JEWISH RHODE ISLAND

JANUARY 2026 | TEVET/SHEVAT 5786
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JEWISH RHODE ISLAND

EDITOR Fran Ostendorf

DESIGN & LAYOUT Alex Foster

ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT
Tracy Blake | 401-421-4111, ext. 160
tblake@jewishallianceri.org

CONTRIBUTORS Bob Abelman, Ruth Marris Macaulay, Sarah Greenleaf, Robert Isenberg

COLUMNISTS Michael Fink, George M. Goodwin, Patricia Raskin, Rabbi James Rosenberg, Daniel Stieglitz

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ON THE COVER: PHOTO | ALEKSANDARNAKIC VIA ISTOCK

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

@JewishRhody

Here's to health and wellness in 2026



LISTEN. Do you hear someone coughing or sneezing?

I hear it everywhere I go this season. It seems like everyone I know has a sick family member.

All our family holiday plans and gatherings – Hanukkah and New Year's – had to be canceled. Flu here. Virus there. And pretty soon, you don't have a family gathering anymore.

The COVID years were worse of course, but I've never experienced a winter season where so many people are sick and so many events are being canceled. And it is only January.

New York is reporting its worse flu season *ever*. (Did I mention my husband is traveling there this week on business? I told him not to come back with the flu!) And Rhode Island is right up there with flu cases.

Are we more sensitive to these illnesses than we were before COVID? Have we become less accepting of people who might be contagious? Are airborne illnesses adapting to us and becoming more effective and deadly? Or is it that fewer people are getting vaccinated?

And what about masks? Do you wear a mask when you are sick or out and about during this period of illness?

If you look at the Rhode Island Department of Health Respiratory Virus Data, it is a little daunting. Rates are high and going up.

So I'm going to sign off here and go sit in my living room. Enjoy our Health and Wellness issues. Perhaps you will get some tips on staying healthy this month and during the rest of of the winter.

And here is an introduction to our new advertising representative, Tracy Blake. She's been on the job several week and she is already adding to our team!

Fran Ostendorf,
Editor

Tracy Blake joins Jewish Rhode Island staff

JEWISH RHODE ISLAND is pleased to welcome Tracy Blake as its newest member of the advertising team. Tracy joins the organization following the retirement of Peter Zeldin in December.

A lifelong Southern New England resident, Tracy brings more than 30 years of experience in marketing and business development across a wide range of industries. Her career has focused on helping organizations grow while maintaining strong connections to the communities they serve.

Most recently, Tracy spent five years as an Advertising and Marketing Account Executive with LocaliQ, a division of the USA Today Network, which owns more than 200 local newspapers nationwide, including The Providence Journal. In that role, Tracy partnered with businesses to develop effective advertising strategies while supporting local journalism.

Tracy is currently pursuing a degree in Public Relations with a minor in Civic Leadership at Bridgewater State University, reflecting her commitment to using communications as a tool for civic engagement and social impact.

A strong advocate for small and local businesses, Tracy has also served as a former Ambassador for the One SouthCoast Chamber of Commerce, where she worked to strengthen relationships between businesses within the local community.

Tracy believes that when a business advertises with Jewish Rhode Island, it is doing more than promoting its services. "Advertising here means supporting local media that keeps the Jewish community informed, connected, and engaged," she said.

To learn more about advertising opportunities with Jewish Rhode Island, Tracy Blake can be reached at tblake@jewishalliance.org.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PHASES CREATIVE STUDIO

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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.

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UP FRONT

He researches antisemitism for a living.

Why does the State Department want to kick him out of the country?

BY ANDREW LAPIN
JTA



For years, Imran Ahmed has presented his research on how tech platforms enable the spread of antisemitism to receptive audiences across the ideological spectrum.

HE'S WORKED with the Anti-Defamation League and Jewish Federations of North America; the latter credits Ahmed with the backbone of much of its own policy proposals. He's appeared at a conference organized by the first Trump administration, with Mike Pompeo, the former secretary of state, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also in attendance.

He's joined Republicans in advocating for an end to Section 230, a law granting special protections to social media platforms. During the first Trump administration, on the strength of his research, the British-born Ahmed received a priority visa as an "alien of extraordinary ability" – the so-called "Einstein visa," after the German-born Jewish physicist.

All of that only added to Ahmed's befuddlement when, just before Christmas, the current Trump State Department announced it would be revoking his visa because of what Secretary of State Marco Rubio tweeted were "egregious acts of extraterritorial censorship."

"It is confusing," Ahmed told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency on Jan. 2, speaking from his home in Washington, D.C. "Certainly there was some alarm."

The confusion came not least because Ahmed, as a legal permanent resident, no longer has a visa to revoke. He received an EB-1 visa, which provides a fast pathway to permanent residency, in January 2021, at the end of Trump's first term and now has a green card.

Ahmed was different from the four other digital anti-hate activists named in the State Department announcement, all of whom are based in Europe. Since 2021, his organization, the Center for Countering Digital Hate, has been registered as a U.S. nonprofit – a status that he notes should confer First Amendment protections. Last year, the group reported $4.2 million in revenue.

Ahmed has received no formal notification of an effort to revoke his residency. Neither Rubio's own tweet, nor a State Department press release announcing the sanctions, mentioned him. There's just a tweet, from a State Department undersecretary, mentioning him by name as a "key collaborator with the Biden Administration's effort to weaponize the government against U.S. citizens."

The State Department did not answer questions about Ahmed's case. "The Supreme Court and Congress have repeatedly made clear: the United States is under no obligation to allow foreign aliens to come to our country or reside here," a spokesperson told JTA in a statement.

At a time of aggressive immigration enforcement activity that has ensnared others with green cards, Ahmed isn't taking chances. He sought (and was granted) a legal restraining order to prevent the government from seizing him and moving him to an immigrant detention facility without trial, as officials have done to an estimated 59,000 migrants in the last year. On Monday he returned to court, successfully petitioning to extend the protective order through March.

"We want to make sure that they can't take me away from my friends, family and support network," he said. He's optimistic on that front. "I have faith in the courts, and I have faith that the rule of law is still intact in the United States."

What happens next is anyone's guess. But Ahmed's ordeal has cast a cloud of uncertainty over the work of a trusted Jewish communal ally – and further muddled the Trump administration's own stated commitment to fighting antisemitism.

"Absolutely fascist – and dangerous – effort by the admin to ban my colleague Imran Ahmed and others from the US," Amy Spitalnick, head of the Jewish Council of Public Affairs, wrote on X last week.

Ahmed partnered with Spitalnick's group on a report about the rise of antisemitic influencers on X after Oct. 7. "He's dedicated his career to fighting online hate and extremism," Spitalnick recently told JTA, noting the two had first connected after the 2017 "Unite the Right" march in Charlottesville, Virginia, during which one counter-protester was killed.

A columnist at Britain's Jewish News also criticized the Trump administration's targeting of Ahmed: "Imran Ahmed was a friend to America and an important voice in debates about free speech," wrote David Hirsh. "He obeyed the law, just as the Americans he worked with obey the law, and he should be treated the same, while working in and contributing to the United States of America."

The Trump administration has taken special pains to prevent immigration by Muslims, last month blocking visas for passport holders from 20 mostly Muslim countries and targeting Afghans especially after an Afghan national shot and killed a National Guard member in Washington in November.

Ahmed is a third-generation Brit of Afghan descent, and in his column Hirsh called Ahmed, "a brilliant Muslim Brit." Ahmed has said that he now considers himself an atheist.

His allies see his case as part of a different Trump administration priority. Spitalnick told JTA the targeting of Ahmed was "all part of the broader weaponization of the federal government to go after perceived political enemies and advance an extremist agenda, which in this case is to push back against any regulation of tech."

In the State Department's targeting of him, Ahmed sees the handiwork of his longtime foes: the tech "oligarchs" who control the social media giants he seeks to rein in.

