JEWISH
RHODE ISLAND

NOVEMBER 2025 | CHESHVAN/KISLEV 5786
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Smithfield schools open investigation

Memories of Beth El, Fall River

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JEWISH RHODE ISLAND

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ON THE COVER: Members of the media and others listen at the news conference Oct. 30 at Twelve Acres in Smithfield. PHOTO | BRIAN SULLIVAN

The Voice of Greater Rhode Island's Jewish Community
JEWISH RHODE ISLAND

@JewishRhody

Can we all agree?

THERE IS A DIFFICULT, ongoing event in our community.

In Smithfield, there were accusations that several football players trapped a Jewish teammate in a bathroom. The details, reported in the weeks since the incident, are now being disputed and vary depending on who you speak to.

But the school committee, after three and a half hours of executive session, has decided to hire an attorney to investigate. And a complaint has been filed with the Rhode Island Attorney General's office.

And on Monday evening, outside of the school committee meeting, flyers appeared, that called what happened "locker room antics." These were attributed to "many parents of past and present athletes."



As of this writing, we don't know how this situation will be resolved, but I hope we can all agree on these points:

Any kind of attack – religious or racial or toward one's identity – is unacceptable. It makes no difference if it is verbal or physical.

We as a community are rightly outraged. These kinds of attacks are not trivial, nor can they be dismissed as locker room talk.

We should recognize the potential impact on victims as these experiences could haunt them for years or even the rest of their lives.

It's not enough to react after the fact. We need to put a greater emphasis on prevention – making sure there is education in the schools and that students and others in the community are exposed to more sensitivity and anti-bias training to assure we all know how to be accepting of each other and our cultural, physical and emotional differences.

Holocaust and genocide education is mandated for Rhode Island's middle and high schools. That law was signed in 2016. This law focuses on all forms of genocide. And there is a commission in the state to assist.

And how about following the guidelines for bullying that are pretty prominently displayed on most school websites? I encourage you to look up those guidelines for your school or district. It is clear that locker room antics and hazing should be a thing of the past under these guidelines. We really shouldn't have to worry about any kind of attacks on our children and grandchildren at school, public or private.

Most important: We should all talk to our children and grandchildren and make sure they know how to treat others with kindness and respect.

This incident has brought a lot of divergent parts of our community together in the last week and showed the strength and support in numbers. It should remind everyone that we have more in common than what separates us.

I've seen people I haven't seen in quite a while as they've turned out to learn, protest, and support our community. It was good to reconnect. It was even better to know they were turning out for a unified purpose.

That's a strength our community needs.

Fran Ostendorf,
Editor



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THE MISSION OF JEWISH RHODE ISLAND is to communicate Jewish news, ideas and ideals by connecting and giving voice to the diverse views of the Jewish community in Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts, while adhering to Jewish values and the professional standards of journalism.

ALL SUBMITTED CONTENT becomes the property of Jewish Rhode Island. Announcements and opinions contained in these pages are published as a service to the community and do not necessarily represent the views of Jewish Rhode Island or its publisher, the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island. We reserve the right to refuse publication and edit submitted content

UP FRONT

Jenna Cosgrove takes RIC women through the hoops

BY DOUGLAS STARK



Rhode Island Women's Basketball coach Jenna Cosgrove. JONATHAN ENDOW

There was a moment in 2017 when Jenna Cosgrove's Judaism and love of basketball intersected and came together in a way that even she could not have envisioned.

The scene was the 2017 Maccabiah Games held in Israel. Cosgrove was an assistant to Coach Sherry Levin for the women's basketball team, the Open Team, which is comprised of college players from all over the United States.

AT THE TIME, Cosgrove was an assistant coach for Fordham University women's basketball team and was recommended by Stephanie Gaitley, her head coach at Fordham.

The opportunity to coach in partnership with Levin, one of the best women's basketball coaches anywhere, was not lost on Cosgrove, who stated at the time, "I am so grateful and excited to work alongside Coach Levin, who has proven success at past Maccabiah Games, including two gold medals. I am looking forward to broadening my horizons and hope to be impactful on and off the court with the top female Jewish basketball players in the United States."

As she recalled, "There was a service at the Holocaust Museum. I was sitting with the team, all the athletes, and we were reciting the Jewish prayers. In that moment, I felt a sense of unity and connection – something I had never experienced with a team before. For me, sport and faith had never intersected in that way."

Since then, Cosgrove has built the Rhode Island College (RIC) women's basketball program into a national power, and in the process, not only become one of the best Jewish women's college basketball coaches, but one of the best women's college basketball coaches.

Her meteoric rise has finally been recognized as she is the recipient of the Marty Riger Outstanding Jewish Coach of the Year awarded by the Jewish Sports Heritage Association. The award is presented to those who possess the qualities of Riger, a championship-winning New York City basketball coach.

Her love of sports was nurtured by her family, one that is rooted in athletics, primarily football, to its core. Her grandfather, her father and her uncles played Division I football at the University of Maine. Her grandfather, Jack Cosgrove, started Pop Warner football in the town of Sharon, Massachusetts, and the middle school football field in the town is named after him. Her uncle is the winningest coach at the University of Maine and is now the head coach at Colby College in Waterville, Maine.

'Her love of sports was nurtured by her family, one that is rooted in athletics, primarily football, to its core.'

She played many sports growing up, but by the second grade, basketball became her passion, and she ran with it.

As she remembered, "I grew up in a primarily Jewish town and had Jewish friends. I was raised Jewish, but when I went to college that was not the norm."

She played at Endicott College in Beverly, Massachusetts, where she focused on sports management and was intrigued by the business aspects of sports. Many internships later and some time off after graduation coaching AAU, as well as volunteering at her high school, coaching became her goal.

Then, a position became available at Fordham University. As Cosgrove remembered, "I had no connections at that level, but tried relentlessly to break in. I am not a city person, but I realized a sacrifice had to be made to start my career, so I moved to the Bronx."

She dedicated seven years to Fordham, remaining loyal as she embraced the chance to grow within a successful mid-major basketball program that posted 20-plus win seasons and captured the first ever Atlantic10 title and NCAA appearance in 2014.

After spending her entire twenties in New York, she knew her career needed a pivot, and the goal was to return home. It was right before the Maccabiah Games in 2017 when Cosgrove applied for the Rhode Island College job.

After winning the gold in Israel, Cosgrove was hired at Rhode Island College in August, late in the process, leaving little time to bring in her own players and ramp up before the season began. In addition, the women's basketball program had fallen on tough times. A big challenge awaited her, but with time she knew she could meet the challenge.

Her time at Fordham proved to be the most beneficial for her, a series of lessons that she could lean on as she sought to build a program from the ground up. "I helped contribute to the change in culture with a new coach at Fordham. I knew I needed to be patient, bring in great players, and change the culture as fast as possible. While at Fordham, I learned how to recruit at a high level and demand high expectations. I brought that same Division I mentality, standards and expectations to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Our tests are not always what they seem to be

Parashat Vayera contains some of the best-known stories in the entire Torah. It starts with the announcement of Yitzkhak's (Isaac's) birth and ends, essentially, with the Akedah, with Avraham binding his son on an altar and Yitzkhak's near death as a sacrificial offering. There have been an enormous number of commentaries of all sorts written about the Akedah. Some try to justify Avraham's actions; some try to justify God's role in the entire story. Some criticize Avraham.

D'VAR TORAH



RABBI MARK ELBER

THERE'S A WELL-KNOWN midrash about the beginning of the story. God says to Avraham: "Take your son, your only son, whom you love, Yitzkhak, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there for an *olah*, a burnt offering, on one of the mountains which I will tell you of" (Genesis 22:2). So, the midrash breaks down the story phrase by phrase. "Take your son" – Avraham replies: "I have two sons." God says: "your only son" Avraham replies: "This one is the only son of his mother and that one is the only son of his mother." God says: "whom you love." Avraham replies: "I love them both." Finally, God says: "Yitzkhak." One of the ways that midrash works is it focuses on unusual phrasing and words that might seem superfluous – and our Tradition tells us that there are no superfluous words or even superfluous letters in the Torah. Anything that appears to be such, cries out to be explained.

Names in the Torah often have very significant meanings and connotations. Just like *Avram* means "high," or "eminent, father," *Moriah*, the land in which the Akedah takes place, can be understood to mean "my teacher (*mori*) is *Yah*" (i.e God). The tradition tells us that Moriah is the mountain in Jerusalem upon which the *Beit HaMikdash*, the ancient Temple, was built. Rashi, the best-known medieval commentor on the Torah and Talmud (1040 – 1104) interprets the word (Genesis 22:2) "*V'ha'alehu*" (and offer him) as follows: "God did not say to 'slaughter him' because the Holy One did not desire to slaughter him, but only *to bring him up* (the literal meaning of *v'ha'alehu*) to the mountain in order to prepare him as a burnt offering. But after Avraham had brought him up, God said to Avraham: 'Take him down." Rashi can't imagine that God could have actually wanted Avraham to sacrifice him.

The Torah introduces the story with the phrase: "And it came to pass after these things, that God tested Avraham." (Genesis 22:1) Nachmanides, the Ramban (1194 – 1270), another pillar of medieval commentary, believed that Avraham failed the test. Conventionally, people understand the story to imply that Avraham passed the test by being willing to sacrifice the most precious thing in the world to him – his son Yitzkhak – the very person whom God had told Avraham his future would come from. Thus, God asking Avraham to sacrifice Yitzkhak is tantamount to saying that Avraham has no future, he's the end of the line. Conventionally the story says that Avraham is rewarded for being willing to sacrifice Yitzkhak and the Torah says (Genesis 22:16): " because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your favored one, I will greatly bless you and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is upon the seashore…" If you recall, Avraham was also promised this long before the Akedah. So that's a bit puzzling. Despite what the Torah literally says, the

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Greater Rhode Island

November 7	4:13pm
November 14	4:06pm
November 21	4:00pm
November 28	3:57pm
December 5	3:55pm

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

RIC," stated Cosgrove.

Immediately, it paid dividends. Her first season, 2017-18, the team finished 9-17, a four-win improvement, and although the win total did not reflect it, change was on the way.

Starting with the 2018-19 season, Cosgrove has built a Division III powerhouse. The team has five Little East Conference Regular Season Championships, four Little East Conference Tournament titles, four 20-win seasons, three NCAA Tournament appearances, one NCAA Final Four, two NCAA Sweet 16 appearances, two Little East Conference Rookies of the Year, two Little East Conference Players of the Year, and three Little East Conference Defensive Players of the Year.

As far as coaching accolades, Cosgrove has been named the Little East Conference Coach of the Year four times, the Region II Coach of the Year twice, and the New England Women's Basketball Coach of the Year in 2024. She has been named a finalist to receive the Women's Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA) National Coach of the Year award twice.

The program reached national attention in 2022-23 when the Anchorwomen finished with a 28-4 record which culminated in a trip to the NCAA Final Four. Along the way, the team toppled No. 3 Scranton, No. 12 Chicago and No. 10 Babson to advance to the National Semifinal.

"We took an unranked team to the Final Four. The entire state was behind us. I tell our players, with RIC being one of only two state schools in Rhode Island, the impact of our program is magnified. What we accomplish here doesn't just elevate our team, but our entire community. The governor was at the Elite Eight game against Babson College and again at our NCAA games when we hosted in 2024. You could really feel the buzz. There was a billboard on Route 95. It is a different feeling here when the whole state is behind you," remarked Cosgrove.

A year later, Cosgrove arguably had her best team, starting the season 27-0 before losing to Washington & Lee University in the Sweet 16. It was a tough way to finish the season, but the following day, she gave birth to her son, Casey John Cosgrove. "I'm fortunate to have a group I not only coach but also consider family and experiencing that chapter of my life alongside them is something I'll always cherish.

"Giving birth so soon after our last game left me little time to process the Sweet 16 loss. It was a tough one, especially because we had such high hopes of advancing further. That night was humbling – we were still in the game until the end even though we shot our lowest percentage of the season, a reminder that on any given night, any team can come out on top."

Notwithstanding the tough defeat in the Sweet 16 to end the season, Cosgrove feels good about what the program has accomplished during her tenure.

"This is proof of what can happen when you bring the right people together. We have a staff and a group of players who work with unwavering commitment, and the national recognition we've received has exceeded anything I could have imagined. The mission now is simple: continue raising the bar and sustaining that level of excellence.

"There's a confidence that winning instills in you once you get a taste of success."

Cosgrove has found a home at RIC.

"RIC is my first head coaching job, so I can't say I envisioned this level of success. From day one, I just put my head down and focused on recruiting to rebuild. I knew I could sell RIC – we have outstanding facilities and resources for our student-athletes. But the real difference has been the student-athletes who chose to be part of this program. Many of them have been first-generation students, which gives me the opportunity to make an impact that goes far beyond basketball."

"We would love, love to have her build her program into the UConn women's program of Division III basketball," said Jack Warner, president of RIC.

With success come the inevitable rumors and talk of whether Cosgrove will leave to pursue a Division I job. According to her, not so fast. "I worked at Division I, so I have a taste of it and right now it's of course a whole different landscape. Right now, my number-one priority is my family. I am grateful for the balance and support I have around me."

Now that the Anchorwomen are a national power, the goal is to keep the program achieving at that high level. Her 2025-26 team had an interesting year. They won 19 games but, according to Cosgrove, they underachieved, and it did not help that one of her best players had an ACL injury. As she looks forward to the upcoming season, all the players from the Final Four and Sweet 16 runs have moved on, leaving a younger team.

But for her, the challenge is still there. It is a new year. A new team. A new opportunity to reach the summit again.

The season begins Nov. 10 against Western New England University.

DOUGLAS STARK, *of Barrington, is a writer, museum consultant and sports historian. If you have any Rhode Island Jewish athletes you'd like to see us interview, contact editor@jewishalliancri.org*

CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

FOR COMPLETE MONTHLY LISTINGS, VISIT JEWISHRHODY.ORG

Ongoing

Kosher Senior Café and Programming. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Monday – Thursday at the Bonnie & Donald Dwares JCC, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence; Fridays at Temple Sinai, 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. In-person (and on Zoom most Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays) programming 11 a.m.-noon followed by lunch and discussion noon-1 p.m. The Café will be closed for Thanksgiving on 11/27 and 11/28. On Wednesdays, programming is chair yoga. For seniors aged 60 and older as well as younger adults with a disability; all faiths and backgrounds are welcome. Suggested donation: $3 per lunch. The Kosher Senior Café is a program of Jewish Collaborative Services and is supported by the Jewish Alliance of Greater RI and Blackstone Health. Information and RSVP, Neal or Sherri at neal@jcsri.org, sherri@jcsri.org or 401-421-4111, ext. 114.

Temple Emanu-El Mahjong. Tuesdays (with the exception of holidays). 11 a.m.-1 p.m. 99 Taft Ave., Providence. Information, Shoshana Jacob at shosh@teprov.org or 401-331-1616.

Hebrew Classes Fall Session at Temple Emanu-El. Tuesdays thru 11/11. Beginner class 5-5:45 p.m. All other levels 6-7 p.m. 99 Taft Ave., Providence. Five levels of in-person Hebrew conversation classes offered: Beginner, Introduction to Prayerbook Hebrew, Advanced Beginners for Spoken Hebrew, Intermediate and Advanced. Offered jointly with the Jewish Alliance of Greater RI. Information, Toby Liebowitz at tobyaane@gmail.com.

Temple Beth-El Adult Beginner Hebrew. Tuesdays thru 12/16. 7-8:30pm. 70 Orchard Ave., Providence. No classes: 11/11, 11/25. $150 for members, $180 for non-members. Information, Judith at 401-331-6070.

Temple Beth-El Teen Night. Thursdays 6 p.m. 70 Orchard Ave., Providence. Conversation and dinner. Information, Jude Weinstein at jweinstein@temple-beth-el.org or 401-331-6070.

Temple Sinai Hebrew Lessons. Thursdays thru 12/18. 7-8 p.m. Zoom classes, led by Cantor Gelber, will be a mix of lectures and then divided into four smaller breakout rooms. No class: 11/27. Information, Templesinairi.org, dottie@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

Delve Deeper: "The Land of Israel in the Religious Imagination from Antiquity to Present." Thursdays thru 12/18. 6:30 p.m. Bonnie & Donald Dwares JCC, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence. Explore texts that discuss the holiness of Israel with focus on traditional Jewish texts. Led by Michael L. Satlow, Ph.D., professor of Judaic studies and religious studies at Brown University. Offered in person and via Zoom. Information, Morty Miller at mortymiller1945@gmail.com.

Cape Cod Synagogue Family Shabbat Services and Dinner. Second Friday of the month 5:30 p.m. 145 Winter St., Hyannis, Mass. In-person and livestreamed services on website, Facebook, Cape Media, YouTube and Community Television Comcast channel 99. Followed by community Shabbat dinner. Information, 508-775-2988 or capecodsynagogue.org.

Cape Cod Synagogue Shabbat Services. Fridays 7 p.m. 145 Winter St., Hyannis, Mass. With Rabbi David Freelund. In-person and livestreamed on website, Facebook, Cape Media, YouTube and Community Television Comcast channel 99. Information, 508-775-2988 or capecodsynagogue.org.

Temple Beth-El Torah Study. Most Saturdays 9 a.m. 70 Orchard Ave., Providence. Join Temple Beth-El clergy and delve into the weekly portion. Information, Jude Weinstein at jweinstein@temple-beth-el.org or 401-331-6070.

