the JEWISH VOICE

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WEDDINGS

Change coming to Alliance's Dwares Jewish Community Center

BY FRAN OSTENDORF
fostendorf@jewishallianceri.org

Big improvements are coming to the Bonnie & Donald Dwares Jewish Community Center building. The structure, which straddles Elmgrove Avenue and Sessions Street in Providence, will soon undergo a sweeping update to its front and back entrances and lobby to make it handicapped accessible and more user-friendly.

Dedicated in 1971, the building is home to the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island, the David C. Isenberg Family Early Childhood Center, J-Fitness, J-Space afterschool programs, J-Camp, The Jewish Voice, the Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Center, and The Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association. All will remain in the building.

Plans call for front and back entrances with lobbies to replace the current four separate entrances. An elevator will be available at the front entrance to take people up to the front lobby or down to the lower lobby. Concrete ramps will be in place at both entrances.

Work is set to begin March 7, with asbestos abatement at the front and lobby area of the building as well as in the Social Hall. Because the structure was built in the early 1970s, there is asbestos that must now be removed.

Groundbreaking will follow, on March 21, according to Dan Hamel, chief operating officer and controller of the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island. The exact dates depend on the weather.

Donald Dwares, honorary co-chair of the capital campaign committee that has been working to ensure the renovations come to fruition, said he and his wife, Bonnie, "could not be more excited" that the renovations are set to begin.

"Our dream to modernize the facility so that it will become secure, inclusive and accessible for our entire community shall soon become a reality," he said.

Once the renovations are finished, in the fall, you will enter the building to find stairs up to a bright, welcoming lobby or down to the lower lobby, which will include membership and fitness. When you enter the front door, an elevator at the left will be available to take you up or down to either lobby.

"This is an exciting time for us," said Hamel, adding that, after the renovations, "you'll be able to see into the building. People will be able to see who we are."



COURTESY | N|E|M|D ARCHITECTS

The new front atrium, as shown in a rendering by the architects.

But to get there, things will get a bit messy.

Once construction begins, the Sandy & Richard Bornstein Atrium, Salmanson Family Lobby, Victor & Gussie Baxt Social Hall and kitchen will be temporarily closed. Work on

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PHOTO | NICOLE LOPEZ WEDDINGS

A modern-day couple on their wedding day.

Weddings get a modern makeover

BY ARIEL BROTHMAN

The personality of weddings is changing. Since couples are waiting longer to get married, many in the wedding industry are seeing more confidence and more financial security in today's engaged couples. As a result, they are taking control of the wedding planning, a role that traditionally belonged to parents. And since couples are taking the reins, more of their personalities shine through in the details of the big day!

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Kosher Senior Café on the move

In order to keep the food flowing and accessible for seniors during the Dwares JCC renovations, the Kosher Senior Café is moving temporarily.

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THIS ISSUE'S QUOTABLE QUOTE

"There is no personal growth without community..."

Eighth annual vigil focuses on poverty issues

The sound of shofars echoed through the Rhode Island State House Jan. 6 to signal the beginning of the Eighth Annual Rhode Island Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty vigil. This year more than 225 people heard comments from Governor Gina Raimondo, Senate President Teresa Paiva Weed and House Speaker Nicolas Mattiello. Bishop Herson Gonzalez of the Calvary Worship Center, Woonsocket, offered a keynote address that focused on the need for the General Assembly to concentrate on reducing poverty, saying that there was so much work that still needs to be done in this area.

The RI Interfaith Coalition is made up of diverse religious communities and advocacy partners throughout the state who come together to fight poverty.

During the vigil, coalition leaders spoke of their legislative concerns which include: expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit, reforming pay day lending practices, expanding opportunities for workforce and Occupational Training, implementing Opening Doors RI (the state's plan to end homelessness which includes support for an affordable housing bond, as well as Protection of families from domestic and on-school property gun violence), and maintaining the RIPTA senior/disabled fare program while providing adequate funding for senior centers.



Rabbi Wayne Franklin sounds the shofar.



PHOTOS | KAREN JEFFREYS, RI COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

Attendees gather in the State House.



Pictured from left to right:
Edward Petras, Vice President Commercial Lending; Anthony Medeiros, Vice President Commercial Lending; Joseph T. Baptista Jr., President & CEO; Nancy E. Stokes, Senior Vice President Lending; Matthew R. Ledin, Vice President Commercial Lending; Daniel L. Conrad, Senior Vice President Lending

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‘Deli Man’ offers up a delicious taste of Jewish American history

BY LEAH C. BOURAMIA

At first glance, the 2014 documentary “Deli Man” seems like an homage to pastrami. Yet the film stretches its vision far beyond the pickle, reaching back into the history of a Jewish American institution: the deli.

According to the book “Pastrami on Rye: An Overstuffed History of the Jewish Deli,” by Ted Merwin, the first Russian immigrants to New York City, in the 1880s, helped delis rise to prominence in the early 20th century.

When immigration from Europe peaked in 1907, reaching 1 million, the deli industry was booming, according to a Dec. 12, 2015, article in The Economist, “The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Deli.” By 1931, it is estimated that there were over 2,000 delis in New York City alone, says “Deli Man” director Erik Greenberg Anjou. Today, we learn from the film, there are roughly 135 Jewish delis in the entire United States.

“When you consider that number, it’s a pretty stark picture of something we think of as a pillar of Jewish cuisine and behavior,” Anjou says.

“Deli Man” describes the heyday of the delicatessen, when there was a deli on every corner, each with its own specialties, as well as the expected standards. Today, we might not even recognize items on these establishments’ lengthy, detailed menus, but Ziggy Gruber, of Kenny and Ziggy’s New York Delicatessen, the main figure profiled in the film, proudly shares binders replete with clear plastic sleeves, each containing vintage menus from New York delicatessens. Items like chollent, lungen stew and chicken fricassee have all but disappeared from the modern deli menu. Of course, knishes, matzah ball soup, overstuffed sandwiches, pickles and *latkes* have endured changing tastes and continue to be favorites.

“Deli Man” shows the struggle of the delicatessen to stay alive in the United States: how the rising costs of rent, equipment and quality food have translated into high menu prices that have driven away many customers. Viewers are also reminded of how the tradition of the deli is woven into the fabric of the Jewish community as a relaxed space to get together, enjoy the foods our grandparents ate, and perhaps speak and hear more Yiddish than anywhere else in the American Diaspora.

Jay Parker, owner of Ben’s Best Kosher Delicatessen, in Rego Park, N.Y., has been featured on the Food Network’s “Diners, Drive-Ins, and Dives,” as well as in “Deli Man.” Ben’s Best has survived by consistently offering high-quality deli since 1945.

“We’ve been dealing with the same vendors almost since the place opened,” Ben’s Best website states. “Ask me what I paid for corned beef yesterday, I won’t know. The price isn’t important, it’s the quality.”

Like Anjou, Parker is deeply concerned about the survival of the deli. While Parker has been on several panels delving into the institution of the American deli, he says Ziggy Gruber is the industry’s true ambassador.

Something about Gruber is unique. Young by many deliman standards, both the film and his restaurant’s website tell how the 40-something Gruber made a study of his grandparents’ deli, the Cresthill Kosher Deli, in Spring Valley, N.Y., after he began working there at the tender age of 8.

At 15, after the passing of his beloved grandfather, Gruber journeyed to Providence to help his grandmother run the deli. Gruber’s grandmother died in 2014, leaving the deli in his hands.



Erik Greenberg Anjou

Gruber’s grandmother’s deli was a success, and Gruber’s parents moved to Providence to help run it. Gruber’s father, Gene, is also featured in the film.

“Holocaust survivors who made it big in New York used to pull up in their limos to eat at the delis on 2nd Avenue – because it tasted like home,” Anjou said.

LEAH C. BOURAMIA is an educator, wife and the mother of two rambunctious boys. She lives in Warwick.

Deli Night

The Dwares Jewish Community Center, in Providence, will host “A Night at the Deli” on Feb. 18. The event begins with dinner at 6 p.m., followed by a screening of “Deli Man” at 7:30 p.m. Director Eric Greenberg Anjou and fourth-generation deli-man Jay Parker will speak at the event. To book, or for more information, go to jewishallianceri.org/a-night-at-the-deli



Ziggy and Gene Gruber, of Kenny and Ziggy’s New York Delicatessen.

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Your donation helps the world's neediest Jews

BY HILLARY SCHULMAN
hschulman@jewishallianceri.org

Second in a series of three

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) provides relief to the world's poorest Jews. Those who are in dire need of assistance turn to the JDC for food, medicine, clothing, home care and heat. This assistance is heavily depended upon by economically vulnerable seniors and families living in places where few or no other social services exist. The JDC aims to help these seniors and families find their way to self-sufficiency and break the poverty cycle.

The Jewish Alliance's Annual Campaign provides core funding for the JDC, whose relief programs around the world assist our extended network in areas that need it most.

Here is a look at relief programs in the former Soviet Union. After the downfall of that nation, thousands of elderly Jews fell into poverty. They lost their homes, their livelihoods and their social safety net. Many of these people were often forced to choose between food and medical care.

To date, there are over 130,000 elderly Jews across the former Soviet Union who rely on the JDC's relief programs to survive. The JDC provides services such as home-care workers, supermarket food cards, food packages, meals on wheels, hot meals in communal dining rooms, free medical consultation, winter relief, rehabilitation equipment, day centers, and home repair.

Boris is 64 years old and lives in Vitebsk, Belarus, in a dorm-style apartment. In Boris's case, he relied on many of these life-saving services all at once.

His father abandoned his family before he was born, and, as the only male, Boris felt responsible for supporting his family. He dropped out of high school to work, bringing whatever money he made to his mother. He also lived with his aunt and grandmother.

Before he hit retirement age, Boris's mother became paralyzed. He left his distillery job to help care for her, resulting in only being able to collect a small pension – about $196 a month.

After his mother passed away, Boris could no longer afford the small home they had shared, so he moved into his current residence, which is now crammed with both their belongings, as well as trash that he does not have the energy to get rid of. The stress of his situation has taken a toll on his health. Boris developed hypertension, diabetes and blood clots in the leg. He spends most of his small pension on medications that keep him alive.

The JDC has been helping Boris: it has provided him with a bank card, which he can use for the remaining costs of his medications, as well as food. Without the JDC's relief programs, Boris would have to choose between food and medicine.



PHOTOS | JDC

Boris is 64 years old and lives in Vitebsk, Belarus, in a dorm-style apartment.



Avraham, Isaac and Diana Tkacenko live in Kazakhstan with their older brother, parents and grandmother in an old, run-down house.

During Jewish holidays, the JDC delivers holiday food sets to Boris, bringing him a little bit of joy and connection to Judaism.

The JDC's relief programs do not stop at the elderly – they also help families afford the basic necessities to live a dignified life. Across the former Soviet Union, there are over 10,000 Jewish children living in poverty who need the JDC's assistance. Many of these children are in difficult family circumstances, dilapidated housing or orphanages.

Avraham, Isaac and Diana Tkacenko live in Kazakhstan with their older brother, parents and grandmother in an old, run-down house. Their parents both work part-time jobs, neither of which brings in much money, so they cannot afford rent. Their home belongs to a family member, who lets them live there for free, but it is more of a storage basement than a home.

Their grandmother uses her small pension to buy food. Their local synagogue helps the Tkacenkos, but for a family of seven, it just is not enough. The children are malnourished because of a lack of food and vitamins.

The JDC's relief programs have been saving the Tkacenko family. One of the JDC's network of 145 Hesed social welfare centers – located across the vast expanse of the former Soviet Union – has been their main source of aid. They receive food packages and money for heating fuel and warm clothes. When the children fall ill, the JDC provides medical assistance and emergency assistance.

Without the JDC, Avraham, Isaac, Diana and their family might not survive.

You can help people like Boris and the Tkacenko family. Your gift to the Jewish Alliance's Annual Campaign will help provide relief to thousands of impoverished Jewish elderly and families. They, just like so many around the world, need you.

EDITOR'S NOTE: There will be one more article, describing the JDC's renewal programs throughout the world.

HILLARY SCHULMAN is a development associate in philanthropy for the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island.

the JEWISH VOICE

EDITOR
Fran Ostendorf

CONTRIBUTORS
Leah Charpentier BouRamia
Arial Brothman
Seth Chitwood
Stephanie Ross

EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS
Irina Missiuro
Judith Romney Wegner

DESIGN & LAYOUT
Leah Camara
Rachel B. Bell

ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT
Tricia Stearly
tstearly@jewishallianceri.org
401-421-4111, ext. 160

Karen Borger
ksborger@gmail.com
401-529-2538

VOICE ADVISORY GROUP
Melanie Coon, Douglas Emanuel, Stacy Emanuel, Rabbi Jeffrey Goldwasser, John Landry, Mindy Stone

COLUMNISTS
Michael Fink, Rabbi James Rosenberg and Daniel Stieglitz

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Art leads to understanding at JCDSRI and ISRI

BY ARIEL BROTHMAN

CRANSTON – It shouldn't be a big deal when two communities come together to make art and meet new friends; something so seemingly pure and light-hearted shouldn't be seen as a necessary step towards preventing hatred and increasing awareness. But the reality is that we live in a world where it is important to be proactive about seeking out the truth about people who are different from us, because the real truth is that they're probably not that different at all.

That was the message from Adam Tilove, head of Providence's Jewish Community Day School of Rhode Island, in a Martin Luther King Day Jr. speech at the Islamic School of Rhode Island in Cranston. JCDSRI and ISRI joined forces Jan. 18 to collaborate on an art project in the Islamic School's gymnasium, and their choice of day was no coincidence.

With the guidance of Leah Smith, Talia Levitt and Michael Townsend, members of Providence-based art collective "Tape Art," students and their parents expressed themselves through tape art, a medium that was developed right here in Rhode Island 25 years ago. Using multiple colors of masking tape, the group made pictures. In their experiences with tape art, the artists have noticed that it is very "collaborative" in nature.

"We've found that we can bring this to any community, and people will make art. It's awesome," says Townsend.

The two schools originally entered into a partnership after the ISRI was vandalized with hate messages last year. The students of the day school immediately showed their support for their Muslim peers with letters of encouragement. It was shortly after this incident that Tilove and ISRI's Head of School, Abdelnasser Hussein, recognized the urgency of exposing their students to each others' cultures in an effort to prevent further hate crimes.

Hussein encourages his students to interact with people of other faiths, and has facilitated partnerships with private schools, Catholic schools, charter schools, and others.

"We are all American citizens working for the benefit of our kids," he says of his perspective, holding his infant son in one arm. "We are willing to get in touch with everyone who wants to understand us."

Rhode Island's Secretary of State, Nellie Gorbea, who attended the event, explained to a receptive audience why Rhode Island is the perfect place for this kind of partnership.

"Rhode Island can lead," she said confidently. "It's part of being a Rhode Islander to accept others as they are."

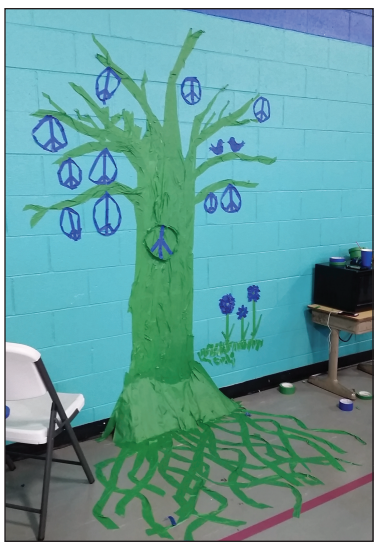
Sophia Elanani, vice president of ISRI's PTO, saw this in action when she experienced a sea of curiosity from the Jewish day school's students.

"We have so much participation in this [program] with sheer kindness and open-mindedness," she exclaims. "They are asking questions [about subjects] from the *hijab* to our dietary rules … they just want to know. They are so interested in finding out who we really are."

But ultimately, she continued, "we're part of the same tree, just a different branch."

The theme of the creations was "ways to improve the world." After a brief explanation on how to make tape art, students broke into groups of four or more and got down to taping away their differences.

A couple of hours later, we all did a "gallery walk" where we listened as a representative from each group explained the group's artwork. Creations included a tree with peace signs, children playing and talking together and holding up the world with their hands, multiple environmentally-themed creations, a Minion from Pixar's "Despicable Me" with a watering can next to a mathematical formula for what was rumored to be time travel, and a portrait of MLK himself. The room came alive with messages of *tzedakah*, and *sadaqah*.



Sister Wendy Manchester Ibrahim of the Rhode Island Council for Muslim Advancement, which oversees Rhode Island's many Muslim-affiliated institutions, expressed her belief in the importance of the kind of partnership that JCDSRI and ISRI have developed.

"I think it's fantastic what the principal is doing here. He's a global thinker and I don't think this event could have gone any better," she said. "Doing it in a fun way where kids get to know each other … is a brilliant idea."

The schools' fifth graders will also be working together in the coming weeks in a theater workshop, which started the week prior to the tape art event. The students will meet twice a week for the next 12 weeks.

"We really wanted to make sure that in our engagement together we give kids a deeper opportunity to get to know each other," said Tilove. "This was a beautiful event," he said, referring to the tape art. "But this wasn't the end."

ARIEL BROTHMAN is a freelance writer who lives in Wrentham, Massachusetts.



PHOTO | JCDSRI

Martin Luther King Jr. as depicted by the students.



PHOTOS | ARIEL BROTHMAN

A group of students plan their project.

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Branch Manager
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jerry.kritz@swmc.com
Branch NMLS ID 1330911
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The event is open to the community and is free of charge.
Donations in support of the Federation by non-members are welcome.

Telling our stories to honor our heritage

Understanding our ancestral connections, our family's genealogical roots and their stories constitutes the foundation of our very being. We can truly appreciate where we're going when we know – and appreciate – where we've been. Honoring our heritage is honoring our past, and honoring our past is honoring our future. I believe in the phrase "it's in the genes" and that we should think about our heritage, listen to stories about it, tell stories about it and write about it. This is what I did in this story from my book, "Pathfinding," told to me by my late father.



PATRICIA RASKIN

"In Czarist Russia, most Jews were orthodox, and Jewish boys attended their own schools, called yeshivas. There was a military draft for all boys of military age. When Jewish boys were drafted into the Czar's army, they were treated as inferiors. They could not obtain Kosher foods. So it wasn't surprising that many of the Jewish boys facing military service left Russia before they could be drafted. Where did they go? They went to America.

"Your grandfather, as a youth, traveled all over Siberia. He was an entrepreneur and a salesman, so it wasn't surprising that when he faced the draft he decided to leave Russia and go to America. He sewed $500 into the lining of his coat. That is all that he owned. He kissed his mother goodbye, said goodbye to his friends and left for America.

"At that time there was an underground that operated throughout Europe, and it was able to spirit Jewish boys from town to town westward until they got to the German border. Once they got to Germany, they could board a ship that was bound for America.