"This is quite clearly an attempt to silence the work that we do studying and exposing the way that social media platforms encourage, amplify and reward – with money – antisemitism and other forms of hate," he said. "These guys have been lobbying aggressively in Washington long before President Trump was president. They've been invited to the

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Parshat Shemot 2026: Rediscovering awe

D'VAR TORAH



RABBI DANIEL KRIPPER

A STORY IS TOLD of the great Rabbi Sampson Raphael Hirsch (Germany, 1808-1888). It is said that late in his life, the old rabbi surprised his students by scheduling a long trip to Switzerland. When they inquired about why he insisted on making such a journey, he replied: "Soon, I will stand before the Almighty. I will be held answerable to many questions. But what will I say when I am asked, 'Shimson, my son, it is true you did many mitzvot, but did you also remember to see My Alps?' "

Hirsch, I think, is pointing us to a radical, though not so new, theology – a religion that doesn't just want us to *follow the rules*, but one which encourages us to drink deeply from the wells of possibility, beauty, wonder and potential good that make up our world.

One striking example we find in our parshah in which we follow Moshe at the burning bush:

And Moses said: *I will turn aside now and see this great sight* (Exod. 3:3).

The midrash comment: R. Johanan held that Moses took three steps forward. R. Simeon the son of Lakish insisted that he did not step forward at all but simply turned his neck to observe it. The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him: Because you troubled to look, be assured you will merit that I shall reveal Myself unto you. Forthwith, *And God called unto him out of the midst of the bush* (ibid., v. 4) (Tanchuma Exodus Shemot 15:2)

What does *awe* mean to you? To me, I describe awe with words like wonder, sacred, inspiration, vast and reverence. Awe is a place, like nature; it is a feeling, like gratitude; it is a gift, like holding a newborn baby. Awe can be many things to many people. The first step in understanding the power of awe is to identify and appreciate what creates awe in our lives. Then it's important to consider how often we experience it. And finally, and most importantly, does it even matter?

Dacher Keltner in his book "Awe: The New Science of Everyday Wonder and How It Can Transform Your Life", writes about awe:

"The feeling of being in the presence of something vast that transcends our current understanding of the world."

This could be the view from the top of Mount Everest or making a trip to the Grand Canyon.

The benefits of experiencing awe are not limited merely to the sublime feeling of wonder, or even to the lifestyle changes that may occur because of re-evaluating one's priorities, such as smoking cessation. It is a shift of perspective that promotes ethical concern, open-mindedness, prosociality and generosity. Finding awe benefits physical and mental well-being.

Awe is therefore not only a valuable experience for the individual but a prerequisite for our collective sociological and psychological well-being. Best of all, it can be induced at will through simple mindfulness exercises, such as reflecting on nature or gratitude, in a manner that will literally change your brain, body and behavior. The benefits of awe are truly awesome.

One of the wonderful things about awe is that it can be found all around us, whether it be through a moving piece of music, a beautiful image, or learning something new, maybe even mind-bending. With little effort and attention, we have the immediate power to elevate our own everyday experiences into something, well, magical.

It is likely the bush that burned but was not consumed had long stood there. Many people may have passed by, glimpsing something unusual at the edge of their vision, but no one looked again. They continued silently, unmoved and unamazed, lowering their curtains and walking as if nothing had happened. The main lesson: even when faced with miracles, people may choose to ignore them.

The great rabbi and philosopher Abraham Joshua Heschel's message is more alive today than ever before. "Wonder, or radical amazement," he wrote, "is the chief characteristic of the religious man's attitude toward nature and history.

RABBI DANIEL KRIPPER *is the spiritual leader of Temple Shalom in Middletown.*

Candle lighting times
January 2026



Greater Rhode Island	
January 9	4:14pm
January 16	4:21pm
January 23	4:30pm
January 30	4:39pm

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

White House and treated like demigods for decades now."

Fighting antisemitism is central to the CCDH's origin story, Ahmed said. A former staffer with the British Labour Party with plans to run for office himself, he quit after the 2015 ascension of Jeremy Corbyn, whom Ahmed calls "an avowed antisemite." (Corbyn, who came to lead Labour amid a party overhaul that saw a massive influx of antisemitic sentiment, was suspended by his party over his handling of the antisemitism issue before ultimately being expelled in 2023.)

Ahmed wanted to understand why what he perceived as a newfound flurry of antisemitic social media activity seemed to follow Corbyn and his allies. He was also disturbed by the 2016 murder of Labour parliamentarian Jo Cox by a far-right figure associated with neo-Nazi groups who had been radicalized online. Together, he reasoned, there was something yet undiscovered about the role social media was playing in pushing out antisemitism across the political spectrum.

"This has always been an organization that, at its heart, has been trying to answer the question, how is it that ancient lies about Jews have been able to gain such purchase in our society?" he said. "And what can we do to change that?"

In the years since Ahmed founded the CCDH (which he relocated to the United States after receiving his green card), his group has published a series of papers on the various ways social media algorithms promote and reward antisemitism and other forms of hate speech. With the ADL, they published a 2023 report on Iranian state media's use of social media to spread antisemitism. In November, with JFNA, they released a report on how Instagram has effectively monetized antisemitic content.

Ahmed presented those findings at JFNA's annual meeting, in front of federation heads from around the country; he credits his work with helping groups like JFNA focus more of their attention on the problem of social media algorithms instead of individual bad actors online. A JFNA representative recently told JTA that Ahmed's research has been integral to the umbrella group's crafting of its own online antisemitism policy proposals.

"He is a valuable partner in providing accurate and detailed information on how the social media algorithms have created a bent toward antisemitism and anti-Zionism," Dennis Bernard, a JFNA lay leader who heads their government relations efforts, told JTA.

Ahmed's work has made him enemies, too. Elon Musk, the world's richest man and head of X, sued the CCDH in 2023, alleging that it violated the X's terms of service in gathering data for a report on its amplification of hate content. A judge threw the case out, but Ahmed isn't so sure Musk – who wielded tremendous power over the federal government at the helm of Trump's Department of Government Efficiency and remains close with administration figures, including the president – has moved on.

"I think it's incredibly telling that the earliest and most vociferous reactions [to the visa sanction] were actually from people like Elon Musk, who himself has spread antisemitic lies and presided over the descent of this platform formerly known as Twitter into a hellscape of antisemitism," he said. On X, Musk responded to news of the visa sanctions with fire emojis.

If the State Department is indeed targeting activists like Ahmed as a matter of policy, it would seem to be at odds with its newly confirmed special antisemitism envoy, Yehuda Kaploun. He recently indicated that he, too, wanted to see more restrictions on social media platforms that promote antisemitism.

"It makes it very confusing for them to claim foreign policy problems, which is what they've claimed, when U.S. foreign policy is to reduce antisemitism," Ahmed said.

Another possibility: that the State Department's targeting of Ahmed has to do with something else entirely. In her post blasting him, the public diplomacy undersecretary Sarah Rogers focused on a different research project the CCDH had undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Ahmed's group, Center for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH), created the infamous 'disinformation dozen' report, which called for platforms to deplatform 12 American 'anti-vaxxers', including now-HHS Secretary @SecKennedy," Rogers wrote. She was referring to a 2021 CCDH report finding that Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., and 11 other anti-vaccine activists were responsible for more than 65% of all anti-vaccine content on social media. Kennedy, now Trump's secretary of health and human services, also celebrated the visa restrictions on Ahmed and the others.

Ahmed dismisses the idea. "The pandemic is long over, so it would be very odd to be targeted for work that we did four years ago. That seems implausible to me," he said.

He is convinced, instead, that he's being singled out because he seeks to put guardrails on the big technology platforms more generally.

In their case to the judge for the restraining order,

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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 usually on Zoom Monday through Thursday) programming 11 a.m.-noon followed by lunch and discussion noon-1 p.m. On Wednesdays, programming is chair yoga. The Café will be closed on Monday, 1/19, in observance of MLK Day. 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 at neal@jcsri.org or 401-421-4111, ext. 114.

