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SERVING RHODE ISLAND AND SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

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Torat Yisrael picks site in E. Greenwich

By Jonathan Rubin
jrubin@jfri.org

CRANSTON — If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. Temple Torat Yisrael of Cranston was ready for a move and had their eyes on a piece of land in East Greenwich in May. The deal fell through, but another site, this one west of Route 2 in a residential area, has become available. Synagogue leaders hope to close within a few months.

The temple, a Conservative-affiliated synagogue, has served Cranston's Jewish community for more than 50 years. About 6,300 Jews live in the Cranston-Warwick area, making it the second largest concentration of Jews in the state after Providence.

A recent demographic study has shown that younger families have been moving to the suburbs, in particular to southern Rhode Island, and East Greenwich has a population that some feel is a nucleus for a growing community.

"This is the beginning of an exciting journey for our congregation and we couldn't be more delighted by the potential of this site and the welcome we are receiving by our future East Greenwich community," said synagogue president Susan Smoller.

See Torat, page 3

Olson to lead JCC



Photo by Jonathan Rubin

Kevin Olson, standing, visits with the Yiddish Shmoozers last Friday at the JCC.

Former CRC head brings wealth of JCC experience to new post

By Mary Korr
mkorr@jfri.org

PROVIDENCE — Kevin Olson begins the new year with a new mandate — to lead the Jewish Community Center (JCC) of R.I. as center director.

Olson comes to the newly named position with the passion and commitment he has demonstrated as Community Relations Council (CRC) director at the Jewish Federation of R.I. (JFRI) for the past year and a half. Additionally, he has an expertise honed during his 17-year tenure at the JCC of St. Paul, Minn., serving for seven as its program director.

"The JCC is the crossroads of our community and is uniquely positioned to bring Jews from all denominations and backgrounds together to celebrate and explore with each other the many ways in which we are Jewish," he said. "The potential is unlimited and we can realize it by working in true partnership with other Jewish agencies, synagogues, organizations and individuals."

See OLSON, page 20

Ford's term pivotal for Soviet Jews

By Ben Harris

NEW YORK, Jan. 2 (JTA) — Shimon Peres represented Israel at the funeral of Gerald Ford.

The Israel vice premier appeared Tuesday at the services for the former U.S. president at Washington National Cathedral.

Rabbi Bruce Lustig of the Washington Hebrew Congregation joined other religious leaders in representing various denominations.

Ford, who in his brief term engaged in intensive diplomacy that paved the way for Israeli-Egyptian peace, died at age 93 last week.

Also attending the services was Ford's secretary of state, Henry Kissinger, whose intensive shuttle diplomacy helped create a truce between Israel and Egypt in 1975.

His presidency lasted less than 1,000 days, but it was enough time to support an international accord that provided a significant boost to the Soviet Jewry movement and marked a pivotal moment in the history of the Cold War.

Gerald Ford, who died Tuesday at 93, signed the Helsinki Declaration in August 1975, along with the leaders of the Soviet Union, Canada and 32 European nations.

The agreement required
See FORD, page 9

Israel mixed on Saddam's hanging

JERUSALEM, Dec. 31 (JTA) — If there was any doubt as to Saddam Hussein's diehard hatred of Israel, it was dispelled by his declaration on the gallows: "Long live Iraq, Palestine is Arab!"

Yet while the deposed dictator's execution over the weekend was deplored by Palestinians who long saw him as their champion, reactions in Israel were more mixed.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, perhaps wary of stoking

regional suspicions that the U.S.-led war in Iraq was part of a strategy to secure the Jewish state, had little comment on the death of a man who for decades had sown terror among Israelis — whether through his Scud missile salvos of the 1991 Gulf War or by bankrolling Palestinian suicide bombers.

"Iraqis have made their choice, and we hope for the Iraqi people that they establish a stable country for Iraq and the

See SADDAM, page 7



Photo: Brian Handberg/JTA

An Israeli newspaper lies on a table in a Jerusalem cafe, Dec. 31, 2006, showing Saddam Hussein's last moments as a noose is slipped around his neck by executioners.

Calendar

*Charting a Course
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ONGOING

TUES., JAN. 16

Koffler Bornstein Families Institute of Jewish Studies

7 p.m. Registration and first class sessions at 7:30. At Temple Emanu-El, 99 Taft Ave., Providence. All community members may enroll. Continued on seven subsequent Tues. at 7:30 p.m.: Jan. 23 & 30, Feb. 6, 13, 20, 27, & March 6. For more information call the synagogue office at 331-1616. See Community.

SUN., JAN. 7

New member brunch, jazz at Beth-El

11:15 a.m. Temple Beth-El, Providence. Ruth Cohen new member brunch. Jazz event to welcome new members to the congregation. Call for reservation 331-6070.

MON., JAN. 8

NCJW task force

7 p.m. Jewish Community Center, Elm Grove Ave., Providence. Second follow-up meeting of the Nat'l Council of Jewish

Women task force on human trafficking. For more information, email ztownsend@polarisproject.org, debchorn@aol.com or sal-jones57@gmail.com.

FRI., JAN. 12

Yiddish shmooz

10 — 11:30 a.m. at the Jewish Community Center, 401 Elm Grove Ave., Providence. First program of the new calendar year, focus on Yiddish and Yiddishkeit, cornerstones of the group's mission. All are welcome. Light refreshments. For more information call Elly, 861-8800, ext.107.

JCDS community text study

7:30 p.m. at the school, 85 Taft Ave., Providence. Hosted by Pamela Levanos. Free and open to the community. For more info contact Andrea Katzman at jcdsri.org

SUN., JAN. 14

Sinai educational program

11 a.m. Temple Sinai, 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. Educational program about this most important and familiar prayer, with Rabbi Joseph B. Meszler, the author of "Witness to the One: The Spiritual History of the Shma." For more information, contact Temple Sinai at (401) 942-8350.

Jewish Collaborative brunch n' learn

10 a.m. Brunch n' Learn with Dr. Lawrence Charap; talk on his research in American interfaith dialogue at the turn of the 20th century, with special emphasis on the early years of the Jewish community of Providence. Dr. Charap holds a Ph.D. in American history from Johns Hopkins University. He also teaches at URI's College of Continuing Education. with dairy brunch. Free to all. Come visit our new facility! The Center, 375 Kingstown Rd. at the Rotary, Narragansett. www.jewishcollaborative.org.

UPCOMING

SUN., JAN. 21

Combatants for Peace to speak

4 p.m. Jewish Community Center, 401 Elm Grove Ave., Providence. Israeli and Palestinian former fighters and current Coordinators of Combatants for Peace, Elik Elhanan and Sulaiman Al Hamri, will talk about their decision to renounce violence and to seek reconciliation and peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Sponsored by the RI Chapter of Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, the Jewish Alliance for Justice and Peace, <http://btvshalom.org>. Free and open to the public; reception

after the program. For more information, call Judy at (401) 751-8665 or email rhodeisland@btvshalom.org.

SAT., JAN. 27

Jewish Collaborative auction, dinner

7 p.m. Silent Auction and Dinner, featuring HD plasma TV raffle, rare sports and pop culture memorabilia, great vacations, and services offerings and more! Great deals for everyone! Proceeds to benefit the Jewish Collaborative and Hebrew School. Entrance, incl. Kosher dinner, \$25. The Center, 375 Kingstown Rd. at the Rotary, Narragansett. www.jewishcollaborative.org.

Spice trade caravan rolls on

The Jewish Community Center, Gallery Z, Johnson and Wales University and the International Institute of R.I. have joined forces to present arts and cultural events at sites around Providence.

Called the "Spice Trade Caravan" it was the brainchild of Dorothy Abram, J&WU professor of psychology, and is designed to appeal to all the senses. The color photographs of people around the world by Bili Mason are complemented by Abram's use of light, scent and movement.

The "Caravan" is being presented at "oases" or host sites, which started with four exhibitions held simultaneously from Dec. 11 to Jan. 8.

Abrams' inspiration was the biblical poem, "Song of Songs," which, she explained, "held the wisdom of the spice trade within its verses."

Throughout the coming year, the "Spice Trade Caravan" will travel to different venues around the city, called oases, featuring different periods and places in history.

The first oasis was at Gallery Z. The second oasis, which ends on Jan. 8, is at the JCC in Providence. It is centered by a photograph of the Torah and altar in a synagogue in India, showing how, although most of the worshippers have gone, the spirit lives on all over the world. The photo is displayed with a stack of suitcases and enhanced by a spicy floral scent.

The third oasis takes place at

Continued on Page 12

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CORRECTION:

In our Dec. 22 issue, we mistakenly listed that Jewish Family Service had a clothing drive to benefit Crossroads. Their drive actually benefitted clients and community members in need.

The Jewish Voice & Herald

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CANDLE LIGHTING
For greater Rhode Island

Jan. 5 4:10
Jan. 12 4:17
Jan. 19 4:25
Jan. 26 4:33



Torat From page 1



Photo by Jonathan Rubin

Torat's building once served as the Cranston Jewish Community Club in the 1940s. As membership grew in the late '40s, a congregation grew, and a thriving Hebrew school followed.

The congregation voted overwhelmingly to sign a Purchase and Sales Agreement and to try and acquire the 6.2 acres of property. The area lies near some commercial districts and a protected woodland area, and is set back from the street. The land already has a house on it, which could be utilized as a meeting space for the Jewish community while a building campaign is launched.

Israel gets millions to rebuild after war

\$910,000 raised locally
By Jonathan Rubin
jrubin@jfri.org

Israel's war with Hezbollah last July made headlines worldwide, but when the bombs stopped falling it began to quickly fade from public interest. The aftermath of armed conflicts takes many years to alleviate, however, and despite the war's cessation fundraising

efforts have continued in the United States on behalf of the Israeli people. United Jewish Communities, the national organization of Jewish Federations in North America, announced this week that its Israel Emergency Campaign (IEC) had raised \$353 million in pledges in the last six months; monies are being dispersed as pledges are paid,

See ISRAEL, page 6



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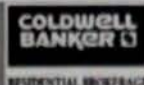
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Opinion

A MAJORITY OF ONE

Chief Rabbinate and the right of refusal

Your reporter has often been accused of having an unseemly over-dependence on clichés, a charge I will now reinforce. To quote Yogi Berra, "It's déjà vu all over again."

Have you been following the tribulations of our Beer-sheba correspondent, Alison Golub, as she tries to persuade the Israeli rabbinate that she is Jewish so that she can marry her Moroccan Jewish boyfriend? Alison is a Jewish-American woman whose parents are both Jewish and who has always regarded herself as Jewish and been so regarded by the Jewish community, and who was suddenly told by the Israeli rabbinate that she will have to prove her Jewish identity or undergo a conversion to the same Jewish religion she has always assumed was her birthright.



Yehuda Lev

Deja vu? And how, dating back to 1957 when I sought to marry a young woman from Chicago who came to join me in Jerusalem and for whom I had made all of the necessary preparations for a wedding, including the use of a spacious apartment for the ceremony, a *ketubba*, witnesses, a rabbi, invitations to assorted family and friends and even the glass to be stomped upon at the conclusion of the ceremony.

Our problem differed from Alison's in one important way. We had no difficulty in convincing the Jerusalem rabbinate that we were certifiably Jewish but they ques-

tioned the validity of my fiancée's earlier civil divorce that did not involve a "get", or Jewish document of divorce. And the Jerusalem rabbinate offered us an easy solution. "Get married in Tel Aviv," they suggested. "The rabbis are more lenient there." (I swear I am not making this up.)

Fortunately I had an Orthodox cousin, a professor at the Hebrew University who had been with me at the University of Chicago and who convinced the rabbinate that all was kosher so the wedding was celebrated as scheduled. But it left in me the same bitter taste that Alison describes in her justifiable anger at such treatment.

If you are expecting that the light of sweet reason might some day penetrate the Stygian darkness in which the Israeli rabbinate cloaks its decisions regarding us apostates, dream on. The Chief Rabbinate recently proposed a change in Israel's Law of Return that would deprive non-Orthodox converts to Judaism of their rights under that law, in effect negating their conversions. The bill would give Israeli rabbinic courts and the Chief Rabbinate sole authority over conversions by re-defining who is a Jew. At present the Law of Return defines as a Jew any person born of a Jewish mother or who converted to Judaism, regardless of the version of Judaism they were converted to. The new definition excludes non-Orthodox Jewish converts. It also appears to affect Orthodox conversions, as happened recently in Louisiana where three Orthodox rabbis signed a statement of conversion that was rejected by

Israel's Chief Rabbinate because it was handwritten, not typed. The rabbis in Louisiana tried to explain that all of their conversions are handwritten because "there are no Hebrew typewriters in Louisiana." Didn't help.

There is, to be sure, another side to this issue. In the late 1950s when I lived in Jerusalem, a distant cousin arrived intending to tour the country, but he no more than stepped off the boat in Haifa when he suffered a minor heart attack. As the only family member in Israel at the time, I was designated to visit him in a Haifa hospital, which I did, traveling back and forth from Jerusalem to Haifa on slow, smelly buses three times every week. One day in the hospital I met an Orthodox woman, also from Jerusalem, who drove to Haifa to visit a similarly ill relative and she offered to drive me to the hospital, adjusting her schedule to suit mine.

When my cousin was well enough to fly home, I thanked her for her thoughtfulness. "Oh no," she said. "It is I who must thank you." "Why?" I received a response I have never forgotten. "Because you gave me an opportunity to perform a *mitzvah*." That was a concept that would never have occurred to me. I hope it will prevail if ever the Chief Rabbis consider the effects of their decisions on Jewish men and women.