Temple Sinai Breakfast and Torah Study. Saturdays 9:30-11 a.m. 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. Breakfast followed by weekly Torah study (also on Zoom) at 10 a.m. Information, Templesinairi.org, dottie@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

Temple Habonim Torah Study. Saturdays 10-11 a.m. Rabbi Howard Voss-Altman leads Torah study on current portion. Via Zoom. Information, Adina Davies at office@templehabonim.org or 401-245-6536.

Cape Cod Synagogue Shabbat Services. Saturdays 10:30 a.m. 145 Winter St., Hyannis, Mass. With Rabbi David Freelund. In-person and livestreamed on website, Facebook and YouTube. Information, Cape Cod Synagogue at 508-775-2988 or capecodsynagogue.org.

Friday | November 7

Temple Sinai Evening Shabbat Service. 6-7 p.m. 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. In the chapel or on Zoom. Information, Templesinairi.org, dottie@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

Temple Torat Yisrael Friday Night Live Service Honoring Veterans and New Members. 6 p.m. 1251 Middle Road, East Greenwich. In-person service led by Rabbi Saks, with streaming available, followed by dinner. Cost: free for veterans, new members and kids 5 and under; $30 for adults; $15 for kids 6-18. Information, Temple@toratyisrael.org.

Saturday | November 8

Temple Torat Yisrael Saturday Morning Shabbat Services. 9:30-10:30 a.m. 1251 Middle Road, East Greenwich. In-person service led by Rabbi Saks with Zoom available. Information, temple@toratyisrael.org.

Temple Sinai Morning Shabbat Service. 11 a.m.-noon. 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. In the chapel or on Zoom. Information, Templesinairi.org, dottie@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

Temple Sinai presents Frank Santos, Jr. 7-9 p.m. 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. Do you think you can't be hypnotized? Would you enjoy seeing your friends become the featured performers? Then come to watch as this show transforms the audience members into the center of attention. Cost: $30. Information and RSVP, Dottie at dottie@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

Sunday | November 9

Temple Sinai Jewish Parenting Group. 9-10 a.m. 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. Share parenting tips with other parents in the Tree of Life room in a discussion led by Rabbi Heather Shore. Information, Templesinairi.org, dottie@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

Sisterhood of Temple-Beth-El Artisan Marketplace. 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. 70 Orchard Ave., Providence. Marketplace will include 25 vendors offering pottery, photography, jewelry, glass, woodwork, wall art, paintings, knitted items and Judaica; Scholastic books from pre-K through 8th grade; as well as the Brotherhood Bagel Café. Information, info@temple-beth-el.org.

Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Center: Kristallnacht Commemoration. 7 p.m. Bonnie & Donald Dwares JCC, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence. Professor Michael S. Bryant, Bryant University, will explore how Hitler's pursuit of power and his campaign against the Jews converged in Kristallnacht, a turning point on the road to genocide. Information and RSVP (requested), hercri.org, info@hercri.org or 401-453-7860.

Wednesday | November 12

Brown University Program in Judaic Studies: Dara Horn to speak on antisemitism on college campuses. 5:30 p.m. Salomon Center for Teaching, DeCiccio Auditorium (Room 001), 79 Waterman St., Providence. Dara Horn is the award-winning author of "People Love Dead Jews." The entire community is invited to attend. Free. Information, Michael L. Satlow at 401-863-3911.

Friday | November 14

Hattie Ide Chaffee Home presents Fishel Bressler. 2-3 p.m. 200 Wampanoag Trail, East Providence. Join us as we welcome the talented Fishel Bressler for a special performance with our residents. Information and RSVP, Susie Adler at Susie.Adler@hattieidechaffee.org or 401-486-3890.

Temple Torat Yisrael Virtual Kabbalat Shabbat and Torah Services. 5:45-6:15 p.m. Via Zoom only. Information, temple@toratyisrael.org.

Temple Sinai Evening Service. 6-7:45 p.m. 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. Join us in the Sanctuary or on Zoom for our evening service, which will be followed by an Oneg in the Social Hall. Information, Templesinairi.org, dottie@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

Saturday | November 15

Temple Torat Yisrael Saturday Morning Shabbat Services. 9:30-10:30 a.m. 1251 Middle Road, East Greenwich. In-person service with Zoom available. Information, temple@toratyisrael.org.

Temple Sinai Morning Shabbat Service. 11 a.m.-noon. 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. Join us for our monthly mindfulness service in the Chapel or on Zoom. Information, Templesinairi.org, dottie@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

Kids' Night Out: Sports Nation. 5-9 p.m. Bonnie & Donald Dwares JCC, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence. Parents enjoy a night out while kids enjoy activities including arts & crafts, games and a movie. Dinner included. For grades K-5. Cost: Member: $60 | Non-Member: $75 | Member Sibling Price: $35 each | Non-Member Sibling Price: $37.50. Information, Rachel Accetturo at raccetturo@jewishallianceri.org or 401-4111, ext. 140.

Sunday | November 16

Temple Sinai presents the Alef Beats. Noon-1 p.m. 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. Join us in the Sanctuary to hear this a cappella group of Brown University and RISD students who have a love of music and a passion for Jewish culture. Information, Templesinairi.org, dottie@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

Temple Sinai presents the Ocean State Clarinet Choir. 2-3 p.m. 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. After the Alef Beats perform in the Sanctuary, cross over into the social hall to continue with our musical afternoon. Information, Templesinairi.org, dottie@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

Monday | November 17

Judaism 101: Understanding the Fundamental Ideas that makes Judaism...Jewish! 7 p.m. Third of four online sessions with Rabbi Saks via Zoom. Each session will explain, discuss and dissect topics that help make Judaism more relevant and meaningful. Upcoming date: 11/24. Information and Zoom link, Deanna at 401-885-6600.

Tuesday | November 18

Broadway Film Series: "Jersey Boys." 6-8 p.m. Bonnie & Donald Dwares JCC, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence. The Jewish Alliance is bringing the magic of Broadway to the big screen with a special film series. In "Jersey Boys," Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons discover the importance of loyalty, forgiveness and standing by one another. Cost: $5. Information and RSVP, Samantha Kaufman at skaufman@jewishallianceri.org.

Wednesday | November 19

Touro Fraternal Association Fall Open House. 6:30-8:30 p.m. Touro Hall, 45 Rolfe Square, Cranston. Learn about our organization as you enjoy a free deli dinner and a performance by stand-up comedian Paul D'Angelo. Open to all Jewish men ages 18 and over. Information, Larry Berman at lberman55@yahoo.com or 401-447-2655.

Friday | November 21

Jewish Alliance Hosts Blood Drive. 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Bonnie & Donald Dwares JCC, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence. Donations by appointment. (Use sponsor code 1528.) Walk-ins welcome if availability permits at time of arrival. Eat, drink and bring photo ID. All donors will receive a $10 Whole Foods gift certificate. Information, ribc.org or 401-453-8383.

Temple Torat Yisrael Congregational Shabbat led by the Religious School and Potluck Dinner. 5:30 p.m. 1251 Middle Road, East Greenwich. In-person service with streaming available followed by free potluck dinner. Information, temple@toratyisrael.org.

Temple Sinai Evening Service. 6-7 p.m. 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston.

CALENDAR

In the Chapel or on Zoom. Information, Templesinairi.org, dottie@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

Saturday | November 22

Temple Torat Yisrael Saturday Morning Shabbat Services. 9:30-10:30 a.m. 1251 Middle Road, East Greenwich. In-person service led by Rabbi Saks with Zoom available. Information, temple@toratyisrael.org.

Temple Sinai Morning Shabbat Service. 11 a.m.-noon. 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. In the chapel or on Zoom. Information, Templesinairi.org, dottie@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

Sunday | November 23

Temple Torat Yisrael Adult Ed with Rabbi Saks. 9-10 a.m. 1251 Middle Road, East Greenwich. Topic to be determined. Information, Temple@toratyisrael.org.

Monday | November 24

Judaism 101: Understanding the Fundamental Ideas that makes Judaism...Jewish! 7 p.m. Last of four online sessions with Rabbi Saks via Zoom. Each session will explain, discuss and dissect topics that help make Judaism more relevant and meaningful. Information and Zoom link, Deanna at 401-885-6600.

Friday | November 28

Temple Sinai Evening Service. 6-7 p.m. 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. In the Chapel or on Zoom. Information, Templesinairi.org, dottie@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

Saturday | November 29

Temple Sinai Morning Shabbat Service. 11 a.m.-noon. 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. In the chapel or on Zoom. Information, Templesinairi.org, dottie@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

Sunday | November 30

Temple Sinai People of the Book. 2-4 p.m. 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. Join us as we discuss "Thistlefoot" by GenneRose Nethercott. This story combines Jewish folklore with traditional Russian fairy tales as well as the supernatural and the mundane. Information, Templesinairi.org, dottie@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

Tuesday | December 2

60th Anniversary of Nostra Aetate Celebration. 5:30-7:30 p.m. Bonnie & Donald Dwares JCC, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence. Join the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island and the Providence College Jewish Catholic Theological Exchange Committee for an evening of reflection and dialogue. This interfaith gathering will celebrate the progress made, explore the work still ahead and deepen our shared commitment to understanding, respect and partnership. Information and RSVP (by 11/20), Emily Gaudreau at egaudreau@jewishallianceri.org.

Thursday | December 4

Jewish Book Council Author Series: "Saints and Liars: The Story of Americans Who Saved Refugees from the Nazis." 6 p.m. Bonnie & Donald Dwares JCC, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence. In conversation with Dr. Laura Auketayeva, historian Debórah Dwork will discuss her new book revealing American relief and rescue workers who risked everything to help Jews and dissidents escape Nazi persecution. Information and RSVP, Samantha Kaufman at skaufman@jewishallianceri.org.

Sunday | December 7

Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Center BAXT Lecture Series: "The Stages of Memory: Reflections on Holocaust Memorials and Cultural Memory." 11:30 a.m. Temple Beth-El, 70 Orchard Ave., Providence. Professor James E. Young will discuss his book including new reflections and updates on Holocaust memorials, cultural memory and the public dimensions of remembrance. Refreshments served pre-lecture. Informal conversation after lecture. Information, hercri.org, info@hercri.org or 401-453-7860.

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COMMUNITY VOICES

An amazing architectural week

A festival of modern Jewish architecture in Providence? Well, it happened during the week of Oct. 5, and it was fabulous!

Founded in 1956 by John Nicholas Brown and other prominent East Siders, the Providence Preservation Society was established to protect historic buildings. Many along Benefit Street, for example, having badly deteriorated, were occupied by poor minorities. Yes, these included Jews. Indeed, the forerunner of the Jewish Community Center once stood at Benefit's northern end.

BUT J.N. BROWN and his neighbors were especially alarmed by the perpetual expansion of the Brown campus. In 1936, he purchased the John Brown House, Providence's grandest, which was erected in 1788, and five years later donated it to the Rhode Island Historical Society. (Technically speaking, he sold the mansion and its sprawling grounds to the Society for $10.) Of course, J.N. Brown had also feared destruction in his own Benefit Street neighborhood, for he and his family lived across the street from the John Brown House in the majestic Nightingale-Brown House, which was erected in 1791. It housed the collection that would later become the John Carter Brown Library on the Brown campus.

This year, the National Park Service celebrated the 50th anniversary of its acquisition of the Roger Williams Spring Park, which, in 1636, was Providence's birthplace. But the original gift of this spring to the city was made in 1928 by J. Jerome Hahn, a Superior Court judge, who in 1931 became the state's first Jewish justice of the Supreme Court. He made this gift in memory of his father, Isaac, the first Jew elected to the state legislature in 1884.

Betsey and I like to consider ourselves preservationists, for in 1996, when we purchased our Arts & Crafts bungalow, built in 1920, we proudly obtained a plaque from the Preservation Society. Yes, two similar bungalows were erected on our street at the same time, presumably by the same developer, but we wanted historians, neighbors and passersby to appreciate our home's distinctiveness.

MUSINGS



GEORGE M. GOODWIN

This year's Preservation Society tour was especially ambitious because it was preceded by a week of educational festivities. They began on Sunday night at Temple Beth-El with a two-hour program focusing on Jewish contributions to modern architecture. The principal speaker was Donald Albrecht, a distinguished architectural historian from New York City, who profiled scores of notable American Jewish architects, designers and craftspeople. Most fled European fascism during the 1930s and early '40s. Lambrecht did not attempt to explain, however, whether any of these artists was or soon became religiously observant.

Fortunately, I was able to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

COMMUNITY VOICES

Words to enhance Thanksgiving dinner

As we gather for a family Thanksgiving in our nation's capital, D.C. it seems apt to praise our birthright. I wish our public schools would put more emphasis on grammar school courses in civics. Rhode Island has led the way in strengthening civics education through requirements and new initiatives, including a 2021 law mandating civics proficiency for all public high school graduates that began with the class of 2023, but it is pretty patchy throughout the nation. I have good memories of my civics classes, sitting at those desks with little built-in inkwells!

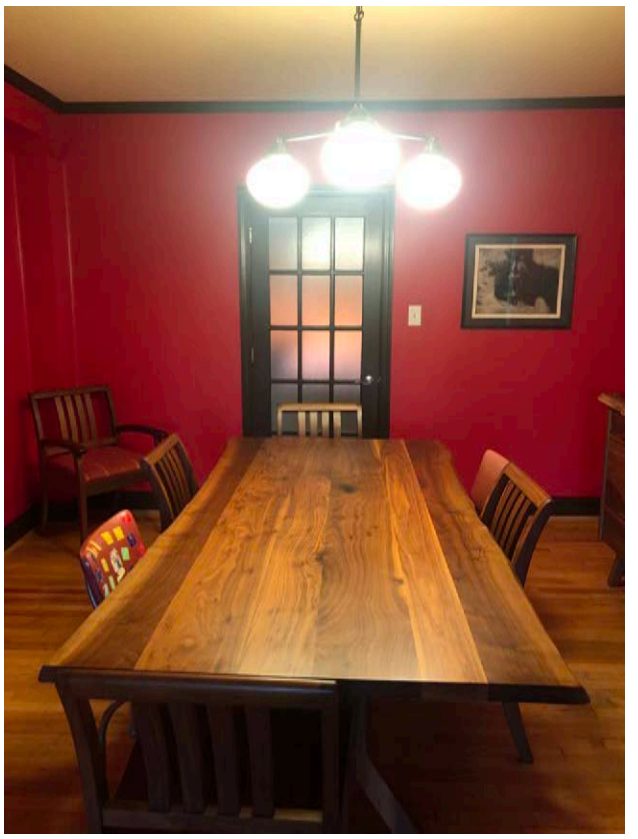


MIKE FINK

EXERCISES IN THE cursive shaping of letters that were once standard, would also be a welcome chance to revive handwriting as an art form. Handwriting remains valuable today for cognitive benefits, creativity, and personal connection, even in a digital world. It enhances memory, learning, and motor skills more effectively than typing, and a handwritten note or document conveys greater thoughtfulness and effort. I get letters from many of my former students and cherish them!

I also find value in watching some – not all – of the movies of yore that I used to praise for their thoughtful, bold, daring criticism of our American history. Anybody remember "Bright Leaf" starring Lauren Bacall and Gary Cooper? Brilliantly and forcefully, it indicts the mass production of cigarettes and goes so far as to criticize capitalism itself! The camera does the work of interpretation with energetic depth.

I do so miss civics and its invitation to explore our concept of patriotism and to invite us not to merely accept American democracy as a given, but to question articulately each chapter of our growth as a society and an economy, to "crit" that growth where necessary through debate, reflection and listening to one another with open hearts and minds. Thanksgiving could create productive conversation about our values, not merely to judge us but to guide us. Any chance of thoughtful words to enhance the dinners and to review both the year behind us and what looms ahead?


The Thanksgiving dinner table. PHOTO | MIKE FINK

MIKE FINK *(mfink33@aol.com) is a professor emeritus at the Rhode Island School of Design.*

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

speak briefly about Beth-El's design. Since its completion in 1954, it has remained significant regionally and perhaps nationally. Percival Goodman, a native-born New York City architect, was ultimately selected over Erich Mendelsohn, an older, German-born modernist, who was internationally renowned before arriving in America in 1941. Fortunately, Mendelsohn built four American synagogues – all in the Midwest – but Goodman built more than 50 throughout the country. He was by far the most prolific synagogue designer in all Jewish history!

Fortunately, on Wednesday, I was also able to lead a Beth-El tour for a small number of Preservation Society members. And later that week, there were several more lectures and programs about Providence's modern architecture primarily for historians and educators.

This year's preservation tour, titled "A Festival of Modern Design," was held, as usual, on Saturday. Perhaps not to offend the religiously observant, there was no reference in its title to Jewish architects. Their impact on the East Side, during the 1950s and '60s, was astounding, however. This was especially evident in clusters of homes near Blackstone Boulevard and on College Hill. Two Jewish architects, Ira Rakatansky and Lester Millman, were featured, as well as some Gentile architects. Many of the homes were commissioned by Jewish clients.

'But on Saturday's tour, I was deeply impressed by two of Millman's houses.'

Fortunately, Rakatansky's architecture has been carefully studied, and I was fortunate to interview him toward the end of his long life in his office a block above North Main Street.

