50 years before returning to Chicago.

She was the owner, with her

husband, of Children's Colony Shop for many years before retiring.

Mrs. Pritsker was a former member of Temple Emanu-El and Hadassah.

She leaves a son, Arnold Pritsker of Chicago; a daughter, Ruth Lauritzen of Minneapolis; two brothers, Samuel and John Kapstein; four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. She was the sister of the late Israel and Dorothy Kapstein and Grace Schaffer.

Burial was in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick.

### Tillie Reuter

PROVIDENCE — Tillie Reuter, 94, a retired salesperson, died Feb. 13. She was the wife of the late Herbert Reuter.

Born in Berditchev, Russia, a daughter of the late Louis and Rachel Brody, she lived in Providence most of her life.

She was a graduate of the former Point St. School.

She was a salesperson at Rainbow Bakery in Cranston for 12 years, retiring 14 years ago. She previously worked for the former Ben's Bakery in Providence for 20 years.

Mrs. Reuter was a member of Congregation Shaare Zedek and the former Congregation Sons of Abraham. She was a life member of Na'amat and a member of the Jewish War Veterans Auxilliary. She was a former member of the Providence Fraternal Association and a member of the former Jewish Home for the Aged Women's Association.

She leaves two sons, Gerald L. Reuter of Plattsburgh, N.Y., and Dr. Richard A. Reuter of

Barrington; a daughter, Selma L. Weiss of North Hills, N.Y.; 10 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren. She was the sister of the late Israel, Benjamin and Albert Brody and Duba Nissen.

Burial was in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick. Contributions may be made to the David P. Reuter Free Helmet Fund, c/o Champlain Valley Physicians Hospital Foundation, 100 Beekman Street, Plattsburgh, NY 12901

### Eugene Silverman

CRANSTON — Eugene Joseph Silverman, 83, a former automobile dealership co-owner, died Feb. 12. He was the husband of Irma (Cohen) Silverman.

Born in Providence, the son of the late John and Jeanette (Schonfeld) Silverman, he had lived in Cranston since 1963, previously residing in Greenfield, Mass.

A graduate of Central High School in Providence, he was an army veteran of World War II, having served as a master sergeant in the Third Army in Europe.

Mr. Silverman was a co-owner of the former Gene Arthur Ford, and then president of Elmwood Dodge from 1963 to 1982. He continued in auto sales until his retirement.

He belonged to the Fireman-Trinkle Post of the Jewish War Veterans. He was a former member of Temple Sinai, Quidnesset Country Club and Crestwood Country Club.

Besides his wife, he leaves two sons, Stephen D. Silverman of Somerset and Peter H. Silverman of Bayville, N.Y.; a daughter, Robin B. Sciarcon of

Cranston; a sister, Dr. Mary Ravin of East Greenwich; seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Burial was in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick. Contributions may be made to Hospice Care of R.I., 169 George St., Pawtucket, RI 02860.

### Catherine Spivack

PROVIDENCE — Catherine "Kay" Spivack, 85, a retired saleswoman and hairdresser, died Feb. 19. She was the wife of the late Max Spivack.

Born in Providence, a daughter of the late William Morris and Tillie (Hanzel) Spivack, she had lived in Cranston

for 45 years before moving back to Providence last year. Mrs. Spivack was a saleswoman for several department stores and a hairdresser for many years, retiring 20 years ago.

She leaves a son, Dr. Richard Spivack of Gaithersburg, Md.; a daughter, Harriet Spivack of Cranston; a brother, Martin Lerner of Mission Viejo, Calif.; a sister, Marion Fialkoff of Margate, Fla.; a granddaughter and a great-granddaughter. She was the sister of the late Howard and Louis Lerner.

Burial was in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick.

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SHELLY GOLDBERG, ASSOCIATE



# My Voice

## Teaching the Holocaust takes surprising turns

By Alison Rose

People sometimes ask me what it's like to teach a class on the Holocaust, which I've done for two years at URI in the College of Continuing Education. They wonder who takes such a class — and why?

When I tell them most of my students are not Jewish, they are surprised.

"Why would non-Jewish students have an interest in learning about the Holocaust?" they ask. "And how do they react?"

Their questions have led me to reflect on my experiences.

How does one determine what motivates students to take a certain course? At the first class meeting, I ask students to briefly state why they chose this course; the answers are not always what one would expect. Some answer along the mundane and predictable lines of: "I needed to take a history class and this one seemed the most interesting," or, "This is the only course that fit into my schedule."