Yehuda Lev is a retired journalist who has worked in Israel, Europe and the United States. He writes a regular opinion column for the newspaper and can be reached at yehudal@cox.net.

Contradictions of Conservative ruling

By Elliot Cosgrove

CHICAGO, Dec. 7 (JTA) — An old Yiddish joke tells of a married couple who came to their rabbi complaining that they couldn't get along.

The rabbi listened to the husband and said, "My son, you're right." The rabbi then listened to the wife and said, "My daughter, you're right."

The rebbe turned to her husband and asked, "How can they possibly both be right?"

The rabbi replied, "My dear, you're also right!"

In a decision sure to befuddle much of American Jewry, the Conservative movement's authoritative Committee on Jewish Law and Standards voted recently to approve seemingly contradictory positions on homosexuality. Of the three papers approved, two affirmed the movement's prohibitive stance on homosexuality, while the third legitimized same-sex relationships within Jewish law — but retained a ban on male intercourse.

Ideologically, the deliberations served to affirm the enduring values and tensions embedded in a denomination that represents one-third of American Jewry.

The positions submitted to

the Law Committee represent Conservative Judaism's commitment both to contemporary Jews and traditional Judaism. The very fact that Conservative Judaism has the theological modesty to sanction significant differences of opinion highlights the movement's distinctive role in the North American religious landscape.

Pragmatic implications

Ideology aside, I find myself concerned with the pragmatic implications of this week's decision. It will be Conservative Judaism's ability to negotiate the complex and interrelated practical issues raised by the vote, not the vote itself, that will indicate the movement's long-term strength.

As a congregational rabbi in Chicago, my first thoughts likely will be to tend to those members of my community confounded by the decision. At times like these, pulpit rabbis must draw from the depth of their pastoral skills to validate the Jews in their midst, seeking to build strong communities in the presence of such divisive questions.

How do Conservative clergy welcome both heterosexual and homosexual cou-

ples in a clear and consistent manner? Will congregations hire or fire rabbis based on the stances they take? In large congregations with multiple clergy, are communities prepared to employ religious leadership with opposing views on this issue?

How will rabbis who follow the movement's halakhically sanctioned prohibitive stance be affirmed if they're accused of homophobia? After all, why in the world would a Conservative rabbi refuse

to sanctify same-sex relationships when the option for doing so is now available?

Effective models of congregational education must be implemented that prepare Conservative Jews for the manifold repercussions of the decision.

If same-sex commitment ceremonies or weddings lie on the near horizon, what do such ceremonies look like? Given that thousands of years

of rabbinic interpretation do not provide provisions toward legitimizing homosexual relationships, what does it mean to construct a same-sex commitment ceremony "*k'dat moshe v'yisrael*" (in accordance with the laws of Moses and Israel)?

Who is going to instruct Conservative rabbis on how to conduct a premarital meeting with a homosexual couple — especially a couple the rabbi must counsel to shun the physical activity that forms the core of a functioning relationship?

To say that this week's vote leaves many issues unresolved is an understatement. It is incumbent upon the movement's institutional arms to support its constituent communities and clergy by responding to the decision in a timely, consistent and intentional manner.

(*Elliot Cosgrove, a Conservative rabbi at Anshe Emet Synagogue in Chicago, is pursuing a doctorate in modern Jewish thought at the University of Chicago.*)

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dr. Aronson's Brooklyn column

Dr. Aronson's enjoyable column of Dec. 22, brings out the following points.

Harry Houdini AKA Ignatz Weiss was not from Brooklyn, but born in Hungary and raised in Appleton, Wis. where his father was the rabbi. Norman Mailer was born in Long Branch, NJ. His father may have been the first South African Jew to immigrate to the United States.

As a practicing pediatrician I have not seen Kopliks spots since the measles vaccine was invented. If I were to see them, I would ask if the child has had his vaccinations and if not, why not.

Many of my friends' children are living in Brooklyn due to the high rents in Manhattan. Although my parents were married in Canarsie, I never had the privilege of living in Brooklyn.

Daniel Nussbaum II, MD, FAAP

Submission Guidelines

Submissions must be signed and include city of residence and telephone number. Letters should be limited to 250 words, and Viewpoint pieces to 700 words. Submissions may be edited for length. Send submissions to: Jewish Voice & Herald, 130 Sessions St., Providence, RI 02906, or E-mail to: voiceherald@jfri.org.

FROM THE OLD OLIVETTI

The 'coop' du jour

People ask me, "How do you get your ideas?" Issue after issue, there's 'The Old Olivetti' like clock-work." The short answer is that I don't get ideas, I just



Josh Stein

turn on the machine and start typing. Ollie does the rest. Other people say, "Don't you have a computer? Do you really use an old electric typewriter? How do you correspond with your editor?" The answers are "no," "yes" and "by carrier pigeon, sometimes by phone." Then they usually look at me oddly and question the carrier pigeon part.

"Nu, so what's not to believe?" I ask.

"Well, you gotta admit," they rejoinder, "carrier pigeons in this day and age are a bit archaic, almost anachronistic, virtually Luddite."

"Yes," I admit, but ask, "So what?"

"So why not live in the modern age?"

Live in the modern age? What's so great about the modern age? It's already someone's past. The past is permanent, no matter how people pervert it. Things happened. Along come historians who try to impart meaning to it; and along come exploiters who either twist, deny or make it up.

It's twisted by Bush who makes Kerry (the war hero) the villain while he (the shirker) emerges conquering hero.

It's denied by the likes of David Irving, David Duke, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and Neturei Karta. "Who's Neturei Karta?" you ask. It's not a who, it's a what — a group of self-proclaimed "Guardians of the City," a small but vocal Hasidic band of Shabbas-protecting, rock-throwing brothers who believe that the establishment of a Jewish national home without divine authorization is a shanda!

Members don't exactly deny that the Holocaust happened, but they do deplore using it as an opportunity to create the State of Israel, which they see as "a poison, threatening true Jews." They pray "that the underlying cause of strife and bloodshed in the Middle East, namely the state known

as Israel, be totally and peacefully dissolved." So much for a two-state solution.

Oh, and the Holocaust was the divine will. "The Zionists," their spokesperson told the Tehran anti-Holocaust conference, "with their secular pompous approach behave in complete opposition to this philosophy and dare to say 'Never Again.' They have the audacity to think that they can prevent the Almighty from repeating a Holocaust. This is heresy." Can we arrange for a grudge match between these fellows and those other religious zealots who want to tear down the Dome of the Rock to build the Third Temple? I'd pay money to see that show of piety.

Then there are those who fabricate history. Parson Mason Weems comes to mind. Do you know of him? A Johnny-on-the-spot; when George Washington died, he published "A History of the Life and Death, Virtues and Exploits of Gen. George Washington," which is as close to fictionalized hagiography imposed on the American public until the more recent exploits of Karl Rove.

"I cannot tell a lie, I cut down the cherry tree." Washington, or Weems? Weems. Washington praying on his knees in the woods at Valley Forge? Weems, not Washington. Washington asking all to leave his death bed, praying, lifting his feet onto the bed and gently expiring, his soul lifted up to heaven? Weems. In an Op-Ed piece in a recent New York Times I was reminded of the fact that Washington illegally claimed land west of the line the Brits said should be reserved to the Indians, fought a war to invalidate British land policies hemming in the settlers (amongst other things) and then protested when squatters occupied land now legally his. (Not Weems.)

So I use an old Olivetti and carrier pigeons. It's more honest that way. Oh, wait, a bird just flew into the coop bearing a message. It's from fearless editor. Let me read it. "Josh: Stop telling people we correspond by pigeon; it's a lie."

Josh Stein is a professor of history at Roger Williams University and writes a regular column for the newspaper. He can be reached at jstein@rwu.edu.

Viewpoint

From combatants to partners for peace, reconciliation

By Diane Balsler and Carinne Luck

It is very difficult these days to be openly identified with peace efforts in the Middle East. Palestinian factions fight intermittently and militants often violate the Palestinian Authority's ceasefire with Israel, while Israel has conducted military operations in the West Bank and has announced plans for the establishment of a new settlement there.

The Palestinian and Israeli members of Combatants for Peace (CFP) have a special understanding of these problems. Formerly sworn enemies, literally dedicated to killing each other in combat, these men were once among the first responders to violence such as that seen over the course of 2006.

Today, however, the roughly 150 Israelis and Palestinians who make up CFP have chosen to lay down arms in favor of coexistence. The Israelis were all once combat soldiers, and the Palestinians were militants, planning or executing attacks on Israeli targets in the name of Palestinian liberation. They now take the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission as their model, meeting regularly, discussing their past with brutal honesty, and searching for common ground.

In simple terms, they no longer believe that that the bloodshed with which the two societies have lived for decades can be stopped unless people of good will act together to bring an end to the occupation and stop all forms of violence. As such, they advocate for mutually acceptable negotiations, leading to the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

In this, they act in the best interests of Israelis and Palestinians alike. Neither community will know real peace or stability until such a solution is achieved. Moreover, coexisting Palestinian and Israeli states would open the door to greater regional stability than the Middle East has seen in the modern age — something of great importance to US interests, as well.

The American Jewish community has always been concerned with the future and well-being of Israel. And now, a growing number of Ameri-

can Jews are coming to see the importance of forging a negotiated, two-state resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. CFP is then a natural ally for those who seek a secure future for all the region's people.

Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, the Jewish Alliance for Justice and Peace, is currently sponsoring a Combatants For Peace tour to 22 American cities because we believe their speakers' messages are vitally important for American audiences to hear. Since 2001 Brit Tzedek has advocated for a Palestinian state next to Israel. We believe that exposure to the activities and beliefs of organizations like CFP that can help make this dream a reality.

And in spite of — or perhaps because of — the perilous times in which we now live, there has never been a more crucial time for CFP's message to be received. The international community, especially the United States, must truly understand that all parties to the conflict must be heard, and that talks are the only way out of the violence. Brit Tzedek v'Shalom is bringing Combatants for Peace on this national tour so that their eloquent voices, advocating for peace and an end to violence, will resonate across the United States.

We must all recognize that continuing to punish the Palestinian public for their democratically held elections will not solve the problem. In fact, we can see that by reducing the Palestinian people to despera-

tion, the situation has gotten worse. Israel is not served by chaos on its doorstep; American interests will not be met by running street battles in Palestinian cities.

All American Jews should heed the transformative voices of Combatants for Peace. In the past, these men didn't only support the killing — they picked up arms to get the job done. But now they're here to tell the American community: It must stop. Only by ending the occupation, establishing a viable Palestinian state, and stopping all use of violence, can we hope to build peace in the Middle East.

Combatants for Peace will speak in Rhode Island on Sunday, Jan. 21 at 4 p.m. at the Jewish Community Center of RI, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence. This event is free and open to the public. A reception will follow. For more information, call Judy Kaye, co-chair of the RI Chapter of Brit Tzedek, at 751-8665, or email rhodeisland@brvshalom.org.

Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, the Jewish Alliance for Justice and Peace, is a national grassroots movement that educates and mobilizes American Jews in support of a negotiated two-state resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Diane Balsler is the national advocacy chair and Carinne Luck is national director of chapter and grassroots development.



Federation

FROM THE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

A whole is greater than the sum of its parts
(Why I love this job)

Stephen R. Silberfarb By

Several weeks ago in Newport, a half dozen community leaders hosted the last of the seven parlor meetings designed to introduce me (and my wife Laura) to Jewish communities across the state. Although each meeting was held in a different area, there was a common theme: Jewish people in Rhode Island want a strong and vibrant local community that is part of a unified Rhode Island Jewish community.

Maybe that doesn't sound like much. But oh, is it ever critical.

When we think about community we think beyond our own individual and agency needs and wants. It means, when it's working as it should, that we are part of something bigger, shared and of greater capacity, efficiency and potential. It also means that we accept that as part of a community not everything goes our way and we understand and value a process that creates and implements consensus. The alternative – "bumping into each other accidentally-like," in the words of Forrest Gump, is simply unfathomable.

The bottom line is that when we build community the right way, we make a difference in peoples' Jewish lives. We strengthen Jewishness in every form. How about that as a tagline? "Living gener-

ously to strengthen Jewish lives."

Not unexpectedly, the parlor meetings also offered a forum to criticize Federation. Some of the criticism was about resources, some about alienation and relevance. All of it was from the heart and with the hope that a better connection with Federation will enhance their community as well as the statewide Jewish community. That is the kind of criticism that is invaluable.

Seven Regions of Wisdom (with apologies to T.E. Lawrence, aka Lawrence of Arabia)

I also heard many hopes and wishes for the future. Most revolved around Jewish education and engagement. In parts of the state, like South County, the Jewish community is building and growing (On Dec. 17, the South County Hebrew School rededicated its new building and celebrated Hanukkah – mazal tov and yasher koach. But for a scheduling conflict my family and I would have joined the celebration). Jewish kids in North Kingstown, Wakefield and the area deserve and need Jewish educational opportunities just like Jewish kids elsewhere in the state (to say nothing of adult programming!). I know few would

disagree with this notion.

West Bay (Cranston, Warwick, East Greenwich and the environs) is home to about one-third of Rhode Island's Jews. With a population less concentrated than the Jewish community in the Providence/Pawtucket area – and no less a desire to participate in Jewish life – West Bay Jews may need engagement options different than those that can be met by an urban (East Side) Jewish "campus."