"Your grandfather got all the way across Poland, and at the last Jewish outpost of the underground there was a family who had an eligible daughter. Her father took a fancy to your grandfather and demanded that he marry his daughter. But your grandfather didn't want to marry his daughter. They threatened him that if he didn't marry her, they would turn him in to the authorities. So during that night, he sneaked out and escaped.

"I would have never known this piece of my heritage if I had not asked my father for this glimpse into my history..."

"He made his own way across Germany, got on a ship from Germany and came to New York. Later when he settled in America, he brought some of his family over, including your great-grandmother. Your great-grandfather died in Russia. Your grandfather left New York and came to Boston with the help of people he knew from the old country. There he started his own business and proceeded to raise his own family."

I would have never known this piece of my heritage if I had not asked my father for this glimpse into my history (nor would I have been here to write this story). It helped me to understand the strength of my origins and the courage that was handed down to me.

I believe that by sharing our family stories we honor our own heritage and legacy. We establish the links for passing family torches from generation to generation and realize that what we do in our own lives has far-reaching and long-lasting effects.

A quote by Niels Bohr sums it up: "Life can only be understood backward, but it must be lived forward."

PATRICIA RASKIN, M.ED. is an award winning producer and host of "The Patricia Raskin Show" on Saturday at 4 p.m. on WPRO, AM 630/99.7 FM. She is a recipient of the 2015 RI Small Business Administration Award. She is a board member of Temple Emanu-El.

Do you know an innovative Jewish educator?

The Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation are partnering to honor outstanding Jewish educators in greater Rhode Island. Nominations are now being accepting for the 2015-2016 school year, for the Lea Eliash Memorial/Grinspoon Award for Excellence in Jewish Education. Please contact Lawrence Katz at lkatz@jewishallianceri.org for the link to the nomination form or more information. Nominations are due by Feb. 24.

The local award winner will receive:

- $1,000 toward a professional development opportunity.
- $500 honorarium from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.
- Plaque from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.
- Local and national publicity and acknowledgment, in print and online.
- Listing on the Harold Grinspoon Foundation website.
- Invitation to participate in an online community of practice.

Jewish educators who see the same class(es) regularly are candidates – early childhood educators, religious school teachers, day school or secondary school teachers, etc. They do not need to be Jewish but do need to work for a Jewish educational organization in Greater Rhode Island performing the functions of a teacher, not of an administrator. Candidates for the award must be teachers who:

- Demonstrate exceptional achievement in Jewish education.
- Have made a significant impact on students and the community.
- Have a minimum of three years experience in the field.
- Teach in pre-school through grade 12.

Applicants should demonstrate creative curriculum design, effective planning skills and inspirational teaching. They should be able to provide examples of successful innovations in Jewish education that engage learners and result in evidence of learning.

Lea Eliash, in serving for over 50 years as a teacher, taught the love of Hebrew language to generations, often of the same family. Lea forged deep connections to these generations of students, with each feeling his or her own personal attachment to her. Even at over 80, Lea was still exhilarated by her teaching and learning. For Lea, it was not "what I teach" but "whom I teach."

Lea was a survivor of the Kovno ghetto. Therefore, in addition to teaching within the Jewish community, Lea generously shared her own highly personal, intimate story with public school and church groups.

The Lea Eliash Memorial Award, established in partnership with the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, brings national recognition to the local recipient. Harold Grinspoon created this award as an expression of his commitment to quality Jewish education and his belief that teachers are at the heart of the educational process. Grinspoon is active in funding Jewish life in western Massachusetts and in the national and international Jewish philanthropic community. The Grinspoon Awards (formerly Grinspoon-Steinhardt Awards) have recognized more than 700 outstanding educators in the U.S. and Canada in the past 15 years, including several from Rhode Island. For more information on the Grinspoon Awards, see hgf.org/JEd-Awards or email Nora Gorenstein at TeacherAwards@HGF.org

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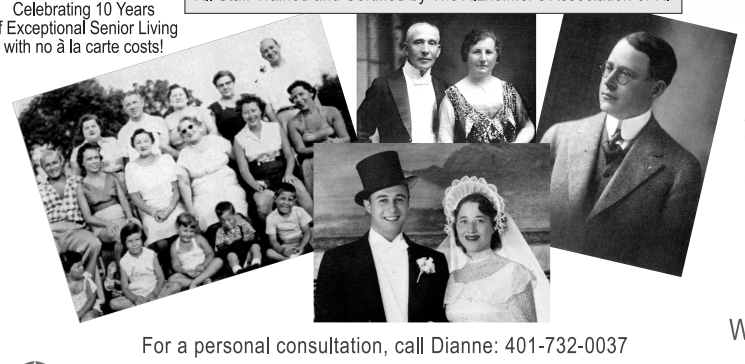
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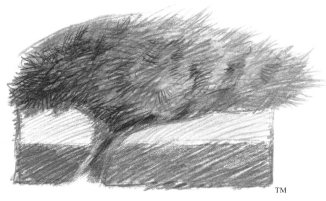
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The hidden awakening of *Tu b'Shevat*



RABBI AARON PHILMUS

In the dead of winter, the full moon of Shevat rises and whispers the promise of Spring. It is called "Rosh Hashanah of the Tree," because it marks the very beginning of the fruit growing process. Beneath rough lifeless bark, there is a hidden awakening. The sap rises from the roots and nurtures the growth of baby leaves and flowers. Although *Tu b'Shevat* comes early this year, it often coincides with the beginning of maple sugaring season in New England. On *Tu b'Shevat* we chant blessings upon fruits of the tree (*borei p'ri ha'etz*) and practice eating more mindfully. There are four cups of wine, one for each season of the year (white, pink, red and dark red). During the seder, we also "eat" from the Tree of Life by studying the Torah of trees. The Torah is called a Tree of Life because just as trees sustain us with food, shelter, fire, tools, medicine and oxygen, so too, the Torah sustains us spiritually, connecting us to the Source of Life.

People often ask me, "Rabbi, with all the assimilation and intermarriage, aren't you worried about the future of the Jewish people?"

"I used to worry about this," I tell them, "but now I stand by the prophet Isaiah who said, 'Like the days of a tree shall be the days of my people….' " When winter approaches, leaves are shed and sap sinks down into the roots. Many trees appear to be dead for several months, yet we never doubt that the sap will rise again come spring. And so the prophet said, "Like the days of a tree shall be the days of my people."

On the Shabbat before *Tu b'Shevat*, we read about our narrow escape from Pharoah's army after 400 years of exile in Egypt. As we marched through the sea on dry land we were transformed from a scattered band of slaves into a holy and mighty nation. When we reached the other side safely, we all burst into song and dance together as if it were some kind of Jewish musical! Since then, our people have lived through countless cycles of death and rebirth. Through it all, the holiday *Tu b'Shevat* has been, "like a bonsai tree that helps us see in miniature the broader shape of contemporary Jewish renewal" (Nigel Savage, director of Hazon).

In ancient Israel, *Tu b'Shevat* marked the beginning of a new tithing year for fruit trees. But when the Holy Temple was destroyed, *Tu b'Shevat* went underground, like a seed waiting to be germinated. In 1492, hundreds of thousands of Jews were expelled from Spain. The center of Jewish mysticism was transplanted to the hills of northern Israel. The Spanish Kabbalists developed a *Tu b'Shevat* seder with prayers and intentions to increase the flow of "sap" in the great cosmic "Tree of Life." Hundreds of years later it was the early Zionists, who revived *Tu b'Shevat* as a way to celebrate our renewed connection to the Land of Israel.

The fourth and most recent flowering of *Tu b'Shevat* came with the emergence of Jewish Environmental Education and the new Jewish Food Movement. Jewish communities around the country are now being transformed and renewed by JOFEE, Jewish Outdoor Food and Environmental Education. If you want to hear more, please join us on Sunday Feb. 7 at 10:30 a.m. at Temple Torat Yisrael in East Greenwich. We will make cheese from scratch with local dairy farmer, Glenn Katz, and have a lecture/discussion on the new Jewish Food Movement with Jewish farm educator Stephen Sherman. You can also go to hazon.org. Hazon is the umbrella organization for Jewish Outdoor Food and Environmental Education initiatives worldwide.

May it be a Shanah Tovah, a good and sweet New Year for the trees and for all of us whose lives depend on them. *Tu b'Shevat samech* – Happy *Tu b'Shevat*!

AARON PHILMUS is rabbi of Temple Torat Yisrael in East Greenwich.

Candle Lighting Times

Greater Rhode Island

Jan. 15	4:20
Jan. 22	4:28
Jan. 29	4:37
Feb. 5	4:47



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Community celebrates life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. though song

Seven Rhode Island community choirs will present "Singing The Dream," a musical tribute celebrating the life and achievements of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on Jan. 31, at 4:30 p.m. at Grace Episcopal Church in Providence. More than 150 voices from Shir Emanu-El of Temple Emanu-El in Providence, Grace Episcopal Church, Prism of Praise Community Gospel Choir, Providence Gay Men's Chorus, Central Congregational Church of Providence, Shireinu – The Jewish Community Chorus of Temple Sinai in Cranston and HaZamir Providence, will honor and commemorate the great American civil rights leader. The choirs will sing gospel hymns, spirituals, Jewish hymns and contemporary compositions.

Produced by Temple Emanu-El, the program has the generous support of the Bliss, Gross, Horowitz Fund at The Rhode Island Foundation and is sponsored by the Board of Rabbis of Greater RI, RI State Council of Churches and The Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island. "The collaboration with churches, community singing groups, synagogues and faith communities celebrates the power of music and triumph of the human spirit inspired by Dr. King's vision for equality," said Cantor Dr. Brian Mayer, *hazzan* at Temple Emanu-El and music director of the program.

The Rev. Canon Jonathan Huyck of Grace Church will offer the invocation and the Rev. Shavon Starling-Lewis of Providence Presbyterian Church will be the keynote speaker. With the benediction by Imam Farid Ansari, the performance will conclude with the singing of "Lift Every Voice and Sing" by all of the voices as well as the audience. The performance is free and open to the public. For tickets, go to singingthedream.eventbrite.com

Israel Mission: Personal Reflections & Impressions
Sunday, January 31 | 10:00 - 11:30am
Dwares JCC Social Hall

In November 2015, the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island and its Community Relations Council (CRC) hosted a mission to Israel with more than a dozen high-profile Rhode Islanders.



Join us for an informal panel discussion moderated by WPRO Anchor & Host Steve Klamkin. The panelists will share their stories and lasting impressions of Israel with members of the Rhode Island community. All are welcome to share in discourse and dialogue.

Kindly RSVP online by January 21 to let us know you will be attending.
http://www.jewishallianceri.org/israel-mission-impressions

For more information about the program, contact
Marty Cooper at mcooper@jewishallianceri.org or 401.421.4111 ext. 171

CRC Community Relations Council of The Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island

Jewish Alliance OF GREATER RHODE ISLAND
401 Elmgrove Avenue | Providence, RI 02906 | 401.421.4111 | jewishallianceri.org

Thinking about writing to the editor? Here's how

Recently, I've been asked many questions about letters to the editor and contributors' columns (op-eds). We love when our readers take enough interest in our content to write to us. We also love getting feedback, and we value the diverse viewpoints of our community.



EDITOR

FRAN OSTENDORF

Feedback, both positive and negative, helps a newspaper become a better publication. But we also have some rules, which were put into place a number of years ago to preserve the pages of The Voice as a place for contributors to express opinions and offer information in a civil way.

Our letters policy, available for all to read on the first opinion page of every issue of the paper, caps letters at 250 words. In the last year, we've allowed up to 300 words, after looking at policies elsewhere and considering the letters we have received.

If you send us a letter that is longer than 300 words, you will get it back with a request to cut it to the stated limit. That has nothing to do with the letter's contents, but simply the length. You can easily check the length yourself by typing your letter into a word processing program and looking at the word count. If you use a typewriter, a full page of double-spaced typing is about 250 words.

If you are submitting a letter to the editor by email, please label it as such in the subject line so we immediately know it is a letter to the editor. The editor's inbox gets many emails – you want to take sure your letter is easy to spot. And be sure to include your name, town or city of residence, and contact information. We do not print contact information, but we must have it to authenticate the letter and should we have questions.

We take seriously our role as a place for civil dialogue. Make sure your letter contains creditable facts, does not quote material that's copyrighted from other publications (which we cannot reprint), does not include live links to other websites (they go nowhere in a printed publication) and does not slander anyone.

Remember, the letter is your opinion. It should be written in that manner. You are speaking for yourself. If more than one person signs the letter, then the letter speaks for the group. Letters usually address articles in the paper or events in the community.

Contributor's columns, often called op-eds, address issues of general interest to our readership. They are longer, 500 to 800 words. They are still the reader's opinion and can be written from a first person point of view, but should still be backed by facts. Since we are part of a nonprofit organization, we cannot advocate for or endorse political candidates.

The Voice has published oped articles on a wide variety of topics: politics, arts, Israel, religion, community. We hope to continue this policy and encourage you, our readers, to submit these longer pieces for consideration.

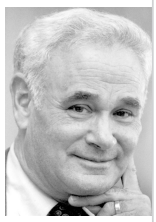
As with all material sent to the newspaper, we may edit pieces for publication or refuse publication, at our discretion. This is the policy of every newspaper. We take this responsibility seriously and do not practice it lightly.

We welcome articles that educate, illuminate, start conversations and further civil discourse – and look forward to hearing from you soon!

ERRATA –Jan. 8

In the article, "The JDC: Rescuing millions of people worldwide," Sam Amiel was incorrectly identified as a JDC volunteer; he serves as JDC's senior program director for International Development and Africa/Asia. Also, to clarify, JDC's Jewish response to global disasters and crises are funded by special campaigns of the Jewish Federations and core funds are not used to support these efforts.

A turning point in Jewish-Christian relations?



IT SEEMS TO ME

RABBI JIM ROSENBERG

This past Dec. 3, 25 prominent Orthodox rabbis from Israel, the United States, Finland, France, Germany, Serbia and Switzerland signed a document composed by the Israel-based Center for Jewish-Christian Understanding & Cooperation (CJCUC) titled, "To Do the Will of our Father in Heaven: Toward a Partnership between Jews and Christians." Since then, dozens of other Orthodox rabbis – including representatives from Jewish communities in Armenia, Canada, Chile, Norway/Estonia, Peru, South Africa and the United Kingdom – have added their names.

The statement's preamble reads: "After nearly two millennia of mutual hostility and alienation, we Orthodox Rabbis who lead communities, institutions and seminaries in Israel, the United States and Europe recognize the historic opportunity now before us. We seek to do the will of our Father in Heaven by accepting the hand offered to us by our Christian brothers and sisters. Jews and Christians must work together as partners to address the moral challenges of our era."

Given the fact the CJCUC statement reflects an Orthodox Jewish perspective, it seems fitting that the authors have turned to such revered Medieval authorities as Yehudah Halevi (c1075-1141) and Moses Maimonides (1135-1204) to offer traditional support for their position: "As did Maimonides and Yehudah Halevi (sources are footnoted), we acknowledge that Christianity is neither an accident nor an error, but the willed divine outcome and gift to the nations. In separating Judaism and Christianity, G-d willed a separation between partners with significant theological differences, not a separation between enemies."

What is potentially significant about this document is that all of its signatories are Orthodox rabbis. By way of contrast, non-Orthodox rabbis have been engaged for several decades in the Jewish-Christian dialogue on local, national and international levels. It is no accident, for example, that Dr. Michael J. Cook, a Reform rabbi, has spent almost all of his long career at the Cincinnati campus of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, the seminary that trains Reform rabbis, teaching his students about Jesus and early Christianity. Here in Rhode Island most of my colleagues and I have been involved in interfaith activities throughout our careers, and even in retirement.

"It is too early to tell whether the Dec. 3 statement by Orthodox rabbis will be a historic turning point in Jewish-Christian relations or a mere blip on the calendar."

Jewish college professors are also fostering the ongoing conversation between Christians and Jews through their courses on the relationship between Judaism and early Christianity. Dr. Amy-Jill Levine, professor of New Testament studies at Vanderbilt University Divinity School in Nashville, author of "The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus" (2006) and co-editor of the "Jewish Annotated New Testament" (Oxford University Press, 2011), is one such world-class scholar who has focused her career on demonstrating to Jews and Christians alike the profoundly Jewish aspects of Jesus' identity.

It is too early to tell whether the Dec. 3 statement by Orthodox rabbis will be a historic turning point in Jewish-Christian relations or a mere blip on the calendar. To begin with, these rabbis appear to represent a liberal minority; how much influence they might have on their more conservative colleagues is yet to be determined.

Moreover, it is difficult to discern what prompted the CJCUC to publicize its position when it did. Perhaps – though I have no way of proving this – the rabbis went public in response to such viciously anti-Christian Israeli fringe groups as Lehava (Flame) – an acronym for the four Hebrew words which translate as "Prevention of Assimilation in the Holy Land." The current leader of Lehava, Benzi Gopstein, has been widely condemned for his views regarding Israeli Christians: "The mission of those vampires and bloodsuckers remains....We must remove the vampires before they drink our blood once again." In the face of such irresponsible and dangerous hate-mongering, the words of Orthodox rabbis who seek to deepen their relationship with Christians offer a welcome counterpoint.

Not surprisingly, the Orthodox rabbis' statement on the relationship between Judaism and Christianity takes a literalist view of our Torah. Thus, in the same section that draws support from both Halevi and Maimonides, the authors quote with approval the words of Rabbi Jacob Emden (1697-1776):

"Jesus brought a double goodness to the world. On the one hand he strengthened the Torah of Moses majestically ... and not one of our Sages spoke out more emphatically concerning the immutability of the Torah. On the other hand he removed idols from the nations ... Christians are congregations that work for the sake of heaven who are destined to endure, whose intent is for the sake of heaven and whose reward will not be denied."

As a religious liberal, I do not accept the notion of an immutable Torah. Furthermore, I question how Emden comes to the conclusion that Jesus "emphatically" affirms the immutability of the Torah. Nevertheless, I applaud Rabbi Emden's insistence that Christian men and women "work for the sake of heaven" and are people "whose intent is for the sake of heaven." And I applaud all those Orthodox rabbis who have signed "To Do the Will of Our Father in Heaven: Toward a Partnership between Jews and Christians." Reaching out to our Christian brothers and sisters is most definitely for the sake of heaven.

JAMES B. ROSENBERG is rabbi emeritus at Temple Habonim in Barrington. Contact him at rabbiemeritus@templehabonim.org.

OUR MISSION

The mission of The Jewish Voice is to communicate Jewish news, ideas and ideals by connecting and giving voice to the diverse views of the Jewish community in Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts, while adhering to Jewish values and the professional standards of journalism.

COLUMNS | LETTERS POLICY

The Jewish Voice publishes thoughtful and informative contributors' columns (op-eds of 500 – 800 words) and letters to the editor (300 words, maximum) on issues of interest to our Jewish community. At our discretion, we may edit pieces for publication or refuse publication. Letters and columns, whether from our regular contributors or from guest columnists, represent the views of the authors; they do not represent the views of The Jewish Voice or the Alliance.