No doubt, many East Side residents frequently encounter some of Rakatansky's East Side dwellings but probably know little about them. I became astonished when allowed to enter or walk around a few. What simple but serene buildings and gardens! And, in my opinion, how unpretentious!

Yes, these homes could be considered spiritual in their respect for and celebration of the sanctity of daily life. Given today's political turmoil, their modesty and self-sufficiency might also be considered patriotic.

Most Providence residents are probably familiar with two of Millman's institutional designs: the expansion of the Episcopal Cathedral on North Main Street and the JCC on Elmgrove Avenue before its recent renovation and expansion. But on Saturday's tour, I was deeply impressed by two of Millman's houses.

One stands on Keene Street, amid resplendent Victorian surroundings. For some strange reason, I was especially intrigued by the stone wall on the home's periphery. Was it built for a previous residence on this site or did the architect seek a sharp contrast between old and new, natural and industrial materials?

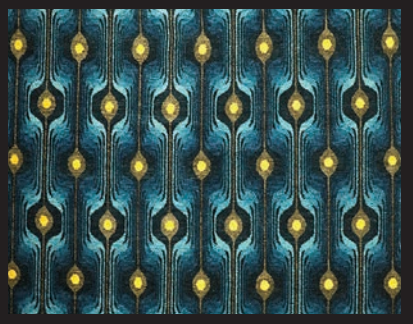
I was also astonished by a Millman home on the east side of Blackstone Boulevard. It has one of the most imaginative (or bombastic) carports I have ever seen. But the elegant residence, a long and spacious pavilion placed perpendicular to the street, epitomizes privacy and harmony. Having once been acquainted with Millman's widow, Ida, an interior decorator and a Beth-El member, I wish that I had complimented her.

Of course, J.N. Brown and his wife, Anne, were far more than preservationists. In 1936, they commissioned an extraordinary vacation home, "Windshield," on Fishers Island, offshore of New London. Though severely damaged by the hurricane of 1938, it was soon rebuilt. The architect happened to be Richard Neutra, a distinguished Jewish modernist from Vienna, who built a new life and an extraordinary career in Los Angeles. Indeed, I graduated from his Emerson Junior High School, which was constructed in 1938. No doubt, this building somehow touched me. It still does.

GEORGE M. GOODWIN, *of Providence, is the editor of Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes.*









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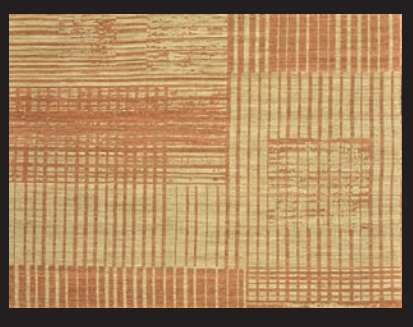
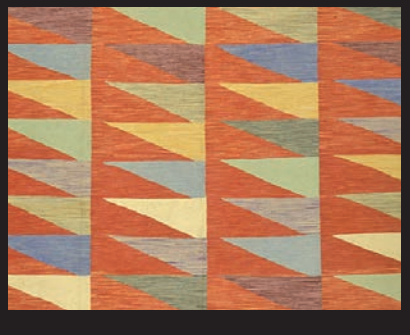



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COMMUNITY VOICES

The depth and breadth of aging

The topic of seniors is very close to home for me as I am an early baby boomer. Up until recently, age was just a number, and my passion, persistence and purpose continued non-stop.

HEALTHY LIVING



PATRICIA RASKIN

BUT OF LATE, I have been reflecting about years and realize no matter how much energy and drive I have, the numbers are real, and the clock is ticking.

I do not say this in a despondent manner but in a way that makes me cognizant of the years I have left to do what I love and be with the people I love. It is sobering because every day that passes, I am aware of my time limits.

I am now reflecting more on the special moments in my life during all the milestone years. This includes attending my high school reunion and revisiting the home I grew up in, which prompted me to write to the current owners and share my memories and ask for a tour. I also reflect on the places I have lived and the people who made those moments so special.

It's like doing an inventory and taking stock of what we have and what we have achieved … and what we have left to do.

This is why capturing those moments is so important as the photos, videos, letters and writings are our "keepers" – proof of where we were both physically and emotionally at those times in our lives.

Feelings can be very mixed when we go back and revisit these memories, especially when those people, places and experiences are no longer available to us. And it can be empowering to recall those special moments which we have been fortunate to have experienced.

And when those memories are difficult and painful, we can acknowledge them and then reframe them to see them in a positive and renewed way.

The in-depth article on jewishsacredaging.com titled "Spirituality and Aging – Commentary from Rabbi Lawrence Kotok" has Rabbi Kotok quoting several sources. He shares a story from Rabbi Alvin Fine, a story from Mitch Albom's book "Have A Little Faith: A True Story" and he points out Judith Viorst's book, over 20 years old, "Necessary Losses: The Loves, Illusions, Dependencies, and Impossible Expectations That All of Us Have to Give Up in Order to Grow."

Rabbi Kotok, summarizes so wisely "… what do you bring to life – what do you bring to a new living situation – how can each of us make that better or easier – how can we reinforce your sense of worth – identity and meaning – my answer

'Feelings can be very mixed when we go back and revisit these memories…'

is in building the sacred community – in building a community that is attuned to the special realities you as seniors begin to face – all of the many aspects of frailty and dependence –both physical and mental – and even if none of those occur the struggle with the perceived loss of independence that comes with both physical and emotional change–moving into a new apartment – or having to give up driving…all of these impact us at some point if we are lucky enough to keep living – none of us are exempt."

He continues, "The ultimate difference is how each individual faces or denies these known realities – whether they do them alone or in a supportive community – and that is where the spirituality of the individual can make all the difference as all of us negotiate life's twists and turns. We can help in this journey if we have established or can build new trusting relationships with them."

PATRICIA RASKIN, *owner of Raskin Resources Productions, is an award-winning radio producer, business owner and leader. She has served on the board of directors of Temple Emanu-El, in Providence. Her "Positive Living with Patricia Raskin" podcast can be heard on voiceamerica.com.*

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Ramban asserts that Avraham *failed* the test by being willing to sacrifice his own son. Avraham was willing to argue with God earlier in this parashah about sparing the entire wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah for the sake of ten righteous people living there and yet he won't argue to spare his own son!!

That's quite striking.

There's another midrash that sets up the story behind the scenes of the Akedah in a similar manner to the framing of the story of Job. The accuser, Satan, says to God: "Avraham has been given so much wealth, etc. and he hasn't even offered you a turtledove as a thanksgiving offering." God replies: "Avraham is so giving that even if I asked him to give his own son as a sacrifice, he would do it." According to this midrashic story, that's the background that precedes the story of the Akedah. Midrashim often fill in the gaps, the unspoken parts of the story. The Zohar, the most influential mystical text of our tradition (from the late 1200's) takes the midrashic idea that sees Satan's role in the story and says instead, that it was Avraham's *yetzer hara*, his own evil inclination, that made him think that he should offer Yitzkhak up.

One thing that these various commentaries have in common is that they all are uncomfortable with how the story is depicted in the Torah. What does the depiction of the Akedah in Vayera say about God? What kind of deity asks someone to sacrifice their child? Is this consistent with the Torah's insistence in Deuteronomy 30:29: to "choose life?"

We all face tests in our lifetimes, some formal, such as in school, some merely the tests that life throws our way from time to time – for some people more frequently than others. These tests put our values and our character on trial. They can gauge who we are as a person – what we are willing to do for our values and for our beliefs. Avraham's "test" can be understood in many ways. According to the Talmud, (Pirkei Avot Chapter 5, Mishna 3) – Avraham was tested ten times. The Akedah was the tenth and last. On the surface it looks like the test was whether Avraham was willing to give up his beloved son. I'm sure it would have been much easier for him to sacrifice himself than to sacrifice Yitzkhak. Maybe, as Nachmanides implies, the real test was for Avraham to say: "no, I won't do it" and to argue with God with the same *chutzpah* with which he argued over the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah earlier in the parashah.

'We all face tests in our lifetimes…'

There's one thing in the text that raises another question. In Genesis 22:5 Avraham asks the young men assisting him to wait as he and Yitzkhak go up the mountain where they will prostrate themselves and return. Both verbs are in the plural. Did Avraham believe that somehow, he would not ultimately have to offer up Yitzkhak and that's why he said they would return? Just as Avraham had said to the Eternal One in the beginning of the parashah (Genesis 18:25): "*hashofet kol ha'aretz lo ya'aseh mishpat?*" (Will the Judge of all the earth not do justly?).

There's one additional complicating factor. This episode essentially ends the parashah, followed almost immediately by the death of Sarah. Our sages say that Sarah heard of what Avraham did and died of shock at the age of 127. How old does that make Yitzkhak in this story? Who's stronger, a 36-year-old Yitzkhak or a 136-year-old Avraham? Is Yitzkhak sacrificing himself? What is being tested in Avraham – his faith (that God would ultimately not really require him to sacrifice Yitzkhak), his obedience, or his willingness to argue for what he thinks is just and right? This amazingly complex story, apparently simple on its surface, is told in about one page. At the end of this episode in the Torah, we never read of Yitzkhak and Avraham being in the same place together again, except when Yitzkhak and his half-brother, Yishmael, come to bury their father, the father who banished his young first-born son, Yishmael, and almost sacrificed his second-born son, Yitzkhak. Our tests are not always what they seem to be.

MARK ELBER *is the rabbi at Temple Beth El, in Fall River. His book of poetry, "Headstone" (Passager Books, 2022), won the 2022 Henry Morgenthau III Poetry Prize.*

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LETTERS

After the ceasefire

IT WAS INTERESTING to see the opinions about Israel fighting Hamas after there is a ceasefire. Military theorist Carl von Clausewitz is reported to have said, "War is politics by other means." It was refreshing to see a peaceful, polite discussion about Israeli politics and the war. Authors were questioning the war tactics and disturbed by the Arab casualties. Hamas thrives on creating "legitimacy traps," housing military supplies and fighters in civilian settings such as hospitals, apartments, schools and mosques. It is easy for armchair generals who are not directly involved in a war to critique tactics and outcomes.

I trained as a psychiatrist in a Veterans Administration hospital right after the Vietnam war. Many of the staff and patients had been war veterans. The stories were of split-second decisions that had life or death consequences. Soldiers talked of killing people dressed as civilians who approached US military assets and ignored warnings. One former soldier had recurring nightmares of having to kill a girl he estimated was about 6 years old. He said that she saw his unit in a Viet Cong area and was going to alert her village. If he had not killed the girl, his whole unit would have been exposed and wiped out. When fighting an enemy shooting from a hospital, the choice is to shoot back, risking civilian casualties or risk dying yourself. You have seconds to decide. Such is a war against terrorists using human shields.

I wish to thank the Jewish community for keeping the internal divisions peaceful. I also wish to thank President Trump for helping free the hostages and giving peace a chance. General Mattis said, "The enemy gets a vote." Unfortunately, Hamas seems to be voting to return to public executions and the oppression of the Gazan people.

Farrel I. Klein
Providence, RI

OPINION

Duties of the heart

IT SEEMS TO ME



RABBI JAMES ROSENBERG

ABOUT 950 YEARS AGO, Rabbi Bahya ibn Paquda, who lived in Andalusia – today, a region of southernmost Spain – wrote a book in Judeo Arabic, later translated into medieval Hebrew and given the title *Chovot HaLevavot*, which reads in English as "Duties of the Heart." To be honest, though my fellow rabbinical students and I had a cursory knowledge of ibn Paquda's major work through English translations and commentaries, we lacked the ability at that time to handle the medieval Hebrew. Moreover, given the undisputed fact that Moses Maimonides (1138-1284) was the intellectual giant of the Jewish Middle Ages, our crowded schedules kept us from devoting much time to ibn Paquda's best-known work. Nevertheless, there is something powerful in the English title that has kept these four words, "Duties of the Heart," with me during the 54 years since my rabbinical ordination.

The title challenges me to ask: What are the duties of my heart? How can I learn them? How can I teach them? How can we, as a society, all benefit from fulfilling these duties? In our contemporary English-speaking culture, we often view the heart as a metaphor for our feelings; similarly, we tend to view our head – more specifically, our brain – as a metaphor for our thoughts, for our process of thinking.

It seems to me that one of the overlooked tragedies in the development of western civilization is that ever since the dawn of science, sometime during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, we have paid far more attention to the duties of our minds than to the duties of our hearts. We seem to pay far more attention to what people think than to what people feel; we seem to care more about *how* people think, the *process* of thinking, than about *how* people feel, the *process* of feeling.

Why is it that so often we value the complexity of an individual's thinking more than the richness, the subtleness, the sensitivity of an individual's feelings? I would suggest that one of our deepest cultural failures is the loss of our ability to balance, to integrate our thoughts with our feelings. It is urgent for us to rediscover how to become both wise in our thinking and wise in our feeling. The failure of our body politic here in America to become whole, balanced, integrated individuals underlies our current political catastrophe. We have managed to cripple ourselves as a nation. We are living in a time of which the Irish poet William Butler Yeats wrote in his poem, "The Second Coming" (1919):

"Things fall apart, the center cannot hold;

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world…"

We are falling apart as individuals; how can we then hope to bring America together again?

In her op-ed piece in the Sept.18 issue of The New York Times," "Colleges Must Keep Hosting Difficult Speakers," Laurie Ann Rosenbury, president of Barnard College, attempts to bring some perspective to the assassination of Charlie Kirk this past Sept. 10 at Utah Valley University; and – by extension – she stresses our essential need to learn how to disagree non-violently. At the beginning of her essay, she points out, "This is a grim moment for higher education, for our country and for freedom of speech…."

"A commitment to nonviolent disagreement should be an obvious part of the fabric of our campuses, just as it is obvious that students need oxygen to breathe… This is also a time to foster more disagreement, not less."

Several paragraphs into her op-ed piece, Rosenbury writes, "At Barnard we have started a multi-year initiative and study groups to cultivate curiosity, broaden inquiry and help students engage others with differing views with empathy and open minds."

To which I add, empathy is, of course, an opening to the heart as well as an opening to the mind.

Toward the very end of her essay, Rosenbury adds "That is the goal of a liberal arts education: teaching students how to think, not what to think."

But Rosenbury does not go far enough; as I have been trying to emphasize, a major problem of liberal education today is that we neglect to investigate with our students not only what we happen to be feeling but also the processes by which we arrive at such feelings.

As many of you know, immediately after we recite the *Shema* during our worship, we continue either in Hebrew or English with the Biblical passage beginning with Deuteronomy 6.5: "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart…" Whenever I recite this verse, I am reminded, at times only subliminally, of the title of ibn Paquda's "Duties of the Heart." And out of the chaos of my unexamined feelings, the question pours out: What are the duties of my own heart? And this is the very question our broken nation needs to ask itself: what are the duties of our collective hearts? It is now time for us to turn our thoughts and our feelings into deeds. As the ancient rabbi Hillel asked 2000 years ago. *"V'im lo achshav, ay-matai?* And if not now, when?"

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

They brought them home

BY DANIEL STIEGLITZ

I WRITE THIS article the day after the last of the living hostages was returned home from their two-year captivity in Gaza. It was an occasion filled with nothing short of joy and celebration. And yet it still stirs up a mix of other emotions in me. I think back to all the hostages; those who survived and those who didn't; as well as people who perished on Oct. 7, 2023, and onward.

When educating people about tragedies and horrors like the Holocaust, one of the key things is to NOT focus on the death of 6 million Jews. The human mind cannot comprehend such a large number of people. To properly understand and educate about something like the Holocaust, one must focus on specific people and their stories.

For any number of reasons, some hostages were more "high profile" than others. Their abduction recorded by Hamas and shared with the world, their ages, etc. The value of each hostage's life is equal. Yet, holding all of them in our hearts and minds is easier when we focus such feelings on specific hostages, victims and their stories. They are representatives in our hearts for the greater whole.

Among these people and their respective stories that I have focused on more closely over the last two years is Noa Argamani. She was a "high profile" hostage since, not only was her abduction recorded and shared by Hamas, but she had a mother who was dying of brain cancer. Her mother

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

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

OPINION

When beauty turns ugly

BY MARJORIE DAVIS

HUDA KATTAN, founder of the billion-dollar cosmetics brand Huda Beauty, created a TikTok video in which she blamed Israel for World War I, World War II, the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and the October 7 Hamas massacre. Saying that she "just had a feeling", Kattan saw no need to provide her 11 million followers with any evidence or rationale to support these outrageous and venomous claims.

Suggesting that Israel would unprovokedly attack anyone, let alone its closest ally, and that the Israeli army would barbarically massacre its own people, is utterly preposterous. Moreover, the fact that Israel did not even exist when World War I and World War II took place was a pesky fact that she conveniently overlooked.

One would be hard-pressed to find a country that has been accused of more false crimes than Israel, or a people that has consistently been the object of more horrendous lies than the Jewish people.

Author Dara Horn said, "The through line of antisemitism for thousands of years has been the denial of truth and the promotion of lies."

Antisemitism is a contagious disease spread by lies that defy logic. A sickness without a cure, antisemitism can be mitigated only by the vaccine of truth.

Whether it was the lie spread hundreds of years ago that Jews kill Christian children to use their blood to make matzah, or Rep. Marjorie Taylor-Greene's fabrication that Jews use space lasers to start wildfires, it is hard to imagine anyone spreading such ludicrous lies about any other group of people.