In Woonsocket, Attleboro, and Barrington (what we in Federation call Northern RI/Southeastern Massachusetts and East Bay, respectively) the Jewish communities are determined to meet the need for Jewish education and enlightenment. There is a deep desire to bring Jewish teens together, to share with fellow Jews and to build quality programs and services so that meaningful Jewish life in their communities is accessible. And with regard to engaging the proud and active communities in Newport County, we must view the bridges as connectors not barriers.

These seven parlor meetings have been instrumental in bringing the diversity of Jewish life in

Rhode Island alive to me. I have promised to come back to each region, and to engage each and every Jewish institution. I have promised to listen and to collaborate. In turn, each region knows and understands that it, too, has an obligation to participate fully in the community. There is no other way to strengthen Jewish life.

I invite you to share your thoughts and feedback with me at any time. My email is: stephen@jfri.org.

Israel From page 3

and this month some \$35 million is being given to the areas hit hardest by the war.

In Rhode Island, the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island raised \$910,000 from 730 donors in a lightning fast Israel Emergency Campaign, chaired by Robert and Judy Mann. The campaign is winding down, although donations will still be accepted into the middle of 2007.

Campaigners worked hard to raise cash during the early days of the conflict for immediate needs – relocating citizens away from the war zone, providing trauma relief for the wounded and elderly, easing the stay in bomb shelters and providing safe activities for children.

In October, funds went towards helping schools and students get back on track. Building repairs and counseling services continued as well.

Now, the long-term goals are being wrestled with. During the warfare, large parts of the Galilee were evacuated, many moved south. Many areas have been slow to regain their populations, especially universities such as Tel-Hai in the Upper Galilee, which saw attendance drop by 30 percent. New scholarships have helped reverse this trend in an attempt to draw students and others back into the area.

Over the past few months, small business grants are fighting slumps in the tourism and other industries. Damaged absorption and immigration centers were repaired, and \$15 million was also used to establish a fund for victims and their families. Trauma support and other types of counseling continue to run their course as well.

To date nearly \$9 million has been given to non-Jewish populations impacted by the war.



Stephen Silberfarb



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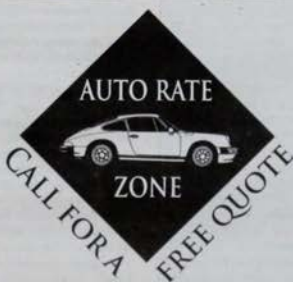
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From page 1

Saddam reaction mixed

Middle East," Olmert spokeswoman Miri Eisin said.

The images of Saddam submitting quietly to his execution were played repeatedly over Israeli television and stirred reluctant misgivings among even seasoned old warriors.

Nahum Barnea, the veteran Yediot Achronot pundit, wrote in a front-page article that the execution was "good riddance" for a man whose nuclear reactor was bombed by Israeli jets in 1981 and who was the target of an aborted Israeli assassination plan in 1992.

Some Israeli commentators noted that international civil liberties groups had protested at the very act of executing Saddam, saying this was unbefitting of an emerging democracy like Iraq and frustrated efforts at investigating other crimes by the ex-despot.

Unlike the United States, Israel has resorted to the death penalty only once — in the case of convicted Nazi war criminal

Adolf Eichmann. That hanging was seen as both bringing closure to Holocaust survivors and enshrining Israel's status as a national haven for Jews.

Ehud Yaari, Arab affairs analyst for Israel's Channel 2 television, said that by executing Saddam, the United States and its allies may have unwittingly ushered in a new era of extreme Middle Eastern violence.

"Saddam was the last of the great pan-Arab nationalists, those who ruled through open military might and defiance," Yaari said. "Now we are faced with the prospect of ascendant sub-national terror — for Sunni Muslims, by Al-Qaida, and for Shi'ites, through Iranian-sponsored groups like Hezbollah."

Saddam's execution was inopportune for Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, who has been trying to revive peace talks with Israel by curbing the Hamas Islamists with whom he shares power.

One of the great diplomatic blunders of Abbas' late predecessor, Yasser Arafat, was to side with Saddam during the 1991 Gulf War. But given the Iraqi dictator's heroic status among many Arabs, total silence was a risk especially as the execution coincided with a statement issued by al-Qaida deputy chief Ayman al-Zawahiri denouncing Abbas as a "traitor" for having "sold Palestine." Abbas' Fatah faction made do with issuing a statement denouncing the hanging as "absolutely illegitimate" and noting Saddam's help for the Palestinian people.

Hamas was far more explicit.

"This crime of execution, which was carried out on the first day of Eid al-Adha, is a token of disrespect for all Islamic and Arab values," read a statement by the group, referring to the Muslim feast of the sacrifice, which began over the weekend.

Thank You!

The Women's Alliance of the JFRI is especially grateful to the following women, for increasing their 2007 campaign gifts to nationally-recognized levels:

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January 23 ~ February 21 ~ April 12

4 Shevat ~ 3 Adar ~ 9 Omer

Tradition tells us that Rosh Hodesh (the marking of the new moon) was once celebrated by both Jewish men and women. In later years, Rosh Hodesh became primarily a women's holiday — a day for women to be together to enjoy meaningful introspection, dialogue and study. The Women's Alliance of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island invites you to join in the study of "Women of Valor" as we continue our eighth year of this unique tradition.

Session #1: Tuesday, January 23, 2007

12:00pm-1:30pm

Temple Beth El- 70 Orchard Avenue, Providence RI

\$14.00 (lunch included)

Speaker- Professor Judith Wegner

Session #2: Wednesday, February 21, 2007

12:00pm-1:30pm

Temple Sinai- 30 Hagen Avenue, Cranston RI

\$14.00 (lunch included)

Speaker- Leonore Sones

Session #3: Thursday, April 12, 2007

7:00pm-9:00pm

Providence Hebrew Day School- 450 Elm Grove Avenue, Providence RI

\$5.00 (desert included)

Speaker- Rabbi Elyse Wechterman

*A snow date in March will be scheduled if so needed.

Invitations which include this year's specific themes and speakers will be coming the week of January 1, 2007. Please stay tuned!

Contact Shanna Yarmovsky at (401) 421-4111 ext. 206 or at syarmovsky@jfri.org with any questions.

Nation

A difficult time becomes harder: Intermarrieds seek burial options

By Sue Fishkoff

SAN FRANCISCO (JTA) — Rob Berman didn't know where to bury his 51-year-old wife, Kathleen, when she died suddenly in September 2005.

Berman is Jewish and the Newton, Mass., couple raised their three children as Jews, but his Catholic wife never converted.

When they married 25 years ago, Berman already had a plot in a nearby Jewish cemetery, but it did not accept non-Jews. So the couple avoided the issue.

"We were 28 and going to live forever," Berman said.

Suddenly he was at a loss.

"You're trying to think clearly on the day your spouse dies at a time when you can't be rational," he said.

Berman visited the city cem-

etery, but felt "something was missing." He wanted a Jewish space for Kathleen to mark the Jewish life they led together.

Then he heard about Beit Olam, which opened near Boston in 1999 to serve Conservative, Reform and interfaith families.

Developed by 16 synagogues, the three-acre grounds are divided into sections separated by the space required by Jewish law to delineate consecrated from non-consecrated ground. Only rabbis may officiate, only Jewish symbols are permitted on the headstones, and the cemetery is closed on Shabbat and Jewish holidays.

"It allows the interfaith community to embrace Jewish life and Jewish afterlife," founder and president Stanley Kaplan said.

That fit Berman's needs.

"When I walked in, there

was something important to me about her being in an area with other mixed marriages," he said. "The names of the Jews and non-Jews on the graves — it was comforting."

Berman bought two plots, "so I'll be there, too."

With the intermarriage rate approaching 50 percent nationally, the Bermans' predicament is shared by a growing number of couples: After raising Jewish children and building Jewish homes, they want to remain together in death. But that can't happen in a Jewish cemetery that follows halachah, or Jewish law.

"The halachah is very clear," said Rabbi Elchonon Zohn, head of the chevra kadisha, or Jewish burial society, of Queens, N.Y. "Only members of the Jewish faith can be buried together."

Jewish burial policy is com-

pllicated by details of ownership and operation. There are for-profit and nonprofit cemeteries; cemeteries operated by synagogues or groups of synagogues; independent Jewish cemeteries; Jewish sections of nonsectarian cemeteries; and other permutations, each following their own policies, which vary across the denominations.

While Orthodox-controlled cemeteries strictly follow Jewish law, Reform cemeteries will bury non-Jews next to their immediate Jewish relatives. A non-Jewish service cannot be used, and non-Jewish religious symbols on the tombstone are not allowed.

Conservative rabbis are guided by a 1991 teshuvah, or responsum, of the Rabbinical Assembly's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards that states Jews may not be buried next to non-Jews, but if it happens, that does not invalidate the cemetery's Jewish status.

This is relevant to the growing number of cemeteries shared by Conservative and Reform congregations, since the Reform will bury non-Jews and patrilineal Jews, who are not considered Jewish by the Conservative movement. Conservative Jews may use such cemeteries, the teshuvah concludes.

The ruling leaves much discretion to individual rabbis. Many are asking the committee for clearer guidance, said committee Chairman Rabbi Kassel Abelson. He is working on a new Conservative teshuvah "that will be more permissive."

That can't come soon enough for many in the field.

Martin Birnbaum, president of the Jewish Funeral Directors of America, said most Jewish cemeteries do not permit burial of non-Jews.

"Conservative cemeteries will accept cremains faster than a non-Jew," he said, referring to the Jewish prohibition on cremation.

While Birnbaum counsels intermarried couples to plan ahead and avoid buying plots in Jewish cemeteries, he sometimes has to tell mourners that their non-Jewish relative cannot be buried with the rest of the family.

"It's not my rule, but it comes out as my rule," he said. "So we come off looking like the bad guys."

The situation will only grow more pressing, said Rabbi Kerry Olitzky, executive director of the Jewish Outreach Institute.

"If it's not at critical proportions, it soon will be, especially in the liberal movements," he said. "One-third of the Reform community is intermarried."

"If our synagogues and official Jewish cemeteries don't provide options, families will simply

opt out," Olitzky said.

That means choosing a nonsectarian cemetery or one maintained by a different faith. Catholic cemeteries, for example, permit the burial of non-Catholic spouses and often are chosen by intermarried couples.

"Families that are together in life should remain together in death," said Roman Szabelski, executive director of the Catholic Cemeteries of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

The pressure on Jewish cemeteries to provide burial space for intermarried couples has increased dramatically, with many new initiatives in the past decade.

Stanley Kaplan is executive director of the Jewish Cemetery Association of Massachusetts, which holds title to half the state's 200 Jewish cemeteries. None permitted interfaith burials in 1998 when Beit Olam was conceived. Intermarried couples chose non-Jewish cemeteries.

It was, Kaplan said, "a shanda," or shame, "that there was no Jewishness to their end-of-life ceremony."

More than 1,000 of the 2,000 burial sites were sold in the first three months, most to people in their 40s. That's decades younger than the typical purchaser, Kaplan said, "but they knew if they didn't buy now, there wouldn't be space when they needed it."

On Dec. 3, just east of San Francisco, Gan Shalom broke ground. Slated to open next summer as a nonprofit cemetery shared by five Reform and Conservative synagogues, Gan Shalom was presented as a solution to local Jewish cemeteries fast nearing capacity. Insiders say its real purpose is to provide an alternative for San Francisco's highly intermarried East Bay, now served only by an Orthodox-controlled cemetery.

Gene Kaufman, executive director of Sinai Memorial Chapel, which owns the new cemetery, said policy has not yet been set, but he expects it will have a small Orthodox section while most of the land will be open to interfaith burial.

In general, the problem is more acute in smaller towns. Larger cities can support more than one cemetery, providing liberal and stricter options.

There is no Jewish cemetery in Port Angeles, a backwater town along Washington's Pacific coast. Olympic B'nai Shalom Havurah, with 40 to 50 members, uses the public cemetery.

"There's no separate section," congregant John Debey said. "We just bury them."

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Ford

From page 1



Photos: Courtesy Gerald R. Ford Library

Gerald Ford is sworn in as the 38th president of the United States on Aug. 9, 1974, as his wife Betty looks on.

The agreement required the Soviet Union to respect human rights, including fundamental freedoms of religion, thought and conscience, and contributed to mounting international pressure to free persecuted Soviet Jews.

"His administration's signing of the Helsinki accords, which established a clear link between international relations and human rights, was the most important step in the struggle to win the Cold War — even though, when they were signing it, both sides didn't necessarily realize this," said Natan Sharansky, an icon

of the Soviet Jewry movement.

Sharansky was a founder of the Moscow Helsinki Group, an organization started to monitor Soviet compliance with the accord.

"The West thought that making a connection to human rights was important in and of itself, even if there was a chance that it turned out to be mere lip service," said Sharansky, a former Israeli Cabinet minister who now is head of strategic studies at the Shalem Center, an academic research institution in Jerusalem. "As it happened, it ended up being the most decisive move to help

dissidents in the USSR."

Ford already had distinguished himself as a vocal supporter of Soviet Jews. In January 1975 he signed into law the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, which denied most-favored nation trading status to countries with restrictive emigration policies — an attempt to pressure the Kremlin into approving more exit visas for Soviet Jews.

As a congressman from Michigan and Republican minority leader in the U.S. House of Representatives, Ford attended a rally for Soviet Jewry in 1971 at Madison Square Garden in New York.

Malcolm Hoenelein, who had just become head of the New York Conference on Soviet Jewry and today is executive vice

chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, recalls that Ford spoke "very movingly, very forcefully" at the New York event.