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

Hebrew Classes Fall 2 Session at Temple Emanu-El. Tuesdays thru 1/20/26. 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 Torat Yisrael Virtual Minyan. Tuesdays 5:30 p.m. Via Zoom. Information, temple@toratyisrael.org.

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

Temple Sinai Virtual Hebrew Lessons. Thursdays 7-8 p.m. Taught by Cantor Gelber via Zoom, the first part of each meeting is either a short history lesson or a short review of the sounds of the letters. Information, Templesinairi.org, dottie@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

Delve Deeper: Second Temple Judaism (Almost) a Thousand Years of Jewish History: Judaism from 600 BCE to 200 CE. Thursdays 1/29-4/23. (No class 4/2, 4/9.) 7-9 p.m. Examine the diverse forms of Judaism that emerged in the Second Temple Period. Via Zoom. Taught by Dr. Sara Ronis, Ph.D., associate professor at St. Mary's University. Presented in cooperation with the Jewish Alliance of Greater RI, area synagogues and JCDSRI. Cost: $250. For tuition assistance, Larry Katz at larrykatz1221@gmail.com or the rabbi at a sponsoring synagogue. Course information, www.delvedeeper.org.

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.

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

United Brothers Synagogue Shabbat Services. 7 p.m. 205 High St., Bristol. Shabbat services first Friday evening of every month. Information, Bradford Louison at bradlouison@gmail.com or 617-512-1978.

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 as we delve into the weekly portion. Information, Jude Weinstein at jweinstein@temple-beth-el.org or 401-331-6070.

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

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.

Temple Sinai Morning Shabbat Service. Saturdays 11 a.m.-noon. 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. Join Rabbi Goldwasser and our congregation either in the chapel or on Zoom. Information, Templesinairi.org, dottie@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

Friday | January 9

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

Sunday | January 11

Temple Torat Yisrael Mahjong Lessons. 9-11 a.m. 1251 Middle Road, East Greenwich. Join us for Mahjong lessons. Information, temple@toratyisrael.org.

Temple Torat Yisrael Sisterhood Arts & Crafts Project. 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. 1251 Middle Road, East Greenwich. Make one of three clay projects. Designed for beginners with detailed instruction and help. Cost: $40 (includes all materials). Information, Sheryl at sheryl@toratyisrael.org or 401-885-6600.

Friday | January 16

Temple Sinai Evening Service. 6-7 p.m. 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. Join the service in person or on Zoom. Meet in the Chapel for a presentation on Hevra Kadisha. Information, Templesinairi.org, dottie@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

Saturday | January 17

Kids' Night Out: Summer in Winter. 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. Information (including cost), Rachel Accetturo at raccetturo@jewishallianceri.org or 401-4111, ext. 140.

Sunday | January 18

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.

Wednesday | January 21

Temple Torat Yisrael Movie Night. 7 p.m. 1251 Middle Road, East Greenwich. Join us to screen "The Band's Visit." Free. Information, Sheryl at sheryl@toratyisrael.org or 401-885-6600.

Thursday | January 22

Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Center: A Journey from Despair to Hope: The Armenian Genocide and the Armenian Americans of Rhode Island. 6-7:15 p.m. Bonnie & Donald Dwares JCC, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence. Pauline Getzoyan and Esther Kalajian trace a journey from devastation to resilience, highlighting the ways Armenians rebuilt their lives and communities after genocide. Free. Information, hercri.org, info@hercri.org or 401-453-7860.

Broadway Film Series: "Annie." 6-8 p.m. Bonnie & Donald Dwares JCC, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence. "Annie" brings to life the value of Tikvah (hope). Annie's optimism in the face of adversity shows how hope can carry us through dark times, a central Jewish theme that has sustained our people across generations. Tickets: $5. Information, Samantha Kaufman at skaufman@jewishallianceri.org.

Friday | January 23

Temple Sinai Evening Service. 6-7 p.m. 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. Join us either in the Chapel or on Zoom as we celebrate a conversion. Information, Templesinairi.org, dottie@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

Saturday | January 24

Stretch to the Stars Havdalah Yoga. 4:30-6 p.m. Bonnie & Donald Dwares JCC, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence. Join PJ Library and Create Power Yoga for some peaceful poses before welcoming Havdalah and beginning a new week. Enjoy a kid-centered yoga class and then perform a short Havdalah ceremony with snacks afterward. For ages 5-8. RSVP by 1/19. Information, Lyndsey Ursillo at lursillo@jewishallianceri.org.

Sunday | January 25

Temple Torat Yisrael Mahjong Lessons. 9-11 a.m. 1251 Middle Road, East Greenwich. Join us for Mahjong lessons. Information, temple@toratyisrael.org.

Day at the J: Pool Party. 10a.m.-2 p.m. Bonnie & Donald Dwares JCC, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence. Join us for a day filled with special activities (including a pool party) for the whole family in addition to regularly scheduled programs. Open to everyone. Free. Information, Emily O'Connor at eoconner@jewishallianceri.org.

Temple Sinai People of the Book. 2-3:30 p.m. 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. Join us as we discuss Noa Tishby's "Israel: A Simple Guide to the Most Misunderstood Country on Earth" in which she chronicles her homeland's evolution through bite-size chunks of history and her personal story. Information, Templesinairi.org, dottie@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

Friday | January 30

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.) All donors will receive a $10 Whole Foods gift card. Walk-ins welcome if availability permits at time of arrival. Eat, drink and bring photo ID. Information, ribc.org or 401-453-8383.

Temple Torat Yisrael Youth Shabbat Service. 5:30 p.m. 1251 Middle Road, East Greenwich. Service led by Rabbi Saks followed by a potluck dinner. Information, Sheryl at sheryl@toratyisrael.org or 401-885-6600.

Temple Sinai Evening Service. 6-7:45 p.m. 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. Join us in the Sanctuary or on Zoom when we will celebrate the Sabbath of Song followed by an Oneg in the social hall. Information, Templesinairi.org, dottie@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

Sunday | February 8

Temple Sinai "Songs for a Cozy Afternoon." 4-6 p.m. 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. Enjoy the beautiful voices of Canter Debbie Gelber and Canter Deborah Johnson accompanied by Raymond Buttero on the piano. Refreshments available. Cost: $18. RSVP and information, Templesinairi.org, dottie@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

FOOD

New Year, New Better-for-You Breakfast



(FAMILY FEATURES) Whether you're preparing to power through workouts or recharging for a day of play, a filling, satisfying breakfast is a fitting way to start the morning. Shaking off the sleepiness can begin with the meal of your dreams, one that's loaded with complex carbohydrates, electrolytes, antioxidants and protein.

For a healthier form of "carb loading," turn to Sweet Potato Blueberry Baked Oatmeal for a quick, nutritious, better way to kickstart the day. It offers complex carbohydrates through oats and sweet potatoes, providing a perfect base for adding yogurt, peanut butter or pairing with eggs for a protein boost. Plus, anthocyanins found in blueberries pack an antioxidant punch to take breakfast to the next level.

Don't let their sweet nature fool you – sweet potatoes are a wholesome option for children, adults and anyone interesting in a nutritional boost. They're used in cuisines all over the world as a satisfying and versatile vegetable, with many surprised to learn a medium sweet potato contains about 100 calories when baked in the skin, along with 2 grams of protein and 25 grams of carbohydrates.

Their carbs may have a bad reputation, but they're made up of complex carbohydrates (which provide energy) that are released at a steady pace. Furthermore, they include a myriad of health-promoting antioxidants – like vitamins A and C – that play a role in immunity, skin health and eye health. Plus, sweet potatoes are a good source of fiber, which helps you feel "full" and can aid in digestion, and potassium.

To learn more and discover better-for-you recipes for the new year, visit ncsweetpotatoes.com.