Send letters and op-eds to: The Jewish Voice, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence, RI 02906 or editor@jewishallianceri.org. Include name, city of residence and a contact phone number or email (not for publication).

What Pope Francis' synagogue visit says about Catholic-Jewish relations

BY RUTH ELLEN GRUBER

JTA – When Pope Francis crossed the Tiber River to visit the Great Synagogue of Rome on Jan. 17, he became the third pontiff to do so. But his 1.5-mile journey to the towering Tempio Maggiore showed that what was once unthinkable is now the norm.

"According to the juridical rabbinic traditions, an act repeated three times becomes '*chazaka*,' a habit," Rome Chief Rabbi Riccardo Di Segni told the pontiff. "Clearly this is a concrete sign of the new era after all that happened in the past."

John Paul II's visit 30 years ago marked a dramatic watershed in Catholic-Jewish relations. By crossing the threshold of the Tempio Maggiore, warmly embracing Rome's then-chief rabbi, Elio Toaff, and famously referring to Jews as Christianity's "older brothers," the Polish-born pontiff broke down barriers that stretched back nearly 2,000 years.

The visual impact alone of the pontiff and the chief rabbi embracing sent out a powerful message of reconciliation.

During his speech to a sanctuary packed with Jewish community members and representatives of the government, international Jewish organizations, the State of Israel and other faiths, Francis reiterated John Paul II's theme that Christianity is rooted in Judaism.

"You are, in fact, our older brothers and sisters in faith," Francis said. Christians, he added, "to understand themselves, cannot fail to make reference to the Jewish roots, and the church, while professing salvation through faith in Christi, recognized the irrevocability of the Ancient Alliance and constant and faithful love of God for Israel."

Formal dialogue between Catholics and Jews had begun only two decades before the visit by Pope John Paul II with the Vatican's 1965 *Nostra Aetate* declaration repudiating the charge that Jews were collectively responsible for killing Jesus. The document also stressed the religious bond between Jews and Catholics, and called for interfaith contacts.

For centuries earlier, as Brown University historian David Kertzer wrote in his 2001 book, "The Popes Against the Jews," the Vatican had "worked hard to keep Jews in their subservient place – barring them from owning property, from practicing professions, from attending university, from traveling freely." Jews were confined to ghettos and often subjected to expulsions, forced conversions and other persecutions. In Rome, the Great Synagogue stands where the papal rulers kept Jews confined to a crowded ghetto until 1870.

John Paul made fostering relations between Catholics and Jews a cornerstone of his papacy.

"What he did was to assert that one could not be a Christian without recognition of one's roots in the Jewish community," said Rabbi Gary Bretton-Granatoor, a longtime participant in Catholic-Jewish dialogue and a former vice president of the World Union of Progressive Judaism.

Pope Benedict XVI, who had been a key adviser to John Paul and an architect of his theological policy, followed John Paul's lead. But Benedict lacked his predecessor's charisma, and some of his policies strained relations with the Jewish world.

His visit to the Rome synagogue in January 2010 reaffirmed the continuity of the Vatican's commitment to Jewish-Catholic dialogue. But it came amid tensions sparked by his decision to move controversial World War II-era Pope Pius XII – whom critics accuse of having turned a blind eye to Jewish suffering during the Holocaust – closer to sainthood.

Rabbi Giuseppe Laras, the then-president of the Italian rabbinical assembly, even boycotted the synagogue ceremony in protest.

The Argentina-born Francis had a close relationship with the Jewish community even before his election to the papacy, when he was archbishop of Buenos Aires. Since becoming pontiff in March 2013, he has consistently demonstrated attention to Jewish issues and won over many skeptics with his warmth. He visited Israel, along with Jordan and the West Bank, in 2014.

In May 2014, Francis defused the Pius issue to some extent by making clear that he had no intention of fast-tracking his sainthood. And a Vatican document released in December to mark the 50th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate* reiterated at length how Christianity is rooted in Judaism. It also renewed pledges of cooperation and said the church as an institution should not try to convert Jews.

Prior to Sunday's visit, Bretton-Granatoor told JTA that Francis "is wholly at ease with the Jewish community and Jewish life. His entrance into that synagogue will not be dissimilar to a Jew entering a synagogue in a new place – new, yet familiar."

On Jan. 17, Francis addressed his personal feeling of closeness to Holocaust survivors, a group of whom were seated in the first row of the sanctuary, and noted the experience of the Holocaust must serve as a lesson for the present and the future.

"The Shoah teaches us that we always need the greatest vigilance to intervene promptly in defense of human dignity and peace," he said.

Francis also said the extraordinary rapprochement between Jews and Catholics over the past 50 years should serve as a model for other faiths.

"Conflicts, wars, violence and injustices open deep wounds in humanity and call on us to reinforce the commitment to peace and justice," Francis said.

"The violence of man against man is in contradiction with any religion worthy of the name, and in particular with the three great monotheistic religions," he said. "Every human being, as a creature of God, is our brother regardless of his origins or religious belief."

LETTER

Re: Student bakers (Dec. 11)

I enjoyed the article titled "Student bakers fight hunger with challah" very much. I'd like to add some background to the article. My daughter Danielle Waldman and her close friend Harrison Paup actually started the Brown Chapter in the fall of 2013. Danielle was looking for a way to combine her strong desire to perform *tzedakah* and *tikkun olam* as well her interest in business. Danielle was also a member and vice president of Brown's Women in Business.

The challah club was a hit from the beginning and did welcome everyone to join and participate, and the club became a great way for the students to meet new friends, learn how to run a business and to give back to the community. What is not known is that Danielle had to go back to the administration twice before her request to start the club was approved.

I sell commercial real estate in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, and I would make my R.I. appointments on Thursday or Friday so I could stop by and buy a challah. The club would bake the challah on Thursday and sell it on Friday before Shabbat. I live in Westwood, Massachusetts, so after buying the challah I would drive home on Route 95 and stop at the Dunkin Donuts at exit 30 to buy a coffee. I use to start sampling the challah on the ride home and the challah never made it home, much to my wife's chagrin.

I would like to commend the students at Brown for continuing such a new and wonderful tradition and for giving back to the community.

Dan Waldman
Westwood, Mass.

Conservative, Orthodox, pluralistic and Reform day school organizations to merge

NEW YORK (JTA) – Five North American Jewish day school organizations and networks representing more than 375 schools from across the denominational spectrum are merging.

The Jewish Community Day School Network (RAVSAK), the Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education (PEJE), Yeshiva University School Partnership, the Schechter Day School Network and Day Schools of Reform Judaism (PARDES) announced in a news release Jan. 19 that they have agreed to "move forward toward the formation of a new, integrated North American Jewish day school organization."

RAVSAK represents nondenominational Jewish schools, the Schechter network is affiliated with the Conservative movement and Yeshiva University mostly serves modern and centrist Orthodox schools. Together, the schools represented by the five groups enroll about 40 percent of the total number of students in full-time Jewish schools, according to The New York Jewish Week, which reported that the merger is estimated to save more than $1 million annually.

The merger comes as enrollment in non-Orthodox day schools is declining and centrist and modern Orthodox school enrollment is flat. Haredi Orthodox schools, which will not be represented in the new group, have been rapidly growing, accounting for more than half of all full-time Jewish school enrollment.

The decision to merge "recognizes that a combined day school organization will more effectively meet the diverse needs of local schools by pooling the talent, expertise and resources originally dispersed among its founding agencies," according to the news release.

The merging organizations began combining their annual conferences in 2010.

The still unnamed new entity is "committed to improving financial vitality and educational excellence in Jewish day schools, and supporting a vibrant, visible and connected Jewish day school field," the release states. "It will work directly with schools, cohorts of schools, and individual professional and lay leaders to strengthen skills and build capacity in areas of teaching and learning, leadership, governance, affordability, recruitment, retention, fund development and endowment building."

The new group will "network colleagues and schools of different ideologies and geographies to address shared challenges and capitalize on shared opportunities, while still providing distinct services and counsel to schools from within similar streams."

The decision to merge follows an almost year-long planning process facilitated in part by the Avi Chai Foundation, which has pledged financial support for the new organization until the foundation shuts down operations in 2019.

In a joint statement, the planning team, representing leaders from each group, said, "The formation of a single integrated day school organization will optimize the quality of services we provide to the schools we serve, giving them the resources they need to build the strongest possible future. It is a definitive affirmation of the centrality of day schools in Jewish life and reflects our dedication to seeing Jewish learning, literacy, culture and commitment flourish in a rapidly changing world."

The new organization, which has begun a branding process to select its name and "develop an identity that reflects a unified, cooperative and fresh vision of the day school field," plans to launch this summer.

Ongoing

Alliance Kosher Senior Café. Kosher lunch and program every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Dwares JCC, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence. Noon lunch; 1 p.m. program. $3 lunch donation from individuals 60+ or under 60 with disabilities. Neal or Elaine, 401-421-4111, ext. 107.

West Bay Kosher Senior Café. Kosher lunch and program every weekday. Temple Sinai, 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. 11:15 a.m. program; Noon lunch. $3 lunch donation from individuals 60+ or under 60 with disabilities. Steve, 401-743-0009.

Through March 3

21 Plein Air Artists. Gallery at Temple Habonim features 36 works from participants in a summer Lifelong Learning Collaborative class. Variety of styles and mediums. Hours are Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Friday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and by appointment. 165 New Meadow Road, Barrington. For information, call 401-245-6536. gallery@templehabonim.org.

Friday | January 22

PJ Library Story and Play Time with "Bubbie Sara." 10-11 a.m. Dwares JCC. Join us for a *Tu b'Shevat*-themed story and play time with PJ Library books, songs and movement, and crafts. All children ages 5 and under are welcome. For more information, contact Sara Foster at 401-421-4111, ext. 130 or sfoster@jewishallianceri.org.

Shabbat Services. Temple Sinai. Shireinu, the community chorus of Temple Sinai, will participate. 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston.

Sunday | January 24

Jewish Culture through Film: "The Age of Love." 2 p.m. Dwares JCC. "The Age of Love," an alternately poignant and funny look at the search for love among the senior set, follows 70- to 90-year-old speed daters – recently widowed, long divorced or never-married – as they prepare for the big day, endure a rush of encounters, then anxiously receive their results. Fearlessly candid about themselves and what they're seeking, these WWII babies are forced to take stock of life-worn bodies and still-hopeful hearts. Then, as they head out on dates that result, comic and bittersweet moments reveal how worries over physical appearance, romance and rejection, loss and new beginnings change – or don't change – from first love to the far reaches of life. "The Age of Love" is a story of the universality of love and desire regardless of age. A discussion led by the film's director, Steven Loring, will follow the screening. Admission: $5 | Members $3. For more information, contact Erin Moseley, director of Arts & Culture, at emoseley@jewishallianceri.org or 401-421-4111, ext. 108.

Day-at-the-J! 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Dwares JCC. An assortment of programs for children and adults. This month's schedule: 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. open basketball; 11:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. movie "The Lorax" and games for children; 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. *Tu b'Shevat* education and seedling planting workshop; 12 p.m., 12:30 p.m., and 1 p.m. greenhouse tours; 12 p.m.-5:30 p.m. family/open swim (2 pool lanes) | lap swim (2 pool lanes); 1:30-2 p.m. senior mini-workout and Q & A; 2-4 p.m. "Age of Love" (see separate calendar listing for more information), 2-4 p.m. Teen Fitness certification, 4-4:30 p.m. post-movie stretch | Wellness Q & A; 3-5 p.m. Youth Basketball League (week 2, but still time to join). For more information, contact Luke Brookner at lbrookner@jewishallianceri.org or 401-421-4111, ext. 117.

Wednesday | January 27

Reactions to the Holocaust: Journey for Justice. 7 p.m. Dwares JCC. Join us for an intimate discussion featuring two authors who will share their unique perspectives on the journey for justice in a post-Holocaust world. Dina Gold is a former BBC investigative journalist and television producer. She is on the board of the Washington, D.C. JCC and currently serves as co-chair of the Washington Jewish Film Festival. She is a senior editor at Moment Magazine and author of "Stolen Legacy: Nazi Theft and the Quest for Justice at Krausenstrasse 17/18, Berlin." Lisa Moses Leff is an associate professor of history at American University, where she is also affiliated with the Jewish studies program. She is the author of "Sacred Bonds of Solidarity: The Rise of Jewish Internationalism in Nineteenth-Century France" and "The Archive Thief: The Man Who Salvaged French Jewish History in the Wake of the Holocaust." Sponsored by Congregation Beth Sholom, Rhode Island Holocaust Memorial Committee, Yom Ha'Shoah Committee (Board of Rabbis of Greater Rhode Island, Community Relations Council, Holocaust Education Resource Center of Rhode Island, Rhode Island State Council of Churches, Temple Emanu-El), Jewish Book Council and Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island. For more information or to RSVP, contact Erin Moseley at emoseley@jewishallianceri.org or 401-421-4111, ext. 108.

Thursday | January 28

Jewish Journeys: A Conversation with Michael Douglas and Natan Sharansky. 7:30-9 p.m. Salomon Center for Teaching, De Ciccio Family Auditorium, Brown University Main Green, 79 Waterman St., Providence. Registration required: douglas-sharansky.eventbrite.com.

Sunday | January 31

Israel Mission: Personal Reflections & Impressions. 10-11:30 a.m. Dwares JCC. Panelists from the November CRC and the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island mission share their stories and lasting impressions of Israel with members of the Rhode Island community. All are welcome to share in discourse and dialogue. The program will be dedicated to the memory of Elizabeth "Liz" Hollander and Jonathan Stanzler, who were active members of the CRC especially regarding issues relating to Israel and the Middle East. Donations in their names are graciously accepted and will be used to fund programs on Israel, advocacy and social justice. RSVP online at jewishallianceri.org/israel-mission-impressions to let us know you will be attending. For more information, contact Marty Cooper at mcooper@jewishallianceri.org or 401-421-4111, ext. 171.

Interfaith Concert Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Grace Episcopal Church. 4:30 p.m. Shireinu, the community chorus of Temple Sinai, will join other choirs. The tickets are free and are available at singingthedream.eventbrite.com. The church is at 175 Mathewson St., Providence.

Saturday | February 13

Kids' Night Out: Love. 5-10 p.m. Dwares JCC. Calling all parents! Kids' Night Out is a chance for children to spend the evening with their friends in a fun and safe environment...and a great opportunity for parents to have a night out "kid free!" Kids' Night Out runs once a month on Saturday evenings. Each month children are entertained with a variety of themed activities, including sports, crafts, swimming and more. A pizza dinner and snacks are served, and the evening ends with a movie. Ages: 5–12. Price: $35 | Members: $25 | Siblings: $15. For more information or to register, contact Shannon Kochanek at 401-421-4111, ext. 147.

Monday | February 15

Jewish Alliance Town Hall Meeting. 7 p.m. Dwares JCC. This meeting will focus on the upcoming renovations to the Dwares JCC.

Tuesday | February 16

PJ Library Story and Play Time with "Bubbie Sara." 3-4 p.m. Dwares JCC. Spend some time with us twice a month to hear stories, play games and make new friends! We will read various PJ Library books and sing songs about different Jewish holidays throughout the year. Children will also be able to make a craft. All children ages 5 and under are welcome. For more information, contact Sara Foster at 401-421-4111, ext. 130 or sfoster@jewishallianceri.org.

Thursday | February 18

A Night at the Deli. Dinner 6 p.m. | Film 7:30 p.m. Dwares JCC. Join us for a Night at the Deli featuring a fully catered "New York deli" style dinner from Ben's Best in Queens, New York; a special film screening of "Deli Man: The Movie" and special guest speakers: Eric Greenberg Anjou, producer & director of "Deli Man," and Jay Parker, 4th-generation owner of Ben's Best. Price (per person): $42 | Members: $36. (Member pricing extends to Alliance Annual Campaign donors who give a household gift of $1,000 or more.) Price includes full dinner and admission to the film. For more information, contact Erin Moseley at 401-421-4111, ext. 108 or emoseley@jewishallianceri.org.

Sunday | February 21

Special Day-at-the-J! 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Dwares JCC. An assortment of programs for children and adults. This month's schedule: 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. bounce house and board games; 12-5:30 p.m. family/open swim (2 pool lanes) | lap swim (2 pool lanes); 11 a.m. and again at 2:30 p.m. Jewish Disability Awareness and Inclusion Month film screenings of "I'm Ready" and "A Pure Prayer" (two short trigger films from Ma'aleh Film School) followed by "Praying With Lior" (a full-length documentary); 10:30 a.m., 2 and 2:30 p.m. Limited Mobility and Chair Exercise Workshops (20-minute introductory mini-workshops that teach the basics of Chair Yoga, Chair Resistance Band Exercises and other movements to help increase strength); 3-5 p.m. Storytime and Craft with Jennifer Rosner, author of "The Mitten Strings" (see separate calendar listing). For more information, contact Erin Moseley at emoseley@jewishallianceri.org or 401-421-4111, ext. 108.

"The Mitten String" with Jennifer Rosner. 3-5 p.m. Dwares JCC. In celebration of Jewish Disability Awareness and Inclusion Month, parents and children join children's book author Jennifer Rosner as she reads from her new book "The Mitten String." This original folktale is about a girl named Ruthie who is visited by a deaf woman and her baby. Ruthie, a talented knitter of mittens, wonders how the mother will know if her child wakes up in the middle of the night and is inspired by the surprising answer. This modern folktale will resonate with those who love crafts, anyone who encounters someone with physical differences – and with everyone who has ever lost a mitten in the depths of winter. Children participate in a craft project after the story. For more information or to RSVP, contact Michelle Cicchitelli at 401-421-4111, ext. 178 or mcicchitelli@jewishallianceri.org.

Friday | February 26

PJ Library Story and Play Time with "Bubbie Sara." 10-11 a.m. Dwares JCC. Spend some time with us twice a month to hear stories, play games and make new friends! We will read various PJ Library books and sing songs about different Jewish holidays throughout the year. Children will also be able to make a craft. All children ages 5 and under are welcome. For more information, contact Sara Foster at 401-421-4111 ext. 130 or sfoster@jewishallianceri.org.

Calendar Submissions

FEB. 5 issue, FINANCE | PHILANTHROPY, must be received by JAN. 27.

FEB. 19 issue, CAMP, must be received by FEB. 10.

SEND ALL CALENDAR ITEMS TO: editor@jewishallianceri.org with the subject line "CALENDAR." Calendar entries may be edited for content, length and relevance.



Finding my Jewish identity

BY ADAM GREENMAN

As a person who identifies as Jewish, but who lives a rather secular life, I was surprised by my excitement at being asked to join the Jewish Alliance mission to Israel in November. While I was taught at a young age the importance of Israel and my Jewish heritage by my parents, grandparents and at Hebrew school, I also have the distinct memory of my mother pouring the dairy silverware into the meat silverware after my grandparents passed away. Since my Bar Mitzvah, my attendance at synagogue can best be described as occasional, usually for a Bar Mitzvah or wedding. Nonetheless, I found myself with a sense of pride and gratitude at being offered this opportunity to see the Holy Land.