In a statement issued Wednesday, the Anti-Defamation League remembered Ford for his support of Soviet Jews as well as his strong stance on Israel.

"President Ford supported a strong Israel and worked with partial success to oppose the international Arab boycott of companies doing business with Israel," the statement said. "President Ford deplored the infamous 1975 U.N. resolution equating Zionism with racism as a 'wholly unjustified action.'"

Appointed by Richard

Nixon following the resignation of Vice President Spiro Agnew, Ford became president after Nixon resigned in August 1974 during the Watergate scandal. He remains the only U.S. president never elected as either president or vice president.

Taking over from Nixon, Ford kept Henry Kissinger as secretary of state, mindful of the delicate diplomatic fabric that emerged in the Middle East after the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Kissinger's intensive shuttle diplomacy and Ford's active interest culminated in a truce between Israel and Egypt in 1975. That truce, and the quiet that ensued, laid the groundwork for the 1978

Camp David peace accords brokered by Ford's successor, Jimmy Carter.



President Ford signs the final act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in Helsinki, Finland, in August 1975.

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Arts & Culture

The swashbuckling bar mitzvah:

'Zorro' film unmask's rite's meaning

By Dinah A. Spritzer
 VIENNA (JTA) — In the new Austrian film "Zorro's Bar Mitzvah," Jewish party docu-

menter Andre describes the addictive nature of his video extravaganzas.
 "There are people in Israel

who collect my films, not just of their family, any family," he explains.

He philosophizes that perhaps it is his destiny to endlessly attend bar and bat mitzvah parties because he never got to have one.

Hard to imagine collecting bar mitzvah videos?

After seeing "Zorro," you might be tempted to play it again and again like Andre's Israeli fans, to catch what the four families portrayed have to say about Jewishness, adulthood, identity, gender, schmaltz and, yes, Zorro the masked hero.

This masterful cinematic documentary of three recent Viennese bar mitzvahs and one bat mitzvah is the work of Austrian Jewish filmmaker Ruth Beckermann, whose documentaries about World War II and Jewish memory have earned her critical acclaim.

The 90-minute film, in German with English subtitles, is making the round of festivals. The film's title is inspired by the video clip Andre is shooting for a Georgian-Viennese family, which will be the centerpiece of their extravagant bar mitzvah party. Sharon, the handsome bar mitzvah who looks more like 19 than 12, is to play Zorro, and Andre sets up a shoot replete with horses, stunt men, makeup art-



Austrian filmmaker Ruth Beckermann stands in front of a poster for her film 'Zorro's Bar Mitzvah,' in her Vienna home.

ists, costumes and sword fighting in front at a Baroque Austrian estate.

Never far from the scene is Sharon's sexy mother, whose perfect French manicured nails, showy outfits and willingness to spend vast sums on a party that resembles the Academy Awards seem to fascinate Beckermann.

The lavishness, however, is undercut by the sincerity of mother and son. Sharon's mother is only doing what her extended family expects — they want a party appropriate for the son that her own father circumcised.

Far from being spoiled, Sharon is dutiful, respectful and performs his Torah portion with finesse.

Then in the film's most hilarious moment, after a downcast Sharon tells Andre he only wanted to play the man in black because of a scene from "The Legend of Zorro" that "my mother won't allow" — Antonio Banderas as Zorro startles and then embraces a half naked Catherine Zeta-Jones — the audience is treated to that scene.

When Sharon finally speaks on camera about the meaning of his bar mitzvah, it's clear that dancers imported from Israel and a stage encircled by torches are not an inappropriate tribute for what he feels is the most important day of his life.

The greatest contrast to the cleavage and booty shaking at the Georgian party is the bar mitzvah of Moishe, whose family is from a Chasidic branch of Judaism.

Watching Moishe pray and recite Torah at such a high level surely makes this the most distilled passage into Jewish adulthood in "Zorro."

Beckermann makes a point of showing how female friends and relatives, including Moishe's mother, can only view the proceedings by peering through gaps in a row of bushes set up as a gender barrier in the party room.

The other bar/bat mitzvahs are full of family drama.

We meet the mother of young Sophie praying behind the curtain that separates women from men at an Orthodox service. She peeps out as Austria's chief rabbi, Paul Chaim Eisenberg, says a prayer on her behalf. The mother, Nana, has survived the Asian tsunami while on vacation and clearly is still shaken by the experience. Going ahead with Sophie's bat mitzvah after such a trauma is clearly not easy.

In Europe, most synagogues function according to Orthodox principles, even when their members are largely secular.

One of Sophie's American relatives complains about women having to sit upstairs during the service.

As a Hungarian Jew who came of age in the spring of 1945, Sophie's grandfather, Hans, never had the chance for a bar mitzvah because "conditions were such that it was impossible to hold one," he recalls.

The same is true for the Iraq-born grandfather of Tom, whose Iraqi-Israeli-Viennese mother organizes Tom's bar mitzvah at Israel's Western Wall.

One of the more ardent bar mitzvah supporters in the film is Tom's Christian father, named Christian.

"What it means to me is that he is becoming a man," he says of Tom. "And for me personally it is very important because I was raised as a Christian, and confirmed, and I can't remember it at all."

If there is anything missing from "Zorro," it is the translation of the Hebrew religious passages spoken in the film. It would be nice for Jews and non-Jews to get the meaning of what these new adults are saying.

Other than that omission, the film is a delightful snapshot of Jewish life within one European city where Jewish traditions thrive despite their near destruction during the Holocaust.

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News Briefs

Teddy Kollek dies



JERUSALEM: Jerusalem's ex-mayor Teddy Kollek died. Kollek, who served for 28 years at the head of Israel's capital, passed away Tuesday. He was 95. Known by his nickname Teddy, Theodor Kollek was born in Austria and moved to pre-state Palestine in 1935. During World War II he served as an intelligence asset for Allied forces, a job that would prepare him for his next job: liaison for the fledgling State of Israel's Haganah militia in the United States.

After Israel's founding, Kollek ran the office of Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion. He first became Jerusalem's mayor in 1965, and when eastern areas of the city were liberated in the Six Day War two years later, worked tirelessly to bring Jewish and Arab residents closer. Kollek was voted out of City Hall in 1993 and replaced by Ehud Olmert, now Israel's prime minister. He was married and had two children. (JTA)

Re-working road map

WASHINGTON: The Bush administration is considering a plan to declare an independent Palestinian state with provisional borders by the end of 2007. Sources in Washington said it could be an element of a new American Middle East peace plan. At the same time, in an effort to bolster the regime of Mahmoud Abbas, the administration has also begun lobbying Congress to provide \$100 million to fund forces loyal to the Palestinian president. A diplomatic source, briefed recently by administration officials on the idea of a state with provisional borders, said that it would allow President Bush to achieve his goal of a two-state solution within a reasonable framework. (FORWARD)

Aliyah numbers

JERUSALEM: The number of immigrants to Israel from North America reached a 23-year high in 2006 despite an overall drop in aliyah to the Jewish state. Three thousand, two hundred Jews from the United States and Canada made the move last year, continuing

an annual rise of about 10 percent for the past half decade. But overall, aliyah rates in 2006 fell to an 18 year low of 21,000, due mainly to a lessening of Jews arriving from the former Soviet Union. Numbers were also down from France and Eastern Europe. (HA'ARETZ)

Israel at 7.1 M

JERUSALEM: Israel's population stands at 7.1 million at the end of 2006, according to a new report by the Central Bureau of Statistics. Seventy-six percent of the population is Jewish. Annual population growth remained steady at 1.8 percent, close to the 1980s level before the large influx of Russian and Ethiopian Jews. Of the roughly 120,000 new Israelis this year, 88 percent were births and the rest were new immigrants. (JTA)

Population count

NEW YORK: While we are counting Jews, the United Jewish Committee is considering dropping its surveys of American Jews that have been taking place at 10-year intervals. A debate over the findings of the 2000 survey that estimated the U. S. Jewish population at 5.2 million, a drop of 300,000 from that of 1990, has raised questions of flawed methodologies for defining and counting Jews. The latest edition of the American Jewish Yearbook, just published, lists the Jewish population as 6.4 million, basing its figures on local Jewish population studies. Its authors admit to problems; smaller communities are under-counted and people with two homes can be counted twice but until there is a universally accepted definition of who is a Jew, population counts will continue to be challenged. (JTA)

Settlement delayed

JERUSALEM: Israel has agreed to postpone the creation of a new West Bank settlement hous-

ing Jews who were evacuated from their homes in the Gaza Strip. The decision came as a result of pressure from the United States that claimed it would violate Israel's obligation under the "road map." A State Department spokesman said that establishing the new settlement "could be viewed as predetermining the outcome of final-status negotiations." It was to have been placed on a former military base and would have housed 30 Israeli families. (JTA)

Billionaire backs Bibi

TEL AVIV: A Russian-Israeli billionaire, who recently talked of running for Prime Minister of Israel, has endorsed Benjamin Netanyahu's bid to regain the premiership. Arkadi Gaydamak, whose lavish public philanthropy has stirred speculation that he could enter Israeli politics, has told an interviewer, "Of all the people on the list of prime ministerial candidates, Netanyahu is the most fitting and the most responsible." Gaydamak's backing, if he continues his support for the former prime minister, could enable Netanyahu to save the time and effort needed for fund raising. (JTA)

Married gays can register

JERUSALEM: In a precedent-setting ruling, Israel's High Court of Justice, corresponding to our Supreme Court, has ruled that five gay couples who married outside of Israel, must be registered as married couples in the Population Registry. The court rejected the position of the State Attorney, that Israel lacks the appropriate legal framework for such marriages and therefore cannot register them. Reaction was mixed. Itay Pinkas, who married his partner in Toronto, said: "This is a historic day for the

gay community and for Israel. We will keep battling for full equality in other areas." The Minister for Religious Affairs, Yitzhak Cohen of the Shas Party thought otherwise. "The High Court has sunken in the gates of defilement and has torn out the last mezuzah from its doors." The debate continues. (JTA)

And finally Believe it or not: Web wives

NEW YORK: Jewish men, whose wives are out of town or ill, have an unknown friend with a website offering palageshim, or temporary wives. Citing rabbinic sources, the blogger insists that

palagesh is "a guard for the Torah" in that it keeps married men away from ladies of the evening. Rabbi Avi Shafran, spokesman for Agudath Israel of America, asked by the Jewish Week to comment, suggested a better use for the blogger's time. "He should call Agudath's Volunteer Services Department and we'll help him get a life." Meanwhile there seems little chance that the idea will spread. By year's end 14 men and only one woman had signed up. (NEW YORK JEWISH WEEK)

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Community



The next Storytime program is "The me I want to be," and the book is "The Mitzvah Giraffe." It will meet Tuesday, Jan. 9, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Temple Emanu-El sisterhood lounge (Follow the pink arrows past the main office). For more information, call Lisa Shorr at 921-2607 or email lshorr@pctrouble.com.



Temple Torat Yisrael congregants cooked Christmas dinner for the Rhode Island Family Shelter in Warwick. This is the third kosher Christmas Dinner the Cranston temple members prepared a holiday diner for the shelter. From left to right, are: David Smoller, Marcia Slobin, Roberta Arsac (VP for programming); David Wasser, Judith Lubiner (Social Action chair), Rabbi Amy Levin, Barry Golden, Ilene Bojar, Mitchell Golden, David Bojar, Cindy Davis, Melanie Davis, Ellen Golden, Sara Pulner.

Meeting new moms

Parenting group offered by JFS and the JCC

PROVIDENCE — Jewish Family Service and the Jewish Community Center are co-sponsoring a drop-in group for new mothers. This group will give new mothers a chance to meet

other new moms and chat about the challenges faced by all new parents. Topics will include sleep (or lack thereof), eating, family relationships and baby temperaments.

The program will take place on Thursday mornings from 10-11:30 a.m. at the JCC, beginning on Jan. 11. Discussions will be

facilitated by Suzanne Jacobs, LICSW, a child and family therapist. There is no charge for the group. This program was funded by a grant from the Women's Alliance Endowment Fund at JFRI.

Continued from Page 2
Spice trade

Adoption group to meet

PROVIDENCE — Adoption Options is holding a free informational meeting for those exploring the possibility of adoption. In Rhode Island, the next meeting is scheduled on Thursday, Jan. 18, from 6 to 7 p.m. in the United Way building at 229 Waterman Street, Providence (second floor). The meetings are always held on the third Thursday of the month.

For more information, contact Peg Boyle, LICSW, at

401-331-5437 or visit www.adoptionoptions.org.

Licensed adoption workers with significant experience working with adoptive families, birth mothers and children will be available to provide information and answer questions about the adoption process, home studies and other pertinent questions.

In Massachusetts, call 1-800-337-6513 for the next scheduled meeting.

around the world celebrate their beauty and poignant innocence. Their losses and sorrows are commemorated with intermittently falling blossoms.

The fourth oasis, in the J and W exhibition window on Chestnut St., at the John Hazen White School of Arts and Sciences, presents photographs of a Somali family "adopted" by Abrams and her students. United Nations refugees, the Abdirrahman family fled war and famine in their native country.

From Jan. 8 to March 23, the Caravan will be at the Culinary Archives and Museum at J and W for art, dance, food samples and fabric demonstrations

At the annual ball of the International Institute on April 14, handmade chocolates from various places along the spice route will be offered.

As the Spice Trade Caravan moves on, it will visit the J&W International Festival on April 17 and 18. Jewish culinary student Ron B.D. Klein will demonstrate and offer tastings of his kosher-style Mexican mole as he uses a metate and pestle brought from his grandmother's village in Mexico.