Sweet Potato Blueberry Baked Oatmeal

Courtesy of Sarah Schlichter on behalf of the North Carolina Sweetpotato Commission
Prep time: 10 minutes | Cook time: 30 minutes | Servings: 6

INGREDIENTS

Butter, oil or nonstick cooking spray
2 cups uncooked rolled or old-fashioned oats
2 teaspoons cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1 1/2 cups 1% milk
2 large eggs
1 cup mashed sweet potato
1 1/2 tablespoons butter, melted
1/3 cup maple syrup, plus more for drizzling
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2/3 cup blueberries (fresh or frozen)

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 F.

Coat inside of 2-quart baking dish with butter, oil or nonstick cooking spray.

Mix oats, cinnamon, salt and baking powder.

Beat in milk, eggs, sweet potato, butter, 1/3 cup maple syrup and vanilla extract.

Mix together, saving blueberries for last to prevent staining or crushing, and spread inside dish.

Bake 30-35 minutes until oats are tender and moisture has been absorbed.

Drizzle with maple syrup, to taste.

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COMMUNITY VOICES

Cartoons, caricatures and Jonas Salk

BY GEORGE M. GOODWIN

MUSINGS



GEORGE M. GOODWIN

GROWING UP in Los Angeles in the 1950s, my twin brother, Theo, and I enjoyed drawing and painting. Our parents, seeking to encourage us, sent us to weekly art classes in Mrs. Abbey's studio. She lived in Brentwood, a few miles from our home. Eventually, this neighborhood would gain some notoriety, for it was where O. J. Simpson was accused of murdering his former wife, Nicole, and her friend, Ron Goldman.

Mrs. Abbey, a grandmotherly figure, loved still life. She typically arranged flowers in vases or fruit in bowls, and we kids, using tempera paints on paper, were encouraged to portray them. Our parents, impressed with our creations, framed some noteworthy examples. Yes, Theo and I still display some of these masterpieces in our homes, and so do our kids. Now Betsey and I delight in our grandkids' creations.

Soon after its publication in 1955, I received a copy of Thomas Craven's primer, "The Rainbow Book of Art." This children's introduction to European and American art amazed me. It still does. I'm fascinated by the artists, sculptors and architects who were included and those who were left out.

Some of our elders enjoyed taking us to art museums. But music and dance lessons soon become higher priorities. I played flute and alto saxophone, and Theo played clarinet and oboe. As teenagers we successfully auditioned for the Los Angeles Junior Philharmonic, which meant that Mom had to schlep us to ever more places.

Having been forbidden to watch much TV, Theo and I were encouraged to write letters to relatives, collect stamps and coins, participate in a youth group devoted to Indian lore and read for our own pleasure. Swimming and diving also became important, as long as these lessons didn't interfere with Saturday morning's religious school classes or midweek Hebrew instruction.

Meanwhile, while continuing to draw, I became fascinated with cartoons and caricatures. Theo and I were fortunate to be able to attend Disneyland's opening in 1955, but I don't think that we were captivated by goofy stories or characters. Perhaps stronger influences were the framed portraits of theater, movie and TV stars that adorned the walls of an elegant Hollywood restaurant, The Brown Derby, where our family went on special occasions. The nearby movie palaces of the 1920s, such as the Chinese and Egyptian, were equally mesmerizing. Our Wilshire Boulevard Temple, which was never referred to as a "synagogue," was another magnificent example of historical revival styles or perhaps science fiction!

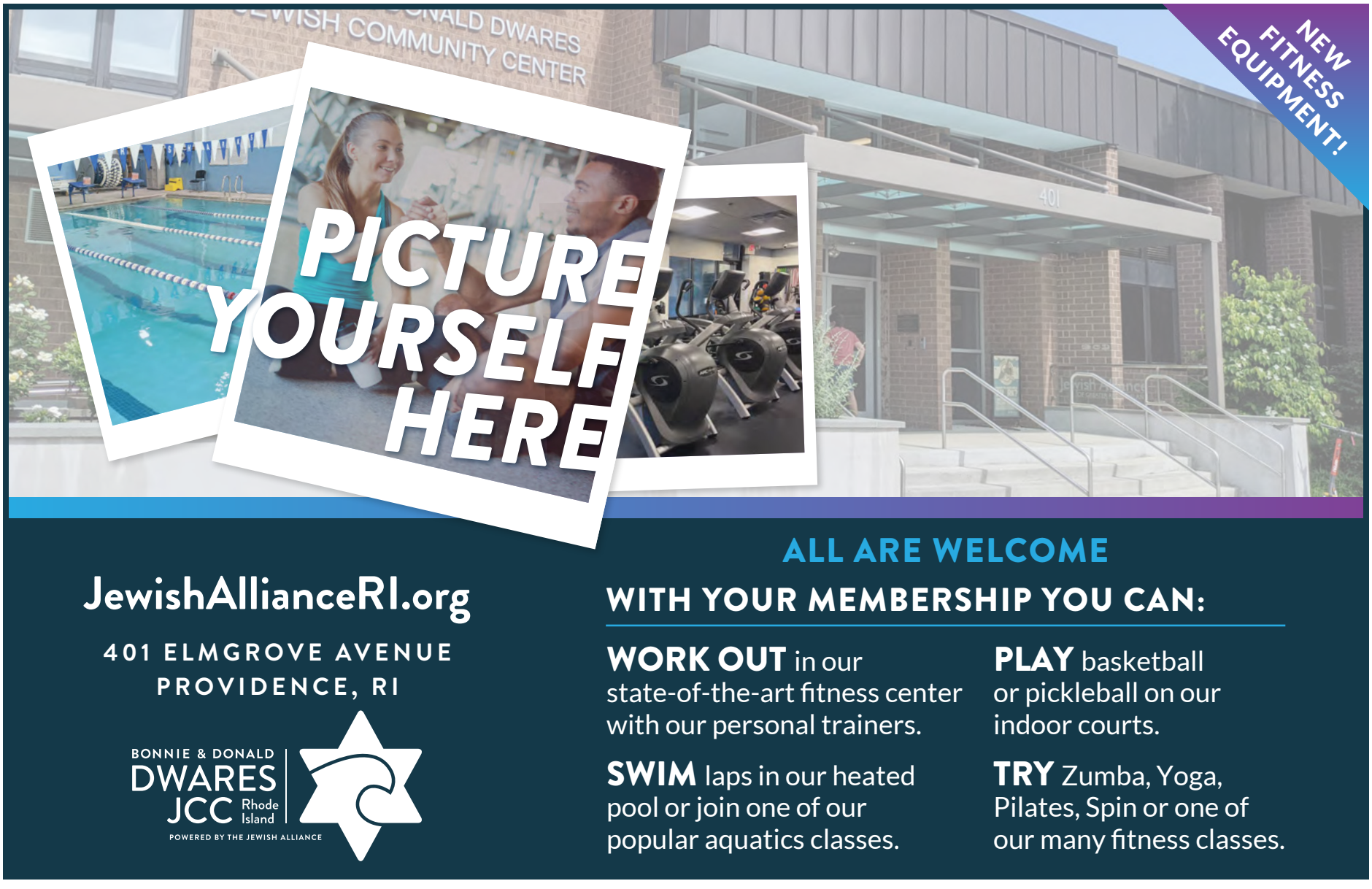
At one time, framed reproductions of Audubon prints hung in our living room. But Dad, an Anglophile, later collected caricatures from London's 19th-century magazine, Vanity Fair, and displayed them at home and in his law office. By eighth grade, especially through my love of Dickens and Conan Doyle, I too became an Anglophile.

My fascination with cartoons and caricatures was also fed by Mom's and Dad's subscriptions to The New Yorker and the Sunday edition of The New York Times. Theo and I had been forbidden to read comic books, but somehow our parents agreed to send us a few copies of Mad Magazine to summer camp. I wondered if Dad, whose specialty was entertainment law, had written a will for the real Alfred Newman, a Hollywood composer who shared a name (although it was spelled differently) with the fictitious mascot and cover boy of Mad!