Others, however, have given reasons more personal in nature. Commonly they express a desire to know more about the Holocaust. There are typically only a few Jewish students, some of whom have had relatives who survived the Holocaust. There have also been Catholic students trying to sort out the actions of the Roman Catholic Church during the Holocaust.

Students of different minority groups sometimes say they would like to put their own group's history into perspective. I have had students whose families are from Cambodia and suffered under the Khmer Rouge. I have had African-American students who have a sense of what it means to be labeled as different. Some are "college-aged," coming from the Kingston campus, while most are more mature students. A few have been old enough to remember the war years in America. The common thread is their desire to learn the history of the Holocaust and to apply the lessons of the Holocaust to the present.

One of my students recently asked me whether I learn something new about the Holocaust each time I teach the course. As must any teacher, I read new books and articles regularly in order to keep abreast of the literature and informed of new research and incorporate what I learn into the course. In the field

of Holocaust studies in particular, there is a vast and ever-growing collection of books, articles, and films. I also told her that I learn from the students. This may sound like a cliché, but it is actually true.

Although there have been many memorable students, a few stick out in my mind. The first time I taught the course, one of my students was a retired English teacher. He was extremely articulate, intelligent and thoughtful. During his years as a teacher, he invited a Holocaust survivor to come speak to his class and the experience proved so moving for him that this individual became a life-long friend.

Another time, I had a



tion. I have been fortunate in that respect. For example, a student applying to medical school asked me for a letter of recommendation, explaining that her motivation for wanting to study medicine was to understand human psychology and behavior and suffering. She informed me that my course was an excellent study of those themes. Last semester students commented on my ability to remain objective in the course, and allow them to feel comfortable expressing their opinions.

For me, teaching the Holocaust offers an opportunity to make a small contribution to the world. During the semester, students express their astonishment and horror over the material, and some have told me that this course

what that meant for the German Jews. They also learn something about Jewish law when we examine the life and death decisions faced by the Jewish councils in the ghettos. Some Jewish council leaders turned to rabbis for advice when they were asked by the Nazis to provide lists of those to be deported. Was it permitted according to Jewish tradition to turn over some Jews in order to save others? According to the Talmud, if the Jews are told: "Give us one of yours and we shall kill him; otherwise we shall kill all of you," all should be killed and not a single soul should be delivered for death. But if the enemy should specify the name of the person to be delivered, there are two opinions. Some authorities permitted the community to deliver the designated person; however, Maimonides, the great 12<sup>th</sup>-century philosopher and legal scholar, would not permit it unless the person was guilty of a capital crime.

Most of the readings are first-hand accounts and primary sources. One very important component of the course is the guest speaker. We are fortunate to have Holocaust survivors in our community who are willing to speak publicly about their experiences. Having the opportunity to talk with a Holocaust survivor is more powerful for the students than anything I can teach them or they can read in a book.

It is an evening course, meeting weekly from 7-9:45 p.m. When I come home from teaching at 10 p.m., I am completely drained. While this would be true of any class that lasts almost three hours and is past my bedtime, it is all the more exhausting due to the enormity and importance of the subject. What is the most difficult aspect of teaching this course? Probably that I often do not have the answers to the most pressing questions: Why did this happen? How can we understand the Holocaust and prevent it from happening again? Why did the world allow Hitler to kill six million Jews and five million other civilians?

But the rewards are clear. A student just wrote to me: "I hope you continue to inform people like me who have no idea of the extent of the Holocaust."

*Alison Rose teaches at URI's College of Continuing Education.*



**EDUCATIONAL FOCUS** — These photos are taken from the film "Schindler's List." The Shoah Foundation, founded by Schindler filmmaker Steven Spielberg, in collaboration with Yale, Rice and USC universities, has developed a curriculum to use in Holocaust courses. The initiative explores how visual history works as a vehicle to facilitate learning. For more information, visit [www.vhf.org](http://www.vhf.org).

*Photos courtesy Universal Studios*

trying to swim to the shore, others assert that the U.S. Coast Guard ships were in fact sent by Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau, Jr. to keep track of the location of the vessel in case a change in policy would allow it to land.

In short, every person who learns about the Holocaust relates it to their individual life experiences in some measure, and brings their own perspectives to bear on their understanding of the material. It is in these moments that the issues take a new focus for me. One never really knows what it is about one's teaching that works and touches people, unless one is fortunate enough to have students who share this informa-

has changed their lives. Another group of students will be educated in the history of the Holocaust each year and through them I am sure many others are touched. I am sensitive to the fact that for many of my students this course is the first and perhaps only exposure they will have to Jewish history. It would be unfortunate if they come away knowing the Jews only as the victims of mass murder. So I begin with a survey of Jewish history and along the way I find opportunities to refer to Jewish beliefs, practices and lifestyles.