For more information or to be added to the email list announcing Spice Trade Caravan events, contact dabram@jwu.edu.

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Yaakov Weiner, 5, and his sister, Rachel, 7.



Sheva Taitelbaum, 7.



Tzvi Golden, 6.

Artists capture Hanukkah

By Mary Korr
mkorr@jfri.org

PROVIDENCE – A lively group of young artists gathered at the newspaper last week to collect their prizes as winners of the annual Hanukkah art contest. The hundreds of entries were displayed on tables, showing unique interpretations of the theme, “Hanukkah in New England.”

Yaakov Weiner, 5, and his sister, Rachel, 7, were both winners, to their amazement – although their styles were quite different. She chose a lighthouse with a cutout menorah lighting up the night for seamen to navigate the season of light by. His was a hazy sunset in watercolor with dreidels traced over it.

Tzvi Golden, 6, took a multimedia approach bold approach. “First the watercolors, then markers,” he said. And while the concept of the menorah and dreidels (which looked like the sails of ships albeit upside down) flowed freely, his greatest challenge was in spelling the word Hanukkah, which is a challenge to many. “I had to ask the teacher,” he said. “It’s C-H-A-N-U-K-A-H.”

Amanda Levenson, 9, peopled her seaside landscape with her mom, dad and cousins and birds in flight. But she was particularly proud 1. “Of winning” and 2. “Of the little table and flowers, which I have learned to draw this year.”

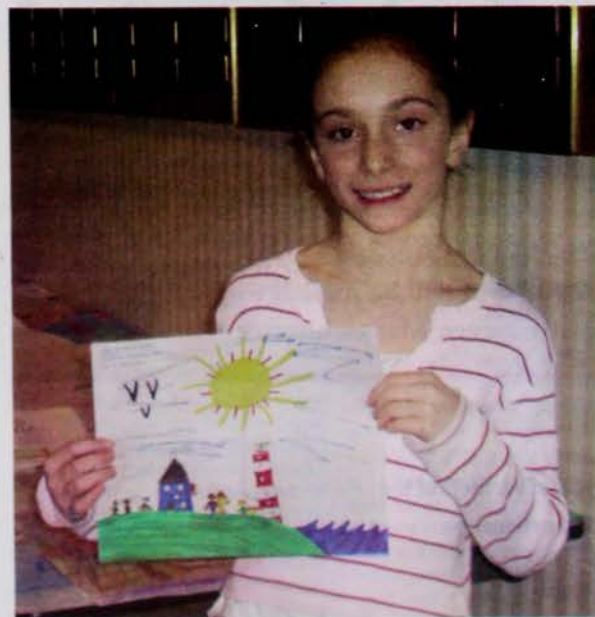
Jessica Benun, 5, kept it

simple. She drew herself, “with the Star of David,” she said. And in line with the theme, she wrote “New England” in clouds and snow falling through a window.

Sheva Taitelbaum, 7, used a “ripping” technique for her two figures playing the dreidel game. Though unfamiliar to the contest judges, she assured them it was very hard to do and certainly not easy like scissor-cut forms.

Rachel Kaufman, 11, showed her artistic ability in 3-D and with bold Hebrew lettering.

The children and siblings enjoyed finding the work of their friends on display, and were very polite in congratulating their fellow winners.



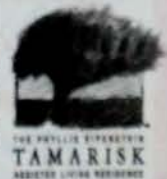
Amanda Levenson, 9.



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Beth David dedicates new facility; one step closer to dream of a collaborative campus



Richard Winkler, president of the Jewish Collaborative, at the dedication of the new facility of Congregation Beth David as a house of worship.



The Rev. Ethan Adler welcomed congregants and spoke of the connection between Hanukkah (dedication) and the building dedication ceremony held Dec. 17.

NARRAGANSETT –

With the renovation of a single family home on the Jewish Collaborative site in Narragansett, Congregation Beth David is one phase closer to realizing its dream of a full-service campus designed to meet the religious, cultural, educational, and social needs of its growing Jewish community. On Sunday, Dec. 17, members of the community, as well as students and families from the Hebrew school, met to dedicate the building as a house of worship.

Students were able to explore the freshly painted and carpeted rooms that will soon serve as their classrooms, and had their first lessons in their own rooms. After the classroom sessions, students and everyone in attendance were invited to the chapel area for the dedication ceremony.

The Rev. Ethan Adler welcomed everyone, and reinforced the connection between Hanukkah (dedication) and the morning's activities in dedicating the building. Rev. Adler also mentioned that since the Hebrew School is about 40 years old, the symbolic journey, reminiscent of the ancient Israelites in the wilderness, has finally come to an end, and the congregation has arrived at the "Holy Land."

Previously, the school met on the University of Rhode Island campus, both at Hillel and at

White Hall. Rev. Adler also led a rousing applause for Rick Karnes, who serves as school board president, for his tireless efforts in preparing the building to be ready for use by the school.

Richard Winkler, president of the Jewish Collaborative, announced, "We rededicate this house of worship. This new sanctuary is a loving example of what dedication to our community can - and will - achieve." Winkler was referring to the future phases of Beth David's plans for the 11-acre site, situated between the Narragansett Rotary and Dawson's Pond.

Other participants included Sara Nelson, president of Congregation Beth David; Rick Karnes, building committee chairman, and Stan Barnett, Beth David ritual committee chairman. Also sharing their thoughts were Jon Beck, a member of the Hebrew School board; Marc Ladin, Beth David board member, and Etti Graff, who taught at the Hebrew School during its early years. Following the dedication, young and old alike enjoyed a dairy brunch with latkes.

A formal, community-wide dedication of the building will take place this spring. For more information about the community's facility and program plans, visit www.jewishcollaborative.org or contact miriam.ladin@gmail.com.



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This year we will travel to Kenya and give our time to a hospital. While there, we will travel to Uganda and share a Shabbat dinner and weekend with a tribe of Ugandan Jews. Last year we visited a temple in Nairobi that was built by Holocaust survivors. All of these experiences link us to generations past, and future generations. Giving to our Jewish Community matters to us a great deal — it helps us help Jews throughout the world.

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Food

Easy beef stew if winter blows in

By Marylyn Graff
mgrafl@jfri.org

Now that the holiday season is over, how about sitting the family down to a hearty winter dinner? A really tasty beef stew with carrots, potatoes and onions sounds good to me.

Don't buy stew meat already cut up. The butcher doesn't bother to follow the grain of the meat. This doesn't take long and will reward you with a better stew. Buy about two lbs. of chuck or shoulder steak, depending on the size of your family. Cut into

1 1/2 inch cubes, separating the parts of the muscle and cutting with the grain of the meat. A soup bone tucked into the pot will add a lot to the flavor of your gravy. (You can always treat the dog after removing it from the stew.)

Ingredients

3 good-sized onions, cut in quarters or eighths, stem ends intact so they don't fall apart

About four Maine or Yukon potatoes, peeled and cut the same size as meat

Four or five medium carrots, peeled and cut into 1 inch pieces

2 or 3 cloves of garlic, crushed

1 bay leaf

1 tsp. thyme

1-2 cups beef or chicken stock or broth

1/2 cup or more dry red wine

1-2 Tblsps. tomato paste

Salt and pepper

Flour, enough to coat meat.

Vegetable oil for browning

Heat about 1/8 inch oil in a large, heavy pot until it shimmers. Put 1/2 cup or so of flour into a medium paper bag with a little salt and pepper, (you can always add more.) About a tsp. of paprika will help with color. Put about 1/4 of meat into bag and shake to coat. Take meat out,



one piece at a time, shaking to remove excess flour and put into pot. Brown well on all sides and remove to a dish. Do not crowd pot. Do this until all meat is browned, adding oil as needed. Put cut-up onions in the pot and brown, adding garlic when almost finished. Pour wine into pot and bring to a simmer, scraping up any browned bits on the bottom. Put meat back into pot with wine, stock or broth and tomato paste, tuck in the bone and bay leaf, sprinkle with thyme. Cover pot and place in a 300-degree oven for one hour. Put in potatoes

and carrots, making sure they are submerged. Cook in oven for another hour or until meat is tender and vegetables are cooked. (You can put potatoes and carrots in at the beginning; they will be somewhat softer, but juices will flavor them well.)

Remove meat and vegetables from pot discard bay leaf and the bone and reduce gravy, stirring up from the bottom. Serve with some very good bread and a green salad.

This is even better if made a day ahead and rewarmed.



Photo: Stuart Cahill

The Conservative movement is working to create a certification for food produced in a socially just way.

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Hazon grant recipients share their homegrown wares at a recent conference at the Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center in Falls Village, Conn.

Forum offers food for thought

Implores Jews to think, how did this food get to my plate?

By Alexandra J. Wall

FALLS VILLAGE, Conn., Dec. 28 (JTA) - David Frank graduated from New York's French Culinary Institute without ever tasting a single morsel.

As a culinary student, he braised, flambéed and sautéed - then stepped back to allow his classmates to taste and judge the food over which he labored.

An Orthodox Jew from Forest Hills, N.Y., Frank is a sales and events manager and consulting chef for a kosher caterer. He always dreamed of becoming a chef, but feared his traditional lifestyle might get in the way.

Not to worry. Frank consulted his rabbi, who - perhaps recognizing that the kosher world could use more culinary talent -- told him that handling unkosher food was not a problem.

"Make everything, taste nothing," the rabbi said.

"I got marked down on my midterm for under seasoning," Frank said. "But I redeemed myself with my final exam. I made a wild mushroom consommé that made my instructor's jaw drop."

Frank now dreams of opening his own upscale kosher dairy restaurant in New York. But in addition to having the traditional kosher certification, Frank wants to use locally grown produce, organic when possible.

He was among 150 people attending a recent conference at the Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center here titled "From Latkes to Lattes: Hazon's Conference on Jews, Food & Con-

temporary Life."

An organization that made a name for itself with environmental bike rides in the United States and Israel, Hazon now is trying to change the way Jews think about food.

Farm program

With Tuv Ha'aretz, its community-supported agriculture program, Hazon has five synagogues in cities across the country supporting local farms. Five more, plus one in Israel, are scheduled to begin next year.

Synagogue members buy shares in the farm and receive a box of organic produce each week. In some locations, subscribers must work several days a year on the farm, ensuring that they have not only a direct connection with the farmer who grows their food but the place where the food grows.

Rabbi Shmuel Simenowitz, the conference's only Hasidic participant, said the community-supported agriculture program, or CSA, has biblical roots.

Simenowitz, who gave up a successful career in entertainment law to be a farmer, runs Sweet Whisper Farms in southern Vermont, which has been described as "Vermont's only shomer Shabbat, organic, horse-powered maple farm."

Knowing how food reaches one's plate should be just as important as a traditional kosher certification, suggested Rabbi Natan Margalit, a teacher and writer from Newton, Mass.

Citing Michael Pollan's

recent book, "The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals," as an example of how disconnected most Americans are from their food, Margalit asked, "Can I look at what is on my plate and take it back to where it was grown? Can I take that journey with it and feel good about it, or if I can't, what am I saying with my bracha," or blessing?

Eco-kosher

While Jewish Renewal coined the term "eco-kashrut" some 20 years ago, Hazon Executive Director Nigel Savage asked whether his organization should adopt the term or work to ensure that a traditional kosher certification includes the new parameters as well.

Indeed, such issues in food awareness have reached new heights, Savage said.

"More and more Jews are thinking about not only kosher food but more contemporary issues, like where our food comes from, how it's grown and how healthy it is," he said. "We think this is a beginning of a new Jewish food movement."

As if he needed more evidence, the Conservative movement last week announced that a commission is working to create a tzedek hechsher, a certification for food produced in a socially just way -- particularly with regard to safe and fair working conditions -- which would be used in addition to traditional kosher certification.

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AS WE GROW OLDER

Immigration—then and now

In recent months, the topic of immigration comes up frequently in the media and from the mouths



Tema Gouse

of our elected officials. More accurately, what they are discussing is illegal immigration. The populace has diverse and uneducated opinions on the matter, but are aware that it must be resolved.

I recall learning in high school that for about two centuries of our statehood, anyone who wished to enter the United States, could do so without reason, clearance, documentation, or money. Remember "Send me your poor and homeless yearning to be free"?

And then in the first quarter of the 20th century, some Washington politicians did not like the "flavor" of the diverse immigrants and decided to enact legislation setting quotas for future immigration. The quotas limited the number of individuals from each country who could migrate to our shores, per year. The quotas were established according to the biases of the elected officials. It was often unfair, but became law. An immigration process was established and for many years there were few violations.

In the past two decades illegal immigration has become rampant, and the nation is divided about how to correct the influx and what to do with those illegal residents who are here now.

All of this leads up to a period when revision of immigration laws seemed highly justified. When World War II ended and the concentration camps were liberated, there were no homes (or welcoming nations) to absorb the survivors. The law required that each immigrant must have an affiant, an American citizen who would sign an affidavit assuming responsibility that the non-citizen would not become a public charge.

My knowledge of this comes from my employment at the Jewish Family Services of Chicago, from 1945 to 1947. I was the youngest social worker in my branch office but I was the only one who could speak both Yiddish and German. Because of that, most of the survivors who came to Chicago were part of my caseload. Those who came to each large city had, with a few exceptions, no one to serve as their affiants.