My fascination with caricature took a major turn in Confirmation class, which enrolled 163 students in 1964. We were required to write a paper on "Who and What Is an American Jew?" After procrastinating, I came up with an idea. Why not draw portraits of about 30 distinguished men and women on a poster board? Without asking permission, I gathered illustrations and photos of numerous dignitaries – from Haym Salomon to Jonas Salk – for my interpretation.

I was quite pleased with my Confirmation caricatures, but my teachers were appalled. They probably

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9



COMMUNITY VOICES

Trees, poetry and nourishment



MIKE FINK

TU B'SHEVAT is our Jewish salute to trees often expressed in the poetry of nature's renewal and rebirth that links it to Israel's cultural identity. Long ago I studied poetry under the guidance and inspiration of literary critic and professor Cleanth Brooks, a central figure in the New Criticism movement dedicated to making verse a tough discipline. It emphasized structural and textual analysis, or close reading, over historical or biographical analysis.

World War II brought Brooks to Yale and among the verses he critiqued was a version of "Trees" by Joyce Kilmer written in 1913. The poem was also set to music by Oscar Rasbach in 1922 and became a popular song. I recall Professor Brooks disapproved of its mixed metaphors, with a special contempt for that nest of robins in the coiffure of a branch. The poem compares humans to trees with roots in the spiritual world and branches reaching outward, bearing the fruit of good deeds. Brooks considered it poor poetry, criticizing its sentimentality and arguing that it valued religious appeal over integrated form and meaning,

Despite this literary disapproval, many of us could sing the words or just admire the sentiment while recalling the fact that Joyce Kilmer was a poet who died fighting in the fields of World War I. The tragedy of the First World War found its voice in those deceptively simple rhymes and lines. "Trees" is notable for its anthropomorphic imagery: the tree, which Kilmer depicts as female, drawing its nourishment from the Earth, looking at God, and raising its "leafy arms" to pray.

My family sold furniture – Wayside Furniture in East Providence – which gave my family its central financial resource. Those chairs and tables and beds. all constructed from wood, were a central part of life to the youthful Fink brothers. Though it is something of a stretch, my connection to both wood and poetry led me to think of the nurturing earth from which both the trees of our livelihood and the poem "Trees" sprang. For these reasons I would like to dedicate this memoir to the nurturing guidance of our editor, Fran Ostendorf, with my gratitude and admiration for her excellent, eloquent and elegant career. Her admirable and intuitive handling of its complex challenges deserves high praise. To this I add my personal gratitude for her tact, judgment, and kindly touch on each and every page.

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

Kindness is key to health and wellness



PATRICIA RASKIN

AS WE ENTER the secular new year I would like to explore the concept of kindness, a key element of health and wellness.

We hear a lot about kindness and I believe that kindness is a building block of communication that promotes health and healing.

Communication takes many forms. It is verbal, non-verbal and energy driven. We can feel the positive or negative energy of others even when the words don't match what we see and feel.

Statistics show kindness significantly boosts health and longevity. It lowers stress, strengthens immunity, improves mood, reduces pain, and increases overall happiness.

In The American Psychological Association, apa.org, Kara Abrams authored the article, "The Case For Kindness: Kindness toward others can boost our own physical and mental health."

Abrams writes, "Being kind is not only the right thing to do—it's also good for our physical and mental health. Psychologists have found that performing acts of generosity boosts happiness and well-being and is even linked to physical health benefits, including lower blood pressure." (see sources cited in article)

Think about a kindness you have recently given or received. What were the effects of giving or receiving that act of kindness, short-term and long-term? Those kind moments stay with us and when we focus on them, they can increase our hope and our joy.

Rabbi Shraga Simmons shares a story in Aish.com in the article "Acts of Human Kindness" that illustrates kindness and its effect. Here is the story as the rabbi tells it:

"The story is told of a *tzaddik* at home one day when he hears a knock at the door. The *tzaddik* opens the door and finds a homeless man standing there. "Can I have a dollar for some food?" he asks. So, he does what any good *tzaddik* would do: Hurries to find his wallet, rushes to give the beggar the dollar, and quickly sends him on his way.

The homeless man is already halfway down the street when he hears someone calling after him, "Wait, wait!" He turns around to see the *tzaddik* waving, who then hands the beggar another dollar.

Upon returning home, the *tzaddik*'s wife is standing in the doorway astonished.

"I'll explain," he says. "When I first opened the door and saw a smelly, raggedy, grimy man standing in front of me, I felt uncomfortable. I ran to get the dollar because I wanted to get rid of him as soon as possible. But after he'd left, I realized that I didn't give him the dollar for *him*, I gave him the dollar for *me* – because I felt uncomfortable. So, I wanted to give a second dollar – this time for *him*!"

Rabbi Shraga Simmons reflects on this story and writes, *"Chesed* means reaching out altruistically, with love and generosity to all… For in the words of King David (Psalms 89:3): *Olam chesed yi-baneh* – "the world is built on kindness."

Here's to your health and wellness… and kindness!

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 8

thought that I had not only defied but mocked their authority. Consequently, I appealed to our Temple's senior rabbi, who was as well-known as many Hollywood celebrities. He also happened to be my great-uncle. My poster hung in a hallway for years.

During my last two years of high school, I became deeply involved in two more cartoon adventures (or misadventures). The first occurred in a required American history course during junior year. I showed my teacher a cartoon of Columbus, which I had drawn on some typing paper. Somewhat intrigued, he hung it above a blackboard and suggested that I draw a few more. I soon drew a few political cartoons each week, and all were eventually displayed in Mr. Lee's classroom. He was so impressed with my spoof of literacy tests required of Southern (Black) voters, that he urged me to submit it to The New Yorker. It hasn't yet been published.

As a senior, I was invited to join the yearbook staff. My assignment was to draw caricatures of all 60 of my classmates and a few teachers. I had already drawn a caricature of our college admissions counselor, which he framed and hung in his office.

I enjoyed many of my classmates and though I wasn't close to all of them it was not my intention to show preferences. I wanted everybody to enjoy some gleeful surprises.

Alas, I miscalculated horribly and offended dozens of people. I could have easily blamed the yearbook's editor and our faculty adviser, but I eventually accepted full responsibility for my outlandish and cruel behavior. I remain truly sorry.

As a historian, however, I remain proud of an article I wrote in the May 2001 issue of a scholarly journal, Modern Judaism. Titled "More Than a Laughing Matter: Cartoons and Jews," it focused on such masters as: Rube Goldberg, Al Hirschfeld, Will Eisner, Harvey Kurtzman, Saul Steinberg and Art Spiegelman.

Have Jews been such insightful satirists because of their history of persecution?

No, Mrs. Abbey was not a Jew, and I do not blame her for my childish inclinations. Is it possible, however, that some of the best art achieves beauty through ugliness? Or that humor and horror are inextricably mixed?

For my yearbook portrait, I portrayed myself as a blob of ink. Perhaps this is another portrait.

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

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Don't overlook our need to connect during those long cold winter days

BY SARAH GREENLEAF

When I lived in Los Angeles one of my rabbi's favorite parables was "It Could Always Be Worse." In the story a family lives in a small home and feels miserable and cramped in the confines of their home. The rabbi tells them to bring their farm animals inside the home. The family follows his advice, only to find their lives even more chaotic and miserable than before. In desperation they return to beg him for more ideas to make their living situation tolerable and he tells them to take the animals back out. They do so and find their home is spacious, quiet and wholly new to them after their experience. The home is the same size it was before, but their perception is greatly changed.

I'M REMINDED of this parable each winter when I'm stuck inside with my toddler especially on Sunday and especially between the hours of 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. Sundays in the winter are a cramped house filled with small animals and this winter I am going to take the rabbi's advice, and I am going to bring more animals (toddlers) in. This was an idea I had last year and failed to execute on because I made it too complicated and tried to vibe code my own sign-up system.