From the moment we arrived, I was struck by the beauty of the country and the juxtaposition of new and old. From Tel Aviv to Masada, at times I felt I was in New York City, and at times I was transported back 2000 years; sometimes in the span of hours. This newness was evident not only in the number of construction cranes and skyscrapers but in the innovation sector. As one of the many great speakers we met with said, Israel has revived a language and has found a way to make water in the desert. The peaks and valleys of the country made for breathtaking views, and the churches, historic sites and Old City were all reminders of the sacred and hallowed ground that exists in Israel and is unmatched here in the United States.

Throughout the trip, I was constantly brought back to my childhood, when my Jewish identity was strongest. As we rode the bus from the Golan Heights to Jerusalem, I looked across the landscape and recalled the *tzedakah* we provided in Hebrew school to plant trees in Israel for *Tu b'Shevat*. Standing at the Western Wall, it was impossible not to think about the Jews who prayed there more than 2000 years ago and to place myself within that history. Seeing the Israeli flag flying over buildings throughout the country, I remembered celebrating not only Independence Day on July 4, but also Israeli Independence Day around May 14. And celebrating Shabbat dinner with everyone on the trip transported me back to my grandmother's house, where our family would gather every Friday night. It was so wonderful, after one week, to be sitting there with others on the trip as fast friends enjoying each other's company, enjoying the conversation and celebrating the Sabbath.

While all of those experiences helped me connect the past with the present, visiting Yad Vashem, the Israeli memorial to the Holocaust, solidified my renewed Jewish identity. There we were reminded of the atrocities the Jewish people endured and how close the Nazis came to accomplishing their goals of genocide. It was impossible not to be moved walking through the darkness of the Children's Memorial, lit only by the mirrored reflections of five candles. In the larger memorial, I was struck by the indifference and outright hostility toward Jewish refugees not only in the 1930s, but after the war ended as well. I found myself reflecting on this part of the trip the most, both by myself and with others. It is impossible not to draw parallels to today and it is equally impossible to dismiss the connection that Jews have to each other and the importance of never letting this type of atrocity happen again.

More than a month later, I am still processing the trip and all of its amazing, sobering and thought-provoking elements. I expect to continue to process for some time. While it may sound cliché, the trip truly was life-changing and an experience I will never forget. As much as this became a personal journey, it was greatly enhanced by experiencing it with others from Rhode Island. I'm truly grateful to have met them, and could not imagine a better group to learn with and from.

I do know that I have returned to the United States with a closer link to my Jewish identity. My family and I have started having Shabbat dinners on Friday night with friends and family. Hanukkah was truly special, lighting the candles in a menorah from the Old City in Jerusalem. I have a new appreciation for Israel, its security concerns and the importance of its existence. But perhaps more important, I have a greater connection to the people of Israel, and to the Jewish community here in Rhode Island. I am really looking forward to connecting more closely with that community and am so thankful to have had my Jewish identity rekindled in such a dramatic way.

ADAM GREENMAN is executive vice president for community investment and public policy at United Way of Rhode Island.



PHOTO | ADAM GREENMAN

Jeffrey Savit with Adam Greenman in Israel.

Hear more about Israel

On Jan. 31, Adam Greenman will join others who attended the November interfaith Israel mission in a reunion where each participant will discuss personal thoughts on the trip. The program, which is open to the public, will be held at 10 a.m. at the Dwares Jewish Community Center, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence. Steve Klamkin, of WPRO radio, will be the guest moderator. This program is sponsored by The Community Relations Council, the Israel Taskforce of the Community Relations Council and The Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island.

For more information about the program, email mcooper@jewishallianceri.org, or call 401-421-4111. You can also register online at jewishallianceri.org.



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Town Hall Meeting: Learn more about the upcoming renovations to the Jewish Alliance's Dwares JCC from the builders and architects.

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For more information contact Dan Hamel at 401.421.4111 ext. 105 or dhamel@jewishallianceri.org.

Veggie and cheese burekas make an easy weeknight dinner

BY WHITNEY FISCH

(The Nosher via JTA) – On my fourth day back at work as a high school counselor following three months of maternity leave, I am keenly aware of just how little time exists in each day. Time and sleep (and coffee) are the hottest commodities in my world right now.

By the time I arrive home each afternoon, my husband and I have just a few precious hours left to spend with our two children, cook dinner, clean up from dinner and get these kids ready for bed. Our time is more precious than ever.

One of the best parts of maternity leave was having time in the day to cook dinner and enjoy it with our family. But now? Dinner takes on a much more harried tenor, and so I have developed a few tricks for the dinnertime rush. One of our favorite quick meals is what we call "Mediterranean Night," which includes some Israeli salad, hummus, tahini, sliced hard-boiled eggs and the main event: vegetable burekas.

The best part of burekas, aside from being doughy little pockets of heaven, is that I use them as a way to clean out my fridge of the veggies and/or herbs that are nearing the end of their freshness. I've included my favorite veggie-cheese combination for this recipe, but the combinations are endless. Simply chop up your favorite veggies lying around in your fridge, sauté with some olive oil and garlic, and then pair them with your favorite cheese. Put the mix into some store-bought puff pastry and you've got an awesome weeknight dinner in just 30 minutes.



Veggie and Cheese Burekas

Ingredients

2 sheets store-bought puff pastry, defrosted

1 cup plus 2 tablespoons filling of your choice (suggested filling: 2 cloves minced garlic, 1/2 cup feta cheese, handful of finely chopped cilantro, 1 eggplant, fried, and 1 sautéed leek)

1 egg yolk plus 2 teaspoons water

1 tablespoon sesame or poppy seeds (optional)

1/4 tablespoon kosher salt

1/2 tablespoon ground black pepper

Nonstick cooking oil spray

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Prepare your preferred filling – for the filling featured: Slice the eggplant into 1/4-inch rounds. Place rounds on a paper towel and dust them with Kosher salt and let sit for at least 30 minutes. (The Kosher salt is drawing out moisture from the eggplant, so that it will be more crispy when baked or fried.) After 30 minutes, pat dry and cut into cubes. Fill a frying pan with 1-inch sunflower or canola oil and set on stove-top burner at medium high heat. Once oil is hot, add the eggplant and fry until each side is golden brown. Let fried eggplant cool on a paper towel-lined plate and set aside.

While the eggplant is cooling, wipe the frying pan of excess oil and add another 2 tablespoons of oil to the pan.

Once hot, add chopped leeks and garlic and sauté on medium high heat until fragrant, about 5 minutes. Add mixture to plate of cooling eggplant.

Place eggplant, leeks, cilantro, feta, garlic, salt and pepper in a medium-sized bowl and stir to combine. Reserve mixture.

On a lightly floured surface, unfold one of your puff pastry sheets. Use a rolling pin to roll out the sheet to a 12-by-12-inch square. Cut the sheet of puff pastry dough into 9 equal squares, each about 4 by 4 inches. (DO NOT WORRY if your squares are not exact.)

Place 1 tablespoon of filling in the center of each dough square.

Fold the dough squares by grasping one corner and folding it over to the opposite corner to make triangles. Pinch firmly along the outer open edge of the triangles to seal. Go over each edge with a finger dip of water to help seal the dough.

Spray your baking sheets with nonstick cooking spray or line with parchment paper. Place your burekas on each sheet, evenly spaced, giving them some room to expand during baking.

In a small bowl, whisk together the egg yolk and 2 teaspoons of cool water. Use a pastry brush to brush a light layer of the egg wash onto the surface of each bureka. Sprinkle each bureka with sesame seeds, if desired.

Bake the burekas for about 30 minutes until golden brown and cooked through.

WHITNEY FISCH received a master's degree in social work from the University of Michigan and is working as a middle-school counselor. The Nosher food blog offers a dazzling array of new and classic Jewish recipes and food news, from Europe to Yemen, from challah to shakshuka and beyond. Check it out at TheNosher.com

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PHDS students learn about *mitzvot* by filling a bucket

On Jan. 11, Providence Hebrew Day School launched a program to help students visualize the importance of interpersonal *mitzvot*. It will continue until Purim. The idea behind the program is that we all have imaginary buckets above our heads that get filled when we are nice to each other and when others are nice to us. When we harm someone or another person mistreats us, the buckets empty. The goal is to help students learn to fill their own buckets and those of others.



PHOTOS | PHDS

The bulletin board by the front office.

Each classroom in Pre-K through Grade 5 has a bucket that the teachers can fill with pompoms when they see the students interacting appropriately with each other and with adults. When the classroom buckets are filled, they are emptied into a bucket outside the front office. The aim is to fill that office bucket. Once this bucket is filled, the students will receive a special treat and then start filling it again.

The middle-school students serve as bucket-filling ambassadors; on Jan. 11, they made their own badges and "passports" that identify them as such. They have a list of "giving" and "respectful" behaviors to focus on and papers on which to report these behaviors to Miriam Esther Weiner, the principal. They have been given goals for each week or multiple weeks and prizes they can earn. The mailbox in the principal's office is quickly filling up! Among the notes so far have been: "I complimented someone … and I made her feel better about her work" and "I didn't tell someone he/she was being ridiculous when I usually would."

The students in Pre-K through Grade 5 watched a video presentation of the book "How Full is Your Bucket for Kids," by Tom Roth and Mary Reckmayer, that presents this concept in a child-friendly way.

Parents are invited to borrow the book from the school so they can use it in discussing this program with their children.

– Providence Hebrew Day School

Beth Sholom's Annual Gala

BY STEPHANIE HAGUE

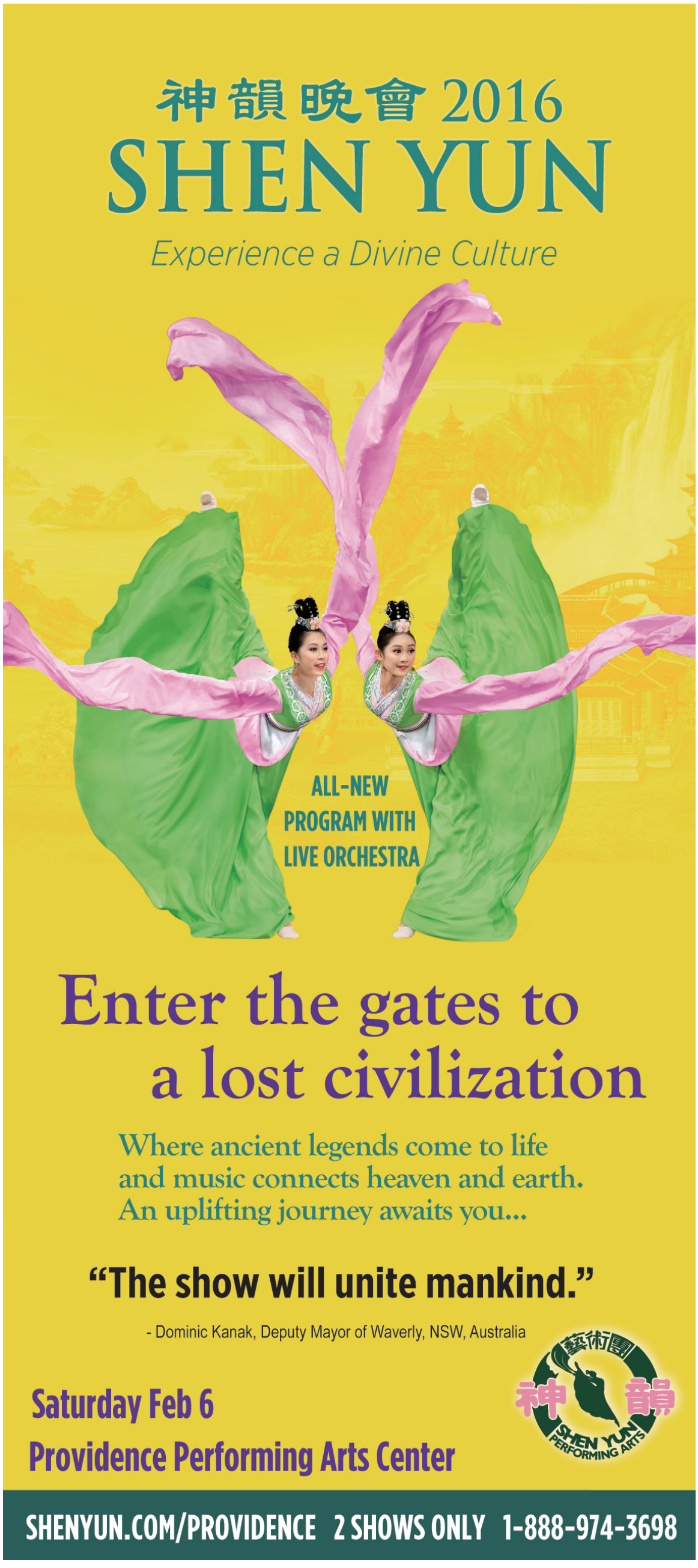
Congregation Beth Sholom celebrates another year of meaningful religious experiences, community programming and participation in the broader local and Jewish community with its Annual Gala Feb. 21 at 4 p.m.

This year's festive gala will honor four exceptional community members based on Judaism's three pillars: Torah (education), *avodah* (religious service) and *gemillut chasidim* (acts of kindness). The congregation will honor Doctors Jonah and Rashmi Licht for their support of Jewish education in Rhode Island, Dr. Stuart Rappaport for 26 years of leading the synagogue in prayer as a High Holy Days cantor, and Dr. David Mandelbaum for his dedication in running Judy's Kindness soup kitchen, providing meals to anyone in need, out of the synagogue. These individuals not only support and inspire the synagogue, but also serve as leaders throughout their professional and personal communities.

The congregation's spiritual leader, Rabbi Barry Dolinger, noted, "far from the top-down model so common in Jewish life these days, CBS is truly a community of engagement, participation and shared responsibility. It's genuine, impassioned and growing in new and exciting ways. The Annual Gala is a great opportunity to highlight some of the holy work that makes our community robust and resilient, honoring the deserving honorees and pausing to celebrate in gratitude together."

The gala will be held at Congregation Beth Sholom, 275 Camp St., Providence. Doors will open at 4 p.m., with hors d'oeuvres and cocktails at 4:30, followed by dinner at 6 and the awards ceremony at 6:30. Live musical entertainment will be provided by the Fishel Bresler Band. Food is supervised by RI Kosher, formerly VAAD of RI. Tickets are $70 per person, with a discounted $50 rate for seniors (ages 60 and over) and students (ages 25 and under). Purchase early-bird special tickets before Feb. 3 for $60. For more information and to purchase tickets: bethsholom-ri.org/gala

STEPHANIE HAGUE lives in Providence and is a member of Congregation Beth Sholom.



Double Chai Society launches Lox and Learning Breakfast Series

BY HILLARY SCHULMAN
hschulman@jewishallianceri.org

Barnaby Evans, the creator and executive artistic director of WaterFire Providence, was the speaker when young Jewish community members gathered at the Providence Marriott Downtown on Jan. 13 for the launch of The Double Chai Society's Lox and Learning Breakfast Series. The series is designed to give Rhode Island's young Jewish leaders up-close and personal exposure to decision-makers and trailblazers, as well as to enable this group to grow as community influencers and dynamic professionals, and expand their personal and business networks.

Double Chai Society chairs Steve and Emily Shalansky welcomed the mix of familiar and new faces, and were followed at the podium by Jeffrey Savit, Jewish Alliance CEO and president, who spoke about the impact of the money raised during the Annual Campaign.

Evans spoke about how WaterFire Providence came to be and how his vision has impacted Providence, as well as the entire state. He also told about re-creating WaterFire in Rome for one night, as well as raising the bar for the event back home in Providence.

His expert visuals illustrated why WaterFire Providence is the number five "thing to do after dark" in the world, on a par with Paris after dark.

Evans also talked about his involvement with the new Holocaust Memorial on the Providence River Walk, its collaboration with WaterFire, and how the memorial has sparked conversation.

For more information about The Double Chai Society or its upcoming events, contact Hillary Schulman at hschulman@jewishallianceri.org or 401-421-4111, ext. 127, or Erin Moseley, director of arts and culture and NextGen engagement, at emoseley@jewishallianceri.org or 401-421-4111, ext. 108.

HILLARY SCHULMAN is a development associate in philanthropy for the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island.



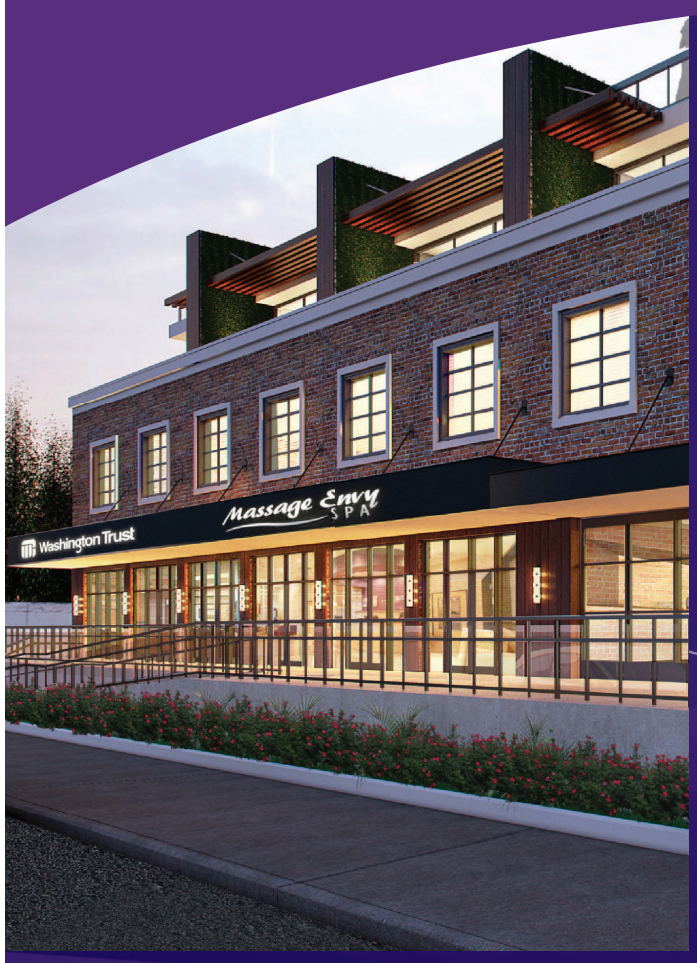


PHOTOS | HILLARY SCHULMAN

Anya Baum Davis and Joshua Deaner.

Double Chai chairs and committee members Steve and Emily Shalansky, Jeffrey Isaacs, and Bethany Sutton with Barnaby Evans.

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Tools and tips for stress-free wedding planning



PHOTO | A BRIDE'S DAY PHOTOGRAPHY

BY STEPHANIE ROSS

While planning a wedding can be fun, it can also be stressful and expensive. With websites and blogs such as Pinterest, it is easy to stack up an overwhelming amount of details. And, according to the wedding-calculating website CostOfWedding.com, the average cost of tying the knot in the United States has grown to $26,444.