And here Jewish pride takes over. As soon as the war ended and the horror of the camp experience

was obvious, every Jewish philanthropy assumed some responsibility for assisting the survivors in any way possible. The federal government was, however, unwilling to modify the usual procedures and requirements for immigration, despite the fact that thousands of Jews were sitting stateless and impoverished and in poor health in reformulated camps, with no options.

So, the nation's Jewish leaders, in collaboration with the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society, the Joint Distributions Committee, and the Jewish family service agencies in the major cities prevailed on the Immigration Department to allow them to become Corporate Affiants, (instead of an individual affiant) promising to feed, house, educate, heal and care for those victims until they could become self-sufficient.

And it worked—without public funding of any kind. The immigrants arrived in New York and were dispersed to the various communities, where most became healthier and self-sufficient at amazing rates. They were eager to learn English and become American citizens. They welcomed the opportunity to regain their Jewish identities with pride, rather than fear. And I was proud to be in on the beginning of that process.

That was immigration THEN. But there are still many people in all parts of the world who would like to immigrate. They have prepared the necessary documentation and await their turn in the quota listings. But few are called because 12 million illegal aliens have stolen into the country in the past two decades, and there are limits to how many thousands can be absorbed.

Many greedy entrepreneurs hire the desperate illegal citizens at substandard wages and prevail on politicians to allow them to remain in this country. Because they are illegal and have no documents, they pay no taxes, but boost the cost of education and medical care for taxpayers. Out of need or inclination, they are responsible for higher crime rates in areas where they settle.

And the Congress and the White House seem impotent to compromise or resolve this enigma with some balance of humanity and reality. Today's immigrants do not have HIAS, JDC, and communities of compassionate compatriots to take on their problems. This is immigration NOW.

Tema Gouse of Cranston writes a regular column on seniors' issues.



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Arlene Rogol, left, of Pawtucket, participates in a discussion on AB Yehoshua at the Dec. 7th program for Read Across Jewish R.I. which was held at Temple Sinai in Cranston.

'Read Across Jewish R.I.' program continues

Read Across Jewish Rhode Island is a literacy project of the Bureau of Jewish Education (BJE) of R.I. The goal is to highlight Jewish literature and involve members of the community in a dialogue focusing on Jewish books and issues. This year's book is A.B. Yehoshua's "A Woman in Jerusalem."

This year's program began with guest speaker Joshua Ellison at Temple Sinai in Cranston. Ellison, the editor of "Habitus: A Diaspora Journal," presented background information about the author, including Yehoshua's heritage as a fifth-generation Jerusalemite and as a Sephardi Jew. Ellison also spoke about some of Yehoshua's political positions, and without giving away the story, showed how they informed the book itself. "A Woman in Jerusalem," published by Harcourt, is available at local bookstores, libraries, and in the BJE library. The Bureau has copies of the book for sale and can help anyone obtain a book. In addition, the Bureau has prepared a discussion guide to accompany the book and welcomes book groups, havurot, and book clubs to call us at 401.331.0956 for a facilitator. The discussion is available for download on our website at www.bjeri.org.

For more information, contact Jana Brenman, BJE program coordinator at 331.0956, ext. 184 or jbrenman@bjeri.org.

Program events:
Updates will be posted at www.bjeri.org

Thurs., Feb. 1
AB Yehoshua Film Program
Barrington Public Library,
281 County Road, Barrington
Sun., Feb. 11

Excerpts & book discussion
with Judy Greenblatt, Director of

Library Services, BJE/RI
Shalom Apartments, 1
Shalom Drive, Warwick, RI
Mon., March 12

Excerpts & Book Discussion
with Judy Greenblatt, Director of
Library Services, BJE/RI

Temple Emanu-El Leisure
Club, 99 Taft Ave., Providence
Thurs., March 22

Guest speaker, Dani Steiner,
Head of School, JCSRI

Borders Cranston, Garden
City, 190 Hillside Road, Cranston

Sun., April 29
Closing program
Brown Hillel, 80 Brown St.,
Providence

Description of the book:

A woman in her forties is a victim of a suicide bombing at a Jerusalem market. Her body lies nameless in a hospital morgue. She had apparently worked as a cleaning woman at a bakery, but there is no record of her employment. When a Jerusalem daily accuses the bakery of "gross negligence and inhumanity toward an employee," the bakery's owner, overwhelmed by guilt, entrusts the task of identifying and burying the victim to a human resources man. This man is at first reluctant to take on the job, but as the facts of the woman's life take shape—she was an engineer from the former Soviet Union, a non-Jew on a religious pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and, judging by an early photograph, beautiful—he yields to feelings of regret, atonement, and even love.

At once profoundly serious and highly entertaining, A. B. Yehoshua astonishes us with his mastery, often unexpected turns in the story and with his ability to get under the skin and into the soul of Israel today.

Making a difference, one light bulb (CFL) at a time

On Sunday, Dec. 17 at 4:45 p.m. Rabbi Mordechi Eskovitz changed the Ner Tamid (Eternal Light) at Touro Synagogue from an incandescent light bulb to a compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulb. Recognizing the importance of energy efficiency and our responsibility to global stewardship, Touro joins 500 synagogues and Jewish institutions in 41 states in adopting energy effi-

ciency and conservation measures this year.

In Rhode Island, the new group "Rhode Island Jewish Environmental Alliance (RIJEA)" has taken the responsibility of promoting the national campaign "A Light Among Nations" in the local community.

Elsewhere in Rhode Island, Brown/RISD Hillel is including CFL bulbs in over 200 Hanuk-

kah gift packages it sends each year to members of the Brown and RISD communities. Temple Emanu-El will be offering CFL bulbs free to its members as a first step in their campaign to encourage the whole Jewish community to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions by changing over to CFLs.

Jewish study classes to resume

PROVIDENCE — The Koffler Bornstein Families Institute of Jewish Studies at Temple Emanu-El will open its second semester on Tues., Jan. 16, with registration at 7 p.m., classes beginning at 7:30 at the synagogue, 99 Taft Ave., and will continue on seven subsequent Tuesday evenings—Jan. 23 and 30, Feb. 6, 13, 20, 27, and March 6.

Offerings include Talmud Study, led by Rabbi Wayne Franklin; Jewish Readers Theatre, led by Florence Markoff; The Many Voices of Psalms, led by Jane Myers; Introduction to Yiddish, led by Mara Sokolsky; and Congregational Choral Club, led by Cantor Brian Mayer. In addition, a four-session mini-course in cooking, Beyond Chicken Soup, led by Marjorie Pelcovits, will begin on Feb. 6 and continue on Feb. 13 and 27 and March 6.

Temple Emanu-El welcomes all interested community members to join a class. For more information, call the synagogue office at 331-1616.

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Community

Brief bio

Kevin Olson and his family relocated to Rhode Island when his wife, Amy, a native Rhode Islander, became director of Hillel at the University of R.I. not quite two years ago.

The couple, who lives in Cranston, shares a passion for the theater and performing and cultural arts. He has worked as a director and has taught college-level acting courses, most recently at the Community College of R.I. Olson earned an undergraduate degree in speech and theater from the State University of New York in Oneonta, and a master of fine arts in theater directing from the University of Minnesota.

The Olsons have two children, Daniel and Shira, who attend Cranston High School West.

OLSON

from page 1

'Unanimous'

"Kevin's awareness of the issues facing our community and his significant experience launching a variety of relevant JCC programs make him ideal for this job," said Jeffrey Vogel, JCC president.

His selection after a national search was unanimous; the search committee was chaired by JCC first vice president Douglas Emanuel, who noted the advantage of Olson's multi-faceted work within the Jewish community here which should allow a "seamless leadership transition."

Olson fills a leadership gap. Recently, Linda Singer-Berk left her position as assistant executive director at the JCC after a decade there. In 2005, the then executive director Rick Nelson did not renew his contract in a mutual decision made with the board, just as the JCC embarked on a \$1.6-million renovation of its fitness facilities. There have been other staff changes as well.

On Wednesday, Olson said, "While the JCC faces several serious challenges in the near

future, I am confident that significant ground-work will be laid in the coming months to help the JCC improve its operations and increase its competitive edge for our core businesses - health and fitness, aquatics, child care and camp. Success in those areas will be most welcome but must be paired with a revitalized expansion of our Jewish focus and activity."

Federation has made an agreement with the JCC to assume responsibility for the center's financial/accounting needs as well as helping with facility management and planning, freeing up Olson's time to focus on the revitalization.

Federation president Herb Stern cited Olson's "professionalism and skill. I know Kevin and the JCC will be significant partners with us at the JFRI to provide exciting and innovative programming that engages and inspires our community."

Stephen R. Silberfarb, executive vice president of JFRI, said, "Kevin's departure from Federation is admittedly a mixed blessing. We are losing a top-notch professional but gaining one at

an important sister agency. So it was with great enthusiasm that we strongly supported the JCC's effort to recruit Kevin."

Transitions

Sitting in his new office surrounded by boxes, ringing phones, and files piled high on his desk, Olson considers the challenge ahead.

His priorities are internal and external - creating a solid infrastructure with strong organizational practices and getting to know the staff, the lay leadership, and the membership, such as the Yiddish Shmoozers who are meeting in an adjacent room on this Friday morning.

He pops in to grab a photo

with them; the personal touch is part of his modus operandi. He is a strong supporter of Yiddishkeit and of "exporting" and integrating the Jewish world - cultural and otherwise - into the larger community.

Boots on the ground

Olson is an activist who "walks the walk" - as CRC director, he worked on, trained for and joined The Journey Home five-day march in May from South County to the statehouse alongside rabbis, interfaith and civic leaders and civilians from all walks of life. Its purpose was to advocate for the homeless and affordable housing. A \$50-million affordable housing referen-

dum passed in the subsequent November election.

He credits CRC efforts with helping to pass the felon voter restoration referendum in November.

At CRC, he organized Election 2006 forums which brought the Congressional and gubernatorial candidates into Federation to hear issues of concern to the Jewish community, both local and worldwide.

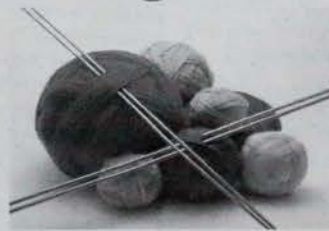
Sharon Gaines, CRC chair, said Olson knows how to "balance vision with a realistic sense of what is attainable."

David H. Leach, chair of the Government Affairs Task Force, worked closely with Olson. "Kevin knew the importance of being proactive on Israel. He was spearheading a campus initiative to educate campus activists in how to deal with anti-Israel propaganda. He was involved with getting a Muslim-Jewish dialogue off the ground. I will miss his insight on issues but am sure that I have a friend at the Center," Leach said.

"We will miss Kevin at the Federation, and we are excited about working with him to inspire Jewish journeys," Silberfarb added.

For Olson, this journey began Tuesday, Jan. 2.

"Mitzvah of the Month" Knitting is Back!



The Mitzvah for January and March is knitting!

Help decide who will be the lucky recipients of our scarves.

January 29th, 10:00 a.m. - Noon
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'Makin' menschen' conference planned

By Larry Katz

Public and private schools have been urged more and more to teach "character education." Some studies of Jewish parents show that the primary reason for sending their children to Jewish Sunday or day schools, outside of B'nei Mitzvah education, is to promote a moral culture.

To enhance the role of teachers in promoting moral values and actions, the Bureau of Jewish Education of R.I. will sponsor a conference on the topic of "Makin' Menschen." The annual Joseph and Leba Zelniker Conference will feature Rabbi Richard Fagan, a consultant on moral education. He will keynote the conference on Sunday morning, Jan. 28, at Temple Beth-El. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m.

Rabbi Fagan's theme will be "Raisin' Menschen: What's

See facing page



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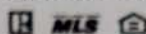
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from facing page

“Makin’ menschen conference

in Your Toolkit?” The Jewish moral education toolkit includes such basics as Mitzvot (commandments), Middot (values), and Svava (moral reasoning). But how do we “operationalize” them? Participants will join Rabbi Fagan in examining some hands-on tools which blend the wisdom of our Torah with best practices from education and psychology in guiding our students to becoming menschen.

Rabbi Richard S. Fagan is the Education Consultant for Moral Education and for Traditional and Conservative Synagogue Schools at the Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education of Greater Philadelphia (ACAJE). His primary work is in the areas of character development and moral reasoning, teacher training and professional development, and curriculum writing. He is also on the Coordinating Committee for ACAJE’s cutting-edge project, NESS (Nurturing Excellence in Synagogue Schools).

Workshops

The keynote address will be followed by two sessions of breakout workshops. Each of the workshops will be repeated so that participants may choose to attend two of them. Rabbi Fagan will facilitate “The Tale End.” Teachers can use our stories – the ones we tell or read – the ones our

students tell, or write – to write drama and reflection, to help our students think, feel and decide as menschen. Teachers will explore strategies in storytelling, writing, art,

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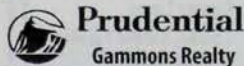
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D'var Torah

Parashat Vayehi
Genesis 47:28 — 50:26

Tied to the land

By Rabbi David Ariel-Joel

(The following article is reprinted with permission from the UJA-Federation of New York.)

Parashat Vayehi, which concludes the Book of Genesis, deals with Jacob's last days, his testament to his sons, and the death and burial of both Jacob and Joseph. Thus, this is a parasha of endings, of the closing of narrative cycles and patriarchal histories. The death of Jacob, the last of the patriarchs, signals the end of the stories of the forefathers and foremothers, before the time when the Jews became a people.