Not this year. This year I'm sending out an email in early January (this is my public announcement, so I have to do it!) with times and dates for friends with kids to sign up. I'm going to use SignUpGenius because I have experience with it from the front end and it is delightfully simple in a 1990s internet kind of way. I'm putting two slots per Sunday from 3-6 p.m. and whoever signs up can come over, the adults can hang out while the children play and I'll feed the kids mac and cheese before they head home for bedtime.

I'm not planning activities because honestly what is the point? If kids want to do activities they will ask, like the other week when I tried to get my daughter involved in a coloring project only to be derailed into making her a dinosaur mask that she wore for the next hour. Her plan was better, the dinosaur mask was a lot of fun to make, and it played to her strengths (gluing) better than my idea had. Also, I find the most frequent thing kids enjoy doing in my house is jumping on the beds in my daughter's room and screaming.

Much is made in the winter months of staying physically active and I get that. What we so often overlook is that after the crush of holiday events January through March is often devoid of opportunities to gather. While it is vital to exercise our physical selves, it is just as vital to exercise our social selves, to be connected with one another.

We've passed the shortest day of the year and the light will slowly return over the coming cold months, but instead of counting down the days until Spring (or instead of *only* counting down the days until spring) I am going to flex my hosting skills in a low-lift way to make something that I want in my life – more time with friends, something fun for my kid to do and a break in the monotony of winter. I'm going to open the door and let the goats (toddlers) in. I'm going to fill my apartment with noise so that when everyone leaves, we are tired, connected and ready for a new week. Sure, it could always be worse, but this year I think it could always be better too.

A Crowded Farmhouse Folktale: https://www.jewishbookcouncil.org/book/a-crowded-farmhouse-folktale#:~:text=It's%20impossible%20to%20read%20too,laughs%20as%20the%20story%20proceeds.

Schedule your own get togethers: https://www.signupgenius.com/

SARAH GREENLEAF *(sgreenleaf@jewishallianceri.org) is the digital marketing manager for the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island and writes for Jewish Rhode Island.*



Hello!
I am Carl,
a successful Jewish male in my mid-sixties from southeast MA, about 30 minutes from Providence, never married, no children.

I am fun and outgoing, with a great sense of humor. I enjoy a night out for fine dining and theatre, as well as a cozy night at home with a good movie and some takeout. I am fond of music of all types – from Barbara Streisand, Barry Manilow, Andrew Lloyd Weber, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra just to name a few. I also enjoy singing. I like visiting museums, zoos, love to travel, and am open to new experiences. I am an animal lover with a beautiful pet cat named Willow. I am looking for a kind, outgoing woman with a sense of humor for friendship, laughs, and perhaps more.

If you are interested, please call or text (508) 889-2270

10 Things to know about the Dwares JCC

The people who work here make the difference. The staff is the cornerstone of the experience. Their attention to detail, care for their work, and ability to connect with everyone who comes into the building are what truly set the JCC apart.

It is a community living room, not just a building. The Dwares JCC is a place where people of all ages and backgrounds come to connect, gather, move, learn and simply be together.

Jewish values guide everything. From wellness to arts to social connection, the work of the JCC is grounded in Jewish values such as inclusion, dignity, kindness and responsibility to one another.

Everyone belongs here. You do not need to be Jewish, affiliated or at a particular stage of life to feel welcome.

Wellness means more than fitness. The JCC supports physical, mental, emotional and social well-being through the pool, group fitness, senior programming and everyday opportunities for connection.

It is truly multigenerational. On any given day, young children, teens, adults and seniors share the same space at the same time.

The pool is a cornerstone of community life. Swim lessons, lap swimmers, seniors, families and special events all coexist, making the pool one of the most active and welcoming spaces in the building.

Inclusion is practiced, not just promised. The Dwares JCC works intentionally to create access and opportunity for people with different abilities, needs and life circumstances.

Relationships matter. Staff know members by name, and long-standing relationships between people, families and the institution are a defining strength of the JCC.

It is a place people return to. Many community members first walk through the doors as children and return years later as parents, grandparents or volunteers. The JCC grows alongside the people it serves.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

How does a fitness professional develop a wellness philosophy?

BY ROB CASTELLUCCI

WHEN I THINK about health and wellness, my thoughts reach beyond fitness centers and athletic complexes. I don't only think about lifting weights, sweating on cardio machines, slamming medicine balls, etc. Of course, appropriate amounts of strength training and cardiovascular activity are quite important to maintain a healthy lifestyle, but there's much more to it. To me, total wellness encompasses all aspects of our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual being.

For the physical component, in recent years, I've shifted focus in my personal workouts, as well as the workouts I guide my personal training clients through, to emphasize quality of movement and mobility. A major aspect of this involves working with moderately to heavily loaded, compound exercises, like squats. I also like to break down movement patterns and make sure we address the stability and mobility within our specific joints that make up these bigger, compound movements and exercises. We always make sure to include cardiovascular activity each week as well, which I like to frame mentally as strengthening the heart, as opposed to the common thought of cardiovascular activity being just a way to burn calories for fat loss.

Beyond exercise, of course, there's the nutritional piece of our physical component. To me, the simpler we make this, the better. I always try to tell folks that it all comes down to calories consumed, versus calories expended. If we expend more calories than we consume, we'll lose weight. If we consume more than we expend, we'll gain weight. Within that, we should always focus on eating as many whole foods as possible, and limit refined/processed foods. A simple phrase I use to describe high quality, whole foods is "if it flew, grew, ran, or swam – eat it." The other important thing with nutrition is to allow ourselves to enjoy the foods we eat and not put too much pressure on ourselves to eat perfectly every single day. It's just not sustainable. Have that slice of pizza occasionally, in moderation!

For the other components: mental, emotional and spiritual, I typically turn to the outdoors and nature. Remember, exercise in its simplest form is just movement of the body. So, going outdoors and walking/running, hiking, kayaking, fishing, hunting, golfing, gardening, etc. can all be beneficial forms of exercise at varying degrees of intensity. I find that the added benefit of being outdoors, especially in or near the woods or forest, is the connection to nature. For many folks, a gentle walk through the woods can encompass all the aspects of wellness that I've mentioned because of that connection to the outdoors and nature. Fresh air, colorful plants, sounds of wildlife and so much more can really reset us mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

I sometimes find myself getting more rigorous exercise from a couple hours of gardening than any workout in the gym. The functionality of being able to carry heavy loads, dig many holes, rake, cultivate, spread material and all that some of my gardening days can entail can put quite a load on the body. But, at the same time, it can give such a release mentally and spiritually to plant things, watch them grow and see how the wildlife and insects interact with those plants. My gardening is typically focused on native perennials and shrubs, which not only has a positive impact on the surrounding ecosystem, but gives me the joy of watching the birds, insects and other wildlife that thrive among those planting areas as well. It all ties into my personal health and wellness.



Some other great examples for myself are fishing and golfing. Whether paddling my kayak to my favorite largemouth bass spot or walking out onto the ice with my sled of gear for several hours of ice fishing, all the components of health and wellness are achieved for me. The peacefulness of being out there is beyond measure. Even for golf, half of the enjoyment is just being outside while taking on the challenge of the sport. Golf goes even deeper because of the social component; chatting, smiling and laughing with friends out on the course makes it even more enriching.

With all that said, my overall health and wellness suggestions to folks would be to move our bodies in many different ways, get outside as much as possible, connect with nature, get involved in social activities, enjoy the food we eat and pick up active hobbies. Quality health and wellness can be achieved by anybody.

Come check us out at the Dwares JCC if you want to know more about myself or our team of fitness coaches. No matter your age, fitness level or goals, we are always happy to help.

ROB CASTELLUCCI *is the Director of Fitness Operations at the Jewish Alliance of Greater RI. He is an ACSM Certified Exercise Physiologist and Golf Mobility Certified by the Titleist Performance Institute.*

10 Health and wellness tips for 2026

Be consistent! Especially in exercising, eating and sleeping. Your body is rhythmic and functions best when it recognizes a pattern.

