the JEWISH VOICE

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HOME & GARDEN

Merrick Garland recalls roots in accepting Supreme Court nomination

JTA – New U.S. Supreme Court nominee Merrick Garland credited his Jewish grandparents, who he said fled to the United States from anti-Semitism in Russia, for putting him in position to be nominated.

"My family deserves much of the credit for the path that led me here. My grandparents left the Pale of Settlement at the border of western Russia and Eastern Europe in the early 1900s, fleeing anti-Semitism and hoping to make a better life for their children in America," he said, choking up March 16 in the White House Rose Garden as he accepted President Barack Obama's nomination.



Merrick Garland

Garland said his father, who ran an advertising business from the basement of his family home, impressed upon him the "importance of hard work and fair dealing." He said his mother's volunteer work taught him the value of community service.

His father, Cyril, was born in Omaha, Nebraska, but hailed from a Latvian Jewish immigrant family. He died in 2000.

Garland's mother, Shirley, who is still living, formerly was the director of volunteer services at the Council for Jewish Elderly in Chicago.

"For me there can be no higher public service than serving as a member of the U.S. Supreme Court," said Garland, now the chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. "This is the greatest honor of my life other than Lynn agreeing to marry me 28 years ago. It's also the greatest gift I've ever received, except, and there's another caveat, the birth of our daughters, Jessie and Becky."

Obama called for Garland to be confirmed in a timely fashion, so he could sit with the court in the fall and fully participate in the court's proceedings. He would fill the Supreme Court seat held by Antonin Scalia, who died last month.

"I simply ask Republicans in the Senate to give him a fair hearing and then a vote up or down," Obama said. "I have fulfilled my constitutional duty. It is time for the Senate to do theirs."

The Senate will go on a two-week recess at the end of the week.

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PURIM MITZVAH DAY



PHOTOS | FRAN OSTENDORF

During Purim Mitzvah Day March 13, community members came together to prepare 700 hamantashen to be delivered to all the nursing homes in R.I. with Jewish residents. At the Phyllis Siperstein Tamarisk Assisted Living Residence in Warwick, and at URI Hillel, bakers joined together to prepare trays of the Purim treats. Volunteers from Jewish Eldercare of R.I. will deliver the treat-filled bags in the days leading up to Purim. The gift delivery of the hamantashen is sponsored by the Women's Association of the Jewish Seniors Agency.

5 things to watch for at the AIPAC confab

BY RON KAMPEAS

WASHINGTON (JTA) – Here are five things to watch for at this year's annual conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, which is taking place here March 19-22:

It's Yooooooooooge.

Organizers are expecting 18,000 activists, 3,000 more than last year, the largest number ever.

So large that, for the first time, plenary sessions are moving out of the Washington Convention Center to the Verizon Center, a sports arena a few blocks away.

Factors fueling interest: The perception that the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement against Israel is making inroads; the unhappiness among AIPAC activists with the Iran nuclear deal; and the election season – the chance to see presidential candidates make their case to the pro-Israel crowd.

Forget the Kosher dinner statistics – AIPAC's not even going to go there, serving no mass dinner this year. But for the first time all food stands within the convention center are Kosher only.

What will Donald say?

Donald J. Trump, the Republican front-runner, will address the conference. His three rivals for the party's presidential

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THIS ISSUE'S QUOTABLE QUOTE

"You can't go through life with that kind of hatred."



The group stops for a photo in Revolution Square.

PHOTOS | TEMPLE BETH-EL

Beth-El's Cuba Mission an eye-opening experience

COMPILED BY TEMPLE BETH-EL

Twenty-nine travelers left Miami for Havana on Feb. 10, and spent eight days traveling through Cuba on Temple Beth-El's Cuba Mission. They visited the Jewish community and learned about the history and culture of the formerly forbidden nation only 90 miles south of Florida. Here are some of the travelers' observations:

Elinor Nacheman

When the announcement was posted about Temple Beth-El's trip to Cuba, the immediate thought in my mind was that this was a trip I had to go on.

Although I have traveled a fair amount, I have never experienced travel in a Communist or Third World country, so I had some trepidations. However, any worries were far outweighed by the idea of visiting a country "trapped" in time, and seeing the Cuban landscape before massive changes to accommodate growing tourism transforms it forever, and certainly learning more about the remnant Jewish community of Cuba.

The trip turned out to be one of the most memorable travel experiences I've ever had. Our guide, Jorge, shepherded us around, candidly answering the questions we fired at him on our bus travels and walking tours. He was eager for us to understand his people, his culture and his country's history ... he was a teacher before he turned to working in tourism, but, as he explained, he still is a teacher – just in a different "classroom."

The heartbreaking facts about Cuba are the grinding poverty and lack of basic materials to do the simplest repairs. When Fidel Castro came to power, 90 percent of Cuba's Jewish population left for Miami. The remaining population continues to shrink as younger Jews apply to go to Israel and end up staying. The remaining community struggles along with aid from several Jewish sources, such as Canadian Chabad, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and the many temple-based humanitarian groups that pass through.

In Havana, we visited with Maya Levy at the Sephardic Center and Adela Dworin, the longtime president of the Jewish community at the Patronato, Havana's main synagogue. We shared a memorable Shabbat service at the Patronato and, following that, were invited to Shabbat dinner, along with a few other visiting Jewish groups. It was an inspiring moment during services when all the young people were called to the bimah and they filled the stage – those young folks are their hope for the future.

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FROM PAGE 2

CUBA



Karen Borger in Temple Beth Shalom in Havana.



The entrance to the Ashkenazic cemetery outside Havana.

More sobering was our visit to the home of Rebecca Langus, in Cienfuegos. Rebecca seated us in the front room of her tiny home, and we were introduced to her family. She is the central leader of the community, which she told us consists of 20 people in five families. They have no synagogue but proudly continue to keep their Jewish heritage alive as best they can. The donations we left in goods and cash, while generous and so appreciated, seemed so inadequate after hearing them speak.

Also sobering was our visit to the old Jewish cemetery in Guanabacoa, where we recited Kaddish at the Holocaust memorial (the first one in the Western Hemisphere).

We experienced a well-rounded view of the arts, culture, architecture and people of Cuba in a fairly short time. My hope is that change will come gradually, with careful thought given to how to make those transformations without sacrificing the very things that make Cuba so special. This is a place I know I want to return.

Jim Tobak

Although I didn't exactly have low expectations about our mission to Cuba, I did go with conflicted expectations and emotions. Looking now in the rearview mirror of our journey to the time warp that is Cuba, I consider the experience memorable and in many ways quite remarkable.

Many things stand out, but certainly a high point was our interaction with members of the small yet vibrant Jewish community that remains in Cuba nearly 60 years after the revolution. The tenacity and resilience with which they have held onto Judaism, and to each other, is yet another testament to our faith – and indeed the human spirit.

Our marvelous tour guide, Jorge, repeatedly said we would leave Cuba with more questions than when we came – and for me this was quite true. Havana is a beautiful, if rundown and dilapidated, city, which I believe can rise from years of neglect and again be the jewel of the Caribbean. My central question – a concern really – is one that I think is shared by many Cubans: With the seemingly inevitable reestablishment of relations with the United States and the tidal wave of money that will crash ashore on the island, will this historic and architectural treasure fall victim to the less desirable, more pernicious aspects of unbridled capitalism?

Despite some adversity, our intrepid crew was a remarkably cohesive and convivial band of explorers. And our mission guides, Temple Beth-El's Rabbi Sarah Mack and Cantor Judy Seplowin, provided both outstanding leadership and moving spiritual inspiration.

Adelina Axelrod

I was traveling in Cuba with a group from Temple Beth El to bring medicine and supplies to three Jewish communities: Havana, Cienfuegos and Trinidad. It is to be noted that the monthly salary of a Cuban worker is between 20 and 22 pesos. Cubans learn to supplement their meager income by trading in the black market and receiving much needed remittances from relatives residing abroad.

On a cobblestoned side street in Old Havana, a *bodega* (a state-run grocery store) caught my eye. It is the place where Cubans use their ration card to purchase groceries. The store was dark except for a lone bare lightbulb hanging from a thin black wire. It was the second week of the month and already the shelves were empty.

URI Feinstein Providence Campus Arts & Culture Program and First Hand Theatrical Present



THIS IS My STORY:
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URI Feinstein Providence Campus - Paff Auditorium
80 Washington St, Providence, RI 02903

For information call 401-277-5206 uri.artsandculture@gmail.com or visit web.uri.edu/prov/arts
For more information www.outloudtheatre.org All events are free and open to the public.



*What the news **does not** report on Israel.*

StandWithUs and Temple Emanu-El are pleased to welcome media expert, Gary Kenzer, for a presentation looking at how media coverage of events in Israel can lead to inaccurate perception.

RSVP: **www.Garykenzer.Eventbrite.com**

Temple Emanu-El & the Jewish Alliance are sponsoring this program as the first in a series of community wide programs dealing with numerous aspects of the Middle East conflict.

TEMPLE EMANU-EL
Jewish Alliance OF GREATER RHODE ISLAND

Gary Kenzer
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
HonestReporting

Wed., March 30
7:00PM
TEMPLE EMANU-EL
99 Taft Avenue ❖ Providence

StandWithUs
RHODE ISLAND

My Fitness Journey: Learning to 'embrace your place'

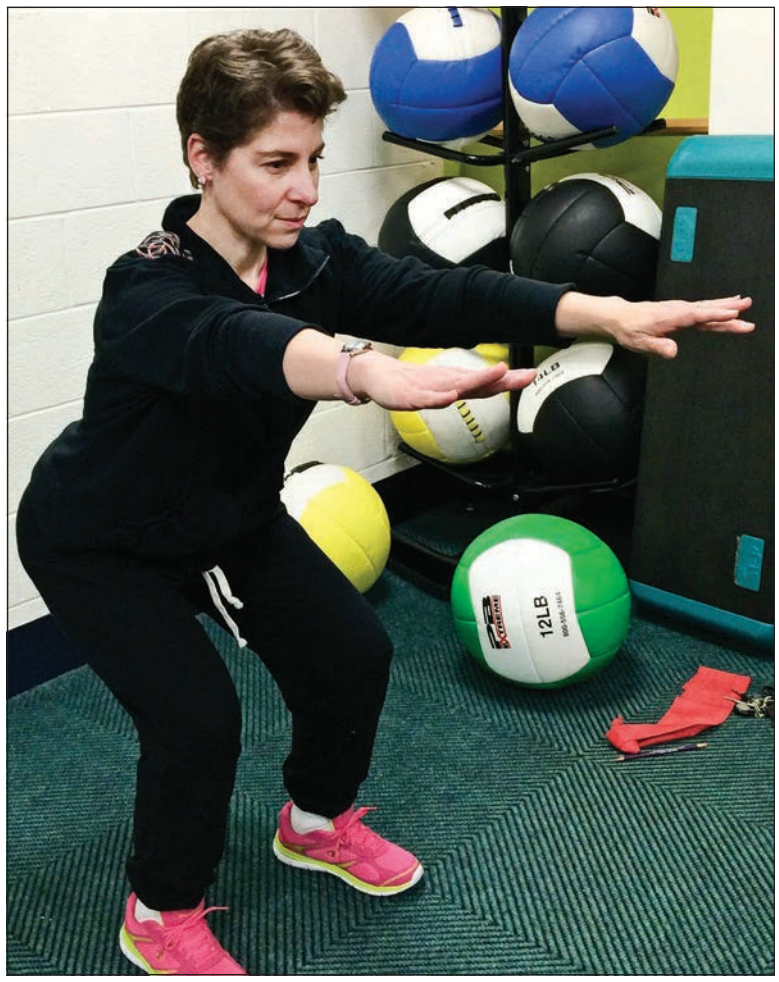
Part three of a series



KARA MARZIALI

Day 15

I got to the Fitness Center early – very early – not only because it's a great way to start the day, but also so that I have my pick of machines and ample floor space. However, this past week, I have noticed that there are a lot more people at 6 a.m. than I am accustomed to seeing. Today I was acutely aware of several young, pretty, blond women working out. Outfitted in trendy fitness attire, one of them effortlessly hopped on a machine that looked dreadfully intimidating to me. I knew I was staring at her for too long, my eyes fixed on her physique as she fell into a cadence with the equipment she was handling. The first wave of emotion I felt was shame (mixed in with a dollop of self-pity and perhaps a pinch of regret). "I'm not as fit as she is, my workout clothes are *shmattes*, and I could never master that machine," I said to myself. And then I realized I was still staring! Her eyes caught my gaze, and she smiled at me. Now, I know this might sound hokey, but … unexpectedly I felt content that I was doing my thing and she was doing hers. What's right for her body, her age and her goals is not necessarily what's right for me. Suddenly, I didn't need to compare myself to someone half my age wearing the latest in fitness fashion. I remembered that this is MY journey, and I was proud of my accomplishments thus far. And, just for the record, later today I may go buy a new pair of exercise pants!



Squatting is not the most attractive position, but I sure feel it in my thighs and glutes!

Day 16

Busy is not the same as physically active. I was busy this week, however, my personal and professional to-do list does not take inches off my hips, strengthen my core, improve flexibility or burn calories. (Although sometimes, when I am fretting, my heart rate increases, but that doesn't count!)

Busyness is not an excuse for getting out of my exercise commitment. (And trust me, I've tried.) I wanted to duck out of training this week and blame it on busyness. The truth of the matter is, if my trainer Eddie makes an effort to be there for me, I owe it to myself (and to him) to "show up."

After only two weeks, Eddie tells me that my posture is awesome, my core is tight and I am holding certain positions (like squatting) much longer than I was initially. He was so proud of me for walking 2.5 miles the other day despite the impending storm. Additionally, Eddie was glad that I told him about the uneasiness I felt when doing a plank. We have enough other exercises, such as the Glute Bridge, to engage my core.

It certainly helps to have someone in my corner. I guess that's why most experts recommend the "buddy system." We're more accountable when someone else is counting on us. I wasn't sure I'd like having a personal trainer. It seemed like a luxury, and I often wondered if I could afford it, if I was worth it or if I'd see any progress.

Today Eddie said, "I'm really happy to be a part of your journey, and I am very grateful to have you a part of mine." That comment made me feel good and encouraged me to stick with this.

Thanks, Eddie, for reminding me that I am responsible for taking care of my body so that I can maintain the busy lifestyle I lead!

Day 19

I received an email yesterday that included a noteworthy phrase: Embrace your place.

It is worth repeating because this phrase is directly linked to wellness – both physical and emotional. Whether you need to exercise because you want to lose 20 pounds, lower your blood pressure, increase your flexibility, train for a marathon or because your doctor's insisting on it, accept where you are.

When I can't "embrace my place" I am left feeling defeated. Suddenly I am comparing my body to someone else's. Though I may not be able to bench 75 pounds (nor do I want to), I can do more today than I could one week ago. Yesterday I was able to maintain my squat position for 20 seconds!

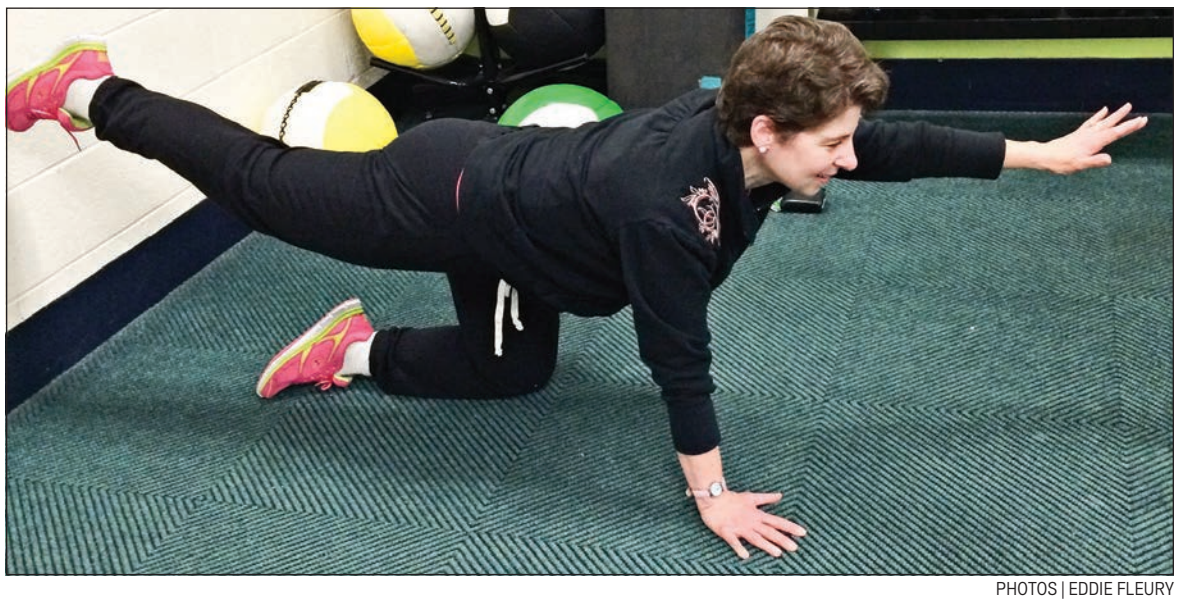
Today, I am at peace with my body, my age, my abilities, my strengths and my life. I am grateful for this journey.

Day 20

UGH! I woke up late and rushed to get to work. I did not feel like getting on the treadmill, nor did I feel like doing my core exercises. However, I made a deal with myself – all I had to do was 10 minutes on the treadmill, just to show I was willing. Twenty-three minutes went by before I realized that I had doubled my initial intention. So, while I did not do my core exercises, I still managed to get in some healthy activity today. (And I was even able to punch in at my usual time!)

Day 21

It was commonly believed that it took 21 days to develop a habit, but according to a recent study, it actually takes about 66 days to form a new habit. Sustaining good behaviors is likely to differ depending on who you are and what you are trying to do. I figure as long as I continue this routine, a habit will form. But I will probably have to persevere beyond the eight weeks of this fitness journey to see lasting results. I don't think it's a destination … it really is a journey. I'll keep moving!



PHOTOS | EDDIE FLEURY

On all fours, I reach one arm while extending my opposite leg, and I hold for 10 seconds. Then I bring the extended leg and outstretch arm toward each other so that my knee meets my elbow. I repeat this 10 times on each side.

the JEWISH VOICE

EDITOR
Fran Ostendorf

CONTRIBUTORS
Leah Charpentier BouRamia
Cynthia Benjamin
Ariel Brothman
Seth Chitwood
Stephanie Ross

EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS
Judith Romney Wegner

DESIGN & LAYOUT
Leah Camara

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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PUBLISHER The Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island, Chair Sharon Gaines, President/CEO Jeffrey K. Savit, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence, RI 02906.
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Jewish writer Nomi Eve to speak about 'Henna House' at Temple Beth-El

BY HILLARY SCHULMAN
hschulman@jewishallianceri.org

"A heady mix of henna, history, and the power of words written on skin, sand, and paper. An engrossing, surprising, compelling read."

– Indira Ganesan, author of "As Sweet as Honey," in praise of Nomi Eve's new book, "Henna House."

Writer Nomi Eve is no stranger to Providence – she received her master's degree in creative fiction from Brown University. Eve is a MacDowell Colony fellow whose essays and stories have appeared in The New York Times, Glimmer Train Stories, Voice Literary Supplement, Conjunctions and International Quarterly. She teaches full time at Drexel University, all while raising her three children with her husband in Philadelphia.

Eve will be in Providence to talk about "Henna House" at 7 p.m. on May 24 at Temple Beth-El.