Right after Charlie Kirk was murdered, accusations that Israel was responsible began to circulate. Kirk, in fact, was a steadfast, vocal supporter of the Jewish state.

But the biggest proliferator of false information is the media.

Soon after the war began, many western news channels reported on an Israeli strike on a Gaza hospital that supposedly killed 500 civilians. However, it was later determined that the explosion was the result of a misfired Palestinian Islamic Jihad rocket. By then, the story had faded from the headlines, and few people heard the truth.

On July 24, the front page of The New York Times contained a picture of an emaciated young boy. The photo bolstered the false claim that Israel was purposely starving Gazan children.

The widely seen photo sparked outrage and anger toward Israel. However, five days later, the paper issued a correction, admitting that Mohammed had pre-existing health conditions that led to his emaciation. The correction, however, generated only a fraction of the clicks of the original story.

On Aug. 17, the BBC ran a story with the headline, "Gazan woman flown to Italy dies of malnutrition." After extensive criticism, it quietly published a correction saying that she had, in fact, died of leukemia. As usual, the truthful story received a fraction of the clicks of the false story.

Indeed, the media use megaphones to shout their lies, and then in a whisper they speak the truth.

It seems that Hamas is always the party that benefits from the media's mistakes, and it is worth questioning why outlets such as NYT, CNN, and BBC never seem to err in Israel's favor.

Ironically, it is Israel's due diligence that works to its disadvantage. Unlike Hamas, Israel does not provide information until they have verified the facts. By then, the media have already reported Hamas' deceptions.

The tendency to promote negative content, especially falsehoods, is a known practice. A leaked Facebook memo disclosed that its algorithms were designed to promote negative posts because they garnered more attention. In addition, an MIT study revealed that false news stories were 70% more likely to be retweeted than true stories.

Although these behaviors apply to all subject matters, for Jews they are particularly problematic, as they shape opinions that fan the flames of antisemitism.

The biggest lie that has arisen from the war involves a supposed genocide of the Gazan population. In fact, it is Hamas that targets civilians, and it is Israel that targets terrorists. It is Hamas that seeks to increase the death total of its own people, and it is Israel that goes to great lengths to minimize the total.

French philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy said, "A genocidal army doesn't take two years to win a war in a territory the size of Las Vegas. A genocidal army doesn't send SMS warnings before firing or facilitate the passage of those trying to escape the strikes. A genocidal army wouldn't evacuate, every month, hundreds of Palestinian children suffering from rare diseases or cancer, sending them to hospitals in Abu Dhabi as part of a medical airlift set up right after Oct. 7. To speak of genocide in Gaza is an offense to common sense, a maneuver to demonize Israel, and an insult to the victims of genocides past and present."

Israel has been accused of intentionally starving the people of Gaza, but since the start of the war, Israel has facilitated the delivery of 2 million tons of humanitarian aid. Hamas has been doing everything in its power to prevent aid from getting to its people, including firing on UN staff and seizing their vehicles to block aid routes.

In August, a 311-page report provided by the Begin-Sadat Center debunked every major allegation against Israel, including starvation and civilian targeting. Every disproven claim was cited with detailed information. In one major finding, the researchers documented that more food entered Gaza during the war than before Oct. 7, 2023, but "extensive looting by Hamas resulted in food shortages".

Recently, an artificial cornea developed by an Israeli company was successfully implanted in the eye of a man who was totally blind. The 78-year-old patient is now able to see. How ironic it is that a country able to achieve such groundbreaking success in curing blindness, is a country that forever struggles to get people who are blind to the truth to see clearly.

As for Huda Kattan, some consequences have resulted from her contemptible TikTok video. The beauty products chain Sephora decided to remove Huda Beauty from its upcoming campaign. However, many people are asking Sephora to completely cut ties with Huda's brand.

Until they comply and fully disassociate with Kattan and her ugly lies, some have vowed to boycott Sephora.

Because while beauty is subjective and in the eye of the beholder, truth most certainly is not.

MARJORIE DAVIS *lives in Providence. She graduated from Brandeis University and is a Senior Database Specialist in a large, international technology company. This originally appeared in The Times of Israel blog. It is reprinted with permission.*

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

pleaded to see her daughter one last time before she died. Fortunately, Noa was one of the few hostages rescued from Gaza by the IDF (as opposed to being released via an agreement).

Saying that I get chills seeing any reunion between loved ones is an understatement. Such was the case when a video was released of Noa being reunited with her father. Most, if not all, the hostages probably had no idea how much we as a nation never forgot about them and always had them in our hearts and minds. The sight of any return and reunion was a joyous occasion for us as well as the families.

At the same time, because of her mother's medical condition, I was relieved that Noa's reunion with her mother was kept private. Although her mother died of terminal brain cancer just three weeks after her daughter's release, at least her wish to see her daughter one last time was fulfilled.

Israel also grieves for all its soldiers who are lost in the line of duty. That, of course, includes those who have perished since Oct. 7, 2023. At these and any other funerals that hit us to our core, people will show up in the thousands to mourn someone who was previously unknown to them. The same is true for people like hostages who don't return alive, and others such as the victims of terror attacks.

A few months ago, a friend and neighbor asked me if I would join him to stand on the side of the road near our homes for the funeral procession of a recently fallen soldier. I didn't ask him for details and joined him.

As the crowds gathered around us, which was only a mere fraction of the overall procession, a family emerged from the building directly across the street from where we stood. People began reacting. One member of the family waved to the crowd as they all got into a shuttle. It dawned on me that they had a connection to the soldier, and I asked my friend, "Is that the grieving family?" He acknowledged that it was. Until that moment, because of the large crowd, I had no idea that, not only were we at the very beginning of the procession, but that the family was my neighbors. With no pun intended, this made it hit even closer to home for me.

Four others among the high-profile hostages were members of the Bibas family. For them, partially due to some personal experiences, I will save what I have to say for another article.

The last person I'll focus on for now is Evyatar David. He was one of the final living hostages who was just released. This past August, Hamas released a video showing him in one of their terror tunnels. Even worse than his looking gaunt, was that they were forcing him to dig his own grave as they recorded him.

Yesterday we saw him reunited with his family. When I talk about feeling chills over such reunions, the chills I felt for him, as a key representative in my heart for all the hostages, victims, and those whose bodies have yet to be returned, make him a testament to all of these people I hold in my heart.

For two years we have been saying, "Bring Them Home". As of yesterday, when it comes to all the living hostages, we can finally say, "They Are Home."

DANIEL STIEGLITZ *(dstieglitz@gmail.com), originally from Rhode Island, immigrated to Israel in 2007 and currently lives in Jerusalem. He works in a nursery school for visually impaired children via the Jerusalem Municipality. His collection of short stories, "Tavern of the Mind," is available for paperback and Kindle purchase on Amazon. www.amzn.to/2Izssrz.*

FOOD

Easy snack bars for a pop of energy



THE POPCORN BOARD

Family Features – Snacks are a staple in the American diet. If you often find yourself eating while on the go, you know how important it is to keep your energy up without sacrificing nutrition with quick, convenient meals and snacks. Whether you're commuting to work, dropping the kids off at school or heading home from a workout, whole grains, granola and protein offer nutrients your body needs.

THESE POPCORN Granola Snack Bars are an energy-boosting pick-me-up, providing the stamina you need along with delicious flavor. As a tasty combination that satisfies hunger, popcorn, granola and peanut butter join forces to help you keep going between meals or replace a meal when schedules get hectic.

They're easy to make and feature popcorn, a whole grain that's 100% unprocessed with no additives, hidden ingredients or GMOs. Alone, air-popped popcorn has only 30 calories per cup.

Popcorn is also a whole grain that provides energy-producing complex carbohydrates and nutrients including zinc and B vitamins and contributes fiber to the diet for a satisfying treat that helps you feel fuller longer.

This Popcorn Granola Snack Bars recipe makes plenty for the week so you can enjoy them while they're fresh then store the leftovers in the refrigerator for easy snacking any time.

To find more popcorn snacks to satisfy cravings on the go, visit Popcorn.org.

Popcorn Granola Snack Bars

Recipe courtesy of The Popcorn Board Yield: 16 bars

INGREDIENTS

Nonstick cooking spray
1/2 cup honey
2/3 cup peanut butter
1 cup granola cereal
1 cup roasted and salted peanuts
3 cups popped popcorn

DIRECTIONS

Line 8- or 9-inch square baking pan with foil. Spray foil lightly with nonstick cooking spray; set aside.

In large saucepan, heat honey until boiling. Stir in peanut butter until well blended.

Remove pan from heat and stir in granola, peanuts and popcorn until coated.

Press mixture evenly into prepared pan. Refrigerate until cool; cut into bars to serve.

Nutritional information per 1-bar serving: 180 calories; 11 g total fat; 2 g saturated fat; 0 mg cholesterol; 90 mg sodium; 18 g carbohydrates; 2 g fiber; 12 g sugar; 6 g protein; 147 mg potassium.



FOOD

Helping Our Neighbors While SNAP Benefits Are Paused

Ways to Help the JCS Kosher Food Pantry

Thank you to all who contributed to our High Holiday Food Drive
your generosity helped so many families.

**Now, with SNAP benefits being paused, our community needs us more than ever.
Please consider supporting our pantry. Every donation makes an impact!**

Food Donations

We are asking for the following items to help keep our families afloat:

- Tuna
- Cereal
- Crunchy P.B.
- Crackers
- Granola Bars
- Shelf Stable Milk
- Canned Pumpkin
- Instant Potatoes
- Rice Pilaf Mixes
- Sardines
- Oatmeal
- Jelly/Jam
- Pretzels
- Canned Soups
- Shelf Stable Almond Milk
- Cranberry Sauce
- Thanksgiving Items
- Kosher Mac & Cheese

However, we are incredibly grateful for any and all food items you are able to provide to us.

***Donations can be dropped off
in our donation boxes at:
1165 North Main Street, Providence, RI
Mon.-Thurs: 8:30 to 4:30 & Fri.: 8:30 - 3:30***

Monetary Donations

Our pantry is also accepting monetary donations on our website: jcsri.org/donate/donate-now/

By selecting *'Community Services & Food Security Fund'* it allows us to purchase food items and personal care items, and provides funding for staff and resources to expand and meet the growing need!

Other Ways to Help the Pantry:

- If you're a local business owner, or part of a school or synagogue community, **consider organizing food drive to support our pantries.**
- If you are holding an event, meeting, craft fair, or holiday party, **ask attendees to bring a nonperishable food item.**
- If you have **paper, plastic, or reusable bags** in excess, please drop them off, they will be put to good use at our pantries!!
- If you have any cans or non-perishables in your cabinet that you aren't going to use, please consider **dropping them off to our pantries.**

Personal Care Item Donations

Many of our clients need assistance acquiring basic hygeine items. We also accept the following items:

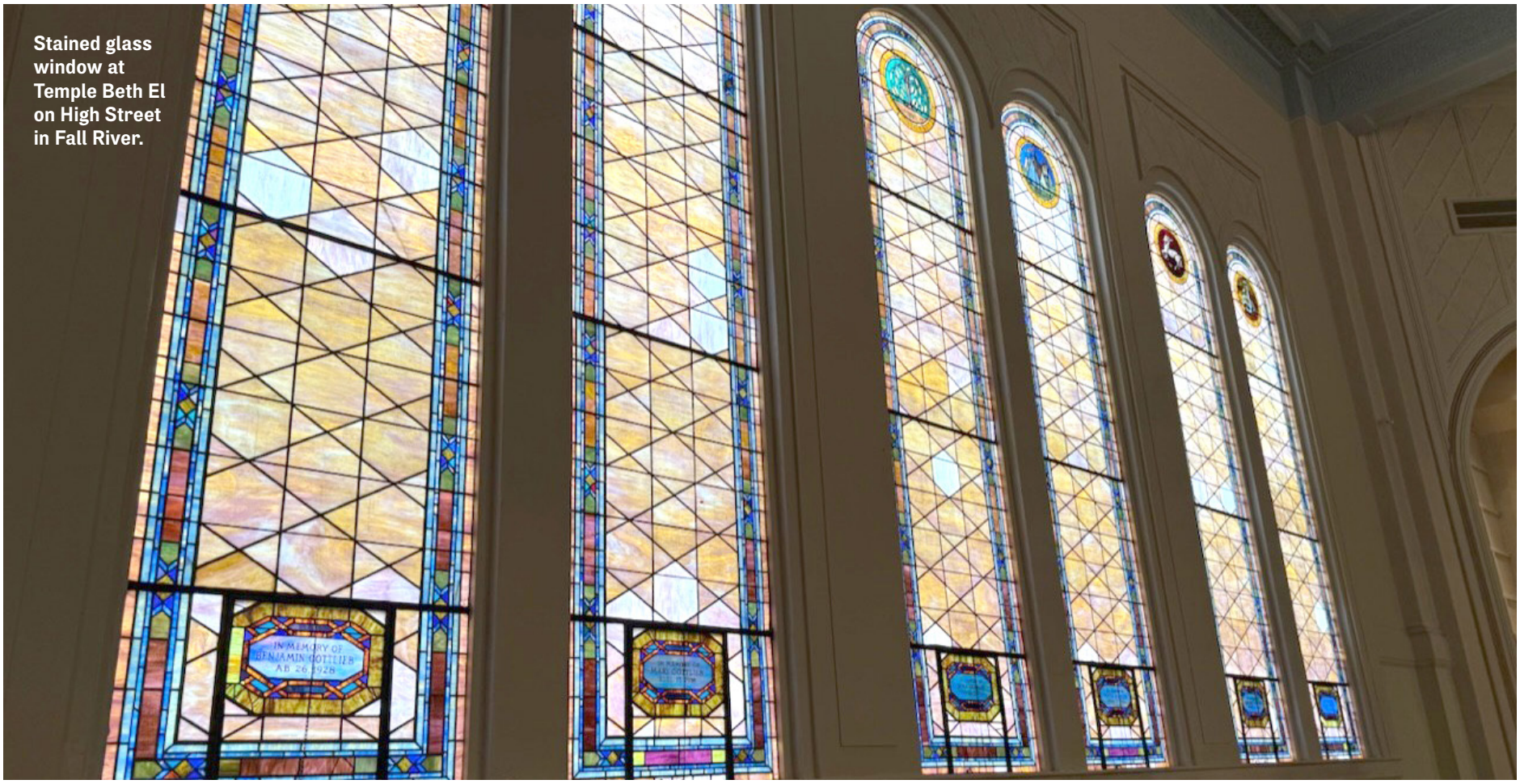
- Tooth Paste
- Tooth Brushes
- Deodorant
- Hand Soap
- Dish Soap
- Conditioner
- Shampoo
- Bar Soap
- Body Wash
- Q-Tips

We are also looking for adult diapers in sizes Small, Medium & Large

**For questions, please contact Kristany Jaycox, Pantry Coordinator
Phone: 401.369.5052 | Email: kristany@jcsri.org**

The Full Plate Kosher Food Pantry is a program of Jewish Collaborative Services

Adoption Options • Case Management • Jewish Eldercare • Kosher Nutrition • Kesher • LifeLink RI
Shalom Apartments • The Counseling Center • The Full Plate Kosher Food Pantry • Tamarisk Senior Living
Jewish Collaborative Services • 1165 North Main Street, Providence, RI 02904 • P: 401.331.1244 • JCSRI.org



Stained glass window at Temple Beth El on High Street in Fall River.

Memories of Fall River's Beth El in happier times

BY M. CHARLES BAKST

On Oct. 31, Temple Beth El in Fall River held its last Shabbat service before moving to a new, smaller, rental location nearby. The High Street building has been sold. This originally ran in the February 2024 issue of Jewish Rhode Island and we thought it was appropriate to run it again. The photos of the interior of the building are recent.

When I recently saw that Fall River's once-flourishing Conservative Temple Beth El has decided to sell its building on High Street and seek a smaller space, I was hardly surprised, but even so it was a punch to the gut.

IT MAKES SENSE, sure. The building, with its gorgeous sanctuary, is badly in need of repair and the congregation has dwindled to almost nothing.

I grew up in the temple, and I do not want to remember it this way. I prefer to bask, gratefully, in memories of the golden years I experienced as a youngster – a student in its thriving Sunday School and thriving Hebrew School, a son of parents who were among its most active members.

My father, Lester, was a president. The life of my mother, Ann, revolved around Hadassah, Sisterhood and Helping Hand. This was one bustling place in the 1950s of my youth.

I see that at the most recent High Holy Days services, attendance was down to 30, or less than 50 even if you include those who attended on Zoom.

In my day, the 650-seat sanctuary was filled, and another service was held simultaneously in the auditorium of the adjoining school building, which opened in 1954. (The main temple building dates to 1929.)

And that new building, with a complex of classrooms spread over two floors, still couldn't accommodate all the Sunday School kids; the temple also had to use space in quarters across the street.

Kids spent an incredible amount of time at Beth El. The bulging Hebrew School classes had a split set-up. Some kids would go on Monday and Wednesday, while others, in the same grades, would go on Tuesday and Thursday. Before classes, you might shoot hoops on the basketball court, with glass backboards, in the school building's auditorium.

Beth El employed an athletic director, Ed Shea, a teacher at Morton Junior High. Young kids just fooled around, but the older boys, including my brother Arthur, played on the Templers, a Shea-coached basketball team in the Church League at the YMCA in Fall River.