But it doesn't have to be that expensive. First things first: Start with a budget.

"Couples should actually set a number to how much they want their wedding to cost," said Tracy Dapp, owner of Inked Events and a professional wedding planner. "Figure out how much money you and/or your parents are putting in and who is contributing to what."

Newlywed Sarah Maloney and her husband stood firm on their number, and she encourages other couples to do the same.

"I budgeted $1,000 for the dress, alterations, jewelry and hair accessories," said Maloney, of Newton, Mass. "That made dress shopping easier because they knew from the beginning what to show me."

Once the budget is set, determine what areas are the most important to you. For some couples, it could be photography, for others it could be flowers. Dapp says once a couple knows what's important to them, they will know where to allocate their funds.

"We used different tools for our wedding," Maloney said. " 'The Wedding Book' by Mindy Weiss answers any and every wedding-related question and gives you a list of questions to ask different vendors when you meet. I also used a budget worksheet I found on RealSimple.com, which allowed us to track all of our spending from the very beginning."

Next, remember to research your venue options.

"Seek out venues that allow you to bring in outside vendors," said Melissa Arsenie, a special events planner in Boston. "Sometimes there are venues that require you to do everything through them. But if you are allowed to bring in your own caterer, DJ, florist, etc., that gives you more opportunity to negotiate a lower price, leverage a connection for a discount, or be creative with what you are doing for things that can add up, such as centerpieces."

Maloney began contacting potential venues soon after getting engaged.

"We got engaged in September 2014, and we started emailing venues two days later," she said. "We got priced out of Boston very quickly. Most venues we looked at required a large room rental fee on top of the fees for catering, bar, etc.

"Finally, we booked a hotel in Worcester, and everything was included in the cost per person, including our wedding coordinator at the hotel, who ended up being incredibly helpful."

Dapp recommends reading and rereading the contract to understand any fees. For instance, some hotels may charge a delivery fee if a couple wants to have welcome bags placed in the rooms of out-of-town guests.

"Non-traditional venues are a good way to save some money," Arsenie said. "Many smaller bed-and-breakfasts and even summer camps will work with you to plan your wedding during a low season. However, if you see a venue that you love that is out of your price range, ask if there is a carriage house, barn or garden on the property. Most of the time it is less expensive to book, but equally as beautiful."

Next, keep "unexpected" costs in mind.

It's easy to forget certain costs, such as delivery fees and postage stamps. However, these expenses can quickly add up.

"When you are picking out an invitation, look at how big and how thick it is, because it may not be your standard stamp," Dapp said. "Get a sample of the invitation you are thinking of and take it to a post office to have it weighed."

Keep the guest list at a comfortable number and keep an eye out for coupons and discounts.

"I did splurge a little and used Minted for our invitations, but I received a discount coupon," Maloney said. "We also wanted the food to be nice, so the food and open bar were the most costly. That being said, our guest total was under 100, which helped keep costs down."

Don't be afraid to get creative.

Websites such as Craigslist, eBay and RuffledBlog.com allow newlyweds to recycle their gently used wedding supplies, which can save you a bundle.

"We saved money by using books as our centerpieces instead of fresh flowers," Maloney said. "We also had a small bridal party, which lowered the cost of gifts. My husband's mom made homemade apple butter as our favors, and I designed the 'Save the Dates' and printed them through Vistaprint, which was really cost-effective."

To reduce stress, don't get caught up in the small stuff. Maloney said she stopped looking at Pinterest once she started planning.



Books make a non-traditional centerpiece.



PHOTO | RACHEL B. BELL

Sample of an invitation.

"It makes it hard not to get swept up in the small details," Maloney said. "I remember a couple of times there were things I saw other people do that was out of our budget, but looked nice."

However, don't stint on the big stuff: It is important to hire professional vendors, especially on the bigger items, such as photographers, wedding coordinators, DJs, etc.

"We are there to work," Dapp said. "It's important to hire people who know how weddings operate and who won't take advantage … This lets your guests enjoy the wedding with you."

Finally, it is also important to enjoy the process.

"The biggest advice I can give is to just enjoy the planning," Dapp said. "You get so caught up in the details and stress, you lose sight of the bigger picture. Take a breath and enjoy it.

"It's always a beautiful day when two people are coming together to spend the rest of their lives together."

STEPHANIE ROSS is a public relations professional and freelance writer in Boston. For more information on Tracy Dapp and Inked Events, of Salem, N.H., go to inked-events.com.

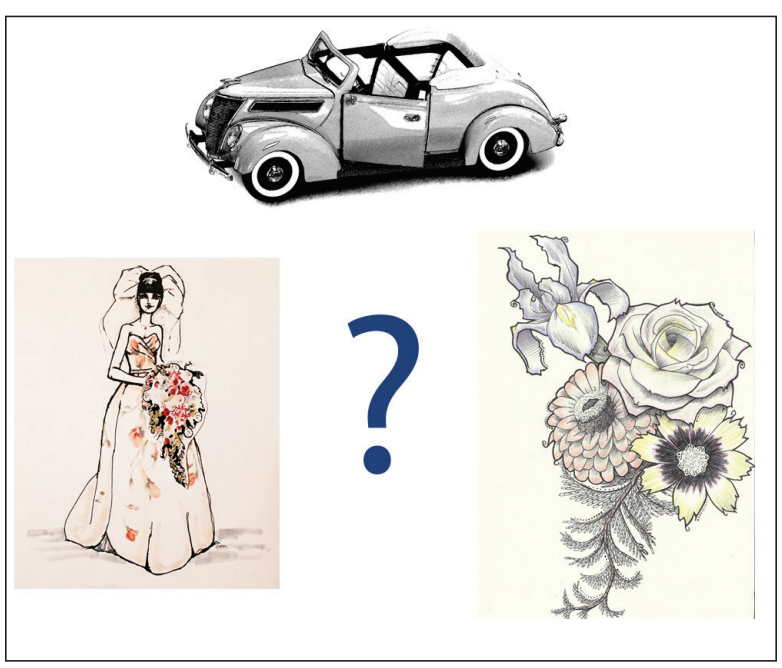


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From puppy love to wedded bliss

BY YEKATERINA GINZBURG-BRAM

Weddings are full of beautiful moments: the vows, the flowers, the tears of joy, the first moment alone as a married couple – but for me, the most wonderful moment of all happened long before then.

In retrospect, I should have suspected something when Mark picked me up after school on a bleak December Wednesday, complaining of nerves and insisting on a trip to the pet shop to look at puppies as the only possible cure. Yes, we'd employed this odd form of "animal therapy" before, but now my partner insisted on bringing a video camera to film a golden retriever puppy as "research" for his "artist girlfriend's" "dog illustrations."

It's true, I do doodle goldens in my spare time, but still, I didn't understand the point of such an elaborate visit – or why the good folks at the pet shop accepted it without question.

As soon as we arrived, we were escorted to a puppy run and introduced to a furry orange toddler hopelessly entangled in his own paws and brimming with boundless goodwill toward humankind.

Mark filmed; I sat on the floor in a joyful doggie-induced trance, so I only vaguely heard my partner inquire about the dog's name, or the employee's response of, "It's printed on his collar." Still, I looked at the gold heart-shaped tag and found ... a date. The current date, in fact, but somehow I missed that.

The pet shop lady then urged me to turn over the tag to read the other side, which said, "Will you marry my friend?"

I should tell you that I understood right then and there. But I didn't.

"How cute!" I said, and kept on playing.

"Don't you understand what this means?" my poor beloved asked, producing a ring box and capturing dramatic footage of the pet store wall with his camera. Which was just as well, since the alternative was me – dressed for work and displaying woefully neglected nails – succumbing to a flood of tears on the floor of a puppy run. And, to this day, it's the single purest, happiest memory of my life.

We still have that dog collar. The folks at the pet shop remembered us for years. We got married in a beautiful ceremony on a stormy November night. Eight years later, we're still writing our story – the most wonderful love story in the world. And, if nothing else, I've learned to look for the romantic, the fairy-tale, the sublime in the most unexpected places. And to keep my nails manicured at all times.



COURTESY | YEKATERINA GINZBURG-BRAM

Yekaterina Ginzburg-Bram and Mark Bram

YEKATERINA GINZBURG-BRAM, of Providence, is a member of Temple Emanu-El and an elementary school art teacher in the Providence school system. Mark Bram is a rock musician, Grand Master of Yang Style T'ai Chi Chuan and the owner of the martial arts school Internal Arts in Pawtucket.

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‘Bridesmaiding’ is not a passive job

BY ARIEL BROTHMAN

Some women are born to bridesmaid. They probably started planning their own birthday parties at age 3, and then their friends’ at age 5, and enjoy the girly stuff to the max. Pink nail polish, spa days, cute dresses … meanwhile, I’m not sure if I have clean socks to wear tomorrow.

I’ve turned the word bridesmaid into a verb because I refuse to “be a bridesmaid.” It’s not a passive job.

Although my tendency toward last-minute planning affects even my clean sock count, maybe that’s exactly why my name seems to be on some previously unknown list of “best people to ask to be your bridesmaid.” I don’t really have premonitions of how weddings should go – I listen to what the bride wants. Maybe I’m on the list because I’m reliable and relatively drama-free. Or maybe I just have close friends and a sister who all happened to find their “Mr. Rights” at the same time. Or maybe it’s some mix of the three.

Whatever the reason, apparently I’m good at it. The day after I was assigned this column, I even received an email from a college friend containing a picture of her hand with – you guessed it – a brand new shiny ring on it. Accompanying the photo – the question of the season.

At the ripe “old” age of 24, having been asked to bridesmaid in four weddings, I already see that weddings are more complex than they were a few decades ago. The weddings themselves are bigger, the planning more elaborate, and the hiring of planners to bear some of the organizational burden is much more commonplace.

So what changed?

According to an article on the website for an online talk show titled “Weddings for a Living,” it started with a royally lavish wedding display in 1981 between two people we all know very well: Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer. This, the author writes, paired with Jennifer Lopez’s glamorized depiction of wedding planning in “The Wedding Planner,” catalyzed the wedding planning process to what it is today: a big sparkly mess (though the trick is you can’t tell it’s a mess).

As a result, bridesmaids have to be up for anything. While the choices couples can make in creating their wedding are growing, so is the role of the bridesmaid. As a matter of fact, most brides I know don’t really know what to do with us. Sometimes we’re just there for a bachelorette event, sometimes a bridal shower. Sometimes we’re expected to help with the planning. Sometimes we’re asked to help choose the dress, sometimes we’re not. But with all the change, one thing remains the same: we’re there to support the bride when she needs us.

When I was first asked to be a bridesmaid, I sensed the dawn of a bridesmaiding era; many of my romantically committed friends, including my own big sister, started speaking more frequently about the prospects of their own engagements. Pictures on social media started showing more and more ornamented hands, along with pictures of smiling couples with “save the date!” captions and requests for recommendations of caterers and photographers.

There is a silver lining to all this bridesmaiding and to waiting a little longer than some of my peers to get married. I have observed from a distance what works and what doesn’t, and therefore I get the benefit of making an informed decision if and when my own day comes. This isn’t a principle confined to marriage. Having kids, choosing schools, retirement, and whatever other milestones you pass along the way – from my perspective these decisions can all benefit from a preview of others’ decisions.

ARIEL BROTHMAN is a freelance writer who lives in Wrentham, Massachusetts.

Tips to writing the perfect card or note

Family Features – Everyone loves to discover a handwritten card or note among a thick stack of mail. Regardless of how many electronic words we get bombarded with each day, the personal touch of a message written by hand remains a special gesture that never goes out of style.

From choosing a card or stationery that reflects a personal style to accenting the letter with the right seal or stamp, every detail matters to underscore a thoughtful message. Stamps are often one of the first details noted by a letter recipient, so choosing a stamp such as the love-letter themed Sealed with Love Forever stamp from usps.com/stamps or your local post office is perfect for the occasion.

Not sure what sentiment to write for the occasion? Here are a few ideas:

Notes of appreciation: Whether the recipient gave you a gift, hosted you for dinner or did a special favor, keep the message brief and sincere. Don’t ever hesitate to send a note of appreciation just to let someone know how truly special they are. Unexpected notes are always wonderful to receive.

Birthday cards: Celebrate one’s personal accomplishments in the past year and any special events planned in the year ahead. End by telling your friend or loved one why he or she is so important to you. That message may just be the best gift you can give.

Celebratory cards: When acknowledging the birth of a baby or the recent wedding of a friend or relative, pick a card they will want to save and treasure for years to come. When writing your sentiment inside, keep congratulations simple and let them know you share in their joy.



PHOTOS | DANIEL AFZAL/UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

New job: Starting a job at a new company or changing one’s career path can be a time for renewal and exciting beginnings. A sincere message wishing a friend or loved one luck and adding advice that he or she might find helpful is often a welcome message to show someone you care.

Condolence cards: If a friend is going through a difficult time, share special memories you have of the person who passed away and why you will miss having that person in your life. End by offering to call or visit in the near future. These gestures, plus the card itself, will remind the recipient they aren’t alone in their grief.

Remember, cards and notes are about letting another person know how much their friendship, gifts or presence means to you. Follow a simple formula, add a few personal touches and you will soon be writing cards with ease.

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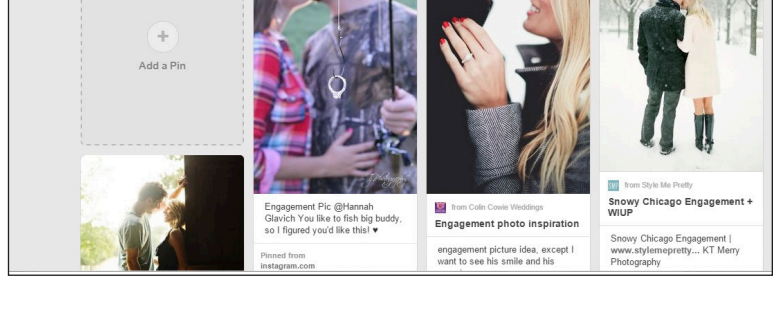
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‘Pin’ down the details the high-tech way

BY HILLARY SCHULMAN

Welcome to the 21st century, where everything is virtualized, digitized and influenced by social media. One such social-media site, Pinterest, has become known as “the way of the wedding planning future” because it allows customers and vendors to have a clear, visual conversation about their wedding vision, style and execution.

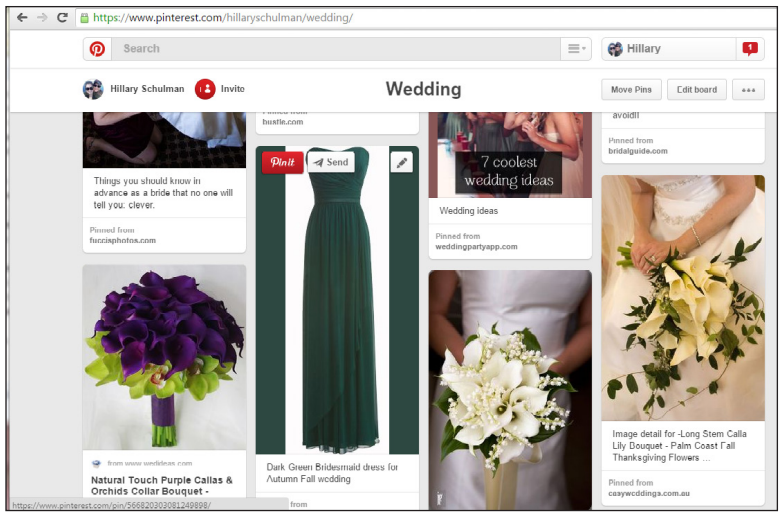
On Pinterest, users create boards, and “pin” ideas to those boards. Imagine, for example, that you have a Pinterest board dedicated to bridal hairstyles. Every hairstyle you find that you like, you pin to that board. Now imagine that everyone in the world can copy those hairstyles, and pin them to their own boards – and everyone can see those boards. That’s what happens on Pinterest, which is why many brides-to-be have embraced it as a place to find ideas from around the world.



Pinterest is now commonly used when it comes to wedding planning. Many wedding companies, such as The Knot and Wedding Wire, give Pinterest users access to their articles and photos because it gives the companies more exposure, especially when users “re-pin” the items.

If you’re like me, a bride-to-be, you would have two boards: one for your engagement and one for your wedding. On my engagement board, I’ve pinned pictures of rings, ideas on how to announce an engagement, engagement photo-shoot ideas, and how-to articles. My hope was that the items pinned on my board would find their way to my fiancé, so he would know what I liked.

On my wedding board, I have pictures of wedding gowns, hairstyles, color schemes, mother-of-the-bride gowns, bridesmaid dresses, etc.



My boards have helped me be more creative, as well as more organized. I have also found it incredibly helpful when talking with vendors: They ask me what my vision is, and I can actually show it to them!

But don’t take my word for it – I sat down with two other women, my sister and a close friend, and talked to them about how they are using Pinterest to plan their weddings.

My sister, Elana, is getting married in September, and she has fully established Pinterest boards for her wedding.

“I first got a Pinterest account in 2012 as part of the job I had at the time. I didn’t start using it on a personal level until maybe a year or so ago, when I wanted to start getting ideas for my wedding,” she said.

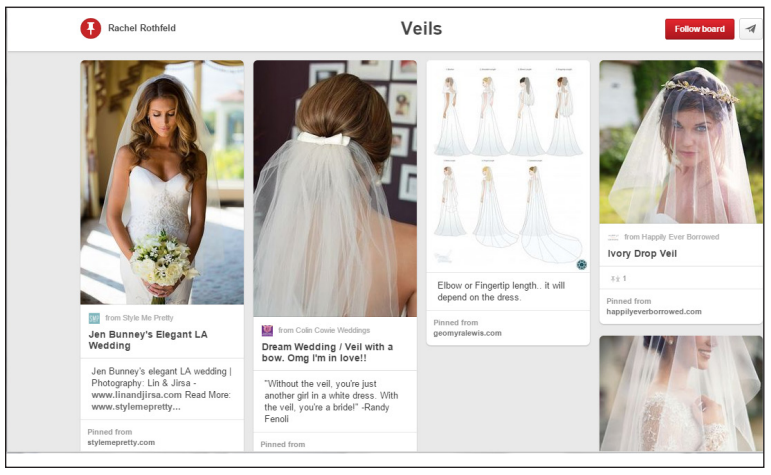
“I’m not using it so much to plan my wedding as much as I am to get general ideas on color schemes, bridesmaid dresses, etc. I am thinking about having the bridesmaids wear champagne-colored dresses, so I went to Pinterest to see examples of those dresses and how it works with different colors. From that, I was able to determine the colors I would like to use for the flowers as well as for the groomsmen’s suits.”

Elana’s research has also proved useful for adding personal touches to her overall theme that she might have overlooked on her own.