Find activities that you enjoy for exercise. You will have higher compliance if you choose activities that you enjoy.

Start with reasonable and achievable goals. Once you get a reasonable schedule in place that you are following it will be easier to add more.

Hydrate! When you sweat, you are losing water from your blood plasma, and your body must work harder to "retain" water. Your blood and, as a result, your oxygen delivery is better when hydrated. More oxygen means you can make more energy.

Sleep! Fatigue is a symptom that we often ignore. If you ignore this and keep stacking up tiredness you increase your stress hormones and decrease your immune protection. Consistent exercise will improve your sleep.

Stretch post work out. Start with a dynamic warm-up 3-5 min of big easy movements that mimic your activity. Then go into your workout. After your workout stretch, as your muscles are "heated" with more blood and are more pliable than at the onset of exercise.

Switch it up! When working out, realize that if you do the same workout all the time your body will become accustomed to that load, and you will "maintain" health, but will also plateau. Incorporate simple changes such as interval training, shorter and heavier sets, different exercises, etc.

Stay social! Social connections improve our sense of connectiveness, and studies show they reduce depression and anxiety.

Get outside! Get some fresh air, spend time connecting with nature and feel your mood improve.

Smile and laugh! Studies show that smiling and laughing increase cellular substances that increase immune function and feel-good mood neurotransmitters.

Submitted by the J-Fitness Team

IN-THE-NEWS

Yehuda Kaploun onfirmed as antisemitism envoy

(JTA) – Rabbi Yehuda Kaploun was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on Dec. 18 as the next special envoy to monitor and combat antisemitism, an ambassador-level role at the State Department aimed at coordinating U.S. efforts to confront antisemitism globally.

His confirmation fills a post that had been vacant in a period marked by spikes in antisemitic incidents both in the United States and abroad.

Kaploun, a follower of the Chabad Hasidic movement, a Miami businessman and a 2024 Trump campaign surrogate, was confirmed as part of a broader package of nominations after the Senate agreed to bring the slate to the floor for debate and a vote. His confirmation came on a 53-43 vote split strictly along party lines, with Republicans voting yes and Democrats voting no.

Jewish organizations largely welcomed Kaploun's confirmation.

The World Jewish Congress praised President Donald Trump's choice, saying it ensures leadership to confront antisemitism at a time of rising threats to Jewish communities worldwide and that Kaploun "has already been working hard, engaging directly with dozens of special envoys and national coordinators from around the world."

The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, the Anti-Defamation League and the Republican Jewish Coalition offered congratulations, calling the appointment timely and necessary given increasing antisemitic rhetoric and violence.

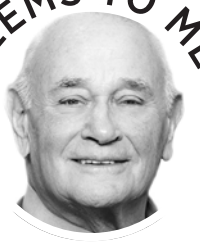
Kaploun testified in November that education and bipartisan engagement are central to combating Jew-hatred, a theme he reiterated in interviews and hearings leading up to his confirmation.

Kaploun was confirmed despite Democratic opposition, with critics arguing that his past statements and political activity reflected an overtly partisan approach and raised concerns about his ability to serve credibly in a role that has traditionally sought bipartisan trust.

OPINION

In search of imperfection

IT SEEMS TO ME



RABBI JAMES ROSENBERG

"AS A PERFORMER, one has a mission, like Coltrane, to take your solo out to talk to God."

This is the opening sentence of an Opinion piece in this past Dec. 2 issue of The New York Times titled "The Quest for Perfection Is Stunting Society;" the author is Jonathan Biss, concert pianist, artistic director of the Marlboro Music School and Festival.

Biss goes on to identify the source of the quote: "That's from Patti Smith, a great and uncategorizable artist, describing the saxophonist John Coltrane's influence on her…"

Next, making no transition in thought or feeling, Biss adds, sardonically, "classical musicians are not trained to talk to God. We are trained not to make mistakes." Here Biss, twisting and turning from John Coltrane to Patti Smith to classical musicians like himself, gets to the point of his essay: our society's misguided – even dangerous – quest for perfection.

A paragraph or two further on Biss writes: "This fetishism of perfection might not be surprising, but that does not make it any less damaging. You cannot learn or grow while trying to appear as if you have everything figured out. You cannot talk to God by trying to avoid doing something wrong. *Perfection is stagnation. (Italics added)*

It is no accident that Biss begins his Opinion piece by calling to our consciousness John Coltrane (1926-1967), one of the most innovative jazz musicians of all time, whose saxophone solo improvisations seem, indeed, to "talk to God." Whenever I play and replay his recording on the Atlantic label of "My Favorite Things," I do not hear him striving for "perfection" on his soprano sax; rather, I hear him taking risks, surprising himself by taking giant steps with his instrument into places where neither he nor anybody else has ever been before.

It is as if in the musical trance of his saxophone improvisation, Coltrane does not, cannot, know if he is flirting with "perfection" or is failing his listeners, his instrument and himself. At his finest moments, Coltrane is far from striving for perfection; he is striving to take his solo out to talk to God. For these reasons, John Coltrane is not only my favorite jazz musician; he is my favorite musician – period!

Despite all of the creativity of our Biblical writers, none of them reaches perfection; for, as I have long been arguing, Biblical literature is the written response of our ancestors – both men and women – to their experience of being in living relationship with God. Our ancestors, like all of us today, reflect our human imperfections in their living and in their writing.

So many of our Biblical writers have somehow managed to take their solo voices out to talk to God – and to us; these ancient writers have found a way to make their voices our voices. When God calls out to Abraham, *"Lech lecha, Go forth!"* Abraham chooses to go forth, and the course of Western history is transformed. Isaac's life is rescued by a ram from God, so that the course of monotheism can move forward. Jacob dreams of a ladder whose rungs are supporting angels, and later on he wrestles with the angel of himself.

Much of the book of Job is one man's anguished turning to take his solo out to talk to God. And then – how can we forget? – every one of our 150 Biblical Psalms is a written record of an ancient Israelite taking his solo out to talk to God. It is not their perfection but rather their all-too-human imperfections that infuse our Psalms with both their humanity and a profound sense of God's Presence both in darkness as well as in light.

The title of this column, "In Search of Imperfection," is deliberate,

As Jonathan Biss makes clear in his essay, the quest for perfection inevitably leads to stagnation – the very antithesis of art. It is the creative use of our human imperfections that enables us to take our solos out to talk to God.

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

Terrorism and a twist of fate

BY MARJORIE DAVIS

For many years I attended the annual Bryant University Women's Summit where I listened to dozens of speeches, many given by celebrities. However, the most memorable speaker was not a celebrity. She was a young woman named Heather Abbott, and in 2016, when she told her story, she captured the attention of the audience as few others have.

SHE AND HER FRIENDS had gone into Boston to see a Red Sox baseball game. At some point during the game, they decided to leave and go to the annual Boston Marathon. The date was April 15, 2013 – the day when two terrorists planted two bombs at the marathon. An eight-year-old boy was killed. His younger sister lost her leg. In total, three people were killed and more than 500 were wounded.

Heather was one of the wounded. Blown through the doorway of a restaurant, she said that her leg and foot felt as if they were on fire. Too afraid to look, she averted her eyes, but when others approached her, the look of horror on their faces spoke volumes.

After three surgeries, the doctors presented her with two options: continue having many surgeries that would go on for years and would bring much pain and little chance of ever walking, or have her leg amputated below the knee. She eventually chose the latter.

In the most compelling part of her speech, she spoke of her struggle to let go of thoughts, such as: If only she had stayed at that baseball game; if only she hadn't gone to the marathon; if only she had been standing at a different location. If only... If only... If only…

Seeking a peaceful environment,

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

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

Georgios Tsibouktzakis was a Greek Orthodox priest who moved to Israel to practice his faith in one of its many monasteries. The peace he found in the Holy Land, however, abruptly ended in 2001 when he, along with four other people, was murdered in a terrorist attack masterminded by Marwan Barghouti. Serving multiple life sentences, Barghouti now sits in an Israeli prison.

In an area of the world where radical Islamic terrorists abound, Barghouti stands out. Polls have shown that he is the Palestinians' first choice to lead a future Palestinian state. However, his popularity extends beyond the Palestinians. Recently, over 200 American celebrities signed a petition calling upon the U.N. and governments around the world to push Israel to release this terrorist.

Good and rational people can debate whether the death sentence should be used, but no good and rational person should seek the release of a terrorist who orchestrated the murder of innocent people.

In Israel in 2023, Lucy Dee was driving with her two teenage daughters, Maia and Rina, when a terrorist rammed them off the road, shot them, circled around and shot them again, murdering all three. CNN anchor Christiane Amanpour referred to the terrorist attack as a "shootout." After six weeks of calls for her to apologize, she finally relented and issued an apology to Rabbi Dee, the husband and father of the victims.

On New Year's Day in 2025 a man drove a pickup truck with an ISIS flag into a crowd in New Orleans, murdering 14 people. Hours later, in NYC, hundreds of protestors marched.

Rep. Ritchie Torres (D-NY) said, "These protesters in NYC are marching not to condemn the ISIS terrorist attack against their own country but to falsely accuse their own country, as well as Israel, of terrorism. The hatred for America and Israel far exceeds the hatred for actual terror, apartheid and genocide in the world."

Disturbingly, this type of moral inversion has reached Gracie Mansion in New York City. Although the New York Times reported that the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement is led by a committee that includes terrorists like Hamas, Mayor Zohran Mamdani boasted that BDS is at the core of his politics.

Moreover, Mamdani has refused to condemn the phrase "Globalize the Intifada," a sentiment that was realized with the deadly antisemitic attack in Australia. Acknowledging that it is a call for violence against Jews, Australia and the U.K. are now banning that phrase and threatening to arrest protestors who use it.

Since Oct. 7, 2023, 156 countries have formally recognized a Palestinian state, in effect rewarding terrorism. They fail to understand that the massacre didn't happen because there was no Palestinian state; it happened because there was one. It was Israel's withdrawal from Gaza, along with billions of dollars the international community provided to build a Palestinian state, that led to the horrific Oct. 7 massacre.

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar said, "We are facing three terrorist states, a unique phenomenon in the Middle East. The terrorist states in Gaza, Lebanon and Yemen have not yet been dismantled, but some people are quick to suggest that we will establish a Palestinian terror state in the heart of our tiny homeland. It means two kilometers from the place we are sitting right now. It would control the topography over all our population centers, and this is what they suggested after Oct. 7, even though it's clear that such an experiment would only lead to another terror state."

'It would behoove them to remember that, as random as it is vicious, terrorism can reach anyone.'

There is a Jewish saying, "Anyone who becomes merciful to the cruel will eventually become cruel to the merciful."

Indeed, people who minimize and excuse terrorism are merciful to the cruel. Directing their anger, not at the terrorists, but at the people who must defend themselves from terrorists, they have become cruel to the merciful.

It would behoove them to remember that, as random as it is vicious, terrorism can reach anyone. One day they could find themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time. They might sustain a life-altering injury, or perhaps the life of someone precious to them could be gone in an instant. Then, with a sudden and cruel twist of fate, it is they who will be left to weep the words, "If only…"

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.*





Twins Ezra Stopa, right, spins his six-year old twin sister Arielle while dancing to the music of Ezekiels Wheels. The twins live in East Greenwich.

PHOTOS | GLENN OSMUNDSON



David Nicolato, of Saunderstown, with a pan of latkes.

Hanukkah at Temple Beth-El





Hadar Aharoni spins her daughter, seven-year-old Amalya while dancing to the music of Ezekiels Wheels.

Clarinetist Nathaniel Seelen, of Newton MA and bassist Kirsten Lamb, of Boston, are half of the Ezekiels Wheels quartet.

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Isaac Brynjegard-Bialik, of Los Angelesm (black tee shirt) supervises the making of a Mosaic finger print community art piece.



Providence Mayor Brett Smiley lights the outdoor menorah during the Hanukkah celebration at Temple Beth-El in Providence.



Mosaic finger print community art piece gets another addition.



Cantor Judy Seplowin leads the group in song before lighting a menorah.



Cantor Judy Seplowin leads the group in song before the lighting of a menorah outside the temple.

Bringing the Hanukkah lights to the State House

On Dec. 17, 2025, a crowd gathered inside the Rhode Island State House to light the menorah. The annual event, sponsored by Chabad of Rhode Island, included entertainment by the Dorons, a local family band, and remarks by Gov. Dan McKee



Rabbi Berel Laufer, left, was the emcee for the event. PHOTOS | GLENN OSMUNDSON



Governor Dan McKee greets Rabbi Yehoshua Laufer before the ceremony.



Holocaust survivor Irving Schild, of Providence, and his wife Regina light a candle.



The Dorons entertained at the R.I. State House Hanukkah celebration.

COMMUNITY

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Holocaust memorial acknowledges Jews and Gentiles murdered by the Nazis during World War II



PHOTO | NANCY KIRSCH

While the sculpture initially appeared as a simple portrayal of people waiting for a train, artist Julia Balk wrote that it "unfolds layers of profound historical weight upon closer examination." This photo depicts the reverse side of the sculpture which, she wrote, "sits on a hefty bronze pedestal molded from vines and meant to look like barbed wire."



Sam Brickle and Kathy Quinn, pose near the Holocaust memorial sculpture on Sept. 27 at the Museum of Work & Culture in Woonsocket. PHOTO | SAM BRICKLE

BY NANCY KIRSCH

An evocative and powerful Holocaust memorial statue by artist Julia Balk is on loan to Woonsocket's Museum of Work & Culture, thanks to the generosity of Temple Beth-El members Sam and Jeanie Brickle, of Barrington. The couple are dedicated and enthusiastic art collectors. Sam met Balk at Art Basel in Miami in 2024.

"NEVER AGAIN" is the oft-cited mantra by Jewish communities to urge their compatriots to never forget the horrors inflicted upon the 6 million Jews murdered during the Nazi regime in Europe. The Brickles, however, want the world to recognize that "never again" should also include the 8 million non-Jews the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum records as having perished at the hands of the Nazis.

"Designed as a 'visual prayer,' this masterful creation beckons viewers to grasp onto hope amidst despair," Balk wrote about her bronze sculpture. "It implores us to carry to light of hope within our souls, even in the bleakest moments. This sculpture calls out to us all, urging us to foster compassion, understanding and vigilance in the face of the hatred that still threatens our world."

The intimate sculpture, which is approximately two feet wide by 16 inches tall and seated on a pedestal (which is also part of the sculpture), encourages visitors to closely examine its intricate detail. As the cast has been broken, the sculpture can never be reproduced.

Sam's family hailed from Russia, and Balk is a fourth-generation Russian. "I was very emotionally tied to the sculpture and it became a very important part of my being," said Sam.

After evaluating different venues to which he might lend the sculpture, Sam had an epiphany.

"The sculpture would normally be shown in a Jewish place of worship or a Jewish museum where Gentiles might not see it; then I thought about Woonsocket," said Sam, who lived in Woonsocket until he was 8 years old and had no older brothers to protect him from the antisemitic bullying he suffered. That bullying led Sam's father to move the family to Providence's East Side.

As donors to the museum in Woonsocket – where the third-generation Brickle Group continues to operate its textile manufacturing, fiber recycling and real estate businesses – Sam and Jeanie thought the museum would be an ideal location.

"When the museum had a flood, we kept the sculpture at the [Brickle Group's] plant for a few months," said Sam. When employees walked past the sculpture, "some of the people crossed themselves

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

COMMUNITY

Jewish Alliance marks 60