On Friday night, you might have the sophisticated experience of accompanying your parents to Shabbat services that included a sermon by the brilliant (though temperamental) Rabbi Samuel Ruderman, chanting by the sweet-voiced Cantor Marcus Gerlich, and music produced by a professional-quality choir and organist.

Saturday morning meant attendance at Bar or Bat Mitzvah services, or else Junior Congregation. From there, you and your friends might convene for lunch at the China Royal downtown – a chow mein sandwich was 25 cents – and then proceed to the movies – also 25 cents – or bowling (20 cents a string and a nickel for the pin boy).

Saturday night might find you back at the temple for a dance.

Then back again the next morning for Sunday School.

Well, actually, before Sunday School, my father sometimes brought me to the morning minyan – all male, of course. There were minyans every morning and evening. When my father was temple president, in 1955-56, he'd often be called at home to get down there to help fill out the quota.

The Sunday morning minyan would be followed by a sumptuous Men's Club breakfast. I would fill up on bulkie rolls, cream cheese, herring and hard-boiled eggs.

When the guest speaker was introduced, I'd scoot out.

Later in life, as the Providence Journal political columnist, I often would be invited to speak to Jewish groups, and I'd routinely joke that my presence was a form of penance for all those times I left the Men's Club breakfasts without listening to the speeches.

What am I leaving out?

Well, the adults had a bowling league. In fact, there once were bowling alleys in the temple basement, but the space was converted to classroom use. The basement also housed a candy machine – my favorite was a Baby Ruth – and a Coke machine.

Beth El youngsters belonged to organizations like USY and Young Judaea. There was a nursery school, and scout troops, and something called Golden Agers.

We had gifted teachers like Eleanor Lechan, Thelma Chebot and Jacob Tabachnik, who cared about you, even though this occasionally meant some tough love.

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In an early Hebrew School drill, we were timed on how quickly we could read a prayer aloud. It seemed weird to me – like, you'd never race through the prayer at services. But it worked – you'd never succeed unless you became really familiar with the material.

There were many interesting discussions. One time a student asked if Jews believe in heaven and hell. The teacher said your afterlife is the memory that people have of how you lived your life on Earth.

When Hebrew School was finished, the temple would have a Cozy Cab bus drop you off near your home – after dark for much of the year. My father tapped his City Hall connections to get a street light installed in the middle of our block.

In an essay I wrote for the 2009 issue of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association's Notes, I spoke about the Jewish prism through which my parents viewed the world, and mentioned my days at Camp Tel Noar, and a 1960 Young Judaea summer trip to Israel. I said the temple reinforced the lessons of justice, charity and pride that my parents instilled at home.

And then I quoted from a 2004 speech that I delivered at Beth El:

"There were the teachers and the students and the lessons and the sermons, and everything in ways I never thought about then sort of added up. There was the Keren Ami, the nickels and dimes we brought in on Sunday mornings. There was the time a poor gentile kid came looking for help, and the rabbi helped him. There was a time a bunch of us acted like jerks on the public bus on the way to Hebrew classes and someone called the rabbi, and he chewed us out, and rightly so, because we had embarrassed the temple."

"We learned about support for Israel, a sense of bonding, and I remember the pictures of the old, isolated Hebrew University on our notebook covers," I continued.

"When my father was temple president, he would often be called to get over there to fill out a minyan, and that gave me a sense of what it means to take on an obligation. When my mother would be invited to present a Bible at a Bar Mitzvah, she would polish her remarks and polish them again, and that pursuit of perfection made an impression on me."

I told Notes readers, "The Bible stories, the customs, the struggle to master Hebrew, the lectures about morality and the dietary laws, represented a standard by which to measure ourselves. We could never be religious enough, or good enough, but we could try, we had to try."

I can tell you with absolute certainty that the milieu in which I was brought up – home life, Beth El life, Jewish camp life – contributed to the shaping of many of the columns I would write for the Providence Journal. You might have noticed my use of "shanda" to describe a political scandal, or the phrase "may her memory be for a blessing" to punctuate a piece about a funeral.

My annual holiday column paid homage to Chanukah's candles and latkes, as well as to Yule logs and boughs of holly.

And, by the way, the Journal's stylebook called for the holiday to be spelled "Hanukkah." My attitude was that I didn't go through 11 years of Beth El Sunday School to be told by the newspaper how to spell it, so I always went with "Chanukah" – and sometimes it slipped past the copy editors.

More importantly, I often wrote about Jewish themes, such as my Bar Mitzvah, or the Holocaust museum in Washington, or a set of Jewish baseball cards, or an ode to Kaplan's Bakery, or an interview with Elie Wiesel.

To me, a column supporting the quests of gays and Blacks and Latinos and immigrants for acceptance and equality also were Jewish themes. And so were columns supporting the food bank.

A tangible souvenir of Temple Beth El remains with me to this day. On the doorway of our condo in Providence is a mezuzah that artistically depicts the building's handsome front. A mezuzah symbolizes our religious obligations, but it is also more than that. I like these lines I found online:

"It's a reminder of our personal Jewish identity, who we are as a people and the values that are important to us," says Alex Shapero, program director at MyZuzah, an organization that provides kosher, fair-trade mezuzahs to Jews around the world. "The mezuzah is a symbol that connects, protects, and unites Jews. It is an external marker that Jews proudly live here and that we're not afraid to say so."

I am honored to have a Temple Beth El mezuzah saying that for me.

M. CHARLES BAKST *is a retired political columnist for the Providence Journal.*



The sanctuary of Temple Beth El on High Street in Fall River. M. CHARLES BAKST



The ark at Temple Beth El on High Street in Fall River.

COMMUNITY

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An American witness to Kristallnacht

BY LAURA AUKETAYEVA

Each November, the Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Center joins communities around the world in commemorating Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass which occurred on Nov. 9 and 10, 1938. It was the moment when anti-Jewish persecution in Nazi Germany turned into open violence, with synagogues destroyed, Jewish homes and businesses were looted, and about 30,000 Jewish men arrested and sent to concentration camps.



Robert Harlan, Frida Stern, Bruno Stern, April 1946, State College, PA. PHOTO | USHMM

AMONG THE EYEWITNESSES to those events was an American exchange student, Robert H. Harlan, who was studying at the Philipps-Universität in Marburg through a University of Chicago program. His diary and later typed recollections, now preserved at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the University of Chicago Library, provide an unusual outsider's view of how one German Jewish family, Bruno and Frida Stern of Würzburg, survived the escalating Nazi persecution.

Harlan came to know the Sterns through their son, William Stern, who was his classmate at the University of Chicago. When Harlan began his exchange year in Germany, William asked him to visit his parents in Würzburg. In August 1938, while traveling by bicycle across central Germany, Harlan wrote ahead to let them know he would stop by. What began as a brief courtesy visit turned into a 10-day stay that deeply affected him.

He arrived "mud-bespattered from head to foot" after cycling through rain and hills, and the Sterns welcomed him like family. Frau Stern drew him a hot bath, served him cake and coffee, and prepared a warm dinner. "I had never seen such kindness," he wrote, noting their generosity even as their rights were being stripped away. Dr. Stern, a lawyer who had already been dismissed from his firm because of his Jewish background, spoke to Harlan frankly: "The present government is not friendly to the Jewish people. Perhaps it would be better if you went on. We would like very much for you to stay, but we will understand perfectly if you wish to leave." Harlan stayed, determined to understand what was happening, though he seemed to underestimate the danger the Sterns faced.

By the fall of 1938, the situation had worsened. The Sterns were ordered to sell their home, and Bruno was instructed to close his law office by Dec. 1. When Harlan returned to Marburg, he wrote about their difficulties with sadness and uncertainty. Then, on Nov. 11, he received a telegram asking him to go visit Frida Stern. Harlan took the first train to Würzburg, not realizing that he was about to walk into the aftermath of Kristallnacht.

He arrived to find the Sterns' apartment completely destroyed and Mrs. Stern distraught. "Her husband had been taken away the night before," he wrote. "Her home was gone. What was she to do? What could I do?" He stayed with her through the night, helping her draft telegrams and cables to her sons in America and to the American consulate. He described her "frantic" attempts to reach anyone who might help. When daylight came, they returned to the apartment. "Never had I seen such methodic, diabolic destruction," Harlan wrote. "Every door was smashed, the furniture splintered, each picture ripped from the wall and torn from its frame; books emptied out of bookcases, torn and despoiled; mirrors shattered systematically."

Harlan helped Mrs. Stern salvage what she could and contacted friends and neighbors who brought food and supplies. He also sought out Bruno's law partner and the American and British consulates to ask about possible visas. The American consul could offer little hope, explaining that the immigration quota was full and "America was at least four years distant" for most applicants. But the British consulate mentioned that a short-term transit visa to England might be possible if the Sterns could prove they would emigrate to the United States. Harlan rushed back to Würzburg to share the news. When he arrived, he found the couple reunited. Bruno had been released from Buchenwald after two weeks.

Harlan's account of that reunion is understated but moving. He described Dr. Stern as "painfully aware of his cropped head and prison pallor." Still, they were alive, and Harlan continued to assist with correspondence until his return to Marburg. The Sterns eventually fled Germany in March 1939 and reunited with their children in the United States.

Harlan's diary shows how someone recognized injustice, refused to look away, and chose to help. Harlan's descriptions of faces "patient and waiting, eager yet despairing" at the American consulate in Stuttgart capture the desperate hope of those seeking escape. Through this diary, he preserved the truth of what he saw. Robert Harlan's diary offers a rare glimpse of how one outsider saw the persecution of Jews unfold around him and chose to act. Studying accounts like his reminds us that understanding Kristallnacht also means asking what it means to witness suffering and decide to act.

The Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Center in Providence invites community members to visit and explore several physical resources available on-site that illuminate the history and impact of Kristallnacht. These include two books, "Women in the Holocaust," edited by Dalia Ofer and Lenore J. Weitzman, and "Kristallnacht," by Martin Gilbert, as well as two locally recorded DVDs: an interview with Rhode Island survivor Alice Goldstein, who lived through Kristallnacht in Germany, and a recorded talk by Curtis Whiteway, a Jewish liberator from Rhode Island who spoke at the Dwares Jewish Community Center about witnessing the aftermath of Nazi persecution and the events of Kristallnacht. These materials are available to view or borrow in person at the Center's library at 401 Elmgrove Avenue in Providence.

The public is also invited to the Kristallnacht Commemoration on Sunday, Nov. 9, at 7 p.m. at the Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Center. The evening will feature a lecture by Professor Michael S. Bryant on how Hitler balanced law and violence, culminating in the Kristallnacht pogrom of November 1938. For more information or to RSVP, please email: info@hercri.org

LAURA AUKETAYEVA Ph.D., *is the Director of Education and Programs at the Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Center*



COMMUNITY



Alliance, SBHEC issue statement on Smithfield School Committee meeting

On Nov. 3, the Smithfield School Committee met in executive session to determine if an investigation would be warranted into the antisemitic hazing incident perpetrated by several members of the football team. After the executive session, there was an approximately 90-minute public comment session. The following statement was issued after that.

THE JEWISH ALLIANCE of Greater Rhode Island and the Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Center (SBHEC) were heartened by the strong community presence at last night's Smithfield School Committee meeting.

Following nearly three-and-a-half hours in executive session, the committee heard impassioned speakers from an audience of more than 150 individuals. We are deeply grateful to everyone who attended and spoke in support of the victim, his family and the Jewish community.

As we await the outcome of the Attorney General's investigation, the Jewish Alliance and SBHEC remain steadfast in our commitment to ensuring that incidents like this never happen again. Our focus now is on partnership – working with school leadership, educators and community members to strengthen Holocaust and antisemitism education, deepen understanding and foster respect across all communities. While this story may fade from the news cycle, our work is not ending, and we will continue to advocate for the victim, for greater education about antisemitism, and for our community.

Together, we will continue to lead with purpose, promote learning, and build a safer, more inclusive Rhode Island for generations to come.

For updated information, go to jewishrhody.com



Wendy Joering addresses the school board. PHOTOS | GLENN OSMUNDSON



School Board Chairman Richard Iannitelli urges the crowd to be patient while the board meets in executive session.



Lillian Birch addresses the school board.



Adam Greenman addresses the Smithfield School Board.



The School Board listens to audience members speak.

COMMUNITY

Rabbis Neimeiser and Goldwasser honored by RI State Council of Churches

BY EMILY GAUDREAU

PROVIDENCE – Two prominent Rhode Island rabbis were honored at this year's Rhode Island State Council of Churches "Heroes of Faith" breakfast on Oct. 30 at Temple Beth-El. Rabbi Preston Neimeiser and Rabbi Jeffrey Goldwasser, both members of the Community Relations Council of the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island, received recognition for their unwavering commitment to social justice and community service. Rabbi Neimeiser received the "Future of Faith" award, while Rabbi Goldwasser was named "Faith Leader of the Year."

The breakfast recognized several community leaders whose work reflects lifelong dedication to civic service and their communities. Both rabbis focused their remarks on social justice, each highlighting his particular areas of advocacy and action.

Rabbi Neimeiser serves as associate rabbi at Temple Beth-El in Providence. His work centers on combining spiritual and ethical leadership, with particular passion for community building, labor rights, immigrant fairness and interfaith dialogue. He helps congregants translate Jewish wisdom into compassionate action.

In his acceptance speech, Rabbi Neimeiser spoke movingly about walking alongside SEIU 1199 workers during their recent labor action.

"I'm joined here today by Mary 'Murph' Walsh, a fearless leader and gifted organizer," he said. "Friends, the Future of Faith is the power of the people. If you didn't have the opportunity to see them in action, let me tell you: our union brothers and sisters know how to care for one another."

He described the nearly 100-day strike with deep reverence. "For almost 100 days; just over 13 weeks; more than 3 months, these workers stood in solidarity with one another. They walked together; they fed each other. They shared and received each other's stories with grace and compassion. To have had the privilege of walking beside them, to feel the warmth of their love, lighting up the darkness, was nothing less than a transcendent prayerful experience for me."

Rabbi Goldwasser of Temple Sinai in Cranston, who chairs the Rhode Island Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty and serves as vice president of the Board of Rabbis of Greater Rhode Island, has been instrumental in organizing the state's faith community around anti-poverty activism. His remarks emphasized our shared humanity and interconnectedness.

"This is what we are here for," Rabbi Goldwasser said, "not just the people in this room, not just the collective of people of faith in Rhode Island, but all humanity. Every human being on this earth was put here with a purpose to bring justice, compassion and love into this world. That purpose begins by making that duty manifest in spirit, in faith and in our actions. This is our great commandment: to love God by loving each other, not just in our affections and our prayers, but by not allowing any of our neighbors to go hungry, to go unhoused, to be left deprived of education, healthcare, a healthy environment, and meaningful work at fair wages."

The Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island benefits greatly from having these dedicated leaders on its Community Relations Council. Their work embodies core Jewish values: *Hineni*, standing with others so no one stands alone; and *Tikkun Olam*, repairing the world. Through their consistent efforts and passionate advocacy, they help advance justice and compassion throughout Rhode Island.

EMILY GAUDREAU *(egaudreau@jewishallianceri.org) director of Community Advocacy and Engagement at the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island.*

The ABCs of surviving Medicare Open Enrollment

BY HERB WEISS

It's that time. The Medicare Open Enrollment period runs until Dec. 7. During this period, Rhode Island's 243,000 Medicare beneficiaries (data from late 2024 to early 2025) are encouraged to explore their Medicare options, carefully review, compare options and make necessary changes to their existing Medicare plan for the following year.

DURING THE MEDICARE Open Enrollment period, you can join a new Medicare Advantage plan or Part D prescription drug plan, switch from Original Medicare to Medicare Advantage, or switch from Medicare Advantage to Original Medicare (with or without a Part D plan).

You can make as many changes as you want during this period. The last change you ultimately make will take effect on Jan. 1, 2026.

Medicare Options

According to Healthinsurance.org, an independent website that provides consumer information and education on health insurance options, here's a snapshot of Medicare plans chosen by Rhode Island beneficiaries.

As of September 2024, 144,610 Rhode Islanders were enrolled in **Medicare Advantage plans**. These plans, offered by private health insurance companies, are alternatives to Original Medicare. Medicare Advantage plans cover all the healthcare benefits that Original Medicare covers (e.g., hospital services and outpatient/medical/physician services), but the out-of-pocket costs can differ significantly, as Advantage plans set their own co-pays, co-insurance, and deductibles (within parameters defined by CMS).

Approximately 115,000 to 120,000 Rhode Islanders are enrolled in **Original Medicare**, representing about 49-51% of the state's Medicare beneficiaries. Original Medicare, covering individuals aged 65 and older as well as certain younger people with disabilities, is a "fee-for-service" plan composed of two main parts: Part A for hospital insurance (covering inpatient hospital care, skilled nursing care, hospice care, and some home health services) and Part B for medical insurance (covering doctor visits, preventive care, and durable medical equipment). These two parts cover a wide range of medically necessary services, with beneficiaries paying a portion of costs, such as coinsurance and deductibles.

Medicare Part D is an optional prescription drug benefit offered by private insurance companies approved by Medicare. This benefit helps cover the cost of outpatient prescription medications. Approximately 83% of the total 243,377 beneficiaries in September 2024 have some form of prescription drug coverage through a Medicare Part D plan.

Finally, according to the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, as of 2024, more than 50,000 Medicare beneficiaries in Rhode Island had **Medigap policies**. These policies are standardized supplemental insurance plans sold by private companies to cover the "gaps" in Original Medicare (Part A and Part B), including deductibles, co-payments, and co-insurance.