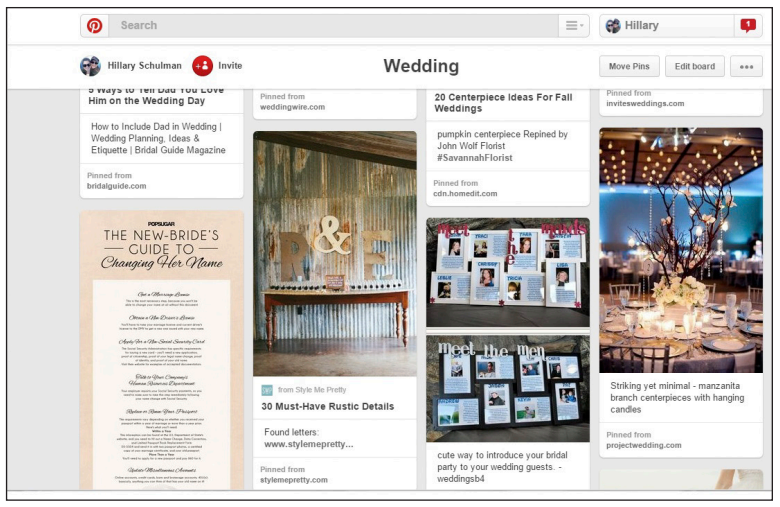
“I think it adds a really special element that makes your wedding unique to you,” she said. “It allows you to get carried away [in a good way] in the planning process and imagine the wedding you’ve always dreamed of … it’s perfect for both planners and dreamers. And, it helps that many of the ideas on the site can be implemented in a budget-friendly way.”

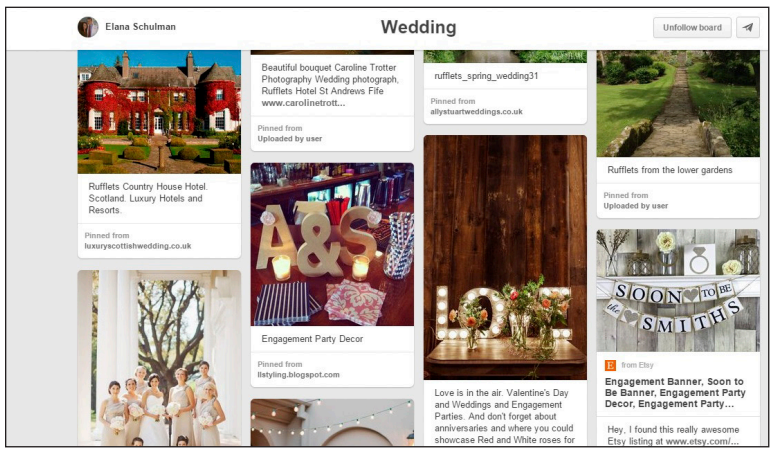
My friend, Rachel Rothfeld, has had an experience very similar to Elana’s. However, her fiancé, Aaron, is a little more involved than Elana’s fiancé, Andrew.

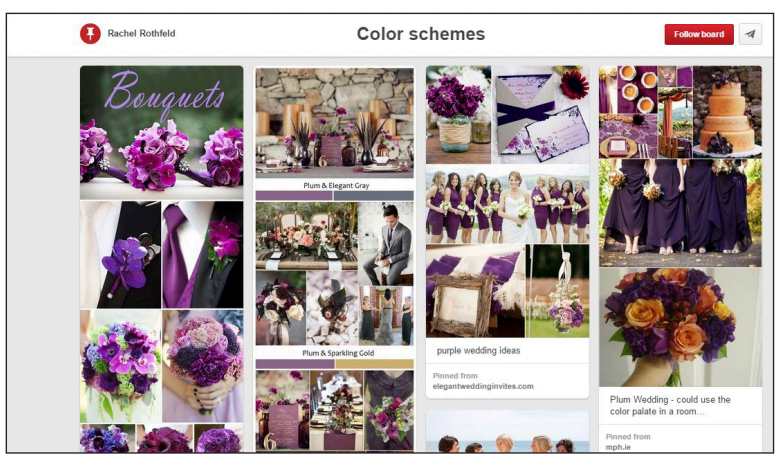
“I started using Pinterest even before I got engaged,” Rachel said. “Aaron and I designed our ring together, so I used it to look at different ring styles and figure out what I wanted.



COURTESY | HILLARY SCHULMAN







“Before I got engaged, I also had a private Pinterest board for wedding dresses, to start thinking about the styles that I liked.” Pinterest users can set their boards to a private mode if they do not want others to see them.

Rachel’s boards have also helped her with the complicated planning process.

“I have created separate boards for different aspects of the wedding to keep it organized,” she said.

In addition, she has found that browsing Pinterest is time well spent.

“I have found Pinterest to be very helpful when trying to make decisions about style. It has helped me to narrow down my choices and see what I gravitated toward. For example, when searching for wedding dresses on Pinterest, I noticed that all of the dresses that I pinned were A-line or ball gown. Once I had found a style I was interested in, I was able to make my searches more specific.

“I also really like having boards with a compilation of the styles that I like which are easy to look through,” she said.

Rachel has also used Pinterest for the one element that is crucial to making her wedding HER wedding: the Jewish factor.

“I did use Pinterest to search for modest wedding dresses so that I was able to see styles that have sleeves. I also looked at a few *Huppah* designs,” she said.

HILLARY SCHULMAN is a Rhode Islander and Brandeis graduate. She is looking forward to getting married in the fall.

FROM PAGE 1 | # WEDDINGS

Here are some of the changes industry experts have seen in recent years, and expect to see in 2016:

1 The locations are personal. Traditionally, people have held their ceremonies in, well, traditional places, such as synagogues, churches and hotels. Ken Berman, of Kenneth Berman Photography, says that now couples are expanding their horizons and choosing places that better reflect their lives together. The beach and the place where the couple met, Berman says, are popular.





PHOTO | RACHEL B. BELL

2 The photography is fun. Berman has also observed that couples are opting for engagement photo shoots and for more candid shots. Couples, he says, are choosing places that they like or are meaningful to them, and they have fun with the shoot. Berman is based in Sharon, Massachusetts, so it's not surprising that he finds Cape Cod is a frequent site for these informal photo sessions.

3 The food is retrofitted. Neil Morris, from A Perfect Taste, in Stoughton, Massachusetts, says traditional gourmet foods and service are meeting new-age recipes and alternative service styles to bring the best of both the old and the new to the table. For example, gueridon service, where waitstaff push food trolleys containing an assortment of dishes to each individual guest, is making a return. And Morris said that even wedding cakes have changed, from pure white frostings to colorful fondant and buttercream frostings.



PHOTO | RACHEL B. BELL

4 The weddings are bigger. The more the merrier, right? This trend has been observed by many in the industry, including Donna Diorio, of the Providence Marriott Downtown. It might have to do with a recent study from The National Wedding Project, based in Virginia, showing that a higher guest count correlates with a happier marriage. Or perhaps brides and grooms just want to start off the marriage with a big party!



PHOTO | JORDAN CRAIG PHOTOGRAPHY

5 The feel is comfortable. This is something that is coming through on many levels in wedding planning. Berman has noted that the weddings are still beautiful, but not necessarily "black-tie," as they once were. Morris has noticed the rise of "rustic-themed" weddings, including farmhouse ceremonies and comfortable, earthy foods: braised meats and root vegetables are common. Perhaps this is a reflection of the modern notion of the wedding reflecting a couple's personalities, but, in any case, comfort, Morris believes, is here to stay.



PHOTO | RACHEL B. BELL

ARIEL BROTHMAN is a freelance writer who lives in Wrentham, Mass.



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New floral trends for a new year

BY RACHEL B. BELL

This year has seen a couple of trends emerge in the wedding floral industry. Most brides are looking for less structured, more natural arrangements with a pop of color.

Bridal bouquets commonly represent a bride's style and personality, which will set the tone for the rest of the wedding. There are many different shapes of bouquets including traditional Victorian, round, teardrop, cascade and wildflower. In the past few years, brides have tended to prefer all white bridal flowers, which are most commonly used in traditional and round bouquets.

This year, two trends have emerged, according to Pamala Hargraves, owner of Blooming Blossoms in Providence. Many brides are choosing a color combination of blush, cream and gold. Romantic garden-style flowers are commonly desired for these arrangements including roses, garden roses, hydrangeas, and peonies. These flowers tend to work better in traditional and round bouquets. Another emerging style, bohemian chic, features lots of greenery. Bohemian chic bouquets often are cascading or teardrop. Colors for these bouquets also tend to focus on neutrals, from white to cream and tend to include a pop of blush, pink or orange, along with various mixtures of greenery.

Centerpieces reflect these same styles. There are many different styles of centerpieces that can be used for a wedding reception. These include tall flower arrangements, low centerpieces, submerged flowers, clusters of mini flower arrangements, candles, petals and a mixture of different arrangements on different tables. This year, smaller table arrangements have become popular, according to Hargraves. These styles include low centerpieces and clusters, often including candles dispersed around the florals. Colors continue in the blush, cream, gold and green styling popular with the bridal bouquets, with the most popular flowers being roses and hydrangeas.

Throughout the wedding, you will continue to see these floral trends, from aisle arrangements and *Huppahs*, to wedding party flowers, and reception accessories.

Whatever style is chosen, mazal tov to all the loving couples marrying this year.

RACHEL B. BELL is a Providence area website and graphic designer and is co-owner of SBR Network.



PHOTO | SARA ZARRELLA PHOTOGRAPHY

A romantic, traditional Victorian wedding bouquet of blush and white garden roses by Pam Hargraves of Blooming Blossoms.



PHOTO | SARA ZARRELLA PHOTOGRAPHY

A small table arrangement, this centerpiece by Blooming Blossoms features cream and white hydrangeas and roses with surrounding candles.



PHOTO | A BRIDE'S DAY PHOTOGRAPHY

This cascading bouquet by Blooming Blossoms represents the modern bohemian chic style.



PHOTO | KIM LYN PHOTOGRAPHY

This bohemian chic table setting highlights the use of greenery in modern weddings. Florals by Blooming Blossoms.

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WBCJC unveils innovative one-day religious school

BY LISA LEVINE

Families today face many demands, difficult choices and sacrifices, but finding community, practicing your Jewish faith and educating your children about Judaism shouldn't be among them. The West Bay Community Jewish Center, in Coventry, strives to make religious school an easier fit for both parents and their children.

Through the years, Principal Susan Sugarman has noticed that fewer and fewer students were attending the second day of religious school, largely due to the time constraints on busy young families. Sugarman and Rabbi Richard Perlman responded by creating a new model that condenses the curriculum into a single weekly class, held on Sunday mornings.

The new school model covers the same lessons but uses a different approach: More games to help students better remember the material, a twice-monthly review to reinforce the lessons, and a creative reward system to encourage students to share their learning with parents, siblings and other students. In addition, weekly lesson plans are sent home with the students for further review and study.

Now that this model has been in place for three months, Perlman and parents are very impressed with the results. As a parent, I am particularly delighted that my boys bring home the lessons they learned in class, bringing a new aspect to our family's dinner conversation.

The curriculum is also enriched by visitors, such as Israeli *shaliach* (emissary) Gilor Meshulam; field trips, such as a visit to Tamarisk assisted living residence, in Warwick, to build a *sukkah*; and special events, such as a lively Hanukkah program.

The rabbi also visits classes often, helping students learn traditional elements of Judaism, such as prayer, and the *havdalah* and Shabbat services.

LISA LEVINE lives in Coventry and is a member of West Bay Community Jewish Center. Parents who are interested in the West Bay Community Jewish Center's religious school should contact Sugarman at myredsox31@verizon.net.



Susan Sugarman and Rabbi Richard Perlman teach the religious school student about the havdalah service.



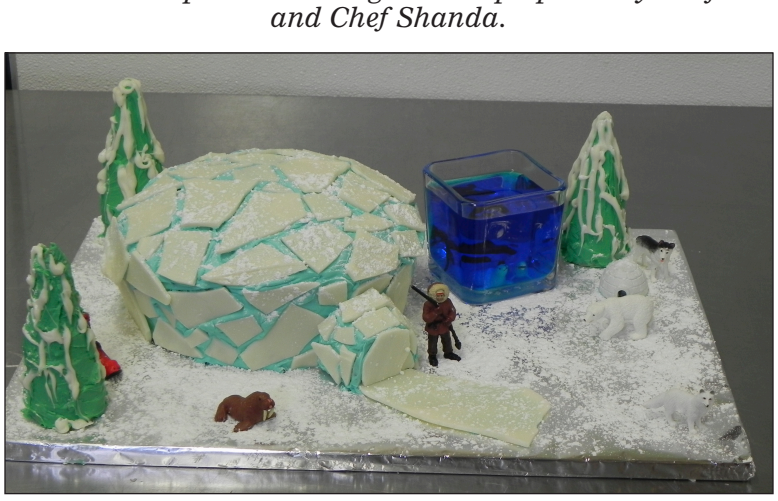
PHOTOS | WBCJC

Benjamin Levine works on sukkah decorations for the sukkah at Tamarisk.



PHOTOS | JEWISH ALLIANCE OF GREATER RHODE ISLAND

On Jan. 15, the children in Room 10 of the David C. Isenberg Family Early Childhood Center had an arctic animal complete with an igloo cake prepared by Chef D and Chef Shanda.



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FROM PAGE 1

RENOVATIONS

the Baxt Social Hall will take place after the lobby areas are finished. Hamel said plans call for construction to be completed before December.

The front entrance will be closed until approximately mid-August. During the construction, you will still be able to enter the building through the fitness center entrance at the back of the building. To access the first floor, the Parenting Center and J-Space rooms, you'll go up the stairs. Access to the Alliance offices will be through the door on Sessions Street. Membership services will move to the fitness area.

Parking in front of the Alliance's JCC building, on Elmgrove Avenue, will be blocked off, but there will be parking on the west side of Elmgrove Avenue, on Sessions Street and in the back of the building.

In the front of the building, on Elmgrove Avenue, crews will install a ramp, take out the current stairs inside, install an elevator and reconfigure the interior entrance to the building. The lobby will also be renovated.

During the construction, there will be jackhammering to get rid of the existing concrete inside and outside the building, so there will be quite a bit of noise at times.

"This is construction," said Hamel. "We're going to try to minimize the disruptions as best we can."

Once the front is finished, work will begin on the new rear entrance, located approximately where the Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Center courtyard is now. A new ramp will be constructed, along with an entranceway. The Holocaust center will be relocated to the back of the first floor lobby.

At the end of the project, the current fitness center entrance will be used for emergency exit only, as will the ECC entrance and the Sessions Street door.

The existing elevator, near the current fitness desk, will be kept in use as it offers the only access to the gymnasium level of the building. With the new front elevator, the Dwares JCC building will be 100-percent handicapped accessible, a goal the Alliance has been working toward for a long time.

Programs normally taking place in the building will, for the most part, remain there during construction, according to Michelle Cicchitelli, chief program officer.

J-Space will continue to meet as scheduled. Its rooms will be untouched during the construction. Spring programs are also set to move forward. Some special events might be moved to other venues, as needed.



COURTESY | N|E|M|D ARCHITECTS

A rendering of the new lobby by the architects.

Summer J-Camp will go on as scheduled since most of the activities are outdoors. Lunch will still be provided to campers; it is prepared in the ECC kitchen. Rainy day activities will take place in the gymnasium. Plans for drop off and pick up on rainy days are still in the works, according to Cicchitelli. "I don't foresee it being a major disruption," she said.

The David C. Isenberg Early Childhood Center will be relatively unaffected. Parents will be able to access classrooms through the back door. Parents might see increased traffic in the parking lot, but the ECC has designated spaces and Cicchitelli says that the center will do its best to minimize the disruptions.

Design for the building was done by n|e|m|d architects, of Providence. The general contractor is DF Pray, of Seekonk, Massachusetts.

"I couldn't be more proud, thankful and elated that the major renovations to our beloved Dwares JCC will shortly begin," said Jeffrey Savit, president and CEO of the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island. "We, our entire community, will be the direct beneficiaries for decades to come of the magnanimous largesse and vision championed by Donald and Bonnie Dwares and so many other wonderful philanthropists."

The capital campaign committee's goal is to raise $6.5 million for the renovations. Dwares said, "The support that so many of our friends and community members have already given and will soon provide through the capital campaign is tremendously gratifying."

The committee hopes the Rhode Island Jewish community will step up and contribute enough additional funds to make the center a true community showcase, open to all.

EDITOR'S NOTE: For more information on the renovations or the capital campaign, visit jewishallianceri.org, or contact Trine Lustig, vice president of philanthropy, at 401-421-4111, ext. 223.

FRAN OSTENDORF is editor of The Jewish Voice.

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Dina Gold is a former BBC investigative journalist and television producer. She is on the board of the Washington D.C. JCC and currently serves as co-chair of the Washington Jewish Film Festival. She is a senior editor at Moment Magazine and author of *Stolen Legacy: Nazi Theft and the Quest for Justice at Krausenstrasse 17/18, Berlin*.



Lisa Moses Leff is Associate Professor of History at American University, where she is also affiliated with the Jewish studies program. She is the author of *Sacred Bonds of Solidarity: The Rise of Jewish Internationalism in Nineteenth-Century France* and *The Archive Thief: The Man Who Salvaged French Jewish History in the Wake of the Holocaust*.

For more information or to RSVP, contact Erin Moseley at 401.421.4111 ext. 108 or emoseley@jewishallianceri.org.

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PHOTO | RACHEL B. BELL

Diners at the Senior Café.

FROM PAGE 1

SENIOR CAFE

On March 2, the Alliance Kosher Senior Café at the Dwares JCC will move to Temple Emanu-El. According to Neal Drobnis, program coordinator, the café operation will move for 8-12 months while construction progresses at the Alliance's Dwares JCC.

Meals will be served at noon in a room adjacent to the meeting hall. There's a small kitchen available. The site will continue to operate Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Programs will continue and the same staff will be involved.

The program will move back to the Dwares JCC as soon as construction progress allows. For more information, call Drobnis or Elaine Shapiro at 401-421-4111, ext. 107. After March 2, the phone number will be 401-338-3189.

FUN AND FACTS FOR KIDS

Sponsored by the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association | info@rijha.com | Written by Ruth L. Breindel



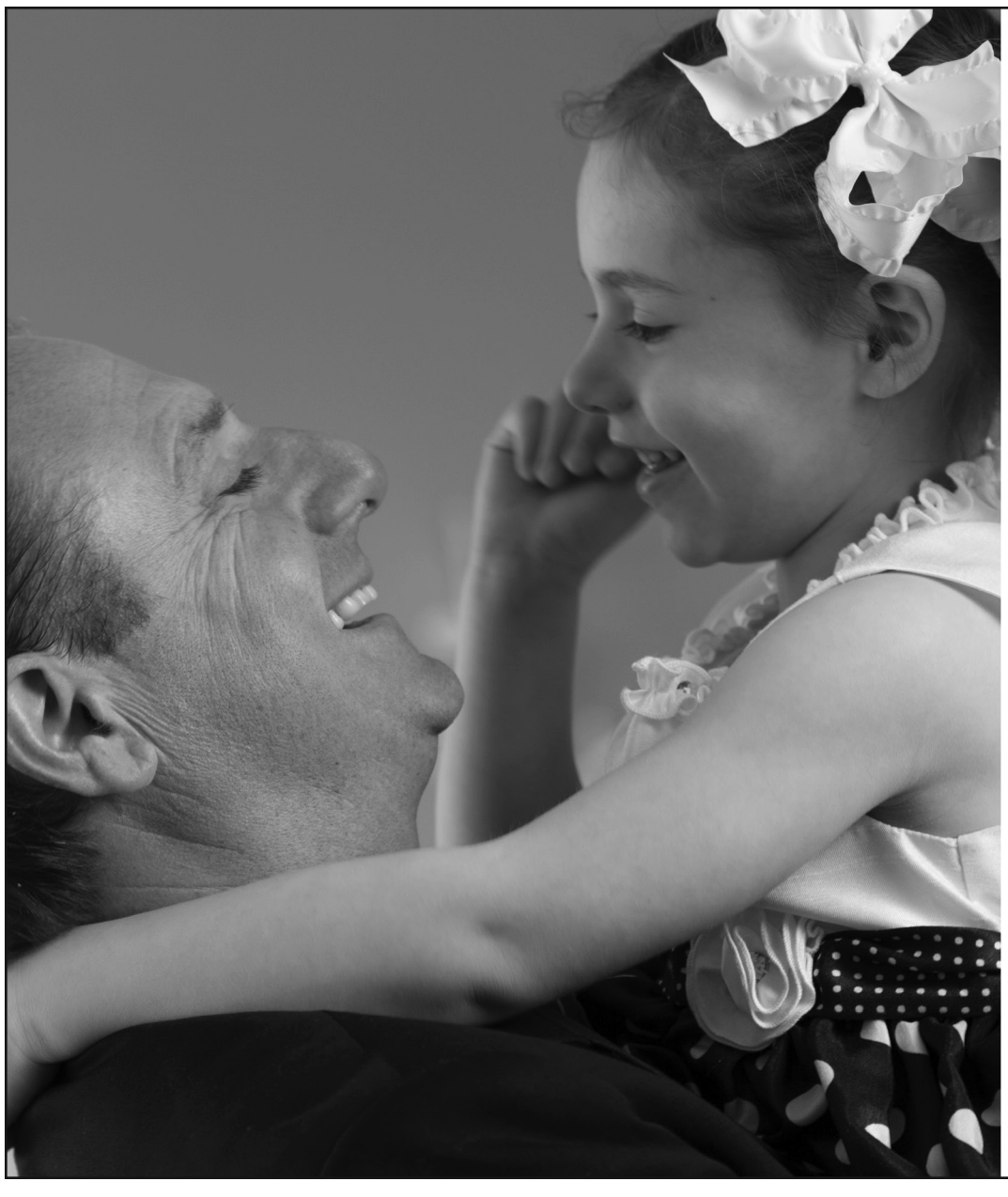
DID YOU KNOW: *tzedakah* boxes are *pushkes*!

For many years in Jewish homes there were small boxes sitting on the mantel, bookcase or kitchen counter, waiting for someone to put in a few coins. These boxes were for charity (*tzedakah* in Hebrew; *pushke*, *pushka* or even *pishke* in Yiddish). At first, people from the organization that owned the boxes would come and collect the money. Later on, people would just write a check to the organization when the box became full. The family would often put in some money at Shabbat or other times during the week; one family kept their box next to the telephone and would put money in each time a call was made. Sometimes these boxes would be in Jewish stores. Various groups set up and gave away the boxes. In the photo, the Jewish National Fund boxes are in back on the left and center. The one to the right is for Pioneer Women, also for Israel, and donated by Geraldine Foster. In the front, the box to the left is a "Palestine Box" with an address of 207 East Broadway, New York; it says: Contribution for the United Charity Institutions of Jerusalem, Hebrew Free School Eitz Chaim College and Bicor Cholim Hospital. This box is quite old and was donated by the Ross family. The final box is for Temple Emanuel Mortgage Fund, and was donated by Mrs. Lewis.

These boxes are from the collection of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association, photographed by Lowell Lisker.

To make your own box:

1. To make the container itself:
   a. Find a small canister (baking powder or cocoa container, juice box) and clean it thoroughly.
   b. You can also take a tube (from toilet paper, plastic/aluminum wrap), cut it to 6 inches and make a top and bottom by cutting a piece of heavy paper/cardboard to fit the top and bottom, then taping them on. This works well with a frozen juice container, too.
   c. You can even use a bottle, and make a cover as in b above. Do not try to cut through the metal cover of the bottle – that's very dangerous!
2. Make a slit in the top of the container, large enough for a quarter to fit easily.
3. Decorate your box as you like. You can cover it with a picture (from a magazine or one you draw), or use wrapping paper, or even hold it all together with duct tape.
4. Put it in a prominent place so that everyone can see it and contribute money. When it's full, cut off/remove the top and bring the money to the charity of your choice.



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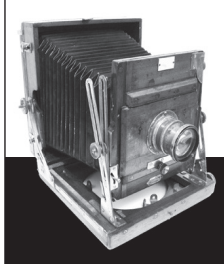
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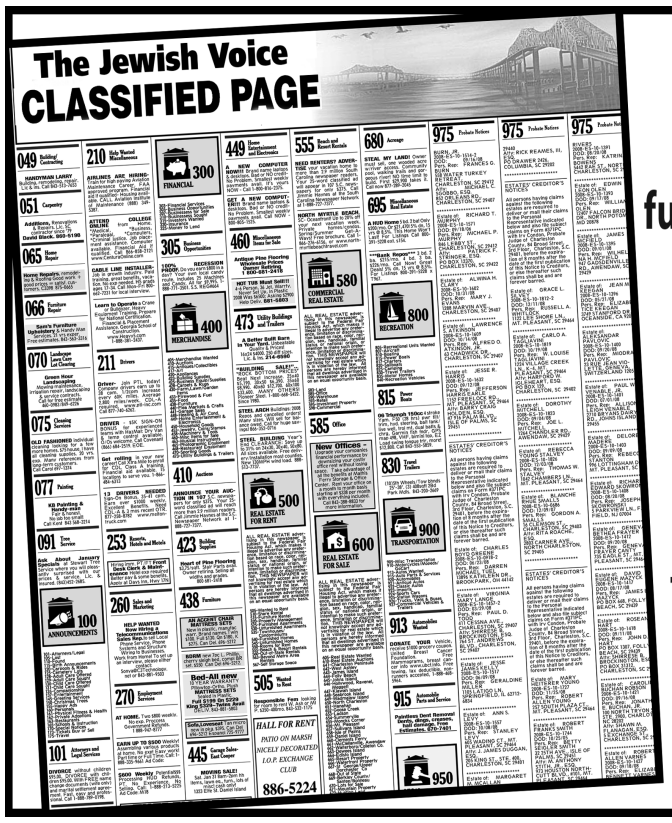
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Gisele Elkin, 94

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Gisele Elkin of Providence passed away Jan. 9.

She was the wife of the late Alfred Elkin; they were married for 53 years.



Born in Stratford, Québec, Canada, the daughter of the late Joseph and Delia (Boisvert) Champoux, she came to East Providence in 1957. She also lived in Pawtucket and Newport before moving to Providence.

Gisele worked for the Canadian War Production Board in Montreal as an inspector during World War II. After moving to Rhode Island, she worked as a bookkeeper for various companies in Providence, Barrington and Pawtucket. She then became co-owner, with her husband, of Vinyl Packaging and Plastic Development of Pawtucket for more than 30 years. She was a Girl Scout leader in Riverside, in addition to volunteering in the local schools.

Her favorite hobby was cooking gourmet meals for her family. There was no meal too complicated for her to undertake. She continued exploring new culinary challenges until she was 90.

Earlier this year, Gisele attended her grandson's graduation from Brown University.

Gisele leaves a daughter, Dorothy Elkin; son-in-law, John Halpin; and grandson, Benjamin Halpin of Stoneham, Mass. She is survived by her sister, Simone Champoux; her sister-in-law Marie-Berthe; nieces Luce and Lyne; and nephew Bernard. She is predeceased by her sisters Gilberte Mole, Madeleine and Jeannine, and her brother Gaston.

Janith Lamchick, 88

MIAMI, FLA. – Janith B. Lamchick passed away peacefully on Jan. 7 at the Palace Suites in Miami. She was born in Providence on March 27, 1927, and was predeceased by her beloved husband Jerome Lamchick. They were married for more than 65 years. She is survived by four sons, Bruce (Eileen), Gary (Ronnie), Randy (Bente) and Andrew (Sandy), six grandchildren, Mitchell, Ryan, Eric, Chelsea, Shaina, Jaime, and four great-grandchildren.

She was an elementary school teacher for 30 years and had a passion for reading, learning, golfing and life. She was a lifelong member of Temple Beth-El in Providence, and was the first woman in the state to lead a minyan. She was also a charter member of Crestwood Country Club. She enjoyed a wonderful retirement with her family in Pembroke Pines, Fla.

Clara "Kail" Rosen

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Clara "Kail" Rosen (Blumenthal) of Providence died Jan. 15, at Bethany Home of R.I. She was the beloved wife of the late Max Rosen. Born in Paterson, N.J., a daughter of the late Louis and Mary (Tabachnick) Blumenthal, she had lived in Providence and Warwick and previously in New Jersey and California. She was a registered nurse in New Jersey, New York and California. Kail was a lifetime member of Hadassah and former active and honored member of Temple Emanuel in San Bernardino, Calif. Devoted mother of Philip Rosen of Providence. Dear sister of the late Morris, Hymen and Sarah Blumenthal. Loving grandmother of Hannah. Contributions in her memory may be made to Bethany Home of R.I., 111 South Angell St., Providence, R.I. 02906.

Hilda Salmanson, 99

WEST PALM BEACH, FLA. – Hilda (Mittleman) Salmanson died in West Palm Beach, Fla. after a brief illness at the age of 99. She was born in Providence and formerly lived in Chestnut Hill, Mass.



She was the beloved wife of the late Samuel Salmanson, one of the founders of Adams Drug Company in Pawtucket. Adams was once listed on the New York Stock Exchange as a 435-store chain operating in 10 states. She was the daughter of the late Max and Fannie Mittleman and the sister of the late Harry and Joseph Mittleman and Sara Goldberg.

She will be remembered for her deep love of family, her pleasant personality, thoughtful advice and concern. Her intelligence shined with her dynamic radiance and elegance.

She was committed to a number of charitable organizations, such as: the Jewish Federation, the Jewish Home for the Aged, The Miriam Hospital and the Ocean State Gala. She was a strong supporter of the Combined Jewish Philanthropies in Palm Beach, always being a member of the Lion of Judah group.

She was an avid golfer and a past member of the Ledgemont Country Club in Seekonk, Mass., Pinebrook Country Club in Weston, Mass., and The President Country Club in West Palm Beach. She had a number of golf accomplishments, including a hole in one.

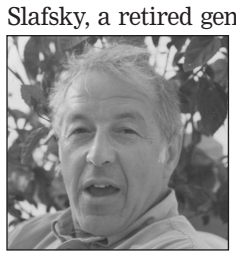
She is survived by her children, James Salmanson, Tobey and Richard Oresman; her grandchildren, Matthew Oresman and Heather Wong, Lauren and Marc Regardie, Brian Salmanson and Nikki DeMartinis; and six great-grandchildren Max, Sam, and Rachel Regardie; as well as many nieces and nephews.

The family would like to express their deep appreciation to Hilda Salmanson's caregivers, Joan, Nerita, Stacy and Lauren, who cared for her with such love.

Contributions may be made to the Friends of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, 450 Brookline Ave., Boston, Mass. 02215.

S. Frederick Slafsky

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – S. Frederick Slafsky, a retired general surgeon who practiced in Providence for 38 years, died Jan. 8 at Philip Hulitar Hospice Center.



One of the first surgical appointees to Brown Medical School, he was a clinical associate professor of surgery (1986-2002) and named surgeon emeritus when he retired in 2004. He was a compassionate physician and a dedicated and committed teacher who built strong bonds with his patients, students and professional colleagues whom he valued and respected.

A native of Gloucester, Mass., where he spent summers working on the docks, he retained a love for the ocean and fishing throughout his life. He graduated from Cornell University in 1954 and Cornell Medical College in 1958.

He served the first two years of his surgical residency at Boston City Hospital (1958-60) and completed his chief residency at St. Vincent's Hospital, N.Y., where he received the Speidel Award for research on portacaval shunts from Cardinal Spellman in 1963. He was chief surgical resident at Boston Floating Hospital (1963-64) and a research fellow and instructor of surgery at Peter Bent Brigham Hospital, working in the animal laboratories of pioneering transplant surgeon and future Nobel Prize winner Dr. Joseph E. Murray (1964-65).

Committed to quality care throughout his career, Dr. Slafsky joined The Miriam Hospital in 1965 and was the first director of the Surgical ICU. He served on many hospital committees and boards and participated in the development of Lifespan. He had clinical appointments at Roger Williams Medical Center, Women & Infants Hospital and the Veterans Hospital.

He leaves his wife Joan Temkin Slafsky, his sons John (Amy Rosenberg) of Palo Alto, Calif., and Ted (Diane Prescott) of Vienna, Va., and four grandchildren, Rachel, Adam, Ethan and Jessie.

Gifts in his memory may be made to The Miriam Hospital, 164 Summit Ave., Providence, R.I. 02906 and WaterFire Providence, 101 Regent Ave., Providence, R.I. 02908.

Edith Weisman

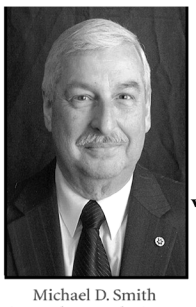
CRANSTON, R.I. – Edith Weisman passed away on Jan. 13, at Steere House Nursing Center, Providence. Born in Providence, a daughter of the late Abraham and Bertha (Lazarson) Sholovitz. Edith lived in Cranston for more than 50 years. She was the beloved wife of the late Samuel Weisman. She was a clerk stenographer for the State of Rhode Island, previously working as a teacher's assistant in Cranston, and retiring in 1991. Edith was a member of Hadassah and former member of Temple Sinai and its Sisterhood.

Devoted mother of Jerold Weisman of Cranston and Deborah Tanguay of East Greenwich. Dear sister of the late Mary Posner-Lohn, Harry, Herman, Max and George Sholovitz. Loving grandmother of Melissa. Cherished great-grandmother of Alexzander and Jaxon. Contributions in her memory may be made to Steere House, 100 Borden St., Providence, R.I. 02903 or Home & Hospice Care of R.I., 1085 North Main St., Providence, R.I. 02904.

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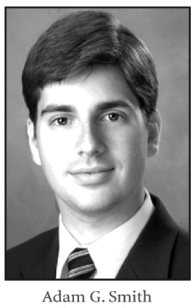
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On *Tu b'Shevat*, seeds of growth and change

BY EDMON J. RODMAN

LOS ANGELES (JTA) – For the last three years, I've celebrated *Tu b'Shevat* – the Jewish New Year of the Trees – by organizing a participatory seder in a nearby canyon-top park.

The seder usually includes about 10 to 15 people from my group, the Movable Minyan – a small, lay-led, independent congregation that needs every member's active participation in order to thrive. We meet in the parking lot, and from there, bags of seder supplies in hand, we take a short hike up past oak trees to a chaparral-covered hill with a panoramic view of the San Fernando Valley.

This is no ordinary picnic. For the seder, in addition to plates, cups and Haggadahs to explain everything (what Jewish event would be complete without a book?), you need two different colors of wine or juice – the change in color representing the changes in season.

We also bring specific fruits, each representing one of the four levels of existence that the kabbalists of Safed, who created the seder, taught that we live on simultaneously: "*asiyah*," doing; "*yetzirah*," formation; "*briyah*," creation, and "*atzilut*," nobility. (*Asiyah*, for example, includes actions like repairing the world. It's represented by foods with a tough outer shell and a soft inside, like walnuts or pomegranates, which symbolize our physical exteriors and our inner spiritual lives.)

My part, aside from bringing a bag of kumquats from a tree in our yard – representing creation, which calls for fruit that can be eaten whole – has been to lead the seder. It's not too hard, considering we have an easy-to-use Haggadah called "Branching Out," published by the Jewish National Fund. But with the New Year of the Trees fast approaching – this year it's celebrated on Jan. 25 – the Haggadah was becoming the same old fruit salad.

Inspired by the trees, I thought it was time show a little growth in my *Tu b'Shevat* celebration. Even though there's been so little rain in Southern California, the trees continued to grow – I wanted to see growth in our minyan as well. Yes, a few more people would be nice. But, more significantly, I wanted to find a way to better appreciate what each member brought to the table both at the seder itself and, more broadly, to our year-round community.

While attending the Federations of North America's General Assembly last November, I was handed a book called the "*Tu B'Shevat* Companion" at a booth sponsored by Livnot U'Lehibanot. The Israel-based organization (which means "to build and to be built") seeks to inspire young Jews – and, apparently, older people like me – to "explore their heritage and spirituality." I had slipped the softcover in my bag, and there it remained until I started thinking about the *Tu b'Shevat* approach.

"Today, we start our feast with seven species [shivat haminin], which are the fruits that the Land of Israel is famous for," the chapter about the seder began. My Haggadah also mentioned them: barley, dates, figs, grapes, olives, pomegranates and wheat. A woman who comes to my seder every year bakes her signature "seven species muffins," which are surprisingly good considering that the list of ingredients sounds like something from a TV cooking competition.

Still, I thought the seven species could provide a rich metaphor for our indie group, and I hoped to find another, non-gastronomical way to relate to them.

Reading the "Companion" (available free online), I learned the date, for example, demonstrated that the Jewish value of "inclusiveness" can be "extracted from the palm tree."

"The palm tree has nothing wasted from it," the Haggadah notes. The dates are eaten; young, unopened branches are used at Sukkot for the lulav; the trunk fibers are "used to make rope." Similar to the palm tree, concluded this "mini-drash" on trees and people, "the people of Israel have no person wasted."

As I read, the myriad personal and communal connections to *Tu b'Shevat* began to flower.

Each of the seven species was presented with "spiritual insights," something our congregation strives for in our Torah discussions. There were also open-ended questions like, "What in your opinion is the best way to be connected to the continuity of our people's heritage without losing our personal uniqueness?"

The more I read, the more the Haggadah seemed to be talking to my minyan. Each of the species was presented in the context of a physical and spiritual connection: The olive tree, for example, has multiple trunks, like a family.

After all, at nearly 30 years old, our minyan was a kind of family, with each member keenly aware of others' growth and setbacks over the years. With our backgrounds varying from secular to Orthodox, our diversity was our strength – though sometimes it resulted in intense debate over the group's course.

Moved by this reverie of connectedness – and awakening to the possibilities of a new depth of meaning of *Tu b'Shevat* for our group – I felt compelled to connect with the book's author, Shlomo Tal.

Tal spoke with me from Safed, where Livnot U'Lehibanot is based, and where the custom of a *Tu b'Shevat* seder began more than 300 years ago. He asked me, when I looked at the *Tu b'Shevat* seder table, "Which fruit smiles at you?"

At first, the question brought to mind the old California Raisins commercials. But then I realized he was asking which fruit I would like to eat first.

For me, that "smiling fruit" was the pomegranate – and for Tal as well. For him, the ruddy fruit with an unexpected interior represented the "ability to see beyond" the outer covering. The pomegranate suggested to him a way to look past the "bitter rind" of some people that we must "unpeel in order to discover" the sweetness inside.

For Tal, the seven species are a way to remind us that community consists of many different kinds of people, each with something to give.

"There is no personal growth without community, and there is no community without every individual going through personal growth," he said.

Inspired by our conversation, I considered each of the seven species. I realized how, in addition to being an earthy bond with Israel, they could foster an organic connection to Diaspora communities – even in L.A., which is so dispersed that it's almost a Diaspora within a Diaspora.

It's with this seed of insight that I hope to grow our *Tu b'Shevat* seder and our grassroots community.

EDMON J. RODMAN is a JTA columnist who writes on Jewish life from Los Angeles. Contact him at edmojace@gmail.com.

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JEWISH CULTURE THROUGH FILM



The Age of Love
Sunday, January 24, 2016 @ 2:00pm
Dwares JCC | 401 Elmgrove Avenue

The Age of Love follows 70- to 90-year-old speed daters—recently widowed, long divorced, or never-married—prepare for the big day, endure a rush of encounters, then anxiously receive their results. Fearlessly candid about themselves and what they're seeking, they are forced to take stock of life-worn bodies and still-hopeful hearts. *The Age of Love* is a story of the universality of love and desire regardless of age. **A discussion led by the film's director, Steven Loring, will follow the screening.** Space is limited, and pre-registration is encouraged.

Admission: $5 | Members $3

For more information, contact Erin Moseley, Director of Arts & Culture at emoseley@jewishallianceri.org or 401.421.4111 ext. 108.

arts & culture

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No matter the adventure, home is best



SKETCHBOOK

MIKE FINK

I'm not a rabbi, but I AM a "minister." She sent me a legal document that declares I can perform a proper marriage ceremony – my alumna, who met a boy in Rome and brought him to her nice little cul-de-sac in Brooklyn. (The home purchased long ago by her midwestern parents.)

"Midge" wanted a wedding without guests or families, only two correct witnesses and one person of the cloth, civic, not clergy. It was all very RISD and arty, and quite daunting. So I file the following report. (I warn you, it contains mostly kvetches.)

On the Acela train to New York, a guy talked business on his cellphone all the way from Providence to Penn Station, nonstop except for Stamford. I hate cellphones, but wait, please, there's more. I got to New York, but where were the groom and "best man" (witness, that is, and also a RISD alum) to meet me and take me to Brooklyn?

Since I had no cellphone, I went to the police and information booth and paged myself. "Who is looking for Mike Fink?" shouted out the loudspeaker to the entire crowd at Pennsylvania Station. Well, of course, in due time, the two young fellows found me, hugged me and guided me to the tight little quarters where we all dressed up for the big occasion. I was told to wear white, and managed to come up with an ivory outfit, consisting of snowy-clean summer trousers, plus a woven linen shawl – rather like a tallit – from Ethiopia that I had purchased in the Holy Land at an absorption center.

Now, this was by no means a Jewish, nor any religious, tying of the knot of matrimony. The bride was in a beautiful beige design created by a textile major, Emily, her former classmate. "Luca," the fiancé, refused to put on pale colors and had chosen to produce a sort-of "Celtic" poetic ritual, featuring white lace ropes to bind their hands symbolically/metaphorically. Okay, let's go.



PHOTO | MIKE FINK

The wedding party in New York City.

The traffic over the bridges to the place where such an original elopement could take place was horrendous. "Shall we simply do our thing on the roof of our apartment?" asked Midge, the wife-to-be. "Let's take a vote." The husband-in waiting said, "No," so we looked for the nearest twilight public garden and found The Cloisters. It was closing, and the light, in the late December solstice, was fast fading. As, likewise, was my patience.

Midge bought 10 fancy candles in the gift shop of the Cloisters museum as it was about to lock its gates. She arranged them under a tree in a magic circle. I read a few words I had prepared, mostly about the meaning of the names Midge and Luca. Midge derives from Madeline, which means "tower" in Hebrew. Luca means "light" from the Latin but also comes from "Lucifer" so watch out! And then, I quoted that useful line from Thirteen Clocks: "Remember Laughter." That was it. There were plenty of tears, a load of quick snapshots before the horizon – the firmament – turned totally black.

They put me up at one of those *pensiones* – they're called Airbnbs or something, and it was rather grim and had no phone that I could find no matter where or how hard I looked. I made for the bed and slept till the a.m. Then, I was to take a taxi back to Brooklyn Heights to catch up with the witness couple who would drive us back to Providence. I hailed a hack – a cab – without delay and said simply, "87 Columbia Heights, please!" The driver tried hard to find the destination but failed utterly. His cellphone was out of order. We both panicked, chauffeur and client! I was reduced to opening the window and asking pedestrians for help and rescue.

We managed, but not until I had gone through a sense of choking claustrophobia and a kind of calm desperation. "You are a nice guy not to be angry," stated the cabbie, and he meant it.

My tale of woe is almost, but not quite, over. We munched a quick bit of food, mostly "gluten-free" – a concept I deplore! – and then, I remembered, our car was very, very low on gas. It's not easy to fight that traffic nor to find a gas station, and I once again experienced that falling feeling, plus a wild hope that we could find rest rooms before too long. Ah, there IS a gas station in Brooklyn, after all.

Now, the voyage northeastward to New England and Rhode Island was a long nostalgic trek. Each signpost brought back a poignant emotion and elicited a tale from a chapter in my life. I AM a Yale man. My roommate DID come from Stamford. I looked at the harbors, a gull or a heron, the trees, the structures and bridges, and offered some anxiety-producing observations about the couple we had just united and some prophecies about their likely future together.

Then, the signposts spelled out "Welcome to Rhode Island," and my service as a parson was nearly over. Until I entered my front door and faced my wife and our son.

"Why didn't you call?" "There was no phone."

"How about an email?" "I couldn't impose on the rush to get ... where? Anyplace we could set up our gypsy camp."

And so, dear reader, you see that I can turn New York into an isolated outpost of the true realms of the busy and crowded world. I am alone and cut off in the city that never sleeps and like Jonathan Bing in the British poem, I guess "home is the best place for people like me."

MIKE FINK (mfink33@aol.com) teaches at the Rhode Island School of Design.





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Rudi Weissenstein's Israel photos at Brown RISD gallery

Brown RISD Hillel is exhibiting Rudi Weissenstein's historic photographs of Israel in the gallery through Feb. 15.

Weissenstein's work comes from The PhotoHouse, the oldest photography shop in Israel. The shop was established in 1936 in the heart of Tel Aviv by the photographer Rudi Weissenstein and his wife Miriam, and has become one of Israel's largest and most valuable private archives of historical photographs.

In 1936, Shimon Rudolph ("Rudi") Weissenstein immigrated to Palestine from Czechoslovakia. A photojournalist by training, Weissenstein was a quintessential press photographer, a field in which he had gained experience during this early years while working in Prague. He was an independent photographer and wanted to set up an archive. The circumstances of the time and place furnished him with fascinating photographic materials.

Weissenstein's archive at The PhotoHouse consists of more than 1 million negatives of photos that document Israel's history, highlighting the spirit, atmosphere, people and pivotal historical events from the 1930s-1970s. Weissenstein's camera was a silent witness to the development of Israel and particularly Tel Aviv, capturing both day-to-day and historic moments, such as the declaration of the State of Israel in 1948.

The show is a small portion of the archive. It is on display in the gallery at Brown RISD Hillel, 80 Brown St., Providence. Building hours: (before Jan. 27) Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.; (after Jan. 27) Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 10 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sunday, noon to 6 p.m. The photos are available for purchase at the end of the exhibit. For more information, call 401-863-2805.



PHOTO | BROWN RISD HILLEL

A photo from the exhibit at Brown RISD gallery.

Brazilian publisher backs off new printing of Hitler's 'Mein Kampf'

JTA – A Brazilian publisher canceled the release of a new printing of Hitler's "Mein Kampf" after strong pressure from the Jewish community and scholars.

Edipro reportedly decided on Jan. 14 to call off a first printing run of 1,000 copies, saying it was an old translation to Portuguese from the 1930s with no commentary. The release was slated for late January.

The vice president of the Brazilian Israelite Confederation, Paulo Maltz, said legal procedures are under discussion to prevent the national distribution of the book authored by Nazi leader Adolf Hitler.

Osias Wurman, Israel's honorary consul in Rio de Janeiro, said: "The book is Nazi propaganda and, under Brazilian law, selling it is a non-bailable crime."

However, Wurman joined some major publishers in Brazil in giving a thumbs-up to an annotated edition, saying: "People need to understand what happened."

Laura Gasparian, owner of Argumento bookstore, said she will sell "Mein Kampf" because "it's a historic document and some people have already been looking for it. But it will go straight to the shelves, it won't be on display."

A 1,000-page edition – with the 650 pages from the original manifesto – is being designed along with 305 notes from an American edition plus other commentary from prominent Brazilian historians.

The 70-year copyright in Germany of the anti-Semitic tract, whose title means "My Struggle," expired on Jan. 1, allowing it to be published in the country for the first time since World War II.

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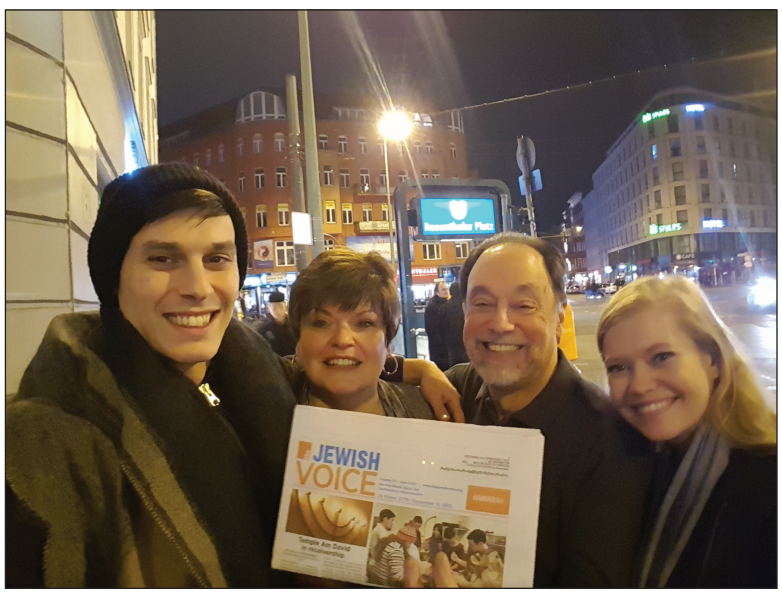
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CONGRATULATIONS – Dr. Jed and Beth (Rosenfeld) Bell of Pickerington, Ohio are happy to announce the birth of their daughter, Olivia Sage, born Sept. 25, 2015. Grandparents are Dr. Stewart and Linda Rosenfeld of Warwick and Mark and Sandra Bell of Roslyn, New York. Harper Rose is the proud big sister.

WEDDING – Erin Leigh Moseley, daughter of John and Judy Moseley & Surya-Datta Mussafeer, son of Suryadave and Suveeta Mussafeer were married Nov. 21, 2015, at Roger Williams Casino by Rabbi Howard Voss-Altman. They live in Attleboro, Massachusetts. Erin is director of arts and culture & NextGen engagement at the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island. Surya-Datta is a contractor for CVS.

CELEBRATING WITH THE VOICE – The Blooms were in Berlin, Germany, on Dec. 19, 2015, to celebrate Alexander Bloom's 25th birthday. Alexander has been living in Berlin since 2013, where he teaches kindergarten at the Berlin Cosmopolitan School. Pictured are Rick and Linda Bloom, Alexander Bloom, and his girlfriend, Bobbie Schultze.



The Jewish Federation of Greater New Bedford Proudly Presents



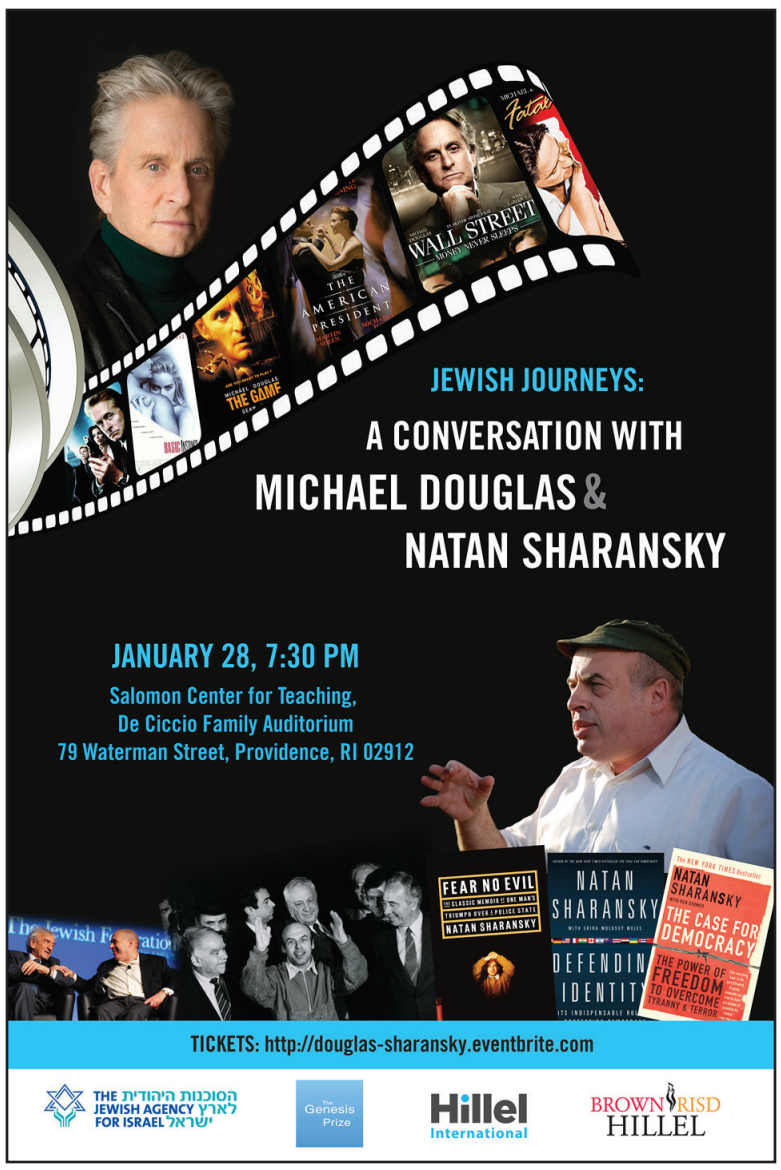
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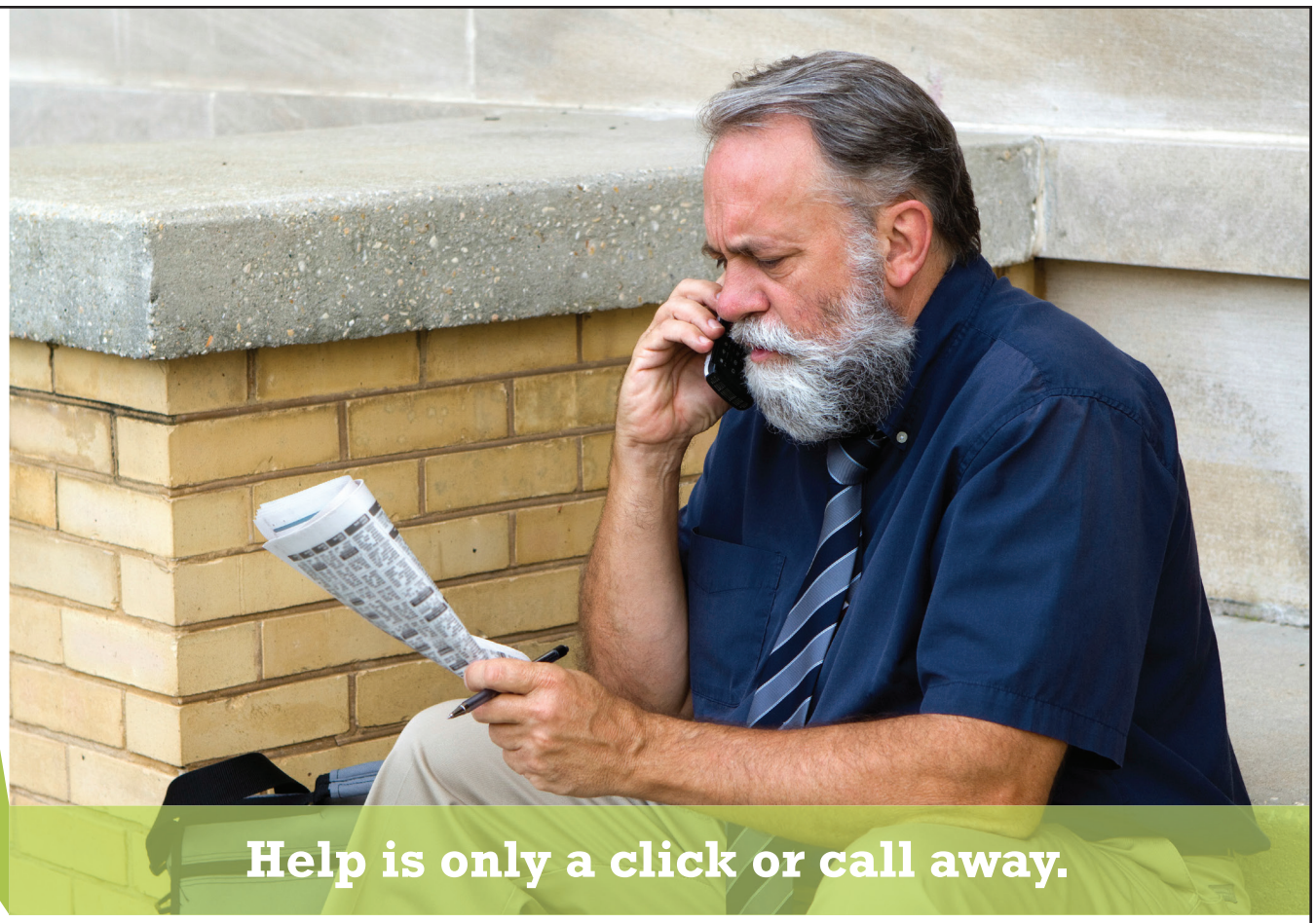


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