For example, my students gain some knowledge of Judaism when they learn that the Nazis outlawed kosher slaughter and

student who had served in U.S. Coast Guard during the Haitian Migrant Interdiction Operation, stopping boatloads of Haitians trying to reach the United States and sending them back to Haiti. Although he had been "following orders," he afterwards couldn't help wondering what happened to those people after they were sent back to Haiti. He wanted to know of any studies of the role of the Coast Guard in the tragedy of the St. Louis, a ship of refugees that was turned away from Cuba and prevented from landing in the U.S. in 1939, eventually returning to Europe. While some sources report that the Coast Guard had a role in preventing the landing and/or preventing the refugees from



# 2003 Camp JORI Annual Report

## New Camp Opens to Record Enrollment

### 2004 — A Year of Continued Construction and Development



As I have over the last seven years, I again report to our community on the status of the camp for the year 2003, and preparations for the summer of 2004. Before I begin to address this last year, I would like to take a moment to "kvell" in some of the major accomplishments that have occurred over the last several years at the camp.

#### These include:

- Move to New Site on Worden's Pond and On-Time Opening of the New Camp
- American Camping Association accreditation of the new camp
- Record Enrollment (350 Children) and Record Scholarship Assistance
- Completed \$5.6 Million of Construction
- Sale and Closing of the Old Camp in Narragansett
- Successful Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation Grant Recipient
- Successful Kresge Foundation Grant Recipient

I would like to express my deep appreciation to our donors and Board members, without whose commitment and dedication none of this would have been possible.

The first year at the new site went more smoothly than expected. I am pleased to report that we had another good year in 2003 and are preparing for our sixth consecutive year of record-breaking enrollment in 2004. We will also initiate use of the facility and programs in the non-camp season, as a result of a grant from The Rhode Island Foundation.

*Michael Schuster*  
MICHAEL SCHUSTER, PRESIDENT



## 2003 Accomplishments

### New Camp Opens On Time

A rainy Sunday on June 1 was the dedication of the new camp. The weather did not deter our enthusiasm as 200 people attended. We were pleased to have Congressman James Langevin and Mark Feinstein, president of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, as our guests of honor.

### The Summer of 2003

The summer of 2003 was one of great excitement as we opened the new facility. We were fortunate to have an experienced staff in addition to some newcomers (75% staff retention and 90% camper retention), and hosted a successful reaccreditation visit by the American Camping Association. Our waterfront and environmental programming were enhanced by the move to our new site. The new Olympic-size pool provided a resource for greater skill acquisition and more space for fun at the pool complex.



### Some of the highlights of 2003 include:

Camp enrollment again increased with over 350 children being served. We continue to see a growing number of children who attend both sessions of camp. This is occurring as our core group of middle-income families requires quality childcare to allow parents to be able to work.

- The camp awarded \$80,000 in financial assistance to needy children.
- Enrollment continued to increase in our Leadership Program for young teens. The popularity of the teen program, which began in 1995 with ten campers, has now grown to more than 75 and will double yet again in the new camp, to 150.

**Camp Program** — There were a number of program enhancements, including the expansion of the boating program with the initiation of sailing, the beginning of the environmental arts program, and major improvements in theatre. Canoe races became part of Olympics.

- American Camping Association accreditation with a nearly perfect score.
- Introduction of a camp swim team.
- Improvement in our tennis program culminating in a trip to Newport to play on the grass courts and visit the Tennis Hall of Fame.
- Increased water activities... including canoe races during Olympics.
- Jewelry making, enameling, and ceramics with our Artist in Residence.
- Improved evening activities including "A Night at the Improv," sock wrestling, and game shows.

**Finances** — In spite of continually rising costs, we were able to hold the 2003 fee to \$1,600 for four weeks, clearly an exceptional value when compared to our peer group, which is now charging well in excess of \$2,300 for a three- and a-half/week camp experience. Maintaining the affordability of the camp for full-paying families is central to JORI's mission.

- The cost of operating the camp has increased substantially due to insurance, utilities, and professional security from dusk to dawn. However, we were able to once again acceptably align our income and expenses appropriately.
- We set a record for our annual campaign giving: a total of \$33,000 a 50% increase over the prior year.

None of this would have been possible without the extraordinary dedication of our director, Ronni Guttin, and her staff of counselors, administration, nurse, chef and a dedicated board.