Taking a Close Look at Your Current Coverage

Even if you're satisfied with your current coverage, the state's Office for Healthy Aging recommends that Medicare beneficiaries closely review and compare their Medicare options to ensure their needs are met in the upcoming year. "Medicare beneficiaries will receive a lot of mail during Medicare Open Enrollment, so it is very important to pay attention to any changes in the plan's costs, including premiums, deductibles and cost-sharing amounts. Make sure your providers and pharmacies are still in the plan's network."

All Medicare beneficiaries (or those approaching Medicare eligibility) can receive free, unbiased counseling from **State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)** counselors. These services are voluntary and meant to help people understand the complexity of plans and make informed choices. SHIP counseling is an offered resource, not a condition of having Medicare or enrolling in a plan.

What to Bring to Your SHIP Appointment

You can enroll in Medicare plans or manage your coverage without using OHA or SHIP partners' counseling. There is a risk of not choosing the best plan to meet your medical needs, missing savings or subsidies, and increasing stress or confusion in making the right choice.

After making an appointment, a SHIP counselor will

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COMMUNITY

The Brothers of Phi Epsilon Pi at Brown University

BY GEORGE M. GOODWIN

Well into the 20th century, Brown was still a tiny institution, enrolling mostly Rhode Islanders. In 1914, for example, when the university celebrated its sesquicentennial, there were only 678 male and 204 female undergraduates, with 102 graduate students. Of Brown's 7,749 alumni, 58% were still living. As America's seventh-oldest university, Brown surely enjoyed some comparisons with Harvard and Yale, but the "Ivy League" athletic conference was not formalized until 1945.



The original brothers of Phi Epsilon Pi. PHOTOS | RI JEWISH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

WHAT DISTINGUISHED Brown from its New England neighbors was its Baptist patrimony. Required by its charter, all Brown's presidents were Baptist ministers until 1937, when Henry Wriston was selected. The charter allowed students of all denominations, but only Protestants could serve as trustees and faculty members.

Some exceptions were made early in the 20th century, when a few rabbis of Providence's Congregation Sons of Israel and David, later known as Temple Beth-El, were allowed to teach Hebrew and Bible courses. The most notable rabbi was Henry Englander, who earned his doctorate at Brown in 1909, but soon joined the faculty of the Reform seminary, Hebrew Union College, in Cincinnati.

Not until 1942, when the university's charter was amended, did a Catholic or a Jewish professor receive tenure. The first Jew was Israel J. Kapstein, who earned his bachelor's degree in 1926 and his doctorate five years later. In 1982, one of his former students, Marvyn Carton, endowed the Kapstein Professorship.

I recently received a letter from Kapstein's daughter, Judith Brodsky, herself a distinguished professor, who feared that her father was completely forgotten by the 130th anniversary celebrations.

Yearbooks show Brown's extracurricular life was once dominated by gentile fraternities, originating in the 1830s. By 1913, 20 fraternities owned and operated their own houses on College Hill.

On the eve of World War I, Brown may have enrolled a few dozen Jewish students. There is no precise way of knowing. Freshmen registration forms asked nothing about religion. It is possible to search for Jewish-sounding names on class rosters and compile a list of individuals excluded from fraternities. There were also very few Catholic students and only a tiny number of Blacks.

The vast majority of Brown's Jewish students walked or took trolleys to campus. Most lived in Jewish neighborhoods in the North End or South Providence.

In 2003, while examining the archives of the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association, I discovered a photo labeled "Phi Epsilon Pi, 1916-17." I sought to identify all 14 young men, who were carefully groomed and nattily attired. I also studied records in the Hay Library's Archives and a book, "Encyclopedia Brunoniana," which was written by Martha Mitchell, the archivist, in 1993.

I wondered if the photo I found may have portrayed Brown's Menorah Society, founded in 1915, following the first chapter, at Harvard, in 1906, and eventually on 34 campuses. The chapter at Brown's Women's College was established in 1919.

I learned that the first photo of Brown's Menorah Society did not appear until 1918. The society was an educational and literary endeavor, so Brown's Jewish young men had a Greek-letter organization of their own.

Phi Ep, founded at City College of New York in 1904, and a year later at

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JEWISH RHODE ISLAND's

This Month in History

Picture Perfect

BACK IN THE 1950S, Temple Beth-El commissioned artist Walter Feldman to craft a decorative tile walkway for the building's foyer, just in front of its handsome wooden doors. In 1986, Feldman returned to the site with his son Mark to do repair work. Feldman started teaching art at Brown University in 1953, and in 1960, he also created an ambitious series of mosaics for the outside of Temple Emanu-El. Feldman was a creative whirlwind for half a century, working in paint, woodcuts, stained glass and book design, before his passing in 2017.

Newspaper courtesy Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association



COMMUNITY

Greater Providence Hebrew Free Loan can help

BY SARAH GREENLEAF

Hebrew Free Loan Societies were started all over North America in the late 1800s and early 1900s from Seattle to Detroit to Providence. While some of these organizations originally lent money with the express purpose of people starting small businesses, others operated as charitable organizations from the start. The Greater Providence Hebrew Free Loan organization has been around for more than 100 years and was originally two separate organizations, the South Providence Hebrew Free Loan and the Gemilath Chesed Providence Hebrew Free Loan. They merged in October 2018.

THOUGH HISTORICALLY people used these types of interest-free loans for small items like a chicken for Shabbat, now people utilize them for a wider range of expenses. Current needs include car repairs, heating bills, college expenses, consolidating high-interest loans (such as credit card debt), medical bills, and more according to Barry Ackerman, a member of the board who led the merger of the two organizations. There are no strict regulations concerning the use of the loan.

To apply for a loan, you must be a member of the Greater Providence Hebrew Free Loan Association. The cost is $18 a year to be a member and allows you to apply for loans. First loans can be up to $5,000 and subsequent loans can be as much as $10,000. The larger the loan, the longer the payoff period. To apply for a loan people must identify as Jewish, reside in Rhode Island, Massachusetts or Connecticut, and submit proof of need, pass a credit check, and have a co-signer who does not need to be Jewish. The organization does not currently have a website, though one is in the works.

Ackerman said, "Our goal is we would love to have more loans out there, right? Our goal is not a big pot of money. Our goal is to have a good foundation, and we want it out there, we want to help people."

The money managed by the Association comes from donations, bequests and over 100 years spent in the stock market. "We are actively investing our money. We are a 100 plus year old organization we would hope to be around the next 100 years, so we have a very conservative, minimal-risk portfolio, and we have an active manager of that."

Many free loan organizations have seen a downward trend in requests for funds in recent years. Ackerman attributed some of this to the influx of government money during COVID19 and to a fracturing of the Jewish community. "The population isn't growing," Ackerman said. "There's not a singular place to go."

The loan application takes place via a PDF you can fill in and email to the organization. It is about a page long and requires a form of ID like a license and your last paycheck. "Seeing the last paycheck doesn't mean you actually make all that money," Ackerman said. "You could be an hourly person and last week worked 30 hours but traditionally work 15 hours." All information is confidential.

"There's always people in need," Ackerman pointed out. And while the needs may have changed, from groceries for celebrations to car repairs, the Greater Providence Hebrew Free Loan Association is still around and ready to help. When asked about his involvement with the Association Ackerman replied. "I like doing something to give back to the community. I like helping build things. I like growing things. And so, to me, that was something that I really wanted to do."

To apply for a loan send an email to gphfla2018@gmail.com to call 401-384-7251

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Columbia, soon endeavored to become a regional and then a national Jewish fraternity. The first three chapters in New England, all founded in 1916, were at Tufts, Maine and Rhode Island State College. The last survived until 1921. Brown's chapter, the 16th, also known as Sigma, was founded in 1916, folding in 1918. Rhode Island State's chapter lasted until 1921. Eventually, there were 48 chapters, which merged, in 1978, with a rival, national Jewish fraternity, Zeta Beta Tau.

Phi Ep probably disappeared at Brown because it was never sanctioned by the university's administration. The local Menorah Society continued to grow and reached its apex in 1928 with 42 members. It disbanded two years later.

I sought to learn as much as I could about each of the 14 Phi Ep brothers portrayed in the 1916 or '17 photo. Most, from the Classes of 1916 through 1919, died during the 1960s and '70s, however. I knew only one brother, Walter Adler, a prominent lawyer and a president of Temple Beth-El, who died in 1991 aged 94. I was acquainted with one of his three daughters, Susan Adler Kaplan, a Pembroke alumna who became a trustee. She, too, has passed away.

The simplest way to characterize the 14 Phi Ep brothers is noting their graduation records. Only 10 obtained Brown degrees. In my article for the 2003 issue of Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes, I wrote a few paragraphs about each brother, but perhaps we should honor all of them by reciting their names: Maurice Adelman, Walter Adler, Maurice Bazar, Charles Bolotow, Abraham Burt, Joseph Cohen, Herman Davis, Herman Feinstein, Arthur Levy, George Lubinsky, Isaac Olch, Daniel Robinson, Jacob Rosenberg and Samuel Silverman.

They can also be categorized by their birthplaces. Only two were born abroad: one in Russia, another in Austria. Eight brothers were Providence natives; three were Fall River natives and one was born in New York City.

I believe that the 10 Phi Ep graduates, including a few who earned Phi Beta Kappa keys and masters' degrees, accomplished something important. Having survived demanding courses in numerous disciplines, they became broadly educated.

For the smartest or most driven men, Brown provided steppingstones for advancement in medicine, law and teaching. Yet, did Walter Adler's degree from Harvard Law make him more successful than Arthur Levy, who earned his law degree at B.U.? Their achievements seem comparable.

A Brown degree did not necessarily lead to professional success. Some Jewish graduates may not have risen much higher than their fathers. Indeed, many went to work for their fathers. They struggled in small businesses and in fading industries, where a liberal education meant little to clients. Perhaps Phi Ep's most successful businessman was Joseph Cohen, who graduated from the school of risk-taking, good luck and perseverance.

Most Phi Ep brothers never left or soon returned to Little Rhody. They spent almost all their years within an area traversable by foot. They were loyal to their community, content with their lot or perhaps fearful of a larger world.

Through marriage, most members of Phi Ep moved beyond their Orthodox upbringing. Indeed, the Reform and Conservative movements became means of social advancement.

A few did not marry, and others did not have children. Two fraternity brothers, Walter Adler and George Lubinsky, had as many as three children.

The Phi Ep brothers sent children, grandchildren and nephews to their alma mater. No doubt legacies received some preference, but admission to Brown became ever more competitive, especially after World War II.

Around 1903, an anthem, "I'm a Brown Man Born," became popular. Its first verse proclaimed: "I'm a Brown man born, I'm a Brown man bred, And when I die, I'm a Brown man dead." Without a pedigree based on membership in the Baptist church or a father's education, none of the Phi Ep brothers was "a Brown man born."

There can be no doubt, however, that most Phi Ep brothers rejoiced in their Brown achievements and associations. They belonged to a university that was in some sense its own fraternity.

Many Phi Eps were blessed with good health and long, productive lives. There were five nonagenarians.

As proud Americans, many brothers were willing and ready to serve in World War I. Alas, some were unable to graduate because of military service. One Phi Ep, Jacob Rosenberg, Class of 1916, lost his life during the war, and his name is enshrined on Soldiers Gate, erected on campus on April 6, 1921, the fourth anniversary of America's entry into the war. But Rosenberg died of pneumonia, not in combat.

His classmate, Jacob Sidkowsky, who was not a Phi Ep member, did die in combat, and his name too is enshrined there. Neither classmate was a "Brown man born," but both became "Brown men dead."

One Phi Ep brother, George Lubinsky, enjoyed the distinction of serving in both World Wars. He served 15 months in the first war and 51 months in the second achieving the rank of captain in the military police.

Lubinsky played center field on Brown's baseball team. It's tempting to think that most of his fraternity brothers hit home runs by studying at or graduating from one of New England's oldest and most competitive universities. They became trailblazers for the thousands of proud Jewish men and women who have followed.

GEORGE M. GOODWIN, *of Providence, is the editor of Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes. He writes a monthly column for Jewish Rhode Island. This paper was presented during Brown' celebration of 130 years of Jewish enrollment.*

COMMUNITY

Community hears Rachel's Challenge



More than 150 people listened to the program Oct. 29 sponsored by the Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Center and the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island.



A crowd listened to Rachel's Challenge. PHOTOS | SBHEC

BY FRAN OSTENDORF

PROVIDENCE – Rachel's Challenge, an inspirational program based on the writings of Rachel Scott, the 17-year-old who was the first victim killed in the Columbine High School massacre, drew a crowd of more than 150 on Wednesday night to the social hall at the Bonnie & Donald Dwares Jewish Community Center.

The program was sponsored by the Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Center (SBHEC) and the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island in response to the recent antisemitic hazing incident involving the Smithfield High School football team.

Wendy Joering, executive director of the SBHEC, encouraged sports teams from area high schools to attend as well as community members interested in showing that "hate has no place in Rhode Island."

Said Joering, "Education and empathy are our most powerful tools [to combat hate]."

Rachel wrote extensively about kindness before her death, and her family has been offering this program in reaction to hate. (rachelschallenge.org)

Sports teams from North Providence as well as Toll Gate and Pilgrim high schools were represented at the evening program. Rhode Island School Commissioner Angelica Infante-Green and other Rhode Island leaders were there including several announced candidates for office. More than the usual number of police officers were in attendance as well.

No representatives from Smithfield schools attended.

The powerful, hour-long program challenged the audience to look for the best in others; to dream big; to choose positive influences; to speak with kindness; and to start their own chain reaction [of kindness].

Audience members sat in rapt attention as the presenter guided everyone through the program, which was a multimedia mixture of interviews with Rachel's friends and family, photographs of her journals and family photos, and guidance on implementing each of the challenges. Interest was intense with few people looking at phones, which we were asked to silence at the start of the program.

The incident at Smithfield High School occurred on Oct. 1, when five Smithfield High School football players were involved in antisemitic hazing aimed at a Jewish freshman football player. It was reported to a local rabbi, and the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island along with the Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Center became involved in working with the administration of Smithfield High School as well as the student's family to offer support.

(Original reports were that several senior football players allegedly locked a Jewish, freshman player in a bathroom and sprayed a cleaning fluid through the door making antisemitic comments, including some about gassing him.)

The superintendent of Smithfield schools called the incident unacceptable, according to reports. The football players involved were to be suspended for the remainder of the football season.

But on Oct. 22, the freshman player attended practice and discovered the football players involved in the incident were dressed and ready to play.

FRAN OSTENDORF *(fostendorf@jewishallianceri.org) is the editor of Jewish Rhode Island.*

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COMMUNITY

Building Connections: a lifechanging gap year in Israel

BY EITAN PESSIN

IN MONTREAL, it's September and it's already getting cold. I pull on a sweater, pack my bag, grab a granola bar, and head out to class. I open my phone to take a picture of the newly changing leaves, and that's when I'm ambushed.

"*One year ago today…*" it says. It's a picture from *Motzei* Shabbos of my first free Shabbat of *Hevruta*, the Israel gap year program I did with the Shalom Hartman institute last year. I remember being panicked about making plans for that first Shabbat – I ended up spontaneously asking a random Israeli from the program if my roommate and I could stay with him in his small city outside of Petah Tikvah.

It was beyond a wonderful Shabbat, from delicious homemade meals to the lovely afternoon swim in his pool. His family was warm and kind, excited to welcome us for Shabbat. When we took that photo to remember the occasion, I had no way of knowing how close he and I would become; how many more afternoons would be spent next to that pool.

What's special about *Hevruta* is that half its participants are Israeli, and half North American. It meant my year wasn't just about being physically in Israel – it was about actually living there. I was able to practice my Hebrew simply by cooking dinner with my best friend, and I was shown parts of Jerusalem I would never have found otherwise. It meant I got to learn about politics and culture from the people who lived it day-to-day, and to understand all the ways we're different and the many more ways we're similar.

Our relationships with each other on *Hevrutra* were about more than just making friends–they were about building connections essential to the relationship between North American and Israeli Jews. We saw firsthand the linguistic and cultural barriers that existed between the two groups when we met at the beginning of the program, overwhelmed by the thought of overcoming them to unite as a cohort. Only a couple of months later, we saw how little they mattered, as we sat on our *mirpesot* (porches) overlooking the lights of Jerusalem, having intimate late-night conversations.

The world today is complicated and often politically charged–a fact that was not lost on me, especially given global events over my year in Israel. But the most important lesson I learned this past year was about dialogue and connection, unity and vulnerability. Many drastically different parts of the American and Israeli political, religious, and social spectrums were represented by my cohort of *Hevruta*, and yet we still had so much fun together, and meant so much to each other. As I navigate a new environment–the college campus–I feel a strong compulsion to cling to what I know, what's familiar. But if I had done that, I might never have ended up outside of Petah Tikvah for that first Shabbat.

I'm exceptionally grateful for the opportunity I was given to study in Jerusalem this past year with the support from my family, friends and local organizations such as the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island. Even months later, when it's cold here and warm there, 8 a.m. for me and 3 p.m. for them, an automatic iPhone Photos flashback is just one of the many reminders I get of my lifechanging year.