The parasha's second verse begins: "And the day drew near that Israel must die" (Genesis 47:29). Suddenly, it's not the death of "Jacob" that concerns us, but that of "Israel." But knowing how the Torah's narrative unfolds, we realize that we're not dealing with endings, but rather with beginnings. The focus in Parashat Vayehi and at the beginning of the next portion, Shemot, is the people's religious and social continuity as they make a transition to a new state.

With the death of Jacob,

and subsequent death of Joseph, there's the danger that this will be the end of the people of Israel. Fortunately, before he dies, Jacob concerns himself intimately with the future of his children and grandchildren. As he senses his impending end, Jacob requests that the two sons of Joseph, Menasseh and Ephraim, be brought to him so that he can bless them.

It's noteworthy that Jacob doesn't bless his son, but rather his grandsons. This emphasizes that the blessing's importance doesn't flow from the natural desire of a father to bless a son (as Isaac blessed Jacob), but that its purpose is related to the continuation of the patriarchal dynasty, and of Joseph's tribe in particular, as well as the firm establishment of the entire people.

Like his father Isaac, Jacob grants the preferred blessing, which should go to the older son (the bechor), to the younger one. But unlike Isaac, he does this knowingly! He acts out of a concern for the future of the people, not because he favors one child over another.

The essence of Jacob's con-

cern for the well-being of the people is found in another request he makes of Joseph: "Do not bury me in Egypt" (Genesis 47:29). Jacob fears that the people Israel won't be able to develop spiritually and culturally in exile. He feels that if they don't take significant steps that look beyond Egypt, then their ability to fulfill the divine promise to Jacob will end.

Jacob's request to Joseph, "Do not bury me in Egypt" came amidst material abundance, as the seven years of famine had ended. He understood that, despite their wealth and comfort, their life in Egypt would be one of spiritual lethargy among the fleshpots in which he and his sons were stuck, a life that would mean spiritual death for his descendants.

Jacob knew that he wasn't making an easy request in asking Joseph to bring his dead body to Israel for burial. But he decided

to move his sons and grandsons into understanding that Israel, not Egypt, was their home. After all, Jacob had been born in Israel, not Goshen. In short, he was determined to try to turn his death into a new beginning for his children and grandchildren.

At the end of the portion, we read about Joseph's death. Joseph, who rose to greatness in Egypt and who had internalized much of its culture, "took an oath of the children of Israel, saying 'God will surely remember you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence'" (Genesis 50:25). The parasha thus ends with Joseph also commanding the children of Israel to swear to take his bones to the Land of Israel.

Joseph's greatness flows from the knowledge that he is acting in service of a destiny greater than himself. Egypt, the place that was so much a part of him, still ultimately was exile. What was

important to him was the future of his people, not its past. He too had to make it clear to the people that its future wasn't in Egypt.

Genesis ends with the deaths of two great leaders of the Jewish people, leaders who knew how to turn their endings into a furtherance of the dream of redemption in Canaan. Jacob and Joseph desired, and succeeded, in commanding the children of Israel to aspire to life as a people committed to and based in its land.

Rabbi David Ariel-Joel is associate director of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism, and directs its Beit Midrash (house of study) program in Jerusalem. A graduate of the Israel rabbinical program of the Hebrew Union College, he also holds an MA in Jewish philosophy from the Hebrew University.

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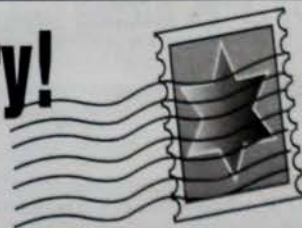
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Obituaries

Marthe Maroten Hassid, 85

PROVIDENCE — Marthe Maroten Hassid, 85, died Dec. 24. Born in Brussels, Belgium, she was the wife of the late Dr. Samuel H. Hassid.

She leaves a daughter, Lilly H. Rippey and her husband, Scott of Matunuck; two grandsons, Benjamin and Daniel; a sister, Ninette and a niece, Danielle, both of Brussels.

Contributions may be made to the Alzheimer's Association of R.I.

Leibe Kravitz, 85

PROVIDENCE — Leibe Kravitz, 85, died Dec. 22. She worked for many years as chief of medical social work a Beth Israel Hospital in Boston and was a member of the Division on Aging and a clinical instructor at Harvard Medical School, receiving many awards for her teaching.

She leaves three daughters, Deborah Kravits of Boston, Miriam Kravits of Queens, N.Y., and Amy Kravitz; a son-in-law, Steven Subotnick; and two granddaughters, Hannah and Naomi Subotnick, all of Providence.

Burial was in Swan Point Cemetery, Providence.

Contributions may be made to Tockwotten Home, 75 East St., Providence RI 02903; Beacon Hospice, 1 Catamore Blvd., East Providence, RI 02914; or National Yiddish Book Center, 1021 West St., Amherst, MA 01002

Murry Lazarus, 87

CUMMING, Ga. — Murry Lazarus, 87, formerly of Providence, died Dec. 20 in Georgia. Born in Providence, he was a son of the late Isadore and Ida (Schleifer) Lazarus.

He was a World War II Army veteran.

Mr. Lazarus was a Mason and a member of the Shrine.

He leaves his wife, Mary (Ginger) Lazarus; two children, Philip and Beverly of Georgia; a sister, Helen (Brill) Talan of Warwick, four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

A funeral service with military honors was held in Georgia.

Samuel Levine, 91

CRANSTON — Samuel Levine, 91, died Dec. 26. He was the husband of Rose (Altman) Levine. They were married for 65 years. Born in Providence, a son of the late Morris and Minnie (Tolchinsky) Levine, he had lived in Cranston for 41 years.

Mr. Levine was the former owner of Hudson Services, Inc. for 45 years. He was also the owner of Evergreen, LLC.

He was a member of Crest-

wood Country Club and Touro Fraternal Association and an avid golfer.

Besides his wife, he leaves a son, Kenneth Levine; and a daughter, Judy Gershman and her husband Geoffrey, all of Cranston; a brother, Abraham "Bibb" Levine of Cranston; five grandchildren, Eric, Melissa, Tony, Darcy and Bill; and a great-grandson, Peter. He was the brother of the late Hyman and Matthew Levine and Nellie Moseff.

Contributions may be made to a favorite charity.

David Licker, 90

CRANSTON — David Licker, 90, died Dec. 27. He was the husband of Katie "Kay" (Exter) Licker. Born in Boston, a son of the late Simon and Sarah (Goldberg) Licker, he was the former owner of Sharon Plumbing Co.

An avid fisherman, he was a charter member of the Galilee Tuna Club. He was also a former Mason and belonged to the Elks Club.

Besides his wife, he leaves a son, Joel Licker and his wife, Linda, of Cranston; a daughter Sharon Garber and her husband, Perry, of Cranston; three grandchildren, Stacy, Marcy and Stuart; and three great-grandchildren, Katherine, Abby and John. He was the grandfather of the late Morton Licker.

Burial was in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick.

Contributions may be made to Hospice Care of RI, 169 George St., Pawtucket RI 02860

Melvyn Maldavir, 68

CRANSTON — Melvyn S Maldavir, 68, died Dec. 29. He was the husband of Sandra (Priest) Maldavir. They were married for 42 years.

He was a salesman of fine jewelry who sold to many area retail stores.

He graduated from Hope High School and Bryant College.

He was an Army veteran serving in Germany.

Mr. Maldavir was a past master of Redwood Lodge #35 AF & AM and was a member of Temple Sinai and its brotherhood. He also coached Little League.

Besides his wife, he leaves a son, Jeffrey Maldavir and his wife, Lori, of Northport, N.Y.; a daughter, Mindy Halpern and her husband, Gary, of East Greenwich; a sister Ruth Greenberg of Warwick; four grandchildren, Jamie, Emily, Shelby and Jack; his mother-in-law, Frances Priest; a brother-in-law, Henry Priest and his wife Kathy; and nephews, Zachary and Alex, all of Cranston. He was the brother

of the late Gerald Maldavir.

Contributions may be made to Temple Sinai.

Bella (Zalusky) Massotti, 81

PAWTUCKET — Bella (Zalusky) Massotti, 81, died Dec. 21.

She leaves a son, Leonard Massotti, and was also the mother of the late Jacob Massotti.

Burial was in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick.

Contributions may be made to the charity of one's choice.

Beatrice (Dolgin) Parker, 89

WHITE PLAINS, N.Y. — Beatrice (Dolgin) Parker died Dec. 17. She was the wife of Herman Parker, to whom she had been married for 69 years. She was born in New York City, the daughter of Samuel and Gussie (Rothenberg) Dolgin.

She attended Hunter College and graduated from business school in 1935.

A resident of White Plains for over 55 years, Mrs. Parker was employed by the White Plains Department of Education as the Guidance Department secretary at Eastview Junior High School and the secretary of South House at White Plains High School, until retiring in 1981.

A member of Temple Israel Center, White Plains, she was active on the education committee, president of the PTA and a member of the Learning Institute. After her retirement, she was a volunteer at White Plains Hospital.

Besides her husband, she leaves a daughter, Toby London and her husband, David, of Attleboro, Mass.; a son, David Parker and his wife, Ronnie, of New York City; three grandchildren, Debra London and her partner, Russ Umphenour, of New York City and Atlanta, Ga.; Marc London and his wife, Julie, of Briarcliff Manor, N.Y. and Josh Parker of New York City; and two great-granddaughters, Zoe and Talia London. She was the sister of the late Ruth Yassky, Fannie Stelzer, Abe Dolgin and Ned Dolgin and is survived by many nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held at Temple Israel Center, White Plains, and burial was in Sharon Gardens Cemetery, Valhalla, N.Y.

Contributions may be made to Hospice & Palliative Care of Westchester, The Esplanade, Fourth Floor, 95 South Broadway, White Plains, NY 10602-4403 or a charity of one's choice.

Dorothy (Brady) Robinson, 96

HOLLYWOOD, Fla. — Dorothy (Brady) Robinson, 96, died in Needham, Mass. She was the wife of the late Rudolph Robinson for over 50 years. Born in New Bedford, a daughter of the late Sam and Ida (Goldstein) Brady, she had lived in Fall River for many years before moving to Florida in 1972.

She was a graduate of Sargent College of Boston University.

Mrs. Robinson was the co-founder, with her late husband, of Robinson Plumbing and Heating Supply Co. and at the same time sold antique china and jewelry.

She helped start the High Flyers Bowling League in Fall River, and learned Braille in order to help create books for the blind.

She was a member of Temple Beth El in Fall River and a member of Hadassah.

She leaves two sons, Russell Robinson of Providence and Dr. Randall Robinson of Needham, Mass.; a sister, Esther Katz of Sarasota, Fla.; and four grandchildren, Paige, Seth, Laura and Brett. She was the sister of the late Sally Brady.

Alene F. (Freudenheim) Silver, 90

PROVIDENCE — Alene F. (Freudenheim) Silver, 90, died Dec. 10. Born in New York City, she was a daughter of the late Benedict and Anna (Hirschfeld) Freudenheim.

Dr. Silver was a research biologist and a professor at Brown University and Rhode Island College.

She leaves two sons, John and Ben Silver; a daughter, Phebe Goodman; five grandchildren, Jonathan Goodman,

Rebecca Gluck, and Nathaniel, Noah and Samuel Silver; and three great-grandchildren, Henry and Charlotte Goodman and David Gluck. She was the sister of the late Ruth Levine and Vera Elkind.

Contributions may be made to the R.I. Jewish Historical Association, 130 Sessions St., Providence RI 02906.

Ruth (Bornstein) Steiner, 92

MYSTIC, Conn. — Ruth (Bornstein) Steiner, 92, died Dec. 19. She was the wife of the late Jacob Steiner. Born in Providence, a daughter of the late James and Celia (Neiberg) Bornstein, she had lived at Academy Point, Mystic for the past four years.

Mrs. Steiner had worked in Providence in retail sales and as a secretary at Temple Beth Torah, now Temple Torat Yisrael, in Cranston until her retirement.

She was a fiercely independent woman who, even in old age, insisted on doing things for herself. She instilled in her children a love of learning, music and a strong moral sense and tolerance for others.

She leaves a son, Jim Steiner of Montclair, N.J.; a daughter, Susan Steiner and her companion, John Drew of Mystic; two sisters, May and Honey; two grandchildren, Matthew Steiner and Michael Steiner and his wife, Camilla; a great-grandson, Sammy; and many nephews and nieces.

She was the sister of the late Sophie, Frieda, Jenny and Tessie.

Burial was in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick.

Contributions may be made to the charity of one's choice.

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Business Profiles

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Diane Turetzky-Haskell,
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By Frank Belsky
fbelsky@yahoo.com

What is the nature of the business?

We've been a full service bridal salon for 35-years.

How Many Do You Employ?

I have four full time seamstresses. We do all of the alterations right here in our store.

Where do you turn for advice in your field?

I grew up in this business since my father was a New London clothing manufacturer who taught me the meaning of quality.

Where do you see your business going in 5-10 years?

I don't want to see the store expand. It's just the right size that allows me to work one-on-one with customers who get a minimum of an hour-and-one-half and more when it's required. That will never change.

What is the newest trend in your business?

Simple, elegant clean lines that take our designers at least four months to complete.

What's the most important factor for growing your business?

We do a lot of re-designing on the premises, including neckline and sleeve changes. Just this week, in fact, we had a bride who came in from London for a final fitting. We custom made a silk jacket to go over her evening gown. Our brides come from France, Germany, and Japan and from all over the world as a result of word-of-mouth referrals. Also, I'm sure that our reputation has grown because we work, meticulously, from sketches, photos from bridal magazines, as well as incorporating our client's own ideas. That combination offers our customers what they expect to receive. For example, we're able to routinely sell bridal gowns and mother's dresses at half-off the regular price.