## An Opportunity to Make a Gift to the Camp

Yes, I would like to help send a child to Camp JORI. I believe in the JORI mission: that no child should be denied an opportunity to have a summer of fun because of need. Please accept my contribution of:

- |                                  |                                      |                                |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$3,700 | One Child for the summer             |                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,850 | One Child for one season             |                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$750       | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 |
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100% of your donation goes directly to the children.

As a volunteer-driven organization, we are proud to inform you that JORI incurs no administrative expenses associated with its fundraising efforts.

## Funds Raised and Spent

In forty-seven months, the Camp JORI Board and other members of the community were able to raise \$5.3 million. An additional \$1.2 million was borrowed from the Camp's Endowment that resulted from the sale of the old camp on Clarke Road. Further, \$200,000 was raised from JORI operations. JORI spent \$5.6 million to clean up the site and build a new infrastructure and buildings in support of the camp. An additional \$600,000 was paid for the land.

A major accomplishment of this campaign has been the \$2 million (40%) raised from outside of the Rhode Island Jewish community. We are very proud of this accomplishment and expect to continue pursuing funds from a variety of new sources.

## Total gifts and grants

Board	\$ .638 Million
Corporations	.121
Individuals	2.232
Foundations	2.343
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5.343 Million</b>

## Future Fundraising and Construction

Additional funds (\$1.7 million) must now be raised to support the final phase of construction. The camp must also raise an additional \$1.3 million to repay its endowment loan. JORI has continued its campaign to raise the \$3 million to complete the project. A critical element of this campaign will be to secure the naming gift (\$1 million). The co-chairs of the campaign are David Malkin and Terry Samdperil.

10 Additional Camper Residence Buildings	\$750,000
Complete Sanctuary	259,000
Arts & Community Bld.	382,000
Additional Sports Fac.	125,000
Environmental Center	50,000
Staff Housing	120,000
Endowment Loan Repayment	1,300,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,986,000</b>

## Construction Completed

\$5.6 million has been spent to complete Phases One and Two of the new camp. To date, the following have been completed:

- 14 cabins, that will accommodate 225 children and staff; new cabins include hot water and showers, a first for Camp JORI. Each cabin has 100 square feet per person.
- A gymnasium with a regulation basketball court for sports, evening activities, rainy day and special event use.
- The dining room with kosher kitchen that will seat 450.
- 2 swimming pools with 2 shower houses.
- Sports facilities including soccer and base ball fields, and 3 new tennis courts, two basketball courts, volley ball courts, and archery area.
- A new infrastructure including water, electrical, waste treatment, and fire alarm and suppression systems; I am pleased to report that substantial resources have been expended to insure state-of-the-art fire protection systems.
- Renovation of cottages for adult staff.

## The Naming Gift

We are now seeking to identify an individual or family that has an interest and the resources to consider the Naming Gift for the camp. A gift of \$1 million will ensure the success of the camp for generations to come.

## The Summer of 2004

The new year offers anticipated improvements in all areas of camp.

- Increased boating experiences for campers including expanded optional time for those campers who desire it.
- Use of our new amphitheatre for increased drama/theatre/performance experience.
- Upgrading of the Leadership in Training program.
- Holocaust Memorial to Children being built by an Eagle Scout candidate.
- Expansion of the swim team.
- Instituting inter-camp competition in swimming and field sports.
- Expansion of the day camp program.
- Increases in financial assistance.

## Year-Round Program

JORI's new community building boasts a state-of-the-art kosher kitchen with seating for 450 in the dining and in the sanctuary. It will be an ideal place for family reunions, synagogue, agency and religious school events.

## Camping & Continuity

Jewish overnight camping is a fundamental contributor to the development of Jewish youth and to Jewish continuity. Issues of self-reliance, and Jewish identity, are substantially impacted by the camping experience, beyond the 4 to 8 week experience that each child has at camp.

Recent research by the Atlanta Jewish Federation found that:

Adults who attended Jewish camps were more likely to:

- 1) To have a mezuzah at their door;
- 2) Attend a Passover Seder
- 3) Light Chanukah candles
- 4) Affiliate with a synagogue
- 5) Light Shabbat candles
- 6) Attend synagogue services at least once per month
- 7) Affiliate with a synagogue
- 8) Affiliate with a JCC
- 9) Give at least \$100 to a local Jewish Federation

Dr. Ira Sheskin compared results of 1990 National Jewish Population Study; camp alumni were 50% more likely than general Jewish population to

- 1) Be married to another Jew
- 2) Belong to a synagogue
- 3) Say that being Jewish was very important to them

For many children, particularly those from interfaith marriages, JORI is often their only Jewish experience.

**CAMP JORI**  
ON WORDEN'S POND

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Summer telephone: 401-783-7000

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