The writer in Israel

EITAN PESSIN *traveled to Israel in 2024-2025 on the Shalom Hartman Institute's Hevruta Gap Year Program. He is currently a student at McGill University.*

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A new beginning

AT SYNAGOGUES all over Rhode Island, congregants participated in the re-rolling of the Torah scrolls on Simchat Torah.



The torah is unrolled at Temple Beth-El in Providence. PHOTOS | BILL OSTENDORF

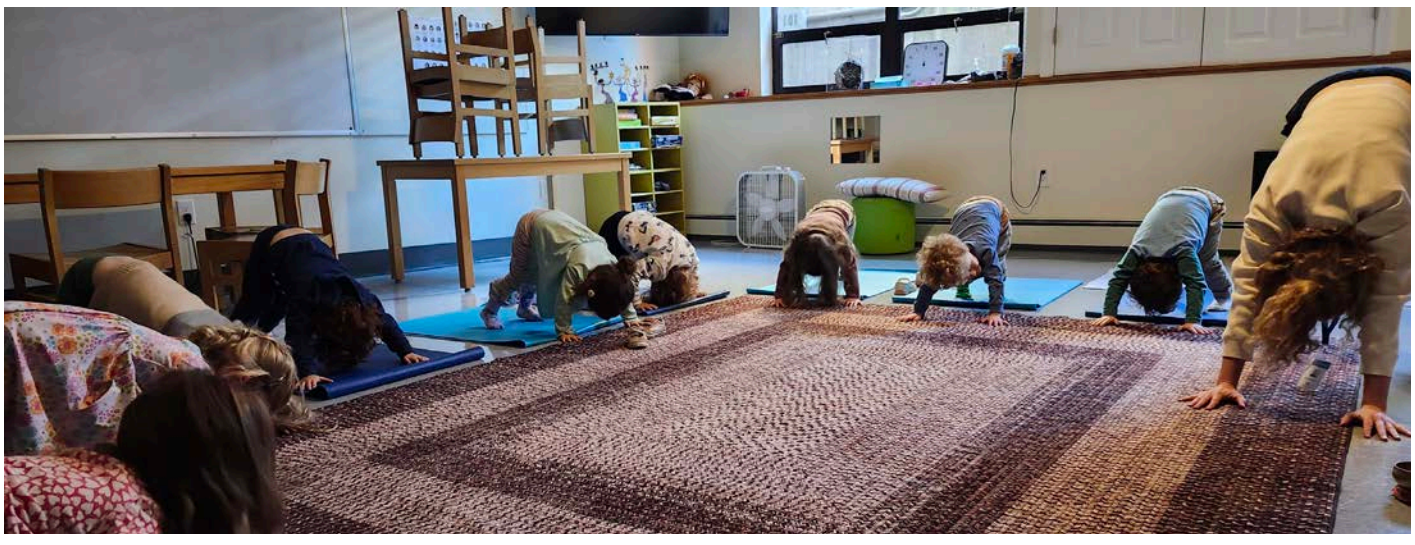
COMMUNITY

‘Specials’ enrich learning at JCDSRI









AT THE JEWISH Community Day School of Rhode Island, we know that learning extends far beyond the classroom and we are so lucky to have a team of specialists who enrich every student’s educational experience. From preschool through fifth grade, our students engage in an array of “specials” that nurture curiosity, creativity and confidence.

Whether they’re exploring rhythm and movement in music, expressing themselves in art, building strength and teamwork in gym, discovering the joy of literature in the library or connecting with the natural world through Nature in the Neighborhood, students benefit from these learning opportunities.

Our ongoing partnership with Save the Bay enhances our science curriculum with hands-on environmental learning. Students dive deeper into the ecosystems around them, becoming scientists, explorers and stewards of the world they inhabit.

These experiences make JCDSRI a place where learning comes alive.

Submitted by Jewish Community Day School of RI

RICI fundraiser a success

RHODE ISLAND COALITION FOR ISRAEL’S (RICI) annual fundraiser and Sy Dill Mensch of the Year Awards event last month attracted over 100 guests and excellent speakers.

Hosted at the Jewish-owned venue Dancing Cats in Providence, attendees enjoyed live music from the local Jewish rock band The Dorons, kosher food, a silent auction and keynote speaker Mark Patinkin, a nationally acclaimed journalist, author and RICI’s Sy Dill Mensch of the Year Award recipient.

Other speakers included former IDF soldier Yotam Schleyer who was a deputy Battalion Commander in the Nahal Brigade and fought on Oct. 7; Hezki Malachi, CEO of Sayeret Nahal Association, which assists military families with mental health and trauma healing in Israel; and Karen Hurvitz, a lawyer amd winner of RICI’s Advocacy Award who has helped Jewish students and families with legal cases concerning antisemitism in Massachusetts.

For more information on RICI, visit www.ricoalitionforisrael.org.

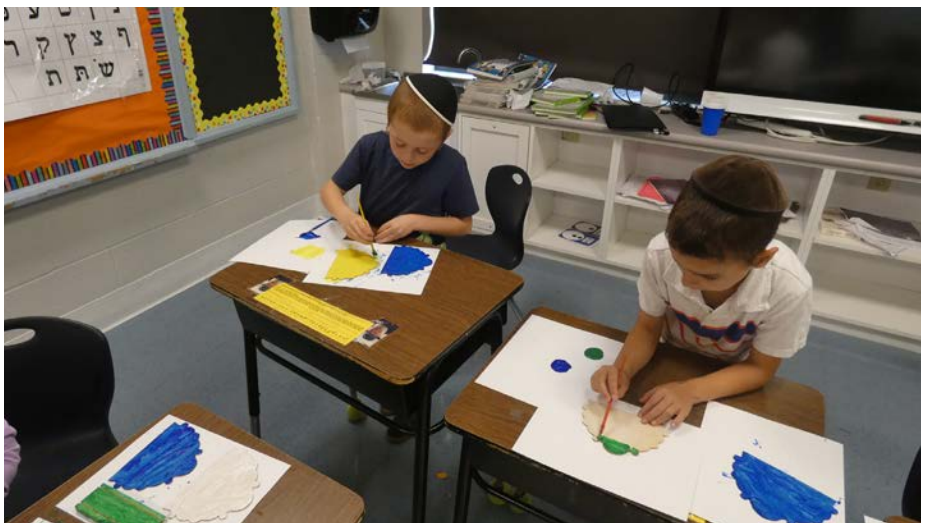
Submitted by Rhode Island Coalition for Israel



Judi Dill with Mark Patinkin PHOTOS | RICI

COMMUNITY

Fall happenings at PHDS



Simcha Gayer and Leibel Horowitz preparing special napkin holders in honor of Sukkot in Rabbi Borenstein's class.



Mendel Minkowitz, hard at work with his class in constructing a Sukkah.

PHOTOS | PHDS



Bayla Goldstein, Chana Laufer and Etta Katzman in Mrs. Plante's class constructing rubber balls after studying states of matter.



Nechama Leah Benjaminson receiving a certificate and prize for displaying the PHDS Core Values. (PHDS has its four Core Values: Persistence, Honor, Discipline and Sensitivity. We had an assembly where certain children and staff members were singled out for their exemplary behavior.)

Touro open house features stand-up comedian

JEWISH MEN 18 and older are invited to attend a free open house, hosted by Touro Fraternal Association, on Wednesday, Nov. 19, at 6:30 p.m. at Touro Hall, 45 Rolfe Square, Cranston.

Guests will enjoy a deli dinner, followed by a performance by Paul D'Angelo, one of the nation's top stand-up comedians. D'Angelo, a headliner at A-List comedy clubs and the opener for such leading comics as Jay Leno and Dave Chappelle, is recognized for his ability to blend humor and relatable storytelling.

There is no cost for the open house, but reservations are required by calling Touro at 401-785-0066 or emailing info@tourofraternal.org.

Touro is the largest Jewish men's fraternal organization in the Northeast. Founded in 1917, Touro offers numerous social activities for its members and guests, as well as monthly engaging speakers and gives back to the community through dozens of annual contributions to Jewish and other causes.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

request the beneficiary bring their Medicare card, current plan(s) cards, and a list of prescriptions and doctors to the meeting.

The OHA and its nine partners are provided with training, certifications, and resources through the federal SHIP grant ensuring they stay up to date on what every Medicare Advantage, Traditional Medicare, and Medicare Part D plan offers.

Every October, OHA and its SHIP partners meet with presenters from Rhode Island's Medicare Advantage plans to become aware of updates on all the 2026 plan changes.

Changes in 2026

According to AARP, expect some significant changes in 2026. The first Medicare-negotiated drug prices will go into effect for drugs like Eliquis, Jardiance, Xarelto, Januvia, Farxiga, Entresto, Enbrel, Imbruvica, Stelara, and NovoLog/Fiasp. Additionally, according to CMS, savings are expected to lower enrollees' out-of-pocket spending by an estimated $1.5 billion next year. Finally, the new cap on annual out-of-pocket expenses for Part D drugs will increase to $2,100.

You can call 1-800-MEDICARE to make changes by phone. You can also use Medicare's Plan Finder tool to compare plans at www.medicare.gov/plan-compare to compare options and enroll in some plans online. Alternatively, you can contact plans directly to enroll.

A Final Note… Beware of Scams and Fraud

Open Enrollment is also prime time for scams. Scammers who claim to represent Medicare may call asking for your Medicare number, Social Security number, or bank information, especially before you enroll. Medicare will never call, email, or text out of the blue to ask for personal information or payment. If you're unsure, hang up and call 1-800-MEDICARE to verify.

HERB WEISS *is an author and journalist who specializes in writing about aging issues. This blog was originally published on RINewsToday.com on Oct. 20, 2025*

COMMUNITY

Beit Midrash: building and nourishing our youth

BY JOANNA D. BROWN

We're sitting out on a friend's terrace on Saturday afternoon, eight teens and five parents. There's that Shabbat dreamy, relaxed feeling in the air, and the afternoon sun filters through vines on a trellis. The parent who is teaching has asked a question about the parshah and is running a discussion where the students are offering their thoughts. Parents pipe in occasionally with additions or questions.

IS THIS HEAVEN or Jewish family camp? No, it's a scene from the early years of Rhode Island's Community Beit Midrash (CBM), a program started by Jewish community leaders Dr. Aliza Krieger and Rabbi Navah Levine.

As a parent of one of the original five families who sought, together, to provide ongoing Jewish education to our children after elementary school, I've had an inside perspective on this excellent program and have watched our child, Simon Kislak Brown benefit from it, as we have benefited from the community and learning ourselves.

The program was launched in 2020 and thrived, even during the height of the COVID pandemic, with a lot of outdoor programming and a flexible approach.

Says Krieger, who is president, "We want our kids to love Judaism." The program seeks to convey the message "that learning is lifelong and doesn't end at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah." Krieger notes that CBM is not a program of any specific Jewish temple or synagogue, "although shuls are connected to us." CBM is "rich and wonderful" and open to any preteens or teens, 6th through 12th grade. "The program can accommodate a wide range of ability."

Rabbi Navah Levine, co-founder & vice president of CBM, adds that "we saw it both as an opportunity for teens to continue their learning and to build and nourish community…It applies both to the teens and the parents. It connects us – it gives us this great shabbat community that is open to all."

CBM has grown from the initial group of five students in 6th and 7th grades to 19 students currently, going up to 12th grade. It offers weekday evening programming on a weekly basis at the Dwares Jewish Community Center, Shabbat learning at participants' homes, and periodic special learning sessions with local rabbis and scholars on weekends. Wednesday learning includes dinner.

One thing that makes CBM special is that the students often guide the content. For example, during the high school program last year with Dr. Yitz Schleifer, the high schoolers learned, based on careful analysis of Jewish texts, personalities of different Biblical characters. The students chose the characters. In addition, they wanted to learn about Kabbalah, so they spent a session focusing Jewish mysticism.

Yael Tesar, a high school senior, joined CBM when she was in 6th grade. "I've loved to see how it's become a real community over time," she says, adding, "I really like the group discussion aspect…it gets a lot of debates going. And the teachers we've had have been amazing."

She adds: "It's such a nice way to stay connected to Judaism, as someone who goes to a school where I'm one of the only Jewish students."

Micah Babchuk, now in 8th grade, started in 6th grade. He complimented the teachers, who are "always amazing…they are really doing it because they want to," and says that they work to "make it a good learning opportunity for everyone."

Dinner was added to the Wednesday evening programming last year, and "the food's great," Babchuk says. Additionally, it was helpful being in the CBM program while preparing for his Bar Mitzvah. "It was one of my main resources when writing my D'var Torah…a lot of quotations from rabbis I got from Beit Midrash."

Shabbat afternoons involve participating families hosting students in their homes for about an hour of informal learning. Teachers include host parents and community scholars. Students learn, have snacks, and then often play sports or socialize during the afternoon.

The Community Beit Midrash group of students and parents has grown since its inception and has room to grow and evolve even more. One new role is that of the parent liaison, who can do outreach to parents who might have questions or be interested in having their child(ren) join. CBM also recently added a staff person, Sophie Kieffer, a Brown undergraduate focusing on Jewish studies. It is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with a Board of Directors.

Anna Cable, current parent liaison, explains that the open-style, more informal learning of CBM appeals to her. CBM is "for kids who are looking for a more *hevruta*-style, pluralistic community-based learning environment." She continued, "I think that having Jewish learning in a more organic setting is appealing" as is the fact that it is "not tied to a particular synagogue or movement." Her children are not yet old enough to participate, but she hopes to offer outreach to the Jewish Community Day School community where her children attend.

If you'd like more information about Community Beit Midrash, write to Dr. Aliza Krieger at cbmrhodeisland@gmail.com.

JOANNA BROWN *is a doctor and writer living in Providence with her spouse and two children.*

Are you a relative of Joseph Engel?

He was born in Graz, was a teenager in Florida and lived most of his adult life in Sweden.

If you are related to him, please get in touch with **Minna Salminen-Karlsson**, minnask@gmail.com in Sweden.

TAKE ACTION: REPORT an INCIDENT

JEWISH ALLIANCE of Greater Rhode Island

At the Jewish Alliance, we believe all people should be treated fairly and justly. If you have experienced or witnessed an incident of antisemitism or extremism, please report it. Antisemitic activity includes overt acts or expressions of anti-Jewish bigotry and hostility. Many incidents are not crimes but are still considered antisemitic and should be reported.

This initiative is meant to help track antisemitic incidents in the state of Rhode Island. Experiencing any type of antisemitism may be traumatic for you or your loved ones. *If you need additional support, please contact Jewish Collaborative Services at 401.331.1244 for guidance.*

www.jewishallianceri.org/report-it/

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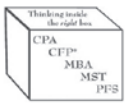


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BUSINESS & PHILANTHROPY

Our Jewish day schools: promoting identity, excellence and community

BY BRAD SWARTZ

Jewish day schools across Rhode Island are doing more than educating children – they're cultivating identity, values and community. Supported by the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island, these schools give families meaningful choices about how their children engage with both academic and Jewish learning.

A dual commitment: academics and Jewish values

Jewish day schools offer a distinctive educational experience that combines rigorous general studies with rich Judaic learning. Students study math, science, literature and history alongside Hebrew language, Jewish traditions and ethical teachings. This dual curriculum promotes intellectual curiosity while grounding students in a strong moral and cultural foundation.

The Alliance plays a vital role in sustaining these institutions by providing financial support, security training, professional development and community programming that enhances the educational experience for students and families.

Among the schools supported by the Alliance are two that reflect the diversity of Jewish life in Rhode Island:

Jewish Community Day School of Rhode Island (JCDSRI)

A progressive, inclusive elementary school, JCDSRI serves children from diverse Jewish backgrounds. With a focus on creativity, collaboration and social responsibility, JCDSRI empowers students to become thoughtful, engaged citizens. The school emphasizes learning and values through the Jewish lens of kindness, justice and respect, offering a nurturing environment where children are encouraged to ask questions and explore.

"We are grateful that the Alliance embraces JCDSRI's mission as the only non-denominational Jewish day school in Rhode Island. The Alliance's support ensures that our faculty can challenge and inspire every child, nurture curiosity and creativity and help students graduate ready to navigate an increasingly fractured present – and uncertain future – with moral clarity, courage and resilience," said Head of School Andrea Katzman.

Providence Hebrew Day School (PHDS)

Founded in 1946, Providence Hebrew Day School (PHDS) provides a traditional Orthodox Jewish education that blends strong academics with focused Torah learning. PHDS serves families seeking a more religiously observant environment while welcoming students from a variety of backgrounds. The school emphasizes character development, community service and a lifelong commitment to Jewish values.

"The Jewish Alliance has an open-door policy, and our monthly agency executive meetings with Jewish Alliance staff like Brad are invaluable as they establish a unified local force that strengthens the schools and all participating agencies," shared Head of School Rabbi Peretz Scheinerman.

Building a stronger Jewish future through Scholarship Granting Organizations

Though each school has its own philosophy, both share a commitment to excellence, inclusion and the strengthening of Jewish identity. Through their partnership with the Alliance, these schools can offer financial aid, maintain small class sizes and provide enriching extracurricular programming.

Jewish day schools are more than places of learning – they are community centers where families connect, traditions are celebrated and the future of Jewish life in Rhode Island is nurtured.

This critical work is further supported through Scholarship Granting Organizations (SGOs) – investment opportunities for nonprofits that receive contributions from businesses, corporations, foundations or individuals and use them to fund scholarships helping eligible students attend qualified private schools.