What's the best thing about your job?

I love every thing I do. This work brings me satisfaction and an immense sense of pride, especially when I receive thank you letters, emails and photos that decorate the store.

What personal connections do you have to the Jewish community?

My mother and father were members of the Beth El Synagogue in New London as are my brother and I.

Who do you admire in your field and why?

My father. I worship the ground that he and my mother walked on. My father set an excellent example for life as well as well as for business.

Academic Advantage



Richard Deutsch

Academic Advantage,
Executive Director
1845 Post Road
Suite One South
Warwick, RI 02886
(401) 921-5860
academicadvantageri.com

By Frank Belsky
fbelsky@yahoo.com

What is the nature of your business?

Academic Advantage offers academic tutoring in all subjects from Kindergarten to grade 12, using techniques proven to provide a productive and pleasant learning experience. All tutoring is individual, designed to fit within the framework of a child's classroom and current assignments. That includes help with upcoming tests. In addition, we monitor the child's progress by issuing a report at the end of each session via our network of close to 40 experienced tutors throughout Rhode Island and Southeastern Mass.

Where do you turn for advice?

I am fortunate in that I rely on my 40-year teaching and administrative experience on every grade level from pre-kindergarten to twelfth grade. That includes my tenure as the head of the history department at Providence Classical High School and seven years as Assistant Head of School at Alperin Schechter Day School. There, we improved reading and writ-

ing scores, and used "guided" reading and writing programs.

Where do you see your business going in 5-10 years?

We plan to be the premier provider of tutoring in Rhode Island, a "one stop shop," for guided reading and writing, critical thinking and problem solving. Additionally, we will set a standard for study skills, academic-athletic coaching, homework assistance, standardized test preparation and home schooling. We also plan to improve the skills of students who do well but are capable of doing better.

What is the newest trend in your business?

Guided education can increase reading and writing levels dramatically, within the course of a single school year. We did it at Alperin Schechter Day School. It's a process of following a child's level of progress by introducing comprehensive standards of vocabulary and reading. It works even faster on a one-on-one basis than it does in a classroom of 20 to 25.

What personal connections do you have to the Jewish Community?

My seven years at Alperin Schechter and close ties within the Temple Emanuel and Temple Am David Community and the Statewide Jewish Community.

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Simchas

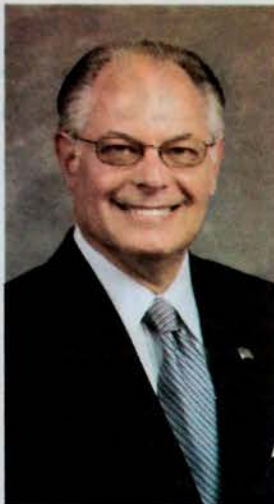


Lana Eve Lacombe

Birth

Angie (Goss) and Ian Lacombe of Cranston announce with much love the birth of their daughter, Lana Eve (Leah Esther), on Sept. 29, 2006. Sharing in their joy are proud grandparents Linda and Charles Goss of West Bloomfield and Nicole (Prinz) Squillante of Providence.

Lana is the beloved great-granddaughter of Estelle Goss, the late Harry Goss, the late Eileen and Alex Friedlaender, and the late Maurice Prinz. Lana is named in loving memory of her maternal aunt, Laura Goss, and her paternal great-grandmother, Edith Prinz.



Michael B. Isaacs

Isaacs re-elected to Town Council

Michael B. Isaacs has been re-elected President of the Town Council in East Greenwich. He received the highest number of votes in the Republican primary and in the November general election, in which all candidates run at-large. Mr. Isaacs is an attorney in private practice and is former West Bay Area Vice President of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, is on the board of the Jewish Seniors Agency and the board of Rhode Island PBS (channel 36).

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Michael Henry Oelbaum and Jennifer Nancy Witt

Engagement

Sue Ann and Frederick Witt, of Yonkers, N.Y., announce the engagement of their daughter, Jennifer Nancy, to Michael Henry Oelbaum, son of Phyllis and Sruel Oelbaum, of Providence. Jennifer is a 1992 graduate of Saunders High School and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in information science from Johnson & Wales University in 1996. She is an information security engineer for Ocean Spray Cranberries in Middleboro, Mass. Michael is a 1993 graduate of St. Andrews School in Barrington and a 1997 graduate of Roger Williams University in Bristol. He is a relationship administrator for Bank of America in Boston. The couple will be married Nov. 17, 2007 in Rhode Island.



Alysa Redlich

Girl Scout collects toys

Alysa Redlich daughter of Reid and Mindy Redlich of Cumberland organized and held a toy drive this December for her Girl Scout Silver Award project.

Her decorated collection boxes received nearly 200 new toys, which she wrapped individually. To earn the award, Alysa had to demonstrate competence with the skills and ability to initiate and complete a project of at least 40 hours.

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My Voice

The street games of Brooklyn

By Stanley M. Aronson, MD

An inner city street is, after all, just another street. Yet the drab streets of central Brooklyn in the late 1920s seemed



Stanley Aronson M.D.

to have been more congested with people than the thoroughfares of other American cities. In those distant years, Brooklyn was still a tapestry of ethnic enclaves, populated typically by first generation families with little evidence, yet, of melting pot homogeneity. There were small districts that were almost exclusively Italian, Irish, German or East European Jewish.

Picture now an immigrant Jewish neighborhood of inner Brooklyn called Brownsville, perhaps an autumn weekday afternoon some 80 years ago. The teeming streets were crowded with humans at work, at play, or merely observing the world while communing with their neighbors. Remember that a typical tenement apartment had few windows or sources of ventilation; had only meager illumination in its rooms, had no television and only rarely a radio. The street, then, became the communal living room to discuss news, share gossip, watch over the kids and absorb the pulsating vitality of an urban society. There were peddlers selling fresh produce from the backs of horse-drawn wagons, roving pushcarts selling whatever could be sold, Mack trucks delivering coal via chutes to the basements of the tenements, wagons laden with large blocks of ice to be hand-carried to kitchen ice-boxes, the predecessors of refrigerators, white-uniformed sanitation workers sweeping the deposits of fresh horse manure into metal ashcans on wheels, an occasional sedan, and clusters of screaming children playing a variety of street games. Somehow, though, in all of this human anarchy and turmoil, the street-based activities of the children were astonishingly organized. There must exist an innate need to exercise, to compete in structured athletic games, to interact with peers which is universally experienced by all growing children, even those born and reared in the crowded tenement

districts of Brooklyn.

The younger children played on the sidewalks, the girls partaking in hopscotch, pottsie or skipping rope while breathlessly repeating some archaic poem. The boys, not sufficiently old enough to be invited to play stick-ball on the streets, nonetheless engaged in a classical sidewalk game called hit-the-penny, or bounced a pink handball against a wall or stoop, or [if sufficiently dexterous] played marbles in some corner of the street not disturbed by much traffic. There were no trees or other forms of greenery but here and there were unpaved bits of sidewalk which allowed games of marble on soil too malnourished to support grass.

Stick ball

The older boys monopolized the streets playing stick ball with manhole covers representing home base and second base. The rules were both rational and intuitive. Thus, if a passing wagon interfered with the action, a child might yell, "Hindu" thus automatically nullifying the play. Why, "Hindu"? Nobody from Brooklyn seems to know but some scholars of language think that it is a corruption of the word, hindrance.

The implements for stick-ball were simple: a piece of broomstick with black tape around the handle and a pink rubber ball. Two interruptions automatically brought these games to a halt: one, an imperative call for supper; and the second, the passing of the iceman's wagon. As soon as the iceman disappeared into one of the tenements, the boys descended upon his wagon to retrieve fragments of ice. The surfaces of these pieces were frequently covered with a layer of sawdust that had served to insulate the ice-blocks. The sawdust layer was hastily wiped off and the fragments then savored until totally melted. The Jewish neighborhoods did not have a consumable luxury found principally in the Italian regions of Brooklyn: wagons selling cups of shaven ice saturated with highly colored fruit syrups.

Virtually every young boy owned his own pink rubber ball, each imprinted with the name, "Spalding" on its surface. Over the years, the name had somehow been transformed to

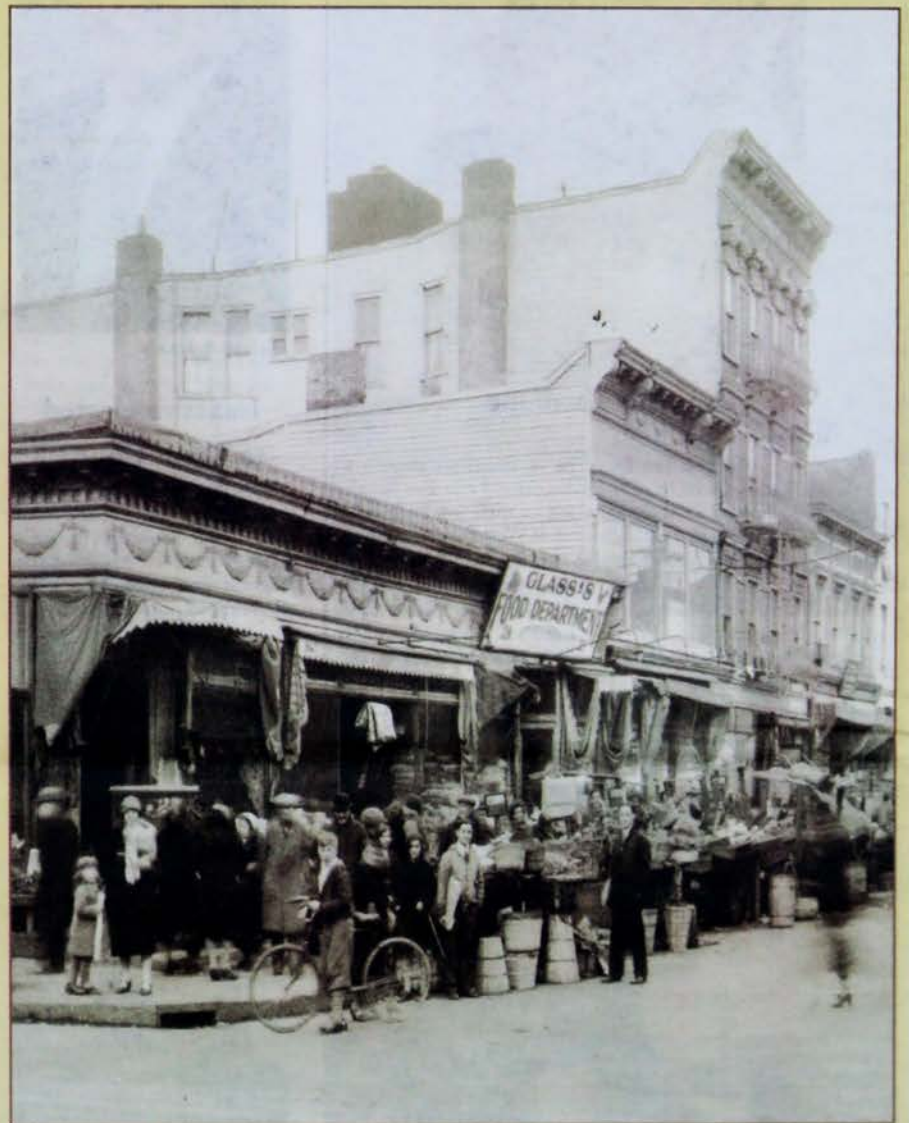


Photo from the recently published book, "A Living Lens, Photographs of Jewish Life from the pages of the Forward," W.W. Norton Publisher

A corner of Belmont Ave., Brownsville, Brooklyn.

"Spaldeen"; and generations of adults remember little of their Brooklyn street-life other than their precious Spaldeens. It had accompanied them while walking to school [bounced rhythmically on the sidewalk or thrown against a brick wall], and even squeezed as one completed homework on the kitchen table.

The Great Depression

The Great Depression commenced in the autumn of 1929. Brooklyn's inner streets then became less congested but more solemn as the sidewalks sometimes witnessed piles of household furniture of evicted families. Neither the iceman's

daily schedule nor the street games of Brooklyn's children were interrupted.

Distant childhood memories, nearly extinct, are sometimes reawakened by the most trivial of events. A recent story in the newspapers mentioned that professional basketball players were dissatisfied with the newly substituted plastic-covered basketballs, preferring the older, leather-covered balls manufactured by Spalding. The news story mentioned, in passing, that the company had also made a rubber ball earlier in the 20th Century that was cherished

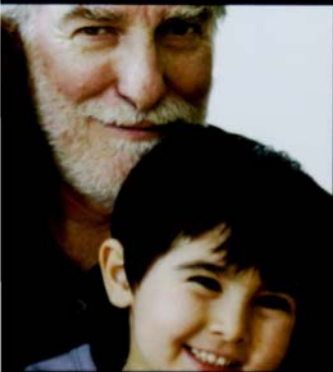
by city youngsters; and which, for some inscrutable reason, was called a Spaldeen. The newspaper concluded by stating that the NBA will likely revert to the older basketball.

For Marcel Proust it was a particular aroma that activated his remembrance of things past; for those of us reared in central Brooklyn, it was the mere name of a sporting goods manufacturer which brought forth a cascade of latent memories.

Stanley M. Aronson, MD, writes a regular column, occasionally on medical matters, for the Jewish Voice & Herald. E-mail



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