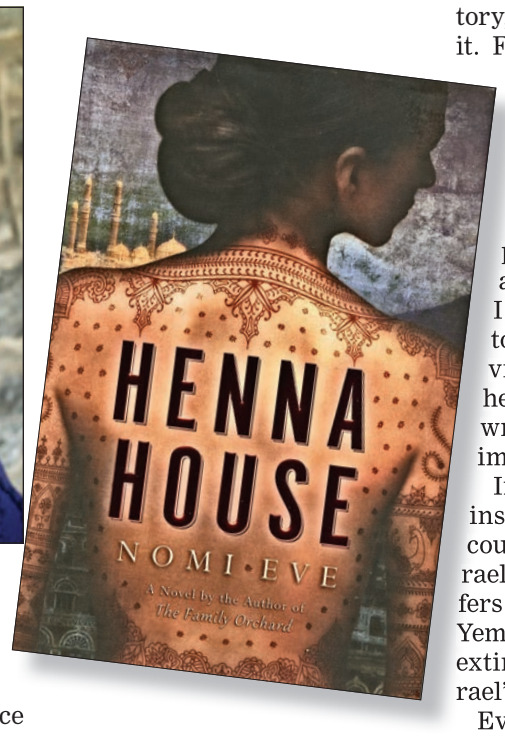
Eve's father is from Israel and her mother is American. Her mother's parents came to the United States as children fleeing the pogroms of Eastern Europe. As adults, they opened a bakery, and, Eve recalls, "Every Friday night our extended family gathered at the bakery for Shabbat dinner."

Her paternal grandparents remained in Israel, and, as a child, Eve spent every summer with them on their moshav, which had an orchard, inspiring her first book, "The Family Orchard."

Eve says, "I am who I am as a writer because of both of these heritages. The bakery and the orchard. America and Israel. I write in English, I am a student of English literature, and I am deeply connected to Jewish history and Israeli history through personal experience and stories."



Nomi Eve



When asked why she writes Jewish fiction, Eve responded that her creativity is firmly rooted in Jewish history, whether she speaks of her ancestors or of personal familial experiences.

"The family tree tells me that the Maharal from Prague was my ancestor, as was Rashi and many other illustrious rabbis and scholars. But I am also related to someone named Dina from the 1500s, and a woman named Uta, a woman named Esther, and a woman named Nechama, all from centuries past. These women have no last names and left no treatises, no exegeses, no volumes of Talmud, they are not prominent figures in Jewish history. But they are my foremothers, so it is up to me and my fellow Jewish women writers to speak for them. So I do."

In talking about one of her stories, Eve explains the relationship between her personal experiences and her fiction expertise.

"I'm inspired by family history, but in no way tethered to it. Family history and Jewish history are my diving boards. I have to have my feet firmly planted before I jump off into the unknown."

Eve's process is highly personal. "I am a visual and image-oriented writer. I will see a scene and want to make it real. I write from vivid pictures I see in my head, like a movie still. I write from and toward these images."

In "Henna House," Eve drew inspiration from her father's cousin's wife, who came to Israel from Yemen. The novel offers a window into the world of Yemenite Jewry – a culture now extinct due to pogroms after Israel's founding.

Eve's novel delves into the role of henna in the lives of Yemenite women, as well as the challenges that both Muslim and Jewish Yemenite women face.

The main character, Adela, faces the potential untimely death of her sick father, and worries that she will be removed from her home and given to a Muslim family if her father should die before she marries. The novel follows Adela on her journey, while bringing in the history of Operation on Wings of Eagles, a mission that brought thousands of African Jews to the newly formed state of Israel in 1949 and 1950.

On May 24, in addition to Eve's talk, there will be a henna artist available, as well as a spice tasting and a demonstration by the Not Just Spices shop on Hope Street. Grab your girlfriends, your book club members, your sisters, your daughters and your mothers – and maybe even the men in your life – and be transported back to 1920s Yemen with Nomi Eve and "Henna House."

HILLARY SCHULMAN is a development associate at the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island.

Holocaust Education Center presents Laurel Leff

The Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Center will present author Laurel Leff at the Victor Baxt Lecture Series event March 20. Her topic is "Well Worth Saving: American Universities' Life- and-Death Decisions on Hiring Scholars From Nazi Europe." Leff will speak at the Cranston Public Library on Sockanosset Cross Road at 2 p.m.

During the Nazi era, American universities had one of the few lifelines to extend to the hundreds of thousands of people trying to flee Europe: faculty positions that enabled refugees to immigrate outside of strict quotas. American academic institutions insisted that positions be offered only to scholars who were not too old, not too young, not too left, not too right, and, most important, not too Jewish. The refugee scholars also had to be well-connected and world class.

American professors received lists of European scholars, circling the ones who were worth hiring and – by extension – worth saving.

As a result, for every intellectual who survived and thrived in the United States, thousands more did not. Leff will explore this little-known aspect of the intellectual migration and the broader questions of America's role in rescuing those persecuted in their home countries.

Leff is an associate professor of journalism and associate director of Jewish studies at Northeastern University in Boston. A former reporter for the Wall Street Journal and the Miami Herald, she has written "Buried by The Times: The Holocaust and America's Most Important Newspaper." She is working on a book on the response of American elites to the refuge crisis of the 1930s and early 1940s.



Seeing the Humanity in Your Enemy

An Orthodox Settler and Palestinian Peace Activist in Dialogue



Rabbi Hanan Schlesinger

Rabbi Hanan Schlesinger serves as the international director of Roots, the Palestinian Israeli Grassroots Initiative for Understanding, Nonviolence and Transformation, which he helped found at the beginning of 2014, bringing together Jewish Israelis and Palestinians, both Muslim and Christian.



Ali Abu Awwad

Ali Abu Awwad is a leading Palestinian activist who teaches his countrymen non-violent resistance. He reaches out to Jewish Israelis at the heart of the conflict, and tours the world to tell his riveting story of violence, imprisonment, bereavement, and discovery of his path of non-violence.

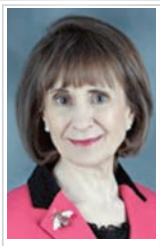
Despite living next to each other, Israelis and Palestinians are separated by walls of fear-not just fear of each other, but even of the price of peace. Roots brings the two peoples together through monthly meetings between families, a women's group, work with school children, engaging local leaders, a summer camp, language learning, and cultural exchanges.

Thursday, April 7, 2016 @ 7:30 pm - Brown University
Macmillan 117, 167 Thayer Street, Providence
Friday, April 8, 2016 @ 7:00 pm - Temple Beth-El
70 Orchard Avenue, Providence
Saturday, April 9, 2016 @ 11:00 am - Congregation Beth Sholom
275 Camp Street, Providence
Saturday, April 9, 2016 @ 8:00 pm - Masjid Al-Islam
40 Sayles Hill Road, North Smithfield
ALL EVENTS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

www.friendsofroots.net | If you have questions, please contact Judy Kaye: judykaye2@gmail.com

ROOTS · TEMPLE BETH-EL · CRC Community Relations Council of The Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island · J Street Rhode Island · Congregation Beth Sholom

Increasing our joy in the month of Adar



PATRICIA RASKIN

As I did my research, I was happy to learn that this month, *Adar*, at the beginning of spring, is known as a month of celebration and happiness. Purim falls in *Adar*. The Talmud says "when the month of *Adar* arrives, we increase in joy" to welcome a season of miracles. Accordingly, the Talmud tells us that this month is fortuitous for the Jewish people.

The article "9 Things You Probably Didn't Know About the Month of *Adar*," at www.chabad.org, states that *Adar* is the Hebrew name associated with "*adir*," which means strength and power. In order to assure that the lunar months of the Jewish year stay in sync with the solar calendar, an additional month of *Adar* is added. Purim is celebrated in the second *Adar*.

Timeanddate.com states, "An extra month, *Adar* I, is added after the month of Shevat and before the month of *Adar* in a leap year. The month is also known as *Adar* Rishon or *Adar* Alef. According to Jewish tradition, *Adar* is a lucky and happy month." Because *Adar* was the last month the Jewish people spent in Egypt before the Exodus, it opens the door to Passover, a true celebration of miracles.

This additional month of *Adar* gives us more reason to be joyful; the lesson for me is in the statement "we increase in joy." I don't think that just happens. It comes from being grounded in the present moment and having a mindset of gratitude and openness to what is joyful in our lives. We can also increase our joy by focusing on the words themselves when we pray and say them with enthusiasm and joy.

It has taken me some time to realize how important each word is that we use and how those words create thoughts that shape our reality. Joy is a natural state for some, but for most of us it is an acquired "taste." As we practice joy and appreciate the beauty around us, we begin to live it.

The word *Adar* has also been associated with beauty, as in the beauty of the season contained in *Adar*, spring. There is beauty in the transition from winter to spring. The buds begin to bloom, the weather becomes warmer and we can feel the warmth of the sun with longer daylight around us, which helps our mood and attitude.

The Jewish Leap Year is referred to in Hebrew as *Shanah Me'uberet*, or pregnant year, and that, in addition to the strength and power of the month of *Adar*, gives us additional opportunity to "birth" new ideas and create new beginnings.

PATRICIA RASKIN hosts "The Patricia Raskin Show" on Saturdays at 4 p.m. on WPRO, 630 AM/99.7 FM. Raskin is a board member of Providence's Temple Emanu-El.

FROM PAGE 1

GARLAND

Garland, 63, a Chicago native, has worked in Washington, D.C., since the 1970s, first as a Supreme Court clerk, then a private lawyer, an assistant U.S. attorney and, since 1997, a federal judge.

He was named to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia circuit by President Bill Clinton in 1997 and became chief judge in 2013. He reportedly was on Obama's short list for a place on the Supreme Court when a seat opened in 2009, but Obama ultimately nominated Sonia Sotomayor.

Garland is a graduate of Harvard Law School and clerked for U.S. Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan Jr. In 1987, he married fellow Harvard graduate Lynn Rosenman in a Jewish ceremony at the Harvard Club in New York. Rosenman's grandfather, Samuel Rosenman of New York, was a state Supreme Court justice and a special counsel to two presidents, Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman.

If confirmed, Garland would be the fourth Jewish justice on the nation's highest court, which is comprised entirely of Jews and Catholics. The three current Jewish members are Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Elana Kagan and Stephen Breyer.

After finishing his Supreme Court clerkship in 1979, Garland became a special assistant to the U.S. attorney general before joining the Washington law firm Arnold & Porter. He later served as an assistant U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia and a deputy assistant attorney general until his appointment as U.S. circuit court judge.

Clinton first nominated Garland in 1995, but the Republican-controlled Senate dragged its feet on his confirmation. After Clinton won reelection in 1996, he renominated Garland. In March 1997, the judge was confirmed by a 76-23 vote with the backing of majorities in both parties, including seven current Republican senators.



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Lessons from Cuban Jewry

A group from Temple Beth-El, in Providence, traveled to Cuba on Feb. 10 laden with donations for our Jewish brethren, filled with enthusiasm and the spirit of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world). Even as we delivered our bags filled with pharmaceuticals, it was apparent that we were receiving as much from the Cuban Jewish community as we were giving.



RABBI SARAH MACK

Cuban Jewry has faced a more intense version of our own Jewish challenges – and has prevailed. These Jews give us hope for the future of our own Jewish community.

Here are a few things we can learn from their ambitious and passionate commitment to Jewish life:

Openness. The Cuban Jewish community is unfailingly open to any person who wants to reclaim their Jewish heritage. After years of religious life being blocked by the Communist regime, few had knowledge of Judaism, and intermarriage prevailed. The Reform movement uses the term "audacious hospitality" for engaging the unconnected. Cuban Jews pioneered this practice – for decades, they have warmly welcomed anyone interested in reconnecting to their Jewish roots and traditions, no questions asked. Their community is successful partly because of its openness and gracious acceptance of all.

Lay leadership. The Cuban Jewish community is primarily lay-lead because it has had no choice. While the Joint Distribution Committee has sent in rabbis over the years, the Jews themselves have had to be the daily stewards of Jewish life. The knowledge that the future of their Jewish community was in their hands alone has created an impressively strong lay leadership where everyone has a vested interest in the well-being of the community. The Shabbat service we attended was led by lay leaders, the dinner organized by others and even the challah was baked by a community member. Additionally, three Jewish communities we visited were led by women. The Cuban Jewish community reflects a refreshingly egalitarian orientation that is instructive to all of us.

Fearlessness about asking for help. Often, when we are struggling, we go to the same sources over and over again for assistance. But because resources of any kind are so limited in Cuba, the Cuban Jewish community has been unabashed and creative in looking outside itself for help. For years, the Canadian Jewish community has been sending Passover supplies. Adela Dworin, the president of the Patronato, Havana's main synagogue, had us laughing with her stand-up routine describing how she has asked visitors for resources over the years, from money to a van. The Kaplen van, Adela told us, is named for its donor – and they joke that Kaplen is Hebrew for Mitsubishi.

> **"The Cuban Jewish community is unfailingly open to any person who wants to reclaim their Jewish heritage."**

Resilience. In the face of true adversity, Cuban Jews have persevered. Their desire to preserve culture and tradition has triumphed over political persecution and economic hardship. Uncomplaining, Cuban Jewry simply does what needs to be done to recover Jewish heritage and culture, with an unflagging sense of purpose and humor.

We learn from our Cuban Jewish brethren to go forth with pride in our heritage, joy in observing our traditions, and hope for the future – no matter what political, economic or demographic curveballs come our way.

SARAH MACK rabbi of Temple Beth-El, Providence, is president of the Board of Rabbis of Greater Rhode Island.

FROM PAGE 1

AIPAC

nomination – Sens. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, and Marco Rubio, R-Fla., and Ohio Gov. John Kasich – are more firmly in the pro-Israel camp but are less likely to attend (although watch for video messages), because they are out on the trail, struggling to catch up with him.

AIPAC insiders are looking for two things from Trump: a repudiation once and for all of his pledge of neutrality when it comes to Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking, and a more substantive outline of his plans for the U.S.-Israel relationship. Boasts about his Jewish grandkids and his 2004 appearance as a grand marshal at a Salute to Israel Parade in New York City just ain't gonna cut it.

The Reform movement leadership has promised to "engage" with Trump over what it calls his "hate speech" targeting Mexicans and Muslims, among others. What does that mean? I asked Lauren Theodore, the Union for Reform Judaism's spokeswoman, and she basically told me to wait and see.

How will Hillary say it?

Hillary Clinton has plenty of goodwill shored up in the AIPAC precincts of the pro-Israel community stemming from her days as the senator from New York, when she routinely appeared at conferences on Tuesday morning firing up believers before they headed to Capitol Hill. She was the first of the candidates to confirm her appearance.

She's been running a presidential campaign, however, that casts her in every way as the second incarnation of Barack Obama – a way of distinguishing Clinton from her surprisingly resilient Democratic rival, Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., who has criticized Obama on domestic policies, particularly regarding the financial sector.

Obama II won't play well with this crowd. Prior to the launch of the actual primaries, Clinton was more willing to distance herself from Obama, in subtle ways, on pro-Israel issues. She thought it was a mistake to make settlements such a charged issue, for instance, in Obama's first term, when she was secretary of state. Clinton simultaneously takes credit for helping to shape the Iran nuclear deal, and also has suggested she would implement it with greater skepticism than the current administration.

Does she risk losing the Obama-loving primary voters who have kept her well ahead of Sanders in order to pivot back toward AIPAC?

Does Bernie Sanders say anything?

AIPAC has invited all contenders, but as noted above, Trump's three Republican rivals likely will not show because they will be working hard to catch up in Arizona, Utah and Idaho, which go to the polls on March 22.

Democrats in Arizona and Utah also vote next week, and it's not yet clear if Sanders would rather be working those states to the max or facing off against Hillary at AIPAC.

What kind of reception should Sanders expect? A polite one, according to folks I've spoken with. Enthusiastic? Well ...

Sanders hews closer to Trump than to Clinton or any of the other Republicans on Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking, telling Arab Americans recently that he would "level" the playing field among Arabs and Israelis when it comes to U.S. mediation, and counting J Street and the Arab American Institute among go-to outlets for Middle East policy advice. He also not only endorses the Iran deal, he wants to launch "normalization" with the country. There's a petition from AIPAC critics calling on him not to speak.

On the other hand, Sanders is also the first Jewish presidential candidate to win primary contests, and over the years he has routinely made the "roll call," the Monday night highlight when AIPAC lay and professional leaders list all the lawmakers showing up at the conference. AIPAC activists in Vermont say he gives them a fair hearing, and the video of Sanders shouting down pro-Palestinian activists at a 2014 town hall meeting in Cabot, Vermont, has become iconic in pro-Israel circles.

We love Democrats! Honestly, we do! But let's talk Iran.

AIPAC suffered a painful split with much of the Democratic caucus last year over the Iran nuclear deal. The day it was clear that Democrats in the Senate would block a vote on whether to scotch the deal, there were emotional scenes in congressional offices.

AIPAC insiders insist that's behind them. Democrats in Congress have been pushing hard on comity, particularly when it comes to bipartisan legislation targeting BDS and in increasing military assistance to Israel.

Except: Until late last week, the only Democrats in Congress who were slated to appear were from among the minority (28 in the House and four in the Senate) who opposed the Iran deal. On Thursday, a single Iran deal backer, Rep. Steny Hoyer, D-Md., the minority whip in the House, said he would appear, presumably to reprise his annual pro-Israel version of Punch and Judy in which he and a top Republican disagree on just about anything except the US.-Israel alliance.

That's one pro-deal lawmaker, two if you count Vice President Joe Biden, who casts tiebreakers in the Senate, and three if Bernie Sanders speaks. Missing from the roster – at least of this writing – are past regulars such as Reps. Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., the minority leader; Debbie Wasserman Schultz, D-Fla., the chairwoman of the Democratic National Committee; Jerry Nadler, D-N.Y., who claims to have the largest Jewish constituency in the county; and Elijah Cummings, D-Md., who established a program that sends a dozen leading African-American students in his Baltimore area district each year to bolster ties between African Americans and Israel.

No one is saying who was invited and declined and who simply was not invited. But the Iran tensions are not about to dissipate. The Obama administration has made it clear that the deal is done, and it will not look kindly on attempts to upend it – an outlook that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has respected, which accounts for some of the goodwill that has accrued between the two leaders since last year.

For AIPAC, it's not so clear. An official said the lobby would support the reauthorization of the Iran Sanctions Act and other sanctions bills, but had yet to settle on specific bills they would back. There are multiple bills under consideration. Some would leave wiggle room for the president to ignore provisions, others seek to force his hand and suspend the agreement. Which does AIPAC back? Even Democrats who last year opposed the deal now say it's time to move on and live with it, while placing the agreement under intense scrutiny.

Also on the agenda:

– Netanyahu will speak via live video link. He opted not to attend in person, not wanting to be caught up in a divisive election.

– AIPAC, an official told JTA, will back renewing the U.S.-Israel defense assistance memorandum of understanding, which must be done by 2018. Specifics, though, are sparse. The Obama administration reportedly wants to bring funding up from $3 billion to $4 billion annually, while Netanyahu is holding out for an amount closer to $5 billion, saying Israel needs a boost in the post-Iran deal environment.

– Also, the AIPAC official told me, expect backing for congressional action condemning any bid by the Palestinians to seek statehood recognition outside the framework of negotiations. That includes demands for a continued U.S. veto of any bids through the U.N. Security Council.

Candle Lighting Times

March 18	6:36
March 25	6:44
April 1	6:52
April	7:58



Keep calm and set an example



EDITOR

FRAN OSTENDORF

Doesn't it seem as if the race for president starts much earlier than it used to? There are certainly many more candidates vying for first place and a chance to represent their party this year. Debates seem to be a weekly event. But can you believe there were more head-to-head debates in the 2008 primary season, particularly in the Democratic Party? Maybe this year, they are just more memorable.

I'm a news junkie, so what some might consider an overload of information is usually a welcome addition to my day. We are lucky to live in an age when information is available 24/7 in a variety of ways. We can see replays of the debates, watch a variety of news reports and see analysis from every viewpoint. But when it's time to say enough is enough, I know I can shut it off. Close the computer; turn off the television; power off the radio; put down the newspaper.

That ability to step away and calm down is important. Everyone should give it a try.

We are a passionate country, built on freedom of opinion and the right to express that opinion. Civil discourse was a crucial part of the founding of our country. Religious freedom came along with that. It's what brought Roger Williams to Rhode Island.

But lately I wonder, what has happened to the "civil" part of civil discourse?

You don't have to agree or disagree with a public figure's viewpoints to be embarrassed by some of the not-so-civil behavior we've seen recently. Screaming and yelling has been going on since the beginning of time. But fistfights? Threats? Don't we all need to step away?

It's all being fed by a "my way or the highway" approach to politics, a dangerous polarization of views that hinders both the dialogue and the functionality of government in general. Politics used to involve compromises and finding common ground. Now it more often is about blocking the actions of the opposition.

Here at The Voice we hope we can continue provide a forum for a variety of different opinions.

No, we aren't going to tell you how you should vote or for whom. We are not trying to tell you how to think. But we are going to try to present as many different opinions as possible so that you can make an informed decision about a particular issue.

When some see a viewpoint they don't like in the media, they assume the reporter is biased or anti-something. Here at The Voice, just because we respect a variety of views doesn't mean we are taking a stand. And just because there is something you disagree with on our pages doesn't mean we're biased or pushing an agenda. Over time, our goal in The Voice is always to share a variety of views and foster the kind of civil discourse that we sometimes take for granted in the U.S.

We hope our community here in Rhode Island will continue its tradition of welcoming and respecting a wide range of views and opinions, setting an example for those around us about what civil discourse is all about.

ERRATA

IN "IMMIGRATION RALLIES AT THE R.I. STATEHOUSE" (MARCH 4), the pair of rallies should have been characterized as a news conference and a rally. Charles Jacobs of Americans for Peace and Tolerance called a news conference at the state house. The event that followed was a rally. We apologize for the error.

When dreams die



IT SEEMS TO ME

RABBI JIM ROSENBERG

"Hold fast to dreams/For if dreams die/Life is a broken-winged bird/That cannot fly." – Langston Hughes, 1902-1967.

Philip Roth's Pulitzer Prize winning 1997 novel "American Pastoral" chronicles the death of the American dream through the experience of a "perfect" American couple: Seymour "Swede" Levov and Dawn Dwyer. Born in 1927, Seymour grows up in the largely Jewish middle-class Weequahic section of Newark, N.J. A superstar in football, basketball and baseball, he is called "the Swede" because of his Nordic good looks – blond, blue-eyed, tall and well-muscled. His wife, an Irish-Catholic beauty from nearby Elizabeth, was crowned Miss New Jersey in May 1949.

Shortly after their marriage in 1950, Seymour and Dawn moved to a huge stone house that sits on a hundred acres off Arcady Hill Road in Old Rimrock, N.J., an ideal rustic paradise "in the middle of nowhere, eleven miles west of the nearest train stop, the Lackawana in Morristown." Because the Swede has agreed to work for his father, who runs a successful business manufacturing ladies' dress gloves, the young couple is able to afford such a home. It would seem that Seymour and Dawn are well on their way to living the American dream, which includes, according to Seymour, "to be where I want to be."

Their dream turns into nightmare on Feb. 9, 1968, when their only child, Merry, a 16-year-old blessed with a subtle mind but cursed with a stutter, protests the war in Vietnam by dynamiting the U.S. post office housed in the village's general store, killing a well-loved doctor who had the misfortune to pick up his mail at 5 a.m. The Swede's daughter "transports him out of the longed-for American pastoral and into everything that is its antithesis and its enemy, into the fury, the violence and the desperation of counter-pastoral – into the indigenous American berserk."

After going into hiding, Merry – how ironic her name – continues her protest against the war by blowing up three more innocents before abruptly changing direction. She proceeds to atone for her sins by adopting a radically self-destructive form of Jainism, a religion of extreme pacifism. In the process she reduces herself to an unwashed bag of skin and bones.

> **"Hold fast to dreams For when dreams go Life is a barren field Covered with snow."**

From that fateful day in the winter of 1968 until the day he dies 27 years later, the Swede tries but fails to come to terms with his daughter's deeds and his sense of guilt over her actions. As his younger brother Jerry puts it, "The struggle of his life was to bury this thing. But could he? How?...One day life started laughing at him and it never let up."

Looking back at the Swede's life, dead at the age of 68, the narrator Nathan Zuckerman, Roth's alter ego, muses: "He had learned the worst lesson that life can teach – that it makes no sense ... Stoically [Seymour] suppresses his horror. He learns to live behind a mask. A lifetime experience in endurance. A performance over a ruin. Swede Levov leads a double life."

We readers learn that the "perfect" American couple gets divorced, that the Swede remarries – though we never are told even the name of his second wife. We also learn that this second marriage produces three sons – Chris, Steve and Kent – though we find out next to nothing about them. It is as if the Swede is trying to put the pieces of his shattered dream back together again, son by son; but he is sentenced to live for 27 years with a dream that is dead.

What makes "American Pastoral" a masterpiece is Roth's ability to weave together a number of significant themes into a striking, if disturbing, tapestry. Perhaps the darkest theme of all is that bad things happen indiscriminately – that despite all the good things that Seymour and Dawn do for their daughter, despite all the skill and compassion that the speech therapist devotes to helping Merry with her stutter, Merry turns out bad. Good parenting does not always result in a good child. There is no cause, no explanation for Merry's deterioration into a sullen, angry teenager who kills four innocents with her bombs. The disintegration of the Swede's family is emblematic of an America that has lost its mind, an America where reason has lost its sway, where seemingly purposive actions turn out to be blind tosses of the dice.

Most of us would like to believe that as we sow, so shall we reap. Merry's parents sow the choicest seeds and nevertheless produce a child who refuted them at every turn. Roth portrays the Swede as a tragic figure, a decent man, an innocent who has no defense against the randomness of life – without "a drop of wit or irony to interfere with his golden gift for responsibility." In some ways, the Swede's unyielding goodness is the source of his undoing; for his trusting goodness is no match against the amoral indifference of chaotic circumstances. In addition, the Swede is undone by his failure of imagination; he cannot anticipate or prepare for the malignant situation in which his dreams are to be tested.

"Hold fast to dreams/For when dreams go/Life is a barren field/Covered with snow."

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

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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).

Pew findings not surprising, but also not irreversible

BY DANIEL SOKATCH

NEW YORK (JTA) – The Pew Research Center poll released last week, surveying attitudes among Israeli citizens confirms what many of us who work on Israeli issues already knew: Israel is a deeply divided society, first and foremost between its Jewish and Arab citizens, but also among its Jewish sectors.

Ethnicity, religiosity, family origin and political beliefs have created an Israel of "camps" that don't much like or have much to do with each other. The Pew research director described these divisions as "jaw-dropping."

As in-depth as the survey is, however, what it does not tell us is why Israel has become so fractured. Israel's Jewish and Arab citizens have been living together for generations, and its Jews belong to a people that survived millennia of persecution with cohesion and unity. Why, then, is it so difficult for Israelis to share their society and arrive at some concept of Israeli-ness that would downplay sectarian differences? And how can a nation so deeply divided offer a sense of community to all its citizens?

Some factors are familiar to Americans experienced with the red-blue state divide. Many Israelis of all three faiths are profoundly religious.

With religious practice frequently comes a more conservative and insular stance on social issues ranging from the rights of women to the role religion should play in the identity of the state. Most important, the Pew survey found that the four descriptions used for being Jewish in Israel – secular, traditional, religious Zionist and ultra-Orthodox – strongly correlate with views on social and political issues, on questions as basic as the prospects for peace or the importance of democratic values.

And then there is the attitude toward the "other." There is profound disagreement over the significance of Israel as a Jewish state. Nearly 80 percent of Jews believe that Jews deserve (some unspecified) preferential treatment in Israel. No wonder most Arab respondents do not think Israel can be a Jewish state and a democracy at the same time. The two groups can't come close to agreement on whether Israeli Arabs face discrimination or the prospects for peace.

The 48 percent of Jewish respondents who actually want to expel their Arab neighbors is a terrible headline, one that underlines the need to reinforce the value of minority rights within Israeli society. Commentators warn that this question cannot be taken in isolation, especially because it did not refer to a real policy proposal. But to those of us working against the growing wave of racism and incitement, this response is a red flag that reflects the reality of what we see on the ground.

It must also be said that these deep divisions serve the purposes of many Israeli leaders, who amplify the idea that Israeli society is a zero-sum game in which one sector can only advance at the expense of others. A prime minister who mustered his base on Election Day with the threat that "Arabs are being bused to the polls in droves" and who conditions Arab civil rights on his standard of good behavior is not, to put it mildly, unifying his country.

Ultra-Orthodox leaders who viciously attack not only non-Jews but their Reform and Conservative counterparts do their part in exacerbating intolerance. Separatist Arab leaders who publicly identify with Israel's enemies don't help matters, nor do settler politicians whose only public policy is demonizing anyone who opposes the occupation as an obstacle to peace and dangerous to Israeli democracy.

There are no easy remedies for these deep divides. We must also keep in mind, after a day where more Israelis fell victim to terrorists in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, that the Jewish-Arab divide, and for that matter some divisions among Jewish sectors, cannot be separated from the pain and trauma of all sides in Israel's existential conflicts. But we also must understand that the Pew poll represents a snapshot in time and is not an irreversible prediction of Israel's future.

From President Reuven Rivlin on down, there are strong voices speaking out against racism and division in Israel. There is a coalition of more than 50 organizations that speaks out at public events against extremist Jewish violence against non-Jews, and it is led by religious Zionists. There is a Coalition Against Racism with an array of participants from Reform Jews to Palestinian grassroots activists, and local Jewish-Arab coalitions dedicated to building shared spaces in which ordinary people interact in their daily lives.

There are waiting lists for leadership training for shared-society activists and new resources for teachers seeking to educate children to think civically and communally about being an Israeli. Even in Jerusalem, the epicenter of conflict, there are efforts to break down the walls between the ultra-Orthodox, secular Jewish and Palestinian populations.

These efforts are not about some kumbaya veneer of superficial goodwill. What Israel needs is the toughest thing of all to build – a truly shared society, with each sector feeling it is a valued and irreplaceable part of the whole. "Tolerance" of minorities or other kinds of Jews is not enough. Israel needs an ethos of sharing its small space among its many different kinds of people because they are all entitled to be there.

From the Tel Aviv entrepreneur drinking coffee on the beach to the student arguing Talmud in Bnei Brak, from the Russian artist to the Ethiopian activist to every Palestinian-Israeli whose family is deeply rooted in the land, there is no other place for them to go.

The Pew study validates, once again, those of us who warn of dangerous fissures in a nation that cannot afford the continued breakdown of cohesion and amity. But we who warn, we who are dedicated to repairing those fissures and building some solid foundations above them, we also know that Israelis are miraculously good at inventing new realities.

Now they need to reinvent their own society – for their own sake, and for all of us who love and support their efforts.

DANIEL SOKATCH is CEO of the New Israel Fund.

LETTERS

Re: A cartoon that isn't funny (March 4)

Political cartoons have been used for years to provoke thought, provide open dialogue, increase awareness, and add humor to political hot button issues. Rabbi Rosenberg's opinion titled "A cartoon that isn't funny" tells us that one evening a cartoon sent by StopIranNow-RI appeared in his inbox titled, "Multiculturalism – The Real Suicide Bomber." Angered by the cartoon, instead of doing what we all do when we receive an email we disagree with (i.e., click "trash"), he decided to use the cartoon to personally attack Howard Brown and StopIranNow-RI as a means to get his inspirational message of multiculturalism to the Jewish community.

The cartoon represents multiculturalism's darker side that can get us killed if we tolerate a culture or religion that actively tries to undermine or destroy ours. This cartoon was first published in 2005 and has been seen and talked about by millions of people. The cartoon doesn't single out Syrian refugees nor does it make any reference to any refugee group.

StopIranNow-RI, coordinated by Howard Brown, is a pro-Israel grassroots organization. Last year the members of StopIranNow-RI spent countless hours emailing and making phone calls to the RI community to contact their congressmen and senators to reject the nuclear deal with Iran and the release of billions of dollars to Iran.

We believed the experts who told us Iran would use the money to continue developing nuclear weapons and arm Hamas and Hezbollah, and we were right.

StopIranNow-RI speaks up on behalf of Israel, against anti-Semitic attacks on college campuses, and to have its views included by our Jewish leadership when they make public statements about matters affecting Israel. We will not be silenced when it comes to defending Israel.

Esta Barcohana
Pawtucket, R.I.

Re: A cartoon that isn't funny (March 4)

I recently read Rabbi Rosenberg's opinion piece in the March 4 edition of the Voice. The more I read, the more concerned I became. In this day and age, was he really trying to disparage a fellow Jew who has only the safety and security of Israel and the Jewish people in mind? Perhaps Rabbi Rosenberg's approach might have worked in the 20th century, when the penumbra of the Holocaust suppressed overt Jew-hatred, and Jews could naively believe that by being open and tolerant, their views would be reciprocated by an adoring world. It is a beautiful, utopian view. But the world has changed. The polite, above-the-fray approach has been (or, at least should have been) discredited in view of the constant hate-filled, eliminationist rhetoric targeting Israel and the Jewish people spouted by the Iranian leadership, Arab countries and the Palestinians; by the BDS movement which intimidates Jews on campus; and by the world's indifference to the launching of thousands of rockets at unarmed and defenseless civilians during the Gaza war. A person who stands up for the Jewish people and their safety should be applauded, not vilified.

Our leaders should consider the damage that has been done by the author's benign approach. It is a philosophy many of us have been taught, and, in a different environment it has much to commend it. But as Winston Churchill said, "However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results." I would encourage all of our leaders to consider the results that have been achieved by passivity in the face of danger, and to join with Mr. Brown in raising the alarm about real, imminent threats to the Jewish community, both in this country and abroad.

Russell D. Raskin, Esq.
Rhode Island Judges and
Lawyers for Israel

Re: Political stories (March 4)

The March 4 Voice had four disturbing political stories: the shouting down and suppression of Charles Jacobs and the State House rally calling for caution on Syrian refugees; Jim Rosenberg's column which in a softer way discouraged dialog on Syrian refugees by expressing anger at a specific Jewish individual and group and calling them out for "fear, cynicism, hatred and despair;" the cursing and assault of women praying at the Western Wall by haredi zealots; and the threat of violence by anti-Israel protesters that ended a talk by a pro-peace Palestinian at the University of Chicago.

What they all have in common is an undermining of tolerance, civil discussion and exchange of ideas, a trend we see playing out in national politics, too. In the case of Syrian refugees both sides have a point – distressed people should be welcomed, especially by Jews, but as Europe shows, caution is called for in accepting large numbers of refugees from a region whose culture is hostile to Jews.

Rabbi Rosenberg and Howard Brown have a right to express their opinions. But in the interests of promoting amity in our community, I suggest that perhaps they meet over coffee and try to understand each other's viewpoints.

Barry Schiller
North Providence, R.I.

LETTERS

We look forward to hearing from you and publishing your letters. Letters to the editor should be 300 words, maximum Send them to: Email editor@jewishallianceri.org. If a computer doesn't suit you, send your letter to Editor, The Jewish Voice, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence, R.I. 02906.

‘Captured in Memory’ photo exhibit opens at Emanu-El on April 3

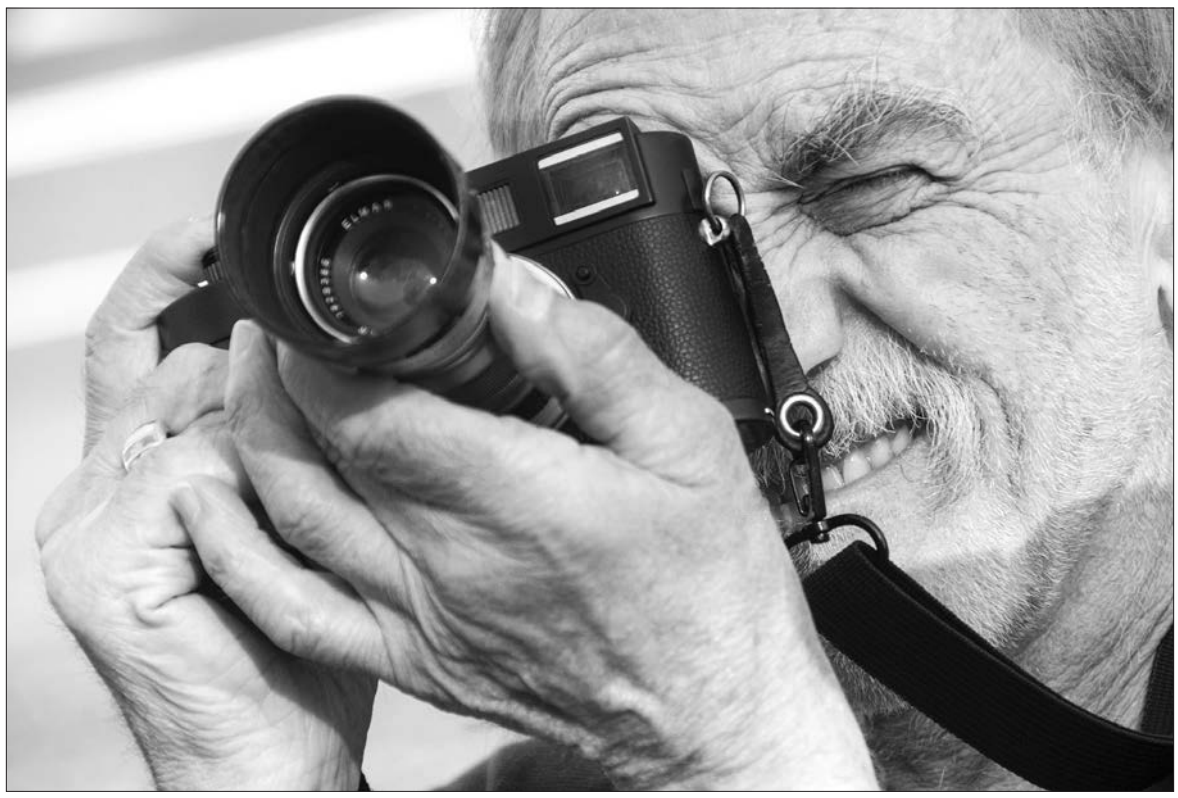
BY LINDA SHAMOON

Captured in Memory: An Exhibition, will open at Temple Emanu-El, in Providence, on April 3. “Captured in Memory,” a book of photographs and commentary by artist and photographer Alan Metnick, will also have its U.S. debut at the temple on April 3.

Both the exhibition and the book use black-and-white photography to tackle big themes that are important to Jews: history, identity, the Shoah and the possibility of transformation. On April 3, the community is invited to Emanu-El to experience both the exhibition and the book.

The powerful, sharply rendered photographs that will fill the walls of the temple’s Bohnen Vestry were shot during Metnick’s many trips to Poland between 2004 and 2016, trips that focused especially on Slawatycze, the village of his grandparents. During each of these trips, Metnick explored his family’s history, as well as the Jewish experience in Poland and beyond in light of the Holocaust and anti-Semitism. The powerful photos selected for “Captured in Memory” tell the story of Metnick’s initially negative attitude toward Poland and its transformation into a more balanced and nuanced view.

“With each visit to Poland, I experience more and more pushback against stereotyping, anti-Semitism and xenophobia. Do I encounter anti-Semitism on these visits? Yes, occasionally. But among the 20-, 30- and 40-year-olds that I am involved with, there are individuals who, on their own, are working to right these wrongs of the past,” Metnick said in an interview.



Alan Metnick

“All by themselves, they are doing things like restoring and maintaining Jewish cemeteries. They have the same spirit of mission and action that I felt among those who went to Selma, Alabama, in the ’60s.”

In the 180-page “Captured in Memory,” Metnick has 61 photographs from his Polish travels that tell the story of little-known villages as well as frightfully familiar sites like Auschwitz; ordinary buildings; desolate fields; the remnants of abandoned cemeteries; and ordinary Poles standing together, as if to face a different future.

Captured in Memory: The Exhibition includes photos from the book, plus photos from Metnick’s most recent trip to Poland, including many not seen in prior Providence exhibitions of his work. In addition, Metnick will give a talk about his experiences in Poland, and he will sign copies of “Captured in Memory.”

The exhibition goes beyond the book to include Metnick’s interest in important moments in our own Jewish community and during his years in Israel. In fact, one print featured in the exhibit is loaded with memory and meaning for many East Siders: A serigraph of Metnick’s 1978 drawing of the first meeting to organize the Solomon Schechter Day School of Rhode Island, a Conservative school on Morris Avenue in Providence that eventually became the Jewish Community Day School of Rhode Island. Also featured in the exhibit are Metnick’s unique prints from a Haggadah, which are paired with quotes from writings by Elie Wiesel, and several prints illustrating events in the Bible.

“There will be selections from three different bodies of my work,” Metnick explained.

The exhibition opens at 4 p.m. in the Bohnen Vestry with a gallery talk by Metnick, a question-and-answer session, a book signing and light refreshments. All are invited.

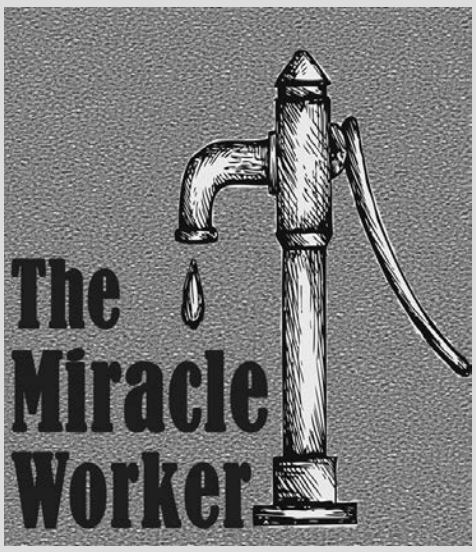
Captured in Memory: An Exhibition is the second of three events offered this spring by Arts Emanu-El at Temple Emanu-El. On May 4, Arts Emanu-El will join with the Yom HaShoah Committee of Temple Emanu-El to present a performance of “Phoenix from the Ashes: Terezin in Words and Music,” by Judith Lynn Stillman. Reservations can be made starting three weeks prior to the event.

FOR MORE INFORMATION about Captured in Memory: An Exhibition, go to teprov.org or call Temple Emanu-El at 401-331-1616. Tickets are not required for the exhibit but a donation of $5 is suggested and would be greatly appreciated.

LINDA SHAMOON is co-chair of Arts Emanu-El at Temple Emanu-El.

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PHOTO | ELIANNA BRESLER

New England Rabbinical College celebration

The New England Rabbinical College held its 31st Anniversary Dinner on Feb. 28: front, left to right: Rabbi Shmuel Alter Twersky, R”M; Rabbi Eliezer Gibber, Rosh HaYeshiva; Rabbi Yosef Lipson, Mashgiach. Rear: Baruch Levine, Parents of the Year Award; Rabbi Menachem Weissmann, Rabbi Yehuda Menchel and Rabbi Zev Bhatia – joint Pillars of Torah Honorees; Rabbi Yitzchok Sanders, Alumni Achievement Award.

Ongoing

Alliance Kosher Senior Café. Kosher lunch and program every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Temple Emanu-El, 99 Taft Ave., Providence. Noon lunch; 1 p.m. program. $3 lunch donation from individuals 60+ or under 60 with disabilities. Neal or Elaine, 401-338-3189. THIS IS A NEW VENUE AND PHONE NUMBER.

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 April 3

Spring Mixed Show. Gallery at Temple Habonim. Encaustics and oils by Nancy Whitcomb; underwater photography by Neil Greenspan; and a mural by Religious School students. 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 | March 18

PJ Library Story and Play Time with "Bubbie Sara." 10-11 a.m. Dwares JCC. Spend some time 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.

Reform Congregations of R.I. Joint Service. 7:30 p.m. Temple Habonim. Yearly Shabbat celebration of Temple Beth-El, Temple Habonim, Temple Sinai and the Newport Havurah. 165 New Meadow Road, Barrington.

Saturday | March 19

Kids' Night Out: High Flying Fun. 5-10 p.m. Dwares JCC. Kids come spend the evening with friends in a fun and safe environment. Parents, take this opportunity to have a night out "kid free!" Kids' Night Out runs once a month on Saturday evenings. Each month children will be 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, or skochanek@jewishallianceri.org.

Sunday | March 20

Hidden Jews of Portugal. 11 a.m. Brown RISD Hillel. 80 Brown Street, Providence. Almost exactly a century ago, the Polish Jewish mining engineer Samuel Schwartz was working in Belmonte, Portugal, and came across a member of its hidden Jewish community. The rest, as they say, is history: he wrote a book about them, "the apostle of the Marranos", Captain Artur de Barros Basto began to visit them in both Belmonte and more remote villages, and today they are living openly and many have moved to Israel. Since the mid-1990s, Dr. Judith Cohen (York University) has been conducting ethnomusicological fieldwork in Belmonte itself, as well as villages in the northeast of Portugal, Tras-os-Montes, exploring the use of music in their lives, as they have moved from the end of a traditional, semi-secret society to a vibrant and open one but , ironically, now living what seem to be its last years as the younger people look for more integrated, "ordinary" Jewish lives elsewhere. Cohen will talk about her work with them, how they use local songs in coded ways, and how the internet has changed their musical lives, and will also sing extracts of songs from the regions they live in, with the traditional square frame drum, the "adufe", used in women's songs in the area. Sponsored by the Program in Medieval Studies, the Program in Judaic Studies, the Program in Religious Studies, Department of History of Art and Architecture, Brown RISD Hillel, the Program in Portuguese and Brazilian Studies and Dean of the Faculty Office.

"Jubanos: The Jews of Cuba." Joanne Forman Film Festival. Temple Beth-El. 2 p.m. Film highlights efforts of remaining Cuban Jews to sustain and revive Jewish life under Communist regime. Discussion with Rabbi Sarah Mack follows. Refreshments. 70 Orchard Ave. No charge.

West Bay Havurah Book Discussion. 2-3:30 p.m. Tamarisk Assisted Living Community Room, 3 Shalom Drive, Warwick. "The Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics," by Daniel James Brown, is a wonderful 2013 non-fiction best seller, which follows an unlikely band of athletes as they strive to compete in the contested games amid the turmoil of the times. Alice Goldstein will lead the discussion. Contact her at 401-463-9233 to register for this discussion group, and for more information. Copies of the book are available at public libraries, as well as at local bookstores and amazon.com.

Friday | March 25

Friday night services. 7;30 p.m. Temple Sinai. Shireinu, the community chorus at Temple Sinai, will participate. The community is welcome to attend. 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston.

Saturday | March 26

(401)j Night Out: Laser Tag. 8:15 p.m. Mission Combat, 3 Bridal Ave., West Warwick. Saturday nights just got better! Grab your friends and take aim for a night of unlimited laser tag at Mission Combat. Join (401)j for laser tag in a private arena. Reserve your spot in advance. Price: $15 per person in advance |$20 at the door. Includes 2 hours unlimited play and pizza. For more information or to RSVP, contact Erin Moseley at 401-421-4111, ext. 108, or emoseley@jewishallianceri.org.

"The Frisco Kid." Congregation Agudas Achim 7 p.m. Meet Rabbi Avram Belinsky (Gene Wilder). He lands in Philadelphia from his native Poland, headed to San Francisco to start a synagogue. Quickly relieved of his belongings by con artists, Avram optimistically sets out alone – on foot – toward the Wild West. He doesn't know what he's getting into in this sidesplitting story of immigration and culture clash. Admission and Snacks: Adults $5, Teens $2, Family Max. $10. 901 North Main St., Attleboro Mass. For more information contact Sharon at 774-210-2019 or Brien at 774-210-2017.

Sunday | March 27

Jewish Unity Live. 7 p.m. Kollel's annual celebration of Jewish learning. Special guest speaker is Judge Dan Butler. Naomi and Steve Schechter are Am Echad Awardees. Dessert reception. Admission $50; $80 for two people. Providence Renaissance Hotel. 5 Avenue of the Arts, Providence. For more information, contact providencekollel@gmail.com or call 401-383-2796.

Tuesday | March 29

PJ Library Story and Play Time with "Bubbie Sara." 3-4 p.m. Dwares JCC. Spend some time 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.

Stargazing at Ladd Observatory. 8-10 p.m. West Bay Havurah. Great for families and children of all ages. Cloudy conditions cancels. 210 Doyle Ave., Providence. Register with Mark at 401-248-5010.

Wednesday | March 30

"What the news does not report about Israel." Presentation by Gary Kenzer. 7 p.m. Sponsored by StandWithUs and Temple Emanu-El at Temple Emanu-El, 99 Taft Ave., Providence. Kenzer, executive director of Honest Reporting, is a media expert dedicated to monitoring media bias concerning Israel. He speaks nationally and has appeared on television.

Thursday | March 31

Women's Alliance of the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island Rosh Hodesh Celebration. Noon-1:15 p.m. "Miriam: Big sister, prophetess, and more! An examination of this multifaceted biblical figure through Torah texts, midrashim, and art." Features Marcia Kaunfer, educator, Jewish Community Day School of Rhode Island. Temple Emanu-El Vestry, 99 Taft Ave., Providence. Cost: $10 (includes lunch). For more information or to RSVP, contact Danielle Germanowski at 401-421-4111 ext. 109 or dgermanowski@jewishallianceri.org or visit jewishallianceri.org/rosh-hodesh. RSVP by March 23.

Assi Azar. 7 p.m. Gender and Sexuality Center URI. Co-sponsored by URI Hillel, the Gender and Sexuality Center and Harrington School of Communication and Media. No cost. For information, contact Amy Olson at amyolson@uri.edu or 401-874-2740.

Sunday | April 3

"The Return." Joanne Forman Film Festival. Temple Beth-El. 2 p.m. Four young Polish women discover their Jewish roots and embark on a quest to understand their identities. Discussion with filmmaker Adam Zucker follows. Refreshments. 70 Orchard Ave. No charge.

"Paper Clips." West Bay Havurah. 2-3:30 p.m. Tamarisk Assisted Living. Special screening of award-winning 2004 documentary about students of Tennessee's Whitwell Middle School's paper clip project. 3 Shalom Drive, Warwick. Call Mark Sweberg for more information, 401-243-5010.

Wednesday | April 4

DEPOSIT DUE. Bus trip to Lower East Side of NYC. June 5. 7 a.m.-11 p.m. West Bay Havurah. Private three-hour tour and Kosher Greek lunch at Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue, unchanged since being built in 1927 Romaniote Jews from Janina, Greece. Bus departs from Tamarisk, 3 Shalom Drive, Warwick. Total cost is $93. Depost due is $50 with balance due May 2. Call Mark Sweberg for information, 401-248-5010.

Thursday | April 7

Double Chai Society Lox & Learning. 8:15-9:30 a.m. Providence Marriott Hotel, One Orms St. Dr. Jeremy Goodman, executive director, the Roger Williams Park Zoo, will speak at this Double Chai Society event designed to give the next generation of Jewish leaders up-close and personal exposure to decision-makers and trailblazers. Breakfast will be served. Free and open to all community members from 30s to 50s who give a gift of any amount to the Jewish Alliance Annual Campaign. (Members of the Double Chai Society are between 30-50 years old and give a minimum of $360 to the Alliance Annual Campaign.) For more information or to RSVP, contact Hillary Schulman at 401-421-4111, ext. 127, or hschulman@jewishallianceri.org.

Israel Settler and Palestinian Peace Activist speak. 7:30 p.m. Brown University, Macmillan 117. Rabbi Hanan Schlesinger and Ali Abu Awwad will tell their personal stories and talk about how they helped create Roots/Judur/Shorashim, the Palestinian Israeli Grassroots Initiative for Understanding Nonviolence and Transformation. 167 Thayer St. Free. Co-sponsors include J Street Rhode Island and the Community Relations Council of The Jewish Alliance.

Friday | April 8

Israel Settler and Palestinian Peace Activist speak. 7 p.m. Temple Beth-El, Rabbi Hanan Schlesinger and Ali Abu Awwad will tell their personal stories. See April 7. 70 Orchard Ave. Free. Co-sponsors include J Street Rhode Island and the Community Relations Council of The Jewish Alliance.

Saturday | April 9

Israel Settler and Palestinian Peace Activist speak. 11 a.m. Temple Beth Sholom, Rabbi Hanan Schlesinger and Ali Abu Awwad will tell their personal storie. See April 7. 275 Camp St. Lunch panel follows. Free. Co-sponsors include J Street Rhode Island and the Community Relations Council of The Jewish Alliance.

Murder Mystery dinner. 5:30-10 p.m. Temple Sinai. Jewish teenagers in grades 8-12 from local congregations, and from Massachusetts and Connecticut are invited. The cost for dinner and theater is $22 per person. 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. For more information please contact Adam at craftyrhodeisland@gmail.com

Sunday | April 10

"Next Year Jerusalem." Joanne Forman Film Festival. Temple Beth-El. 2 p.m. Eight residents and staff of an American senior living community undertake a transformational trip to Israel. Discussion with Mike Fink, RISD professor, follows. Refreshments. 70 Orchard Ave. No charge.

Tuesday | April 12

Women's Community Seder. Temple Beth-El. 6 p.m. Kosher-style Seder dinner for women of all faiths and girls 8 years and older. Portion of the registration fee is donated to HIAS, a global Jewish nonprofit, for its work to help protect Syrian refugees. Cost is $36. RSVP by March 28 to Sisterhood, Temple Beth-El, 70 Orchard Ave., Providence, or call 401-331-6070. Contact liz.sinel@gmail.com with questions.

Friday | April 15

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.

Saturday | April 16

Kids' Night Out: Flat Fun. 5-10 p.m. Dwares JCC. 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!" Once a month on Saturday evening, children are entertained with a variety of themed activities including sports, crafts, swimming and more. A pizza dinner and snacks will be served, and the evening end swith 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, or skochanek@jewishallianceri.org.

Sunday | April 17

Jewish Culture through Film: "The Age of Love." 2 p.m. Location To Be Determined. "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. As they head out on the resulting dates, 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, follows. Admission: $5 | Members $3. For more information, contact Erin Moseley, Director of Arts & Culture, at emoseley@jewishallianceri.org, or 401-421-4111, ext. 108.

New cookbook celebrates food, family, Shabbat

BY CYNTHIA BENJAMIN

Kosher cooking maven Elizabeth Kurtz brought her delicious new cookbook to Providence on March 6 – and even offered up a taste to the community.

Kurtz, with able assistance from her teenage daughter Sarah, did a cooking demo of recipes from "CELEBRATE: Food, Family, Shabbos" at the Cooking for a Cause fundraiser for the Providence Hebrew Day School, held at the Providence Marriott Downtown. Kurtz whipped up Sesame Chicken Hand Rolls, Tortilla Soup and an Asian slaw as she explained her philosophy about food.

"I'm really all about teaching your taste buds" to savor all flavors, not just the overly sweet or overly salty flavors of many foods that Americans are raised eating, she said. And Kurtz believes meals should truly be a celebration – of "Food, Family and Shabbos," as the title of the cookbook says.

"My entire relationship with food, reading and writing recipes, cooking and eating, is all about love," she says.

No one wants to sit down to the same old boiled or baked chicken every Shabbat, Kurtz said. Preparing a mouth-watering Shabbat meal that is sure to delight, she says, should be as joyful as savoring the meal with family and friends. With that in mind, "CELEBRATE" offers 200 recipes that are "easy enough for everyday but special enough for Shabbat."

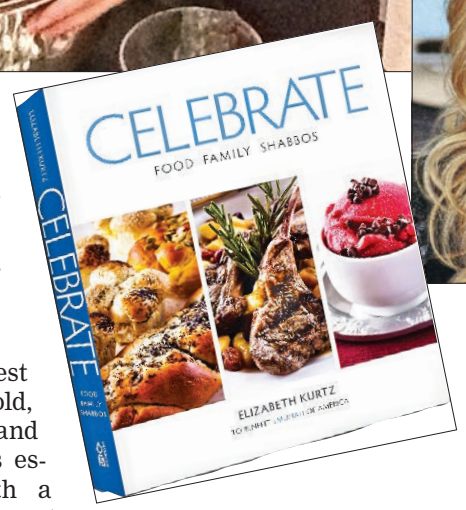
On the cookbook's glossy, richly illustrated pages, there are nearly a dozen recipes for challah alone, including pumpkin, spelt and gluten-free versions, as well as innovative recipes for everything from soups and first courses to meats, dressings and desserts. Fresh, flavorful ingredients are part of every dish and many of the recipes are influenced by Asian, Indian, French and other cuisines.

The cookbook also includes Passover conversions for more than 120 of the recipes, special sections on Kiddish, Shalosh Seudos and the pantry, and make-ahead tips, prep-ahead instructions and freezing options. And, perhaps sweetest of all, "CELEBRATE" is a fundraiser for EMUNAH of America. EMUNAH is Israel's largest women's religious Zionist organization, sponsoring a vast network of children's homes, social services and education programs throughout the country.

Kurtz, of Lawrence, New York, who runs the website Gourmet Kosher Cooking (www.gourmetkoshercooking.com), says some of the recipes in "CELEBRATE" have already become culinary stars, including Everything Bagel Chicken and the sweet and salty Ballpark Cookies. Here are a few of Kurtz' personal favorites from the cookbook:



Sarah Kurtz helps her mother at a cooking demonstration during the PHDS Cooking for A Cause fundraiser.





Elizabeth Kurtz



Sesame Chicken Hand Rolls

The chicken is best served warm in cold, crisp lettuce cups and eaten by hand. It's especially good with a dipping sauce like sweet chili sauce, hot and spicy duck sauce, Spicy Peanut Sauce or Peanut Dipping Sauce. Makes 8 servings.

Ingredients

1 1/2 pounds ground chicken
3 scallions, minced
4 tablespoons soy sauce, divided
1 teaspoon cornstarch
3 tablespoons sesame oil
1/4 pound shiitake mushrooms, stemmed and chopped
3 teaspoons minced fresh ginger
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 1/2 tablespoons packed light brown sugar
2 tablespoons water
20 large butter lettuce leaves
1/2 cup chopped roasted peanuts

Instructions

Combine chicken, scallions, 3 tablespoons soy sauce and cornstarch in a medium bowl. Marinate 10 minutes at room temperature.

Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms and cook 1 minute, stirring occasionally. Add ginger and garlic; cook 30 seconds, stirring frequently. Add brown sugar, water, remaining tablespoon soy sauce, and reserved chicken mixture. Cook, stirring often, until golden brown and cooked through, 5 to 10 minutes.

Arrange lettuce on a large platter. Spoon chicken mixture evenly among lettuce leaves. Garnish with peanuts. Serve immediately. To eat, roll leaves around filling and dip into sauce.

Spicy Peanut Sauce

Makes 1 cup.

1/2 cup creamy peanut butter
1/2 cup coconut water
1 tablespoon Sriracha sauce
1 tablespoon soy sauce
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
1 teaspoon finely grated peeled fresh ginger
1 clove garlic

In a food processor or blender, combine all of the ingredients and puree until smooth.

S'mores Pie

Crust:

1 1/2 cups graham cracker crumbs (from about 10 to 12 graham crackers ground in a food processor)
1/3 cup unsalted margarine, melted
4 tablespoons sugar
1/8 teaspoon salt

Chocolate Filling:

1 cup pareve whipping cream
7 ounces good quality bittersweet chocolate (not more than 70% cacao), finely chopped
1 large egg
Pinch of salt

Topping:

1 (16-ounce) container of marshmallow fluff (or less, as desired)

Put oven rack in middle position and preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Crust: Lightly grease a 9- to 9 1/2-inch pie pan or a 9-inch tart pan with removable bottom. Stir together graham cracker crumbs, margarine, sugar, and salt in a medium bowl; press evenly on bottom and up the sides of the pie plate. Bake until crisp, 10 to 12 minutes; cool on a rack to room temperature. Leave the oven on.

Filling: Place whipping cream in a small saucepan and bring just to a boil over medium-high heat. Add chocolate and remove from heat. Let stand 1 minute, and then gently whisk until chocolate is melted and mixture is smooth. Gently whisk in egg and salt until combined. Pour into graham cracker crumb crust (crust will be about half-way full). Bake until filling is softly set and jiggles slightly in center when gently shaken, about 22 to 25 minutes. Cool to room temperature on a wire rack (filling will firm as it cools), about 1 hour.

Topping: Melt marshmallow fluff in a small saucepan over medium-low heat until soft and spreadable, about 4 minutes. Pour over cooled chocolate filling. Use as much fluff as desired, but cover chocolate layer completely.

Preheat broiler and place oven rack a few inches under the broiler. Broil assembled pie about 30 seconds, watching closely, or until the topping is slightly browned and look like toasted marshmallows. Store at room temperature until ready to serve.

COPIES OF "CELEBRATE: Food, Family, Shabbos" can be purchased at local stores, Emunah.org and Amazon.com.

CYNTHIA BENJAMIN is a chef, writer and editor, and a member of Congregation B'nai Israel, in Woonsocket.

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‘To Kill a Mockingbird’ and other hateful crimes

BY KARA MARZIALI

One of the most enduring stories of all times is “To Kill a Mockingbird.” The novel (published in 1960) which was subsequently made into a movie two years later, is a loose autobiography of Harper Lee’s interpretations, observations and impressions of growing up in the racially-divided south. The story is told by Scout, a young white girl, in Maycomb County, Alabama, during the Depression. When her father, Atticus Finch, is appointed to defend a black man falsely accused of raping a white woman, Scout’s passage from “innocence to experience” begins.

“To Kill a Mockingbird” addresses some of the same issues our society grapples with today – injustice, hate, regionalism, social standing, gender roles, equality, race, cultural differences, legal issues and loss of innocence. The current production at Trinity Repertory Theater, running through April 3, seeks to explore both Scout’s journey and our own personal stories surrounding these themes.

“On the first day of rehearsal for ‘To Kill a Mockingbird,’ I asked each actor to recount a moment in their lives when they moved from innocence to experience,” said director Brian McEleney.

This poignant and emotional stage production of “Mockingbird” is made even more compelling because the actors interchangingly share their personal stories of intolerance, violence, misunderstanding and naïveté. Throughout the performance, each player breaks character to intimately explain how his/her story has intersected with his/her understanding of the play.



Angela Brazil as Scout, Jude Sandy as Jem and Mia Ellis as Calpurnia (background)

The exceptionally talented cast is distinctive and diverse. The choice to cast an actor of color as Scout’s older brother, Jem, challenges the sensibilities of even a modern audience.

“Our acting company is functioning as storytellers,” said McEleney. “We are asking the audience to look past the usual limits of age and race in the presentation of character, and to join us in a collective ownership of this well-known and much-loved American story.”

This also seems to be the director’s method of reminding the audience that regardless of our civil rights advancements, we may still be affected by our narrow worldview and beliefs. In the end, the audience is keenly aware of his/her own bias, insecurity, experiences and narrative. Who among us has not metaphorically “killed a mockingbird?” Dare I ask the readers to recall a time when they have perpetrated racial or ethnic slurs, practiced ethnocentrism or homophobia, entertained misguided notions about anyone who is different or hurt someone who has done no wrong?

Trinity’s production of “To Kill a Mockingbird” will make you squirm in your seat, get angry and feel pity. It will also beckon you to tell your story. Do not miss this historical, educational, thought-provoking production of an American classic.

KARA MARZIALI is the director of communications for the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island.

To Kill a Mockingbird
Running through: April 3
Trinity Repertory,
The Chace Theater
201 Washington Street
Providence
401-351-4242
trinityrep.com



PHOTOS | MARK TUREK

Stephen Thorne as Atticus Finch and Angela Brazil as Scout.

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SUNDAY, MARCH 20
“Jubanos: The Jews of Cuba”
1500 Jews remained in post-revolutionary Cuba. This film highlights their heroic efforts to sustain and revive Jewish life under the Communist regime.

Discussion and slide show with Rabbi Sarah Mack, Temple Beth-El, and participants of the recent temple–sponsored trip to Cuba

SUNDAY, April 3
“The Return”
Four young Polish women discover their Jewish roots and embark upon a quest to understand their identities in the context of Poland’s past, present and future.

Discussion with Filmmaker, Adam Zucker

SUNDAY, April 10
“Next Year Jerusalem”
Eight residents and the staff of an American senior living community overcome obstacles to undertake a transformational trip to Israel.

Discussion with Professor Mike Fink, Rhode Island School of Design



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Hadassah Rhode Island installs 2016 officers

On March 1, officers of Hadassah Rhode Island for 2016 were installed by Karen Dannin, a member of the National Hadassah Honorary Council.

Dannin thanked outgoing officers for their service, and spoke about the newly constructed Sarah Wetsman Davidson Tower Hospital in Jerusalem, which was Hadassah's gift in 2012 to Israel on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the organization's founding. Dannin spoke about the 19-story center for healing, and the importance of "completing the task of equipping and furnishing this sacred structure, which will take persistence, planning and the continued leadership of the women of Hadassah." The five underground levels of surgical suites of the tower were recently opened to their first patients.

Chapter President Sue Mayes addressed the members of the chapter to explain some of the breakthroughs in research that are being accomplished at Hadassah Medical Organization today, especially in stem cell research, which is being used for treatments for various diseases.

"Today, Massachusetts General Hospital and the UMASS Medical Center in Worcester, as well as the Mayo Clinic are also doing expanded trials, working with our Hadassah researchers, for the treatment of ALS." Research at Hadassah is also being done in the fields of age-related macular degeneration, multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's disease and diabetes.



At the recent Hadassah Rhode Island officer installation, left to right, are Betty Ann Israelit, Karen Dannin, Sue Mayes, Judy Silverman and Leah Ross-Coke.

Future events for Hadassah Rhode Island include "A Cause for Applause," on May 15, in memory of the late Dr. Meredith Drench. The Play "Anything Goes" at the Ocean State Theater (at 2 p.m.) will raise funds for the Merry Drench Scholarship at Hadassah Academic College in Jerusalem. On Aug. 9 the chapter's sixth annual Books on the Beach event is scheduled.

The following women were installed as officers for the 2016 year: Corresponding Secretary and Card Chairman: Beth Bark; Treasurer: Judy Schoenfeld; Vice President (Fund Raising): Judy Silverman; Vice President: (Membership): Betty Ann Israelit; Vice President (Program): Leah Ross-Coke; Vice President (Organization); Maxine Wolfson; President: Sue Mayes.

More information about Hadassah and about either of these upcoming events is available by calling 401-463-3636 or at Hadassah.org. The email is rhodeislandchapter@hadassah.org

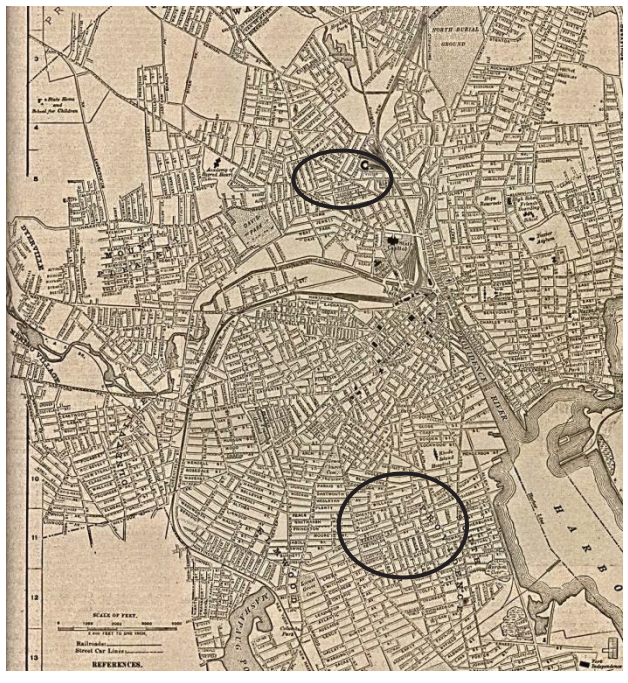
FUN AND FACTS FOR KIDS

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

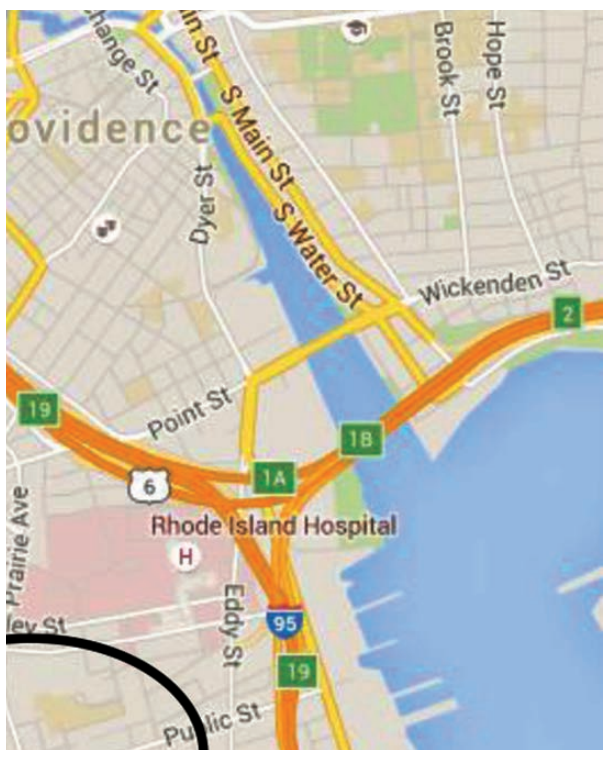
Did you know: The South Side and North End of Providence were Jewish neighborhoods?

Beginning about 1875, there was a large immigration of Jews from Eastern Europe (Russia, Poland, Austria, Romania, Hungary and Czechoslovakia), fleeing persecution. They usually did not have much money. When they arrived in Providence, they moved into neighborhoods where housing was fairly cheap. These areas recently had been built up with single and two or three family houses. Those immigrants who had done well would buy houses and rent them to newcomers. These two neighborhoods were quite far from each other, and there was not a great deal of movement between the two. Jews from various countries in Europe tended to settle together, so the Jews in the North End were from Russia, Austria and Poland; in the South Side, the families were mostly Russian. Even though Russia seems to us to be one place, people would settle with others from their own town or district.

What happened to these areas? As time went on, some of the families who first came to the South Side, and certainly their children, became part of the wider community of Jews and gentiles. As they became "Americanized," they shed their Old World customs and wanted more of the American culture. They began to move to other areas, especially the East Side of Providence and to Cranston, for those who wanted to live outside the city. In the North End, construction of Route 146 and Interstate 95 cut through the neighborhood. Streets were lost, and houses were torn down. The migration, which went on for about 75 years, right up to the mid-1950s, shows the mobility of groups as they become comfortable and eager for advancement and a better life.



1909 map showing Jewish settlements in Providence.



What changes do you see between the two maps?

Here are some hints:

1. What highways are the same?
2. Which are different?
3. What does the growth of highways tell you about transportation and the growth of Providence?
4. Can you see where streets disappeared between 1909 and today?
5. What does the growth of Rhode Island Hospital tell you about medical care then versus now?

Program puts volunteers on the ground in Israeli military bases

BY KEN SCHNEIDER



Ken and Kevin with their bosses David and Ori.



PHOTOS | KEN SCHNEIDER

Sleeping quarters at the base.

Ten years ago, I wanted to go back to Israel but not as a tourist. I had been there nine times before, and enjoyed every moment, but I was looking for a more purposeful way to visit Israel.

Volunteers for Israel filled that need. VFI allows individuals from all over the world to become a volunteer on an Israeli military base. I have now been volunteering for 10 years.

We sleep, eat and work on the base 4 1/2 days a week. The rest of the time is ours to travel and enjoy the country.

The mix of volunteers is usually half men and half women, some married, most not. Jobs vary from cleaning and checking parts to filling sandbags or fixing border fences – from hard labor to light work, whatever your capabilities are. Among my jobs, I have filled sandbags at outposts along the Syrian border and checked expiration dates on medical supplies.

Since becoming a VFIer, my motto has been, "Anyone can write a check, and that feels good, but going to Israel for two to three weeks and working with your hands is extraordinary."

When you volunteer for this program, you are helping to save Israel millions of dollars. The work we do allows the soldiers to do what they do best and keeps reservists from being called to service.

All volunteers get a uniform, housing and meals, and you instantly become part of the team that's there to work. A typical day starts with breakfast at 7:15, flag-raising with the singing of "Hatikvah," then off to work until noon. After a huge lunch, it's back to work until about 4:30. Dinner is at 5:45, followed by a fun evening activity run by the young Israeli soldiers that are assigned to us.

The day ends with TV, playing cards, reading or just relaxing. Each program also includes a field trip to a place of interest, depending on where you are located.

Since 1982, when the program started, more than 140,000 people have volunteered. One of the best experiences is meeting and working alongside the other Israel supporters from every corner of the world, as well as working with the soldiers.

This year, I traveled with Kevin Dwares, of Cranston. We worked hard, laughed a lot and had a great time traveling around the country.

VFI, a nonprofit, non-political, non-sectarian organization, accepts volunteers ages 17 to 90 year-round. There are lots of people that go back year after year – it becomes a healthy addiction. Kevin and I plan to return together next year.

VFI pays most expenses, but volunteers must pay for round-trip airfare to Israel and an application fee of $100, or $55 for full-time students. Health insurance is required.

For more information, visit www.VFI-usa.org. Feel free to contact me or Kevin: Ken Schneider, kenschneider33@cox.net; Kevin Dwares, Kdwares@aol.com.

KEN SCHNEIDER is the chair of the Louis & Goldie Chester Full Plate Kosher Food Pantry of Rhode Island. He lives in Rumford.



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Top trends for upgrading your outdoor space

(Family Features) – No matter the season or the region, outdoor living is hot. As spring approaches, here are six of the top trends that will influence the look, feel and function of outdoor spaces in 2016.

Outdoor rooms: Thanks to advances in all-weather materials, furnishings and accessories, you can outfit an outdoor living space in much the same way that you would any room in the home. As a result, expect to see decks with features such as integrated benches with upholstered cushions, privacy walls and ornamental post caps and railings with decorative balusters similar to those found inside the home.

Railings that rule: Another outdoor element that's being influenced by indoor styling is deck railings. When it comes to selecting the best railing for your outdoor space, design experts recommend using one of the "Three C's" – coordinate, contrast or customize. To make the selection process even easier, Trex, the world's largest manufacturer of high-performance wood-alternative decking and railing, recently introduced a set of curated railings that pair beautifully with the most popular decking colors.

Cooking with class: Americans have taken backyard cooking and dining to a whole new level. Heading into the outdoor living season, expect this trend to continue with increasingly functional outdoor kitchens, complete with cooking islands, pizza ovens, refrigerators and all-weather cabinetry and storage features.

Warming features: One of the hottest trends – literally – for 2016 is the incorporation of warming features into outdoor spaces. From candles and tiki torches to fireplaces and lighting, products that lend physical and ambient warmth will be in high demand. Look for increased use of LED lights integrated into deck railings, stairs and yards as homeowners seek to enhance the ambiance and safety of their outdoor space and extend the time they can spend enjoying it.

High-tech decks: Home automation is hugely popular right now, so it's only natural that the tech trend should migrate outdoors. From lighting and music controlled from a smart phone to motorized rear-projection screens synced to outdoor LED televisions, homeowners are now able to bring their entire entertainment system outdoors.

Leisure without the labor: For those who want to spend more time enjoying, rather than maintaining, their outdoor space, high-performance composite decking is an ideal choice – delivering all the beauty and aesthetics of wood without the time-consuming upkeep. Unlike wood, composite decking resists fading, staining, scratching and mold – and won't rot, warp, crack or splinter.







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J-Space after-school gardening program in full bloom

BY ARIEL BROTHMAN

Spring has finally sprung, and the contents of the greenhouses behind the Dwares JCC in Providence are showing a lot of green! Last fall, Shannon Kochanek, the director of the Eides Family J-Space's after-school program, broke new ground with a project that included the construction of two greenhouses and an educational gardening experience for the kids involved in the program. The young gardeners' seedlings have come to fruition, and here's what they recently had to say about their time spent learning about gardening.



J-Space children among the greenhouse plants. The greenhouses were purchased with a Quality Improvement Grant from the state of Rhode Island.

ADEYNA

Eight-year-old Adeyna wasn't quite sure of the name of what she planted, but she knew it tasted good and that when she next gets an opportunity to plant vegetables, she will plant carrots.

"[I grew] lemon green pea things. They have peas inside. It smells so good!" says Adeyna. When asked about her experience in the greenhouses, she hugged herself, smiled, and said, "It's warm so they" – the plants – "can grow!"

Adeyna and I never quite figured out if the lemon green pea things went by any other name.

BEN

It's too bad that cats don't like caprese salad, because 9-year-old Ben grew basil, tomatoes and catnip. However, Ben's cat has enjoyed the catnip, and Ben's mother even bought a Star Wars-themed catnip holder to put it in. Aside from making his cat happy, though, Ben enjoyed the greenhouse experience. He had one memory in particular that stuck out:

"One time I went down to the greenhouse, and it was raining. And it was super fun. You could see rain dropping all over the place."

It seems that there was beauty outside the greenhouse, too.

ROSE

Nine-year-old Rose selected her vegetables, which she grew with her 5-year-old sister Norah, very carefully. After a lengthy and very logical process of elimination, corn, basil, and flowers made it to the final round. The basil will serve a special purpose.

"My mom makes the best pesto in the world!" said Rose. "Every single birthday night, we have pesto with noodles."

Rose also planted another vegetable, but has requested it not be publicized as cucumbers are a much-loved vegetable in her house, and she fears for the safety of her harvest. "As soon as there's [one] in the house," she explained, "in five minutes it's gone."

JULIA

Eight-year-old Julia described the greenhouses as "really, really full." Julia started off with lima beans, but she has just planted some flowers in anticipation of Mother's Day. Mid-discussion, we had to attend to our greenhouse photo shoot, so we'll have to wait for another day to find out more about Julia's gardening experiences.

ZIA

Zia doesn't remember what she grew. However, she seems to have remembered everything else! Eight-year-old Zia is happy that she has had the chance to learn about growing vegetables, greenhouse management and how you can use vegetables for different and new recipes.

"At J-Space, we get to make things with the stuff we've grown," she explained. "We grow beets and make beet cupcakes and beet cookies. I thought they were gonna be gross, but they were so good!"

Zia also discovered one of the benefits to gardening that it takes some of us decades to figure out.

"To me, gardening is very relaxing!" said Zia, right before throwing herself back into a pile of pillows on the couch.

HENRY

This wasn't 9-year-old Henry's first experience with gardening. His mother, who he says is a gardener, has a big community garden plot. As he practiced shooting a small inflatable basketball into a nearby bin, he explained that he had already picked up a few things from his mother. Since Henry and Zia shared their experiences at the same time, most of Henry's responses were explanations that this material wasn't all that new to him, punctuated by giggles as they spoke about their experiences in the greenhouse.

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



PHOTOS | ARIEL BROTHMAN



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Plant societies work to preserve native species

BY STEPHANIE ROSS

Ever wonder what this area looked like years and years ago? During the Great Depression, begonia growing, classification and study was just getting started. Many thousands of North American plants we know today were still undiscovered. Still, with the introduction of human modifications, the definition of "native plants" is blurry.

The Federal Native Plan Conservation Committee defines a native plant species as one that occurs naturally in a particular habitat, ecosystem, or region of the United States without direct or indirect human actions. For Rhode Island, native plants are those believed to have been around during Colonial times. The University of Rhode Island's current Rhode Island Native Plant Guide represents more than 1,300 species of plants, most known for their flowers or striking foliage.

In the early spring of 1968, a group, now known as the Rhode Island Wild Plant Society, began to gather at the Cook House at the Audubon Eppley Refuge to offer workshops on wild plant gardening. Wanting to separate themselves from a general gardening club, the five members created the society with its roots in conservation.

According to the New England Wild Flower Society, 22 percent of native plant species in New England are listed as rare or possibly extinct. More than 700 volunteers in the area are working to plant native species, lessen pesticide use and control non-native, invasive plants.



The Cardinal flower is one of the most beautiful midsummer blooming perennials, and a plant native to R.I.

In support of that effort, the Rhode Island Wild Plant Society offers an array of programs: lecture series, workshops, botanizing walks, seed starter groups, children's walks, plant sales and more.

For more information on membership options and upcoming events, visit riwps.org.

STEPHANIE ROSS is a public relations professional and a freelance writer in Boston.

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The climate is changing right in our own backyards



PHOTO | DAVID SCHWARTZ

A maple tree showing damage from winter moths.

BY DAVID SCHWARTZ

The discussion of climate change has been framed as a political argument dividing us into two opposing camps. The landscape is, on all levels, going through a very dynamic change. The winter that seems to be ending prematurely is one of the mildest on record. It was a welcome change from the never-ending snow cover of last winter.

In my role as a plant manager, my goal is to provide a positive result for my clients so that they will continue to use my services. Designing and maintaining a successful landscape entails understanding the conditions that the plants will encounter during the coming years. Choosing the right plant for the right place just became infinitely more difficult. The Plant Hardiness Zones, which let us know which plants are appropriate for a certain area, was last redone 22 years ago. It had to be redone this year. Rhode Island remains in the 6a-6b zone, but we are edging upward. The scientists that are involved say that these zones will probably have to be redone every 10 years going forward.

The insect and disease cycles are a constant challenge. Eight years ago, the winter moth made an appearance in Rhode Island. This ravenous defoliator has the widest host range of any insect that I have ever encountered. It is easier to tell someone what it does not eat than what it does.

Our weather patterns have become more extreme. A few years ago, we were encountering floods. Last year, the severe drought nearly emptied the ponds near my home in Coventry.

In designing landscapes, my plant palette has to change to account for less soil moisture and the possible arrival of some malevolent insect that is waiting in the wings.

Proper site evaluation becomes critical as the pieces of the landscape puzzle are morphing into different entities.

One thing that remains unchanged is the enjoyment that we get from our plants.

DAVID SCHWARTZ is the owner of Schwartz Tree Care, Cranston.



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The winner will be announced in the April 29 Mother's Day issue of The Jewish Voice.

**If you don't have access to email, please mail to: Editor, The Jewish Voice, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence, RI 02906*

As summer approaches, reader's thoughts turn to camp



ASK WENDY

WENDY JOERING

Dear Wendy,
Even though it is only the beginning of March, I am already planning my children's summer vacation. Will J-Camp still exist while the Dwares JCC is under construction? I have a 4 year old and 8 year old and would like to know my options.

Thank you!
Busy mom already planning for summer

Dear Busy Mom,
From one busy mom to another – YES!! J-Camp will definitely be operating in full force this summer. Beginning June 20 and running through Aug. 19, camp will be just as fantastic this summer as last.

Our lower camp goes to age 5 and upper camp is for children entering kindergarten through sixth grade. The CIT (counselor in training) program is for seventh to 10th graders.

The Spirit calendar for 2016 is already out and Seth, Shannon and Jo-Anne are knee deep in planning.

The official camp day goes from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., but kids can arrive as early as 8 a.m. and be picked up as late as 6 p.m. (there is an additional charge for extended day). Camp tuition at the Dwares JCC includes lunch, snacks and towels for swimming. How convenient is that?

You can attend as many weeks as you would like; they do not have to be consecutive. There will be surprises all summer long. Thursday trip day is always a highlight – from Mystic Aquarium to The Audubon Society, this year will be more exciting than ever.

Camp culminates with Carnival week. On the last day of camp, there will be a Carnival celebration for every camper who attends camp at any point throughout the summer. More information will be available about that as summer approaches.

Our camp guide is online at jewishallianceri.org, or stop by and pick up a copy.

FOR MORE INFORMATION on lower camp, contact Jo-Anne Petrie at jpetrie@jewishallianceri.org, or 401-421-4111, ext. 180.

FOR MORE INFORMATION on upper camp, contact Seth Finkle at sfinkle@jewishallianceri.org, or 401-421-4111, ext. 146.

WENDY JOERING is director of member and concierge services at the Jewish Alliance.

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The Arbor Day Foundation is making it easy for everyone to celebrate the arrival of spring by planting trees.

Join the Arbor Day Foundation in March and receive 10 free white flowering dogwood trees. "White flowering dogwoods will add beauty to your home throughout the year," said Matt Harris, chief executive of the Arbor Day Foundation. "Dogwoods are known for their showy spring flowers, scarlet autumn foliage, and red berries that attract songbirds during winter."

The free trees are part of the nonprofit Foundation's Trees for America campaign.

With planting instructions included, the trees will be shipped at the right time for planting, between March 1 and May 31. The 6- to 12-inch trees are guaranteed to grow or they will be replaced free of charge.

Arbor Day Foundation members also receive a subscription to Arbor Day, the Foundation's bimonthly publication, and The Tree Book, which contains information about tree planting and care.

To become a member of the Foundation and receive the free trees, send a $10 contribution to TEN FREE WHITE FLOWERING DOGWOOD TREES, Arbor Day Foundation, 100 Arbor Avenue, Nebraska City, Nebraska 68410, by March 31. Or join online at arborday.org/march.



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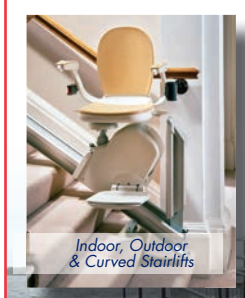
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Community members helped make hamantashen March 13 at Tamarisk. Then, members of the Jewish Seniors Agency Women's Association bagged the hamantashen for gift delivery. Left to right, standing: Myra Shays, Marcia Gerstein, Lila Winograd. Sitting: Sylvia Brown.

Purim, Purim everywhere!

BY JEWISH VOICE STAFF

Looking for a spiel, carnival or party? Here are some of the community Purim events happening in Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts. Information is up to date as of press time.

Orthodox

Beth Sholom: Purim Carnival
275 Camp St.
Providence
March 23, 6-7 p.m.
$10 admission, includes food
401-621-9393

Project Shoresh: Family Purim Extravaganza
March 20, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Suggested donation of $5
401-632-3165

Conservative

Congregation Beth David: Purim Carnival
53 Mumford Road
(Narragansett Community Center)
Narragansett
March 20, 10 a.m.-noon
401-789-3437

Congregation Tifereth Israel: Purim Celebration
145 Brownell Ave.
New Bedford
March 23, 5:30 p.m.
No charge for dinner, followed by megillah chanting. Reserve by March 16.
508-997-3171

Temple Beth-El of Fall River: Purim Celebration and "Politicians on the Roof"
385 High St.
Fall River
March 23, 5:30 p.m.
Megillah reading, followed by supper and a comic Purim musical send-up of the presidential nominees' race. RSVP by March 14
508-674-3529

Temple Emanu-El: Purim Carnival
99 Taft Ave.
Providence
March 20, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
401-331-1616

Temple Emanu-El: Purim Spiel
99 Taft Ave.
Providence
March 23, 7:30-9:30 p.m.
401-331-1616

Temple Shalom: "Lions and Tigers and Bears, OY VEY!" FUNdraiser Purim Spiel
223 Valley Road
Middletown
March 20, 7-9 p.m.
$10 adults, $7 children ages 12 and under
401-846-9002

Temple Torat Yisrael: School and Purim Megillah Skit and Carnival
1251 Middle Road
East Greenwich
March 20, 8:45 a.m.
401-885-6600

Temple Torat Yisrael: Megillah Reading and Purim Feast
1251 Middle Road
East Greenwich
March 23, time TBD
401-885-6600

West Bay Community Jewish Center (WBCJC): Purim Service
2 Brenda Drive
Coventry
March 23, 6:30-8 p.m.
401-392-8452

Reform

Temple Beth-El: Purim Celebration/K'Tan'Tan Party
70 Orchard Ave.
Providence
March 23, 5:30 p.m./6:30 p.m.
401-331-6070

Temple Habonim: Purim Carnival
165 New Meadow Road
Barrington
March 20, 10:30 a.m.-noon
401-245-6536

Temple Habonim: "Wicked Purim"
165 New Meadow Road
Barrington
March 23, 6-9 p.m.
$3 for mac and cheese dinner at 6 p.m., reservations required
401-245-6536

Reconstructionist

Congregation Agudas Achim: Purim Carnival
901 North Main St.
Attleboro
March 20, 10 -11 a.m.
508-222-2243

Non-denominational

Brown RISD Hillel: Purim Party
Location TBD
March 24, 9 a.m.-noon
$10 in advance, $15 at door
401-863-2733

Chabad Chai Center of West Bay: Purim Feast and Bowling
6125 Post Road
(Kingstown Bowl)
North Kingstown
March 24, 5:00 p.m.
$20 adults, $10 kids, includes bowling and shoes
401-884-7888 or 401-884-4071

Welcome to Judaism – An introductory course at Tifereth Israel

"Welcome to Judaism" is a four-semester course designed for adults in the community, both Jewish and non-Jewish, who would like to get a better understanding of Jewish religion, culture and history. Topics will include history, Bible, beliefs, holidays, practices, Israel and much more.

The course provides Jewish community members an opportunity to fill gaps in whatever past education they've received, and provides background for those who don't feel comfortable or conversant with certain aspects of their Judaism.

This is a four-semester course that meets for eight one-hour sessions per semester, on Monday evenings at 7, for a total of 32 sessions. The four semesters are in spring 2016, fall 2016, spring 2017 and fall 2017. The first session begins March 21. All sessions will be held at Tifereth Israel Congregation, 145 Brownell Ave, New Bedford, Mass.

Tifereth Israel was established in 1921 and is affiliated with The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and the Synagogue Council of Massachusetts.

Registration is required. There is no charge for this course. Interested parties should contact the synagogue office at office@tinewbedford.org or 508-997-3171.

Steven Spielberg, Harrison Ford teaming up for 5th 'Indiana Jones'

JTA – Director Steven Spielberg and Harrison Ford are teaming up to film a fifth "Indiana Jones" movie.

The film will be in theaters in July 2019, the Walt Disney Co. announced March 15. Disney took over the rights to the "Indiana Jones" franchise from Paramount in 2013.

It had been rumored that a different actor would take over the iconic role, but Spielberg reportedly insisted that no one other than Ford would play the renowned archaeologist and explorer.

The fifth installment, which is yet untitled, will debut 11 years after the last film in the action-adventure series and 38 years after the first one, "Raiders of the Lost Ark," in which Indiana Jones searches for the Ark of the Covenant, which is believed to still hold the Ten Commandments. Agents of Hitler are also after the ark.

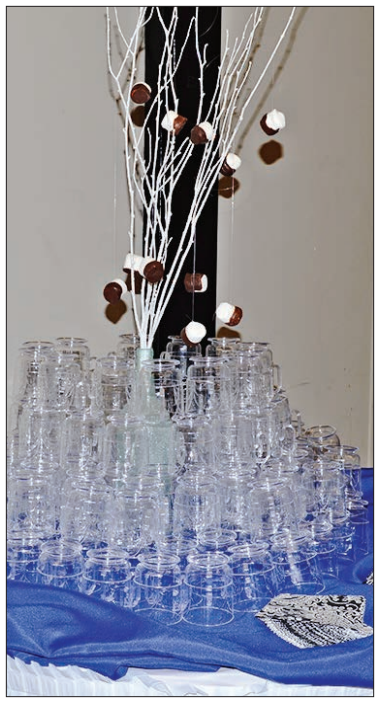
"Indiana Jones is one of the greatest heroes in cinematic history, and we can't wait to bring him back to the screen in 2019," said Alan Horn, chairman of Walt Disney Studios. "It's rare to have such a perfect combination of director, producers, actor and role, and we couldn't be more excited to embark on this adventure with Harrison and Steven."

Ford, 73, recently reprised his role as Han Solo in "Star Wars: The Force Awakens."

Social media was quick to poke fun at Ford's age, with suggested titles for the new "Indiana Jones" film including "Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost AARP," "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Prunes" and "Indiana Jones and the Curse of the Prosthetic Hip Joint."

Study and sweets

On March 5, more than 70 people enjoyed an evening of stimulating study and some delicious treats during Drash & Dessert sponsored by the Board of Rabbis of Greater Rhode Island. The evening started with Havdalah led by Pastrami on RI. The study sessions that followed covered a variety of topics and included rabbis and some interfaith partners. A dessert buffet including a hot chocolate bar capped the evening at the Dwares JCC.





PHOTOS | FRAN OSTENDORF

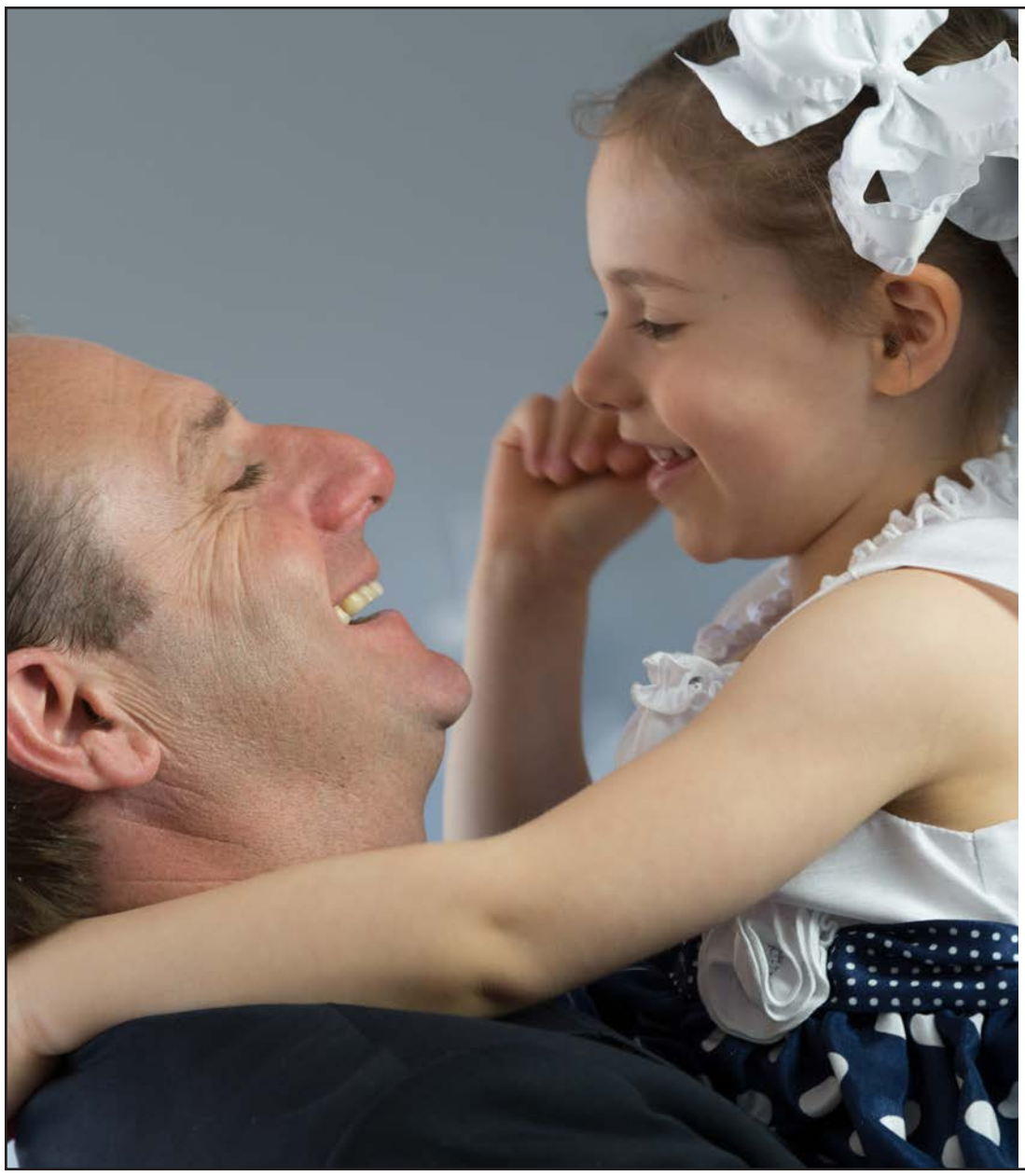
A variety of desserts greeted participants.



Rabbi James Rosenberg's session involved a lively discussion.



Conversation continued at the end of the event.



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Holocaust survivor reminds us of the need to forgive

BY ARIEL BROTHMAN

Even though we are regularly saturated with messages of love, and it's generally understood that hatred is essentially poison of the soul, sometimes it can be really hard not to hate. While it is a normal part of life, it is something we should strive to limit as much as possible. And if someone who survived the Holocaust can do it, perhaps others can work at reducing hate. In the words of Holocaust survivor Louise Lawrence-Israëls, "we must end the circle of hate."

Lawrence-Israëls, now in her 70s, spoke last week at Bristol Community College's Fall River campus during a program organized by the college's Holocaust Center. Lawrence-Israëls, who was hidden away at 6 months old and didn't reemerge into the world until the war's end, when she was 3, addressed a packed multigenerational audience in a lecture hall in BCC's Jackman Arts Center.

The Holocaust Center's director, Ron Weisberger, briefly introduced Lawrence-Israëls before she approached the podium. With a steady, calm voice, she shared her story of living in an attic in the Netherlands during the final years of World War II. She first told of her great respect for her parents, who did everything in their power to keep the family safe.

She told how she learned to speak quietly by mimicking the lowered voices and frequent silence of her parents, how her parents kept her and her brother occupied by teaching them to read and write, and of her brother's birthday gift of letting her play with his favorite toy for the day, a simple white pull horse on wheels that meant the world to him. She told of how her father would regularly leave the apartment to get food, other necessities and news – needless to say, a huge risk in Nazi-occupied territory.

Immediately after their liberation, Lawrence-Israëls recalled that she and her brother were told: "You're free. Now play outside – have fun." American soldiers greeted them, holding chocolate in outstretched hands. She recalled that her brother asked their parents if they could go back outside the next day because he wanted more chocolate.

When people have experienced what her family did during the war, hatred is a possible outcome. During Lawrence-Israëls' upbringing, this was a part of her world. She found herself adopting the beliefs of her parents, just as she adopted their silence as a toddler. She only realized the ripple effect her beliefs were having when her young daughter approached neighbors and repeated some less-than-kind words she had heard from her mother. This, Lawrence-Israëls said, is when she realized she had to "reverse the hatred."



Louise Lawrence-Israëls, left.

"You can't go through life with that kind of hatred. It all started with that four-letter word: hate," she says. "I don't blame the younger generation. It's not their fault."

One of the most important universal messages is to forgive; without forgiveness, we can't move on. We can't heal from the poison of hatred, and therefore we can't grow. But sometimes, forgiveness is indescribably difficult, and as much as one can preach the concept, it isn't always easy to know whether you would actually be able to do it in any given situation.

But knowing that Lawrence-Israëls could forgive provides optimism that anything is forgivable. As Weisberger said, "seeing and hearing from a survivor always makes an impression that you can't get any other way."

Forgiveness is a two-pronged approach to enabling growth. The forgiver forgives, and that is important. But forgiveness also allows the person or people needing forgiveness to continue on their path back to righteousness.

Some have observed, in the media and elsewhere, that this generation of German youth has not felt the forgiveness they need; they feel blamed for the actions of a generation far-removed from their own. Messages like Lawrence-Israëls' could be the ones they need to hear in order to know that they are more than what they think the world thinks they are: they are humans, too.

Centers like the one at BCC are crucial to not only helping us to never forget, but also for acting as a medium for messages like Lawrence-Israëls'.

The BCC Holocaust Center has been in operation for three years. It houses materials from the Jewish Federation of Greater New Bedford and works with their Holocaust Education and Memorial Committee. The Holocaust Center has hosted dozens of speakers and has become home to DVDs, books and other materials on the Holocaust and other genocides.

For 13 years, Weisberger and his colleague, Howard Tinberg, have been teaching a class that is part of the BCC Honors program called "Remembering the Holocaust in Literature and History." The course often utilizes the resources of the center in its curriculum.

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

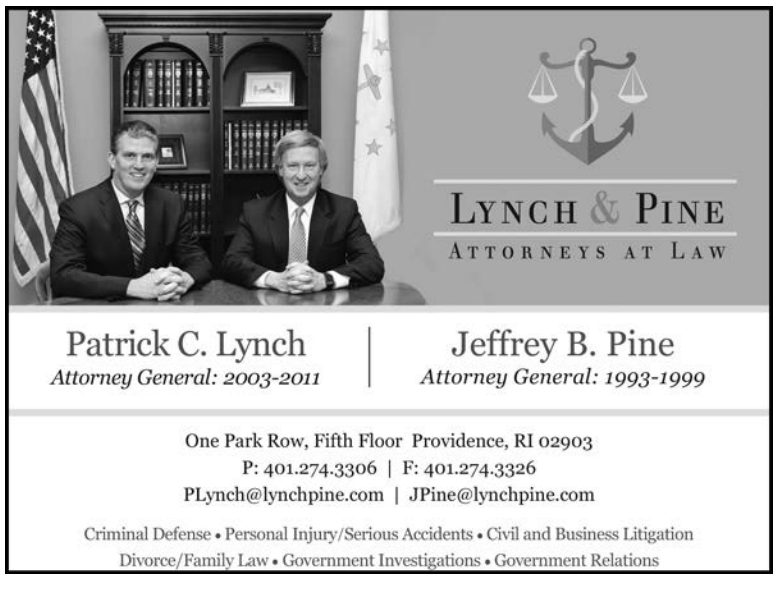
'Cause for Applause' set for May 15

Hadassah Rhode Island's Third Annual "Merry Drench: A Cause for Applause," will be held on Sunday, May 15, at 2 p.m.

"A Cause for Applause" celebrates the life of Meredith "Merry" Drench, former president of Hadassah Rhode Island. Merry, who lost her battle with cancer in 2013, was an author and lecturer on the subjects of physical therapy and behavioral sciences. Since Merry loved musical theater, it is only fitting that the fundraiser involve a musical performance.

This year, the production will be Cole Porter's "Anything Goes," a classic musical with an amusing plot that takes place onboard a ship. The fundraiser-musical event will take place at Ocean State Theatre, in Warwick.

The fundraiser's chair and co-chair are two of Merry's friends and former colleagues, Monika Curnett and Barbara Portney. For tickets or more information, call Monika Curnett at 401-941-4495. Tickets are limited and may not be available after April 15.





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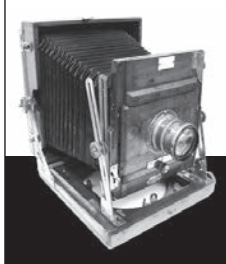
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Ruth Bader Ginsburg to publish first book



NEW YORK (JTA) — Ruth Bader Ginsburg will publish her first book since becoming a Supreme Court justice in 1993 — and it will include her thoughts on being Jewish.

The New York-based publisher Simon & Schuster announced March 10 that Ginsburg's "In My Own Words" will be available in hardcover, ebook and audiobook forms in January.

A selection of writings and speeches by Ginsburg, who turned 83 March 15, the new book addresses everything from Jewish identity to gender equality to the workings of the Supreme Court, according to Simon & Schuster.

Ginsburg and her authorized biographers, Mary Hartnett and Wendy W. Williams, are selecting the writings. Ginsburg will write an introduction.

Simon & Schuster will also publish Ginsburg's authorized biography, but no publication date has been announced.

Ginsburg is the second woman to have been appointed to the Supreme Court.

Adam Sandler buys 'plumber's menorah' at Jewish-owned NY hardware store

NEW YORK (JTA) — Comic actor Adam Sandler bought a $150 "plumber's menorah" at a Jewish-owned Manhattan hardware store.

Sandler spotted the unusual Hanukkah candelabra in the window of Beacon Paint & Hardware while shooting a Noah Baumbach film, "*Yen Din Ka Kissa*," on the Upper West Side and sent a staffer to buy it for him, DNAinfo reported March 11.

"I was told he saw it in our store window when he got out of his trailer, which was in front of Beacon Paint, and asked a crew member to go buy it," store co-owner Steven Stark told DNAinfo.

Stark has been making the unusual menorahs out of pipe fittings as a pet project for about a dozen years. They retail for $150. It is not clear why the store was displaying the creations in March, more than three months after Hanukkah.

Stark's brother and store co-owner, Bruce Stark, personally thanked Sandler for the purchase when he spotted the actor leaving his makeup trailer.

"Whatever he does, he never hides the fact that he's Jewish," Bruce Stark said, recounting that he told Sandler he admires his "The Hanukkah Song." "He's as proud of being Jewish as I am."

Stark said he tried to give Sandler his money back and make the menorah a gift, but Sandler insisted he keep it.

"'You don't give it away to a guy who makes a lot of money, you charge him for it,'" Sandler said, according to Stark.



According to DNAinfo, the Baumbach film, parts of which are being shot this week on West 78th Street near Amsterdam Avenue, also features Jewish actors Ben Stiller and Dustin Hoffman, whose discovery of his Jewish family history recently made headlines.

That's two more potential customers for the Stark brothers.

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Betty P. Abesh, 92

NEW BEDFORD, MASS. – Betty P. Abesh, daughter of the late Susan Brodsky Neyman and Julius Neyman, of Lowell, Massachusetts, passed away March 14. She was the loving wife of Dr. William Abesh for 64 years.

She graduated from Lowell High School in 1940 and from Boston University School of Education in 1944, and she received a master's degree in education from Harvard Graduate School of Education. After her academic career, she did personnel work in Boston where she met Dr. Abesh and came to New Bedford in 1952.

Besides her husband, she is survived by her children, Jane Abesh Meltzer and her husband Neil of Sudbury, Mass; and Dr. Daniel Abesh and his wife Jane Eisen Abesh of Cherry Hill, N.J.; by her grandchildren Jesse, Joseph and his wife Lindsey, and Jonathan Abesh, and Benjamin and Jeffrey Meltzer, numerous nieces and nephews and cousins, and many friends.

She was a very civic-minded, social and giving woman, serving as chairperson of numerous charitable events and enterprises within her community. She was a life member of Hadassah, an active participant of the Sisterhood of Tifereth Israel synagogue, a member of the National Council of Jewish Women, and for many years raised funds for the Rabbinical Cultural Studies. She loved and played bridge and traveled the world with her loving husband, family, and friends in her younger days.

Donations may be made to the Jewish Convalescent Center and to Tifereth Israel synagogue.

Robert Fain, 77

WARWICK, R.I. – Robert Fain died March 2 at Philip Hulitar Inpatient Center. He was the beloved husband of the late Toby (Lemelman) Fain for 32 years. Born in Providence, a son of the late Irving and Sara (Brainson) Fain, he had lived in Providence his entire life.

He was a graduate of the Moses Brown School in 1956, and a graduate of Babson College. He was the founder of Fain Financial Services with a CLU designation for 45 years, retiring in 2010. He was a lifelong member and head usher of Temple Emanu-El, devoted member of the rotary club and an avid bridge player.

Loving father of David Fain and his wife, Lisa, of Seattle, Wash., and Dorie Fain of Baltimore, Md., dear brother of Jocelyn and Carl Feldman of Riverside and adoring grandfather of Talia Rose, Emily Civia and Toby Buck.

Contributions in his memory may be made to the Toby L. Fain Memorial Fund, c/o Temple Emanu-El, 99 Taft Ave., Providence, R.I. 02906.

Howard L. Lovett, 77

FORT MILL, S.C. – Howard Lloyd Lovett of Fort Mill, S.C., since 2014 (formerly of Boynton Beach, Fla., and Warwick), died on Feb. 15 at CMC Pineville Hospital in Charlotte, N.C. He was the beloved son of the late Rose Heller Lovett and Esmond Lovett.

He attended Hope High School and the University of Rhode Island. He worked for Panasonic Consumer Electronics for 25 years before retiring in September 2001.

He enjoyed playing golf, poker, cribbage, reading and the New England Patriots.

He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Marilyn Sondler Lovett, of Fort Mill; daughter Risa Lovett-Truglio and her husband Larry of Fort Mill; his son Jeffrey Lovett and his wife Tina of Chesapeake, Va.; his son David Lovett and his wife Debby of Royal Palm Beach, Fla.; and his sister Dolores Lusting and her husband Jay of Scottsdale, Ariz. He also leaves behind his grandchildren Justin and his wife Melanie, Zoe and Zachary and his beloved great-grandson Easton. A memorial service was held in South Carolina.

Contributions in his memory may be made to the Tomorrow Fund c/o Rhode Island Hospital or a charity of your choice.

Sumner L. Oskern

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Sumner L. Oskern died on March 2 at the Philip Hulitar Home and Hospice Care of Rhode Island. Born in Providence, he was the loving son of the late Jack and Lillian (Berkowitz) Oskern. He was predeceased by his brother, Howard M. Oskern, whom he adored.



He was well-known in the city working in the restaurant industry, first at the Narragansett Hotel, followed by Joe Winkler's Steak House, and finally the Old Canteen. He loved sports, theater and above all the many field trips he took. He was a founding member of Epoch on the East Side, where he had many happy years. Upbeat, witty and playful, he was loved by many and will be missed.

He is survived by his cherished sister, Dorothy Koenig, of New York City and Providence and many cousins.

Contributions in his memory may be made to the Jack and Lillian Oskern Family Fund at Temple Emanu-El, 99 Taft Ave., Providence, R.I. 02906.

Merrill Percelay, 89

PAWTUCKET, R.I. – Merrill Percelay, of Pawtucket, died peacefully surrounded by his loving family. He was the beloved husband of Sheela Percelay to whom he was married for 65 years. He was the son of Jacob and Frances Percelay, and lifelong resident of Pawtucket.



Merrill graduated from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, N.Y., and served as a commissioned officer during World War II. He graduated from Brown University in 1949, and later from the Harvard Business School SCMP Program. He was co-owner of Troy Yarn, a textile company in Pawtucket, and subsequently, co-owner of Craft Yarns. He and his wife were volunteers for the Citizen Democracy Corps, serving two months on small business economic development in St. Petersburg, Russia. He was an honorary board member of the Jewish Family Service Organization and recipient of the Jefferson Award for helping resettle Russian immigrants.



He was a master woodworker, a talented engineer and loved the sea. He was a man of unwavering integrity, a value he instilled in his three sons.

Above all, he loved his family. Along with his wife Sheela, he is survived by his son James (and wife Sabine), Bruce (and wife Elisabeth), and David (and wife Dr. Francine Vogler), and sisters Marion Pranikoff and Territa Percelay. He was predeceased by his brother Morris. He leaves four beloved grandsons.

Michael Weinberg, 73

DELRAY BEACH, FLA. – Michael Weinberg passed away on Feb. 22, in Delray Beach, Fla., after complications with his heart. He was vacationing with his wife at the time.

He was a quiet man but those of us lucky enough to know him closely were privy to his subtle and quirky sense of humor. He was a wizard at making people laugh.

He was born in Providence and spent most of his life living in Cranston, where he and his wife raised their family. He was an independent businessman and owned several automotive repair franchises before retiring to Bluffton, S.C., in 2009.

The retired life suited him. He became active in his community of Sun City and participated in many activities, such as golf, skeet shooting, men's baseball and was a dedicated member of the Congregation of Mickve Israel in Savannah, Ga.

He is survived by his wife, Sheila Weinberg of Bluffton and daughters, Julie Weinberg (Meredith Kelly) of Provincetown, Mass., and Barri Weinberg of Bluffton.

Contributions in his memory can be made to Hadassah of Hilton Head or the American Heart Association.

Bernice S. Shapiro, 86

WARWICK, R.I. – Bernice S. Shapiro died Feb. 20 at Philip Hulitar Inpatient Center, Providence. She was the beloved wife of Henry Shapiro. They were married for 66 years. Born in Norwich, Conn., a daughter of the late Sigmund and Rebecca (Kaufman) Dressler, she had lived in Warwick for four years, previously living in Cranston.

Devoted mother of Howard Shapiro and his wife Janice of Cranston, Rhonda Fallk and her husband David of Clark Summit, Pa., and Kenneth Shapiro of Las Vegas, Nevada. Dear sister of Judith Karlin of Md., and the late Justin and Marshall Dressler. Loving grandmother of Derek, Stacy, Rebecca, and Murray. Cherished great-grandmother of Londyn and Rivyr.

Contributions in her memory may be made to Hadassah, 17 Pocahontas Dr., Middletown, R.I. 02842.

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Embrace your Jewish roots at film fest

BY FRAN OSTENDORF
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The Joanne Forman Film Festival presents three Sundays of films with moderated discussions and refreshments at Temple Beth-El in Providence. This year's theme is "Journeys: Sustaining, Discovering and Embracing Jewish Roots."

March 20, the first film, "Jubanos: The Jews of Cuba," kicks off the festival. This film highlights the heroic efforts of the remaining 1,500 Jews in Cuba to sustain and revive Jewish life under the Communist regime. There will be a discussion with Rabbi Sarah Mack and participants in the recent temple-sponsored trip to Cuba. They'll show slides from the trip.

April 3, "The Return" focuses on four young Polish women who discover their Jewish roots and embark upon a quest to understand their identities in the context of Poland's past, present and future. A discussion with filmmaker Adam Zucker follows.

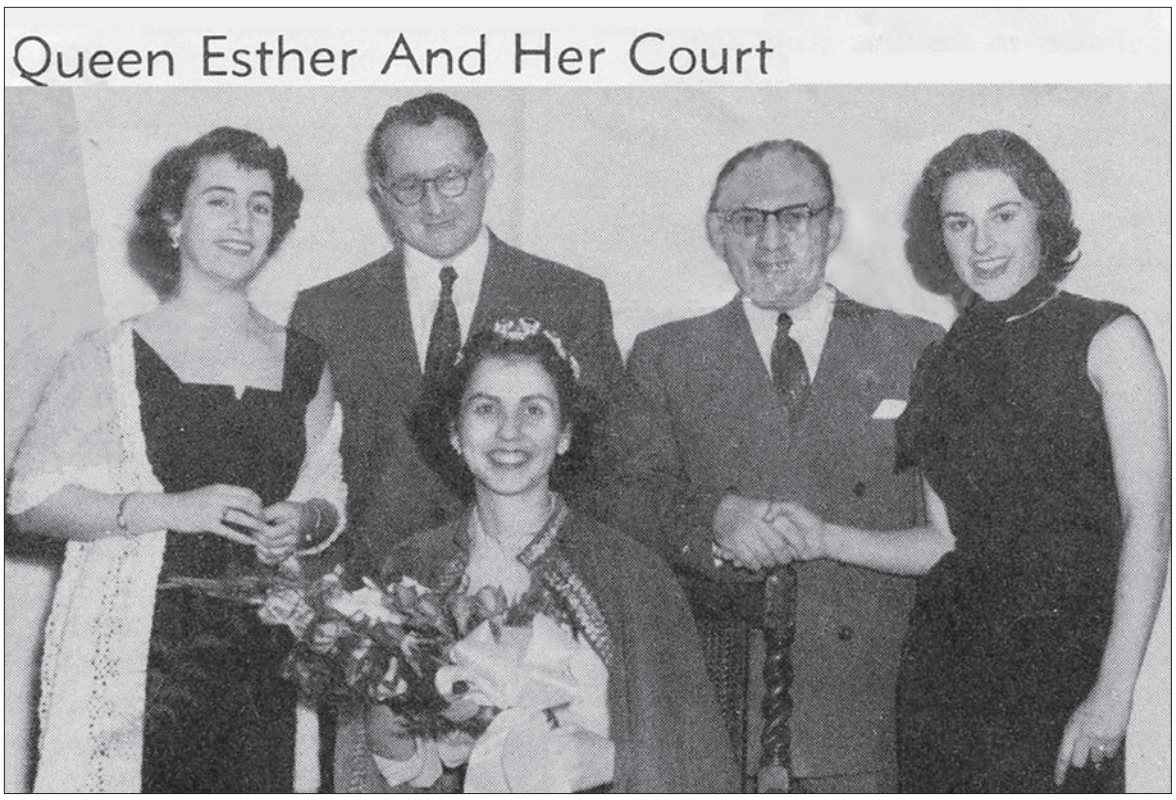
April 10, features "Next Year Jerusalem" about a transformational trip to Israel taken by eight residents and staff of an American senior living community, who have overcome obstacles to make the trip. There is a discussion following with Mike Fink, professor at the Rhode Island School of Design.

Sponsored by the Sisterhood of Temple Beth-El, the film festival has taken place for 15 years and was originally co-chaired by Joanne Forman. Several years ago, it was named in her memory, according to current chair Ellen Silverman.

"Joanne was a generous, giving volunteer," Silverman said. "Everyone loved her." And, Silverman said, she cared deeply about the temple.

All films screen at 2 p.m. in the Meeting Hall of the temple, 70 Orchard Ave. Admission is free and refreshments are included.

FRAN OSTENDORF is editor of The Jewish Voice.



The newspaper clippings sent in by Cohen.

Story of the Purim queen

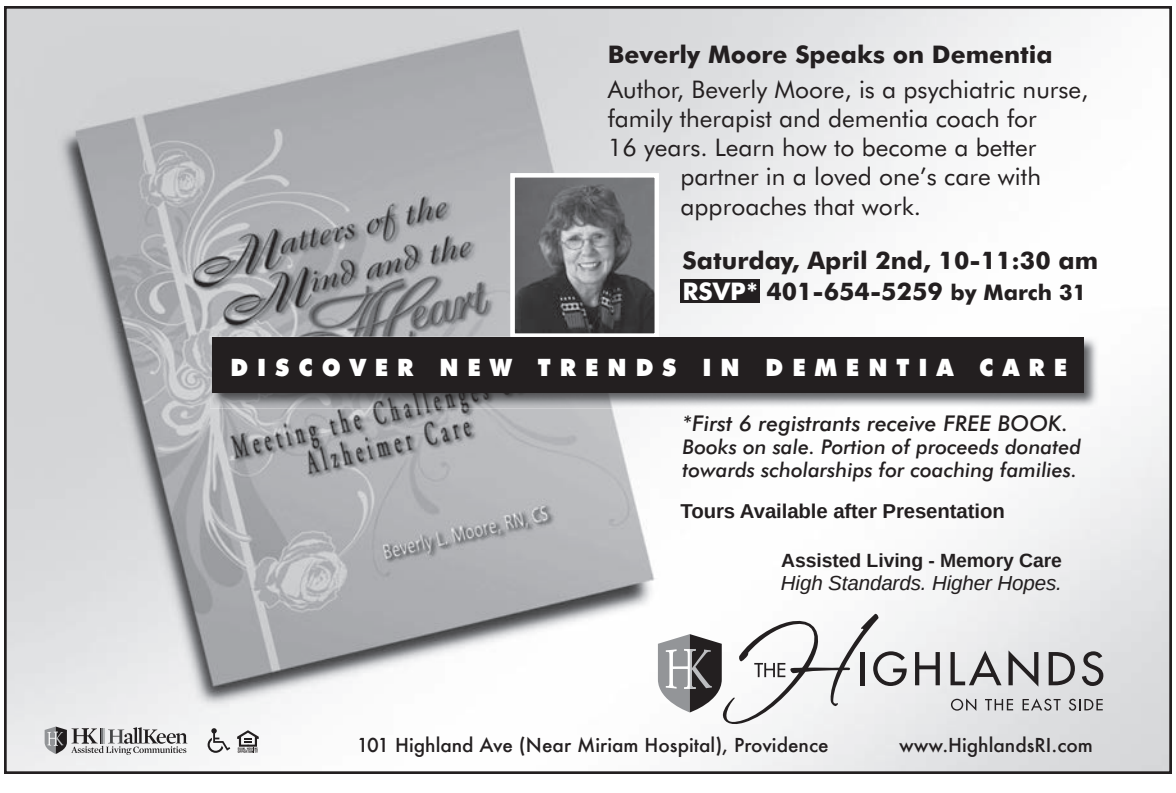
Pauline (Dress) Cohen of Providence sent us the following story with accompanying photos from the newspaper.

"I was crowned Queen Esther in March 1952 at the Jewish Community Center in Providence. Among a few gifts there was a free trip to Grossinger's Resort in New York. It had to be used within a year. After consideration, my boyfriend, Barry Cohen, and I decided it would make a great honeymoon. He was 20 and I was 19. We married the first day of spring, March 21, 1953. We have four children and four grandchildren and will celebrate our 63rd wedding anniversary this Purim."

Mazal tov from The Jewish Voice staff.



Stephen F. Schiff, M.D., F.A.C.S.
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Philanthropy helps students at local colleges

Local Hillels offer a home away from home

BY HILLARY SCHULMAN
hschulman@jewishallianceri.org

One of the biggest concerns of a stereotypical Jewish mother is the strength and vibrancy of the Jewish community at the college where her child has been accepted. What is a vibrant Jewish community? What does that look like for a college student? Is it one with Shabbat dinners every week? Does it need to have educational programs that bring Judaism onto campus? Or does it mean just having a place for college students to go to meet other Jewish college students in a safe, unprejudiced environment? The Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island's Annual Campaign helps support two of the most burgeoning Jewish populations – Brown RISD Hillel and the University of Rhode Island Hillel.

On the East Side of Providence is a beautiful Hillel building that serves both Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD). In one semester, the Brown RISD Hillel can see over 700 students at one or more of their many events per year. Brown RISD Hillel's goal is to engage every Jewish student in Jewish life on campus. It aims to impact students by creating connection points into Jewish life and opportunities for students to develop and enhance their Jewish identity.

Brown RISD Hillel's programming covers a wide range of topics, including experiencing Jewish life and learning, inclusion and advocacy programming, and student engagement. Students also have the opportunity to participate in Alternative Break trips to countries around the world. Examples of some of its most successful programming include the Hillel Initiative on Racial Awareness and Justice (HIRAJ), the Chai of Life Retreat for first- and second-year students, Challah for Hunger, Shabbat and holiday programming, as well as the Engagement Internship opportunity. Brown RISD Hillel also succeeds in cultivating groups of students with similar interests in various activities such as Contemplative Practice, which consists of connecting to Judaism through movement and music, as well as hosting a monthly Women's Rosh Hodesh group.

One student remarked, "My concentration in religious studies and my involvement in Hillel are what's leading me to think about graduate study in religion or pursuing another means of engaging intellectually with Judaism. I don't think that's something I thought you could do before I got here, engage with religion in an intellectual way, because I had always just associated Judaism with culture and holidays. Being involved here at Brown and here at Hillel has really broadened my horizons when it comes to Judaism."

Another student expressed his gratitude to Hillel for allowing him to be able to experience Judaism the way he wanted to. "I feel a deeper connection to Judaism now than I ever have before, and that is in large part because Hillel has given me the opportunity to define Judaism on my own terms. …Looking forward, I am excited by the potential to continue to explore my Jewish identity and to challenge traditional assumptions of what is or is not proper Jewish practice."



PHOTO | BROWN RISD HILLEL

Students participate in havdalah at Brown RISD Hillel.

Another student reflected that her experience at Hillel has helped her become prouder of her identity. "I think my life is definitely changed by my Jewish experience at Brown because I didn't seek living in a huge Jewish community but by living in one it has made me think more deeply about my Judaism and become more proud. … I went through the cycle of being less proud of my interfaith household, thinking other people knew more and I didn't feel accepted, but then I came to feel that I'm making the community better in some way and providing a different perspective. I think the transitions I had through college make me feel ready to keep transitioning in my life and keep Judaism a part of it and continue to learn and ask questions and be a part of exciting and different communities."

The partnership between Brown RISD Hillel and the Jewish Alliance's Annual Campaign is helpful in allowing students like these and hundreds of others to engage in Jewish life in ways that are meaningful to them. Along with other outside sources of funding, Hillel receives money from the Annual Campaign that helps Brown and RISD students find their niche within the Jewish community.

The University of Rhode Island has about 1,000 Jewish students who benefit from the Jewish programming of URI's thriving Hillel. Housed in the Norman M. Fain Hillel Center, URI Hillel connects with close to 500 students weekly, and has seen about 250 different students at various programs in the last semester alone. URI Hillel's ultimate goal is to ensure high-quality, accessible programs and services that enhance and promote active participation within the Jewish community, and for every Jewish student to make an enduring commitment to Jewish life. URI Hillel ensures Jewish educational opportunities and experiences and provides numerous access points for all students of all backgrounds to form deep, personal connections to Jewish life, learning, and Israel through Jewish exploration, leadership and a sense of belonging. It also aims to ease the transition from high school to college with successful programming for first-year students.

URI Hillel's annual array of offerings include programs in categories such as Social and First Year Student Programming, Community Service, Shabbat and Holiday Programming, Israel, Jewish Culture and Education, Leadership Development, Campus-wide Events, and Campus Community Relations. Whenever possible, Hillel seeks to work with university departments, centers and student organizations to co-sponsor events that bring Jewish culture to the campus at large. This year, for example, Hillel hosted former Israeli Knesset member, Rachel Adato, who spoke about the ground-breaking legislation she introduced regarding women's health in Israel. Her talk was co-sponsored by the URI Women's Center, Housing and Residential Life, Health Services and the Counseling Center.

One student expressed the difference URI Hillel has made in her life. "I would like to thank you so much for everything you have done for me at Hillel this past semester. Before my semester started, I was uncomfortable with my faith and felt lost. I didn't have the confidence that I would find a place where I belonged or felt comfortable spiritually (or just in general!). I can't emphasize enough that coming to Hillel was the best decision I have made not only this semester but in college thus far. With the help of everyone else at Hillel, I have found a level of comfort and happiness that I had given up on having. I learned so much about Judaism and myself, and I really feel like I found my place spiritually! Not only that, but I have also made so many new friends that I really feel at home socially as well, with the lovely support and kindness that you have all showed me."

The impact of the programming has permeated the university. Tom Dougan, the recently retired vice president of Student Affairs, said, "Hillel is an integral part of the University of Rhode Island and the programs offered by Hillel complement those offered by the university and the Division of Student Affairs. Hillel staff is outstanding and works closely with students to meet the many needs of both Jewish and non-Jewish students."

URI Hillel is the only program

HILLEL | 29

Women's Alliance
of the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island

Celebrate Rosh Hodesh with us!

Thursday, March 31 2016 | 21 *Adar II* 5776
12:00 - 1:15pm

Due to renovations at the Jewish Alliance's Dwares JCC,
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Cost: $10 (includes lunch)
Speaker: Marcia Kaunfer, *Educator, Jewish Community Day School of Rhode Island*
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For more information or to RSVP, contact Danielle Germanowski at
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Jewish Alliance
OF GREATER RHODE ISLAND

Christopher Columbus seen another way





SKETCHBOOK

MIKE FINK

Harry Ezratty's helpful and useful study of Caribbean Jewish history, in "The Jews in the New World" trilogy, claims there isn't much of a Sephardic presence in Puerto Rico: Spanish rule and the Inquisition discouraged all but a few families.

There were no synagogues or cemeteries – until the 20th century, when some Puerto Ricans sought to convert, or perhaps to reclaim a lost identity.

Puerto Rico is an "existential" island – you can shape your identity from a diverse range of choices. Did you derive and descend from the Spanish conquistadores? From the native Taino people, gentle and peaceful, but most of them doomed to perish at the hands and in the cannibal pots of the Caribs? Or through the greed and cruelty of the Iberian invaders, Columbus' crew? Or are you "American" – that is, connected to the United States through your cousins who moved to the "other" Florida, or maybe to Dallas? It's up to each individual to decide. It's possible you are a mix of all these cultures and genetic designs.

I went to Puerto Rico to explore a new monument about to be finally dedicated, to honor the famous and infamous Admiral Christopher Columbus.Simon Wiesenthal wrote a book titled "Sails of Hope: The Secret Mission of Christopher Columbus," in which he emphasized that Columbus freed the victims of Torquemada, who were imprisoned while awaiting torture and death, but liberated them only to serve as crew on the three ships bound for glory. The dream of those sailors released from the prisons of the Inquisition, he suggested, was not for mermaids or for gold, but for liberty.

Most modern scholars take issue with the Nazi-hunter's interpretation,but Italian communities have always chosen Columbus as the symbol of their own search in the Americas: You can only get your hands on "Sails of Hope" in Little Italy branch libraries, and most statues of Columbus are financed by Italian organizations.

The sculptor Zurab Tsereteli offered his giant Columbus sculpture to several cities in a number of states, but they turned him, and it, down. Columbus, Ohio, said no thanks. Native Americans were horrified at the prospect, in this day of diversity and respect for indigenous peoples.

Even Puerto Rico had its doubts about the project. In fact, parts of the huge and elaborate sculpture sank into the sand and had to be dug up like buried treasure, or replaced by replicas, over a period of two decades before a permanent site could be agreed on - and then it was in Arecibo, not San Juan.

Now, this artist is a celebrity worshiper. He has translated snapshots published in LIFE magazine and newspapers into permanent objects. Remember the Big Three from World War II, Churchill, Roosevelt and Uncle Joe (Stalin)? We had fought two wars as foes of England – in 1776 and 1812 – and now we joined forces with, not against, Britain. We had struggled with the Soviet Union, and then throughout the Cold War and its Iron Curtain of separation. And yet, together, as a triumvirate, democracy, Communism and monarchy allied and prevailed to defeat fascism, Nazism and rampant imperialism. Somehow, at least in promises, freedom from want and fear, and freedom of speech and religion, were our shared pledges.

Tsereteli could shape images of Vladimir Putin and the tsars, Mother Teresa and Liza Minnelli – anybody well known enough to merit a giant Tsereteli in a public square.

Is this an admirable ambition, or a self-seeking ego trip? Regardless, I couldn't ignore the magnitude of his talent and drive.

Somehow, over a number of semesters, I had become fascinated by the cornucopia of contradictions in the Columbus reputation. Poets, painters, biographers, cinematographers, scholars and especially sculptors, have projected any number of ideals upon the great discoveries: Intelligence with the gadgetry of exploration? Courage and daring? The "American Dream"? Was it always merely greed, lust for gold, desire for conquest and the infliction of pain for the sake of personal power and fame? Or was there at least a hint of hope for something spiritual?

Perhaps all art and poetry seeks in the end to pretend that the human quest may go awry – but contains as well something as high and mighty as the grand handmade idols made by Tsereteli!

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

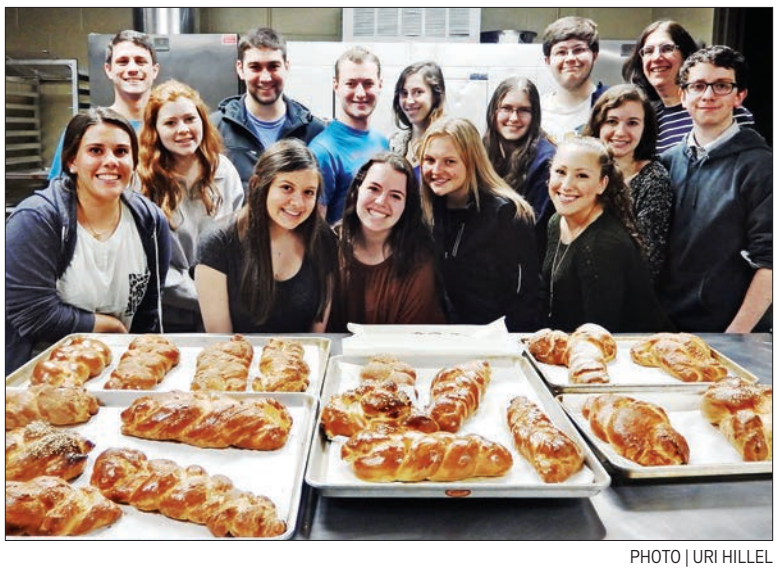


PHOTO | URI HILLEL

URI Hillel students after a Challah-making activity.

FROM PAGE 28 | **HILLEL**

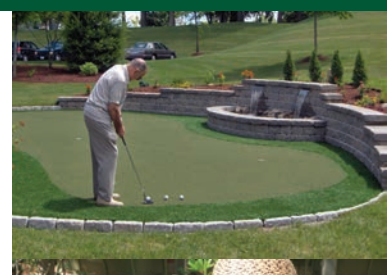
at the University of Rhode Island that provides college students with celebratory and significant Jewish experiences that forge enduring connections to Jewish life. Through URI Hillel, Jewish students have been able to intern or even find employment with partner agencies such as Camp JORI, various synagogues and the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island. The Jewish Alliance's Annual Campaign provides essential funding toward its yearly programming and engagement activities, providing hundreds of students with a Jewish lifeline while they live away from home.

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HILLARY SCHULMAN is a development associate at the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island.

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WE ARE READ ON SAFARI – Monika Curnett went on a safari in Kenya and Tanzania recently and reports it exceeded her expectations. We're happy she thought to bring us along!





BAR MITZVAH – Marcus George "Shlomo" Evans, became a Bar Mitzvah on Feb. 27 at Temple Torat Yisrael, in East Greenwich, with Rabbi Aaron Philmus officiating. Participants included Rabbi Ethan Adler, Cantor Frederick Scheff and his brother Jamison Evans.

At the end of the service Marcus played "Hatikvah" on alto sax while his brother Jamison waved the Israeli flag. During the lunch that followed, Marcus and fellow Rhode Island Philharmonic Youth Jazz Band members, led by Charlie Kalajian, entertained.



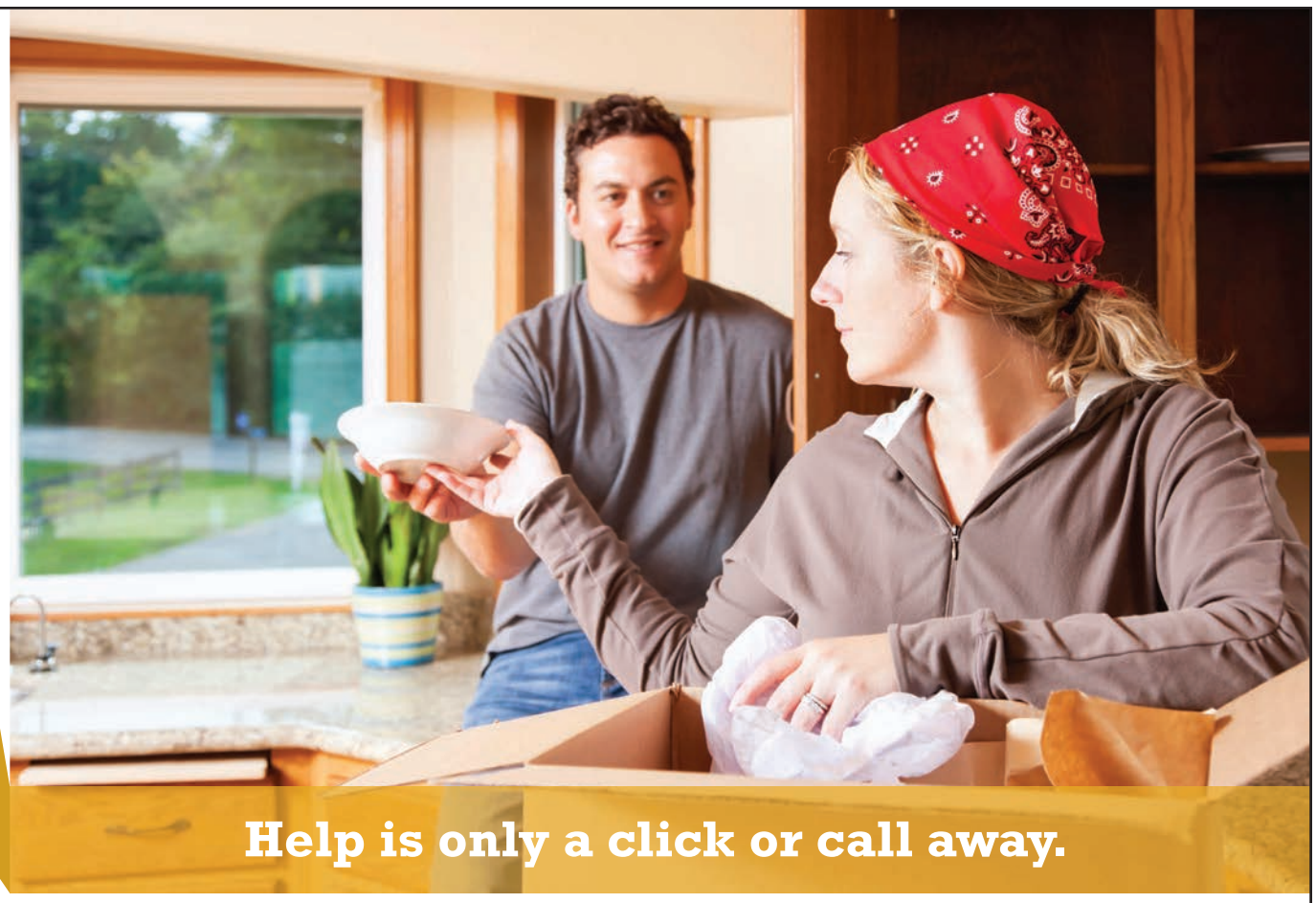
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WE ARE READ IN ISRAEL – Ken Schneider and Kevin Dwares were in Israel recently as Volunteers for Israel (see page 15 for more). Of course, The Voice was with them.

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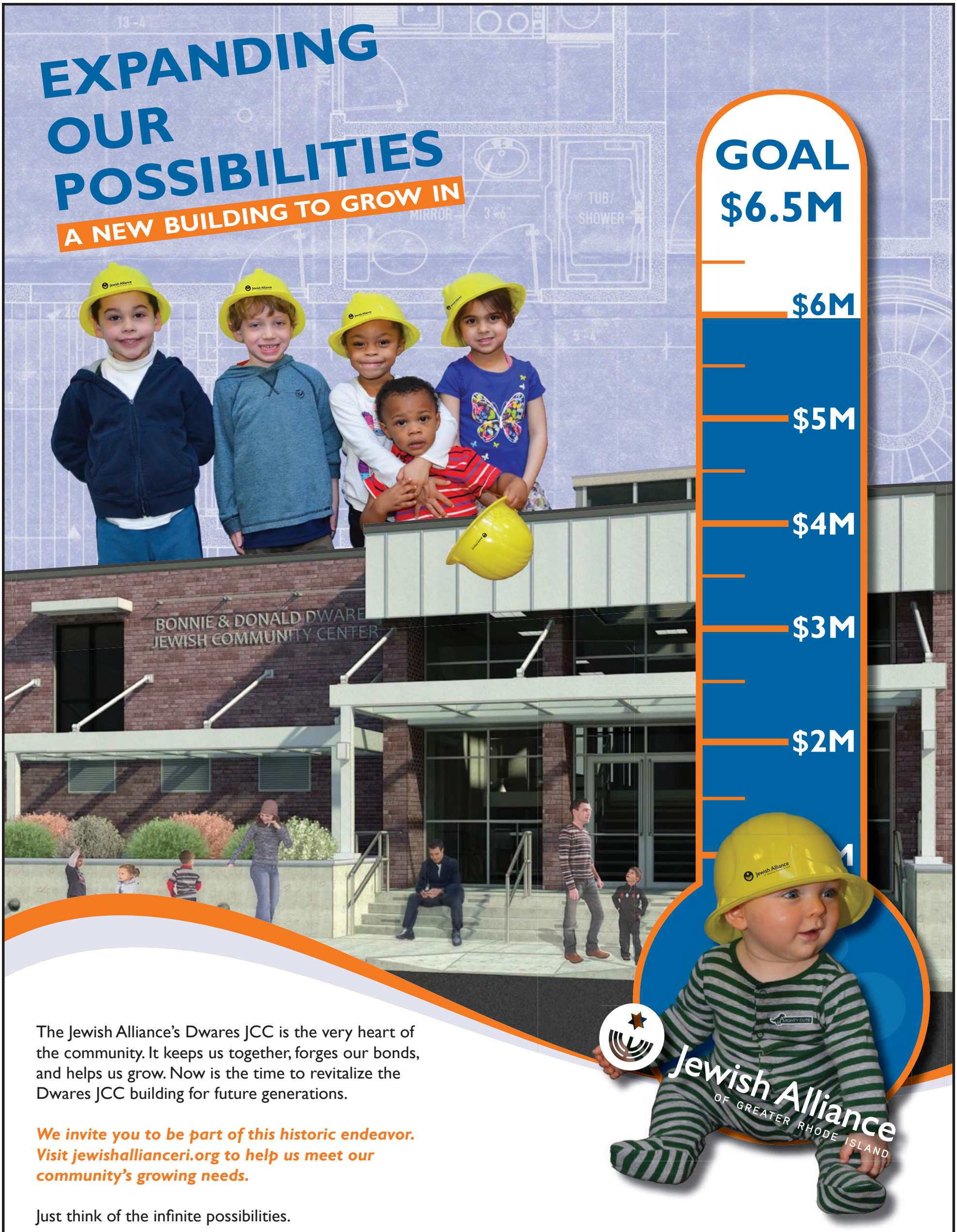
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