SGOs are separate, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organizations established to collect donations on behalf of participating schools. In Rhode Island, this program operates as part of the Rhode Island Scholarship Tax Credit Program, which allows corporations to receive tax credits for contributions to SGOs. The Alliance serves as the financial administrator for the SGO, known as the Foundation for Rhode Island Day Schools (FRIDS) – a state-certified SGO.

Through this program, the Alliance/FRIDS provides substantial tuition support to both the JCDSRI and PHDS. Over the past three years, these schools have received an average of $600,000 per year in combined financial support.

Together, we make a difference

Through academics, Jewish learning and community partnership, the Jewish day schools locally inspire students and their families and strengthen Jewish life across the state. With the continued leadership and support of the Alliance, the dedication of educators and the generosity of donors, these schools remain vibrant centers of learning and Jewish identity.

For more information about partnerships and sponsorship opportunities, please contact Brad Swartz, Fundraising and Partnership Manager, at bswartz@jewishallianceri.org.

Alliance makes year-end giving easy

AS THE HOLIDAY season draws near, the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island is helping community members make their year-end giving both simple and meaningful.

With busy schedules and competing priorities during this time of year, the Alliance is offering clear options and helpful reminders to ensure donations are processed by Dec. 31 – allowing donors to take full advantage of tax benefits while making a real difference.

Gifts to the Jewish Alliance's Community Campaign support a wide range of initiatives that touch thousands of lives locally and around the world. From providing essential social and human services, to supporting Jewish education in both formal and informal settings, to fostering engagement and collaboration across the community, the Community Campaign strengthens the Jewish community at every level.

"Every gift to the Community Campaign is a direct investment in the well-being and future of our Jewish community," said Reza Breakstone, Community Campaign Co-Chair.

Donors are encouraged to review year-end giving options and deadlines early to ensure timely processing. To learn more about how contributions to the Community Campaign create lasting impact, visit jewishallianceri.org.

"As we close out the year, we're deeply grateful for the generosity and compassion of our supporters," said Katie Ziegler, Community Campaign Co-Chair. The Jewish Alliance thanks all who give for their continued commitment to building a strong, connected, and caring community.

Submitted by the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island

Contributions	Critical giving dates
Credit Card	Receive by Tuesday, Dec. 31
Checks	Postmarked by Tuesday, Dec. 31
Wire Transfer	Receive by Tuesday, Dec. 31
Securities via DTC Transfer	Initiate by Friday, Dec. 13
Mutual fund shares	Initiate process by Monday, Dec. 2
ACH	Initiate process by Monday, Dec. 16
Grant recommendations from JFF donor advised funds	Submit by Wednesday, Dec. 10 Requests received later may be remitted to the grantee in January 2026.

These deadlines also apply to contributions to endowment funds and donor-advised funds held by the Jewish Federation Foundation. For assistance making a gift including instructions for electronic transfers, contact us at donate@jewishallianceri.org or call 401.421.4111.

OBITUARIES

Richard Howard Cohen, 82

WEST KINGSTON, R.I. –



Richard Howard Cohen, of Wakefield, died on Oct. 18, 2025.

He was a longtime resident of Cranston, where he and his late wife of 57 years, Paula S. Cohen, raised their five children. He was born in Providence in 1942 to Jacob and Miriam Cohen. Richard attended Cranston East High School before studying business at Johnson & Wales University.

Richard is survived by his children, David and Michelle Cohen, Miriam Cohen and Rob Robinson, Robert and Melissa Cohen, Jonathan and Tania Cohen, and Michael and Cara Hiller. He was the proud "Popie" to Jacob and Alexandra Cohen, Jared Elice, Rachel Sokolow, Joshua and Eli Hiller, and Jack and Max Cohen.

Contributions may be made to the Parkinson's Foundation, Attn: Donor Services, at 200 SE 1st St., Suite 800, Miami, FL 33131; https://www.parkinson.org/.

Mark Kalish, 73



ROCHESTER HILLS, MICH. – Mark Howard Kalish, of Rochester Hills, passed away on Sept. 12, 2025. Born in Detroit, Michigan, he was the son of the late Lester and Alma R. Kalish. He is survived by his daughter, Jessica Kalish, of Rhode Island, and two brothers, Murray Kalish, of California, and Jay Kalish, of Michigan. He was the father of the late Rebecca Kalish (beloved twin sister of Jessica) and former husband of Cantor Judith Seplowin.

A private burial was held in Rhode Island.

Mark spent much of his lifetime in the jewelry business and was instrumental in helping a local Orange County jewelry store expand across the country.

Mark was a good friend to many, was much loved and will be dearly missed.

Contributions may be made to the Rebecca Alma Kalish Fund at https://www.meetingstreet.org/support-us/ways-to-give/endowment/the-rebecca-alma-kalish-fund or to a charity of your choice.

Judith Litchman, 95

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Judith



M. Litchman died on Oct. 23, 2025, at her home in Providence. She was the beloved wife of the late Dr. Henry M. Litchman. Born in Camden, New Jersey, the daughter of the late Albert and Florence (Berman) Melnik, she had lived in Providence for over 60 years.

She was a graduate of Rutgers University and earned a master's degree from the New York School of Social Work (now part of Columbia University). She spent several years with Jewish Family Services in New York City with a mission of helping others. After moving to Rhode Island, Judith furthered her goal by volunteering with numerous local community and social service organizations, including the National Council of Jewish Women, Volunteers in Action, and the Providence Public Schools. She was an accomplished knitter, tennis player, patron and lover of the Arts, especially live theater. She and Henry were committed supporters of Trinity Repertory Company, The Gamm Theatre, and the former 2nd Story Theatre.

Judith leaves behind her children: Michael and Elisa Litchman, Janet and Bill DuBose, and Jonathan and Jennifer Litchman. She was an engaged and loving grandmother of six, spending as much time as possible with each and leaving lasting memories for all. Her brother, Sidney Melnik of Cherry Hill, New Jersey, preceded her in death.

Contributions may be made to the Rhode Island Foundation - Judith M. and Henry M. Litchman Fund, One Union Station, Providence, RI 02903 or a charity of your choice.

Samuel Malin, 82

NARRAGANSETT, R.I. –



Samuel Moses Malin, of Narragansett, passed away on Sept. 26, 2025, at UConn John Dempsey Hospital, in Farmington, Connecticut, after a brief illness. He was the husband of the late Gene Frances (Stutman) Malin and longtime companion of the late Marian Friedland.

Born in Providence, a son of the late Leon and Rena (Shapiro) Malin, he was a lifelong resident of Rhode Island. A graduate of Hope High School, class of 1961, Sam went on to earn bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Rhode Island and a doctorate from the University of Utah. A veteran of the United States Army, he served as Captain in Vietnam from 1969-1970.

Mr. Malin taught English in various schools before teaching GED and creative writing at the RI State Correctional Facility for decades until retirement.

He is survived by his son, Judah Malin, of Huntersville, North Carolina; two grandsons, Caleb and Gabriel Malin; and three siblings, Bayla Sklaroff, Howard Malin and Mark Malin.

Memorial contributions in his honor may be made to Wounded Warrior Project, P.O. Box 758516, Topeka, Kansas 66675-8516.

Harvey Raisner, 88

BOYNTON BEACH, FLA



– Harvey Lewis Raisner died on May 27, 2025, in Boynton Beach. Born on March 6, 1937, in Providence, he was the son of Abraham and Mildred (Mendelowitz) Raisner. He graduated from the University of Rhode Island in 1959 and received a Master's in Education from Yeshiva University in 1960. Also in 1960, he married Elaine (Richman), his wife of 65 years.

Harvey began his career teaching at Rhode Island College and at Scituate High School in Rhode Island. He served as vice president of the Providence ACLU chapter. He proudly participated in the March on Washington in 1963, where he witnessed Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech.

In 1966, he moved his young family to Bloomfield and then West Hartford, Connecticut, where he taught U.S. history and the social sciences at Hall High School and Conard High School for 30 years. He also taught at the University of Hartford. He was a member of Beth El Temple and head of its Board of Education for several years.

He and Elaine retired to Boynton Beach in 1997. He was president of the men's club for eight years; managed the Banyan Springs tennis group; served on the house, pool and sports complex committees; and was a trombone-playing band member. Harvey volunteered at the Boynton Beach Soup Kitchen for over 20 years. He was a tennis player, avid reader and American Civil War historian.

Harvey is survived by his beloved wife, Elaine; adored children: Bruce Raisner (Carolyn), of Marblehead, Massachusetts; Beth Glass (Michael), of San Diego, California; Lisa Schwarzwald (Sam), of Sudbury, Massachusetts; and Anne Raisner (daughter-in law), of Newport. He was predeceased by his son, Dr. Adam Raisner. He leaves behind nine grandchildren: Liv, Andrew, Jonah, Nate, Will (Gaby), Luke, Zachary, Spencer and Adena. Also surviving him are brothers, Myron Raisner (Joanne) and Fred Raisner; brother-in-law, Sid Richman; and nine nieces and nephews.

Donations in Harvey's memory may be made to the ACLU, Southern Poverty Law Center, Simon Wiesenthal's Tolerance Museum in Los Angeles or a charity of your choice.

Denise Rubin, 74

NARRAGANSETT, R.I. – Denise Rubin died on Oct. 22, 2025, at home. She was the beloved wife of David Pierce for 30 years. Born in Bronx, New York, a daughter of the late Milton and Miriam (Blau) Rubin, she had lived in Narragansett for more than 40 years, after living in New York. Denise was a member of Congregation Beth David. She was a speech and language pathologist for the Narragansett school system, retiring several years ago.

When she wasn't busy

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OBITUARIES

traveling around the world, Denise helped manage Parcel of Paradise Farm in Charlestown. She was a brilliant and loving yoga instructor, found deep peace in gardening, and loved sailing and helping to rehabilitate horses.

She was the devoted mother of Geoffrey Pierce of New Bedford, Massachusetts; Keith Pierce and his wife, Brandy, of Pinehurst, North Carolina; Morgan Pierce CAPT, DPT and his wife, Ali Pierce, Esq., of Johnston; and cherished feline Bodhisattva. She was the sister of Norman Rubin of Newtown, Pennsylvania and Michael Rubin of Sweden. She was the loving grandmother of Hayden and Nathan. She was the dear aunt of Joy Dawn Kupperstein, Cheri Fleisch, Sandi Schaeffer, Andrew Rubin, Justin Rubin and many cherished great nieces and nephews. She was a beloved friend and teacher to so many.

Contributions may be made to Santana Center Horse Rescue, 862 Nighthawk Loop, Aberdeen, NC 28315.

Herbert Sackett, 96



BRISTOL, R.I. – Herbert Ezra Sackett, 96, of Bristol passed away of natural causes on Oct. 10, 2025, surrounded by his loving family. A lifelong Rhode Islander, he graduated from Hope High School in 1946 and from Rhode Island State College in 1950 with a degree in business administration. Along the way, he made many lifelong friends.

His involvement in the family greeting card business began at 13 years old. Founded by his father, Morris, Sackett's Greeting Cards was one of the first postcard and greeting card specialty stores in the Northeast. Herb predicted his career choice at Nathan Bishop Junior High School, writing he "found out by actual experience that [he liked] this type of work very much." Taking over in 1968, he grew the business into a 60-store chain across six states. He was a trailblazing leader of the card and gift industry and was featured on the cover of the May 1991 issue of the Gift and Stationery Business magazine.

In retirement, he embraced life fully by skiing at Stratton every week until age 84, spending time with his grandchildren, collecting antique canes, cheering on the Red Sox and Patriots, and supporting causes close to his heart, including hospice care. He was a proud and active member of the Jewish communities at Temple Emanu-El, which his parents helped found, and United Brothers Synagogue in Bristol, where he served as board member and treasurer.

Herb was known for his generosity, common sense advice and wry sense of humor. His legacy lives on through his loving family, the countless lives he touched in his business and friendships, and his enduring example of a life lived with purpose, passion and compassion.

He is survived by his loving partner, Ronnee Wasserman; his children, Richard Sackett and his partner, Ann Demarais, of New York City; and Shelley Sackett and her partner, Lenny Rotman, of Swampscott, Massachusetts; his grandchildren, Alexander, Julia and James Sackett Roseman, and Taylor and Mimi Sakarett; and his great-grandchildren, Leo, Sela and Kai; Ronnee's children, Judy Matt and Steven Schwartz; her grandchildren, Alyssa, Sabrina, Daniel, Devin and Michael; and her great-grandchildren, Beckham and Summer Jo. He was predeceased by his parents, Morris and Evelyn (Sergy) Sackett, and his sisters, Shirley Helen Sackett and Edna Miriam (Sackett) Sonkin.

Contributions may be made to HopeHealth, United Brothers Synagogue or Temple Emanu-El.

Ellen Steingold, 91



PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Ellen Steingold, of Providence and Narragansett, passed away on Oct. 21, 2025. She was the daughter of Goldie and Nathan Katz. Ellen was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. She graduated from Erasmus Hall High School and Arcadia University and received an MSW from Boston College.

Following graduation from college, she joined her husband, Ken, who was stationed in Ponce, Puerto Rico, where she taught elementary school to children on the base. Ellen and Ken enjoyed 68 years together, side by side, building a family, home, friendships and community.

She is survived by her son, Neal; her daughter-in-law, Linda; and her loving grandchildren, Sarah and Benjamin.

When she was in her mid 40s, Ellen went back to school to obtain her MSW. Following graduation, she worked at Jewish Family Service, where she resettled Russian Jewish immigrants to Rhode Island whose numbers surged during Soviet relaxation of emigration polices. She also assisted with the agency's adoption program. Upon her retirement, she enjoyed her grandchildren, summers in Narragansett and time with her wide circle of friends.

Contributions may be made to either the Kenneth '52 and Ellen Steingold Endowed Scholarship Fund, c/o Clark University, 950 Main St., Worcester, MA 01610, attention University Advancement, or your favorite charity.

Mindy Tolchinsky, 69

Mindy Tolchinsky passed away after a long battle with cancer on Aug. 24, 2025. She was the daughter of the late Marcia and Norman Katzoff and sister of the late Morris Katzoff. She was the wife of her loving husband John Tolchinsky for 46 years.

She was the aunt of Sydney and Zachary Tolchinsky, and she had numerous cousins.

She was a loving, caring and compassionate person. She will be sorely missed.

Morrisa Zwetchkenbaum, 92



PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Morrisa "Rissy" Basseches Zwetchkenbaum died on Oct. 8, 2025, at her home in Wingate Residence – one day shy of her 70th wedding anniversary to her beloved husband and "honey" Joseph Zwetchkenbaum. She lived in Providence for more than 50 years, previously living in Warwick. Born in Washington, D.C., on Aug. 26, 1933, Rissy was the daughter and only child of the late Dr. Charles Basseches and Rose (Yeager) Basseches.

She graduated from Mount Vernon Seminary and Wheaton College, where she met her lifelong best friend (the late) Jane Lowett. Just months after graduating from Wheaton in 1955, Rissy married the love of her life, Joe. She had four children in five years and dedicated herself to raising her children. Her children describe her as parenting each of them in exactly the right way, with the perfect balance of love, encouragement and firm guidance.

For more than four decades, she volunteered weekly at The Miriam Hospital and served as a president of the Miriam Hospital Women's Association. She was a member of Temple Beth-El for more than 60 years. Rissy was an avid golfer when playing alongside Joe as long-time members of Ledgemont Country Club. She played golf into her 90s, most recently showing her skills at a family birthday party at Top Golf. She was an enthusiastic walker, clocking three miles daily on Blackstone Boulevard with her (late) dear friend Starr Najarian. Rissy also endorsed healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle even before these ideas were popular. Her very favorite activity was spending time with her family. Whether welcoming them to her home for holiday meals or hosting her children and grandchildren during winter visits in Palm Beach, Florida, Rissy was the heart and soul of her large and loving family.

She was the devoted mother of Rebecca Z. Segal (Valerie Shulock), of Newton, Massachusetts; Marc Zwetchkenbaum (Linne Kimball), of Newton, Massachusetts; Dr. John Zwetchkenbaum (Kimberly Chazan Zwetchkenbaum), of Providence; and Dr. Samuel Zwetchkenbaum (Deborah Carr), of Providence. She was the loving grandmother of Sara Cote (Eddie), Eddy Segal (Corie Reed), Nathan Shulock (Sarah Harney), Michaela Berla-Shulock (Cate Streissguth), Jill Zwetchkenbaum (Teddy Malpiede), Charlie Zwetchkenbaum, Alex Zwetchkenbaum (Kathryn), Abby Z. Gibson (Ben) and Drew Zwetchkenbaum (Sydney Silver). Most recently, she became great-grandmother to babies Leo, Joey and Quinn. She also leaves behind her beloved sisters-in-law, Barbara Z. Poplack (the late Dr. William Poplack) and Susan Z. Levy (Judd Levy); cousins; extended family and dear friends.

Rissy will be deeply missed by those who loved her. She will be remembered for her caring nature, warm hospitality, the genuine interest she took in people's lives and the joy, optimism and energy she brought to all her endeavors.

Donations can be made to the The Miriam Hospital Foundation – Development Office, P.O. Box H, Providence, RI 02901 (or online at https://giving.brownhealth.org/The-Miriam/Give-Now) or Temple Beth-El, 70 Orchard Ave., Providence, RI 02906 (or online at https://www.temple-beth-el.org/payment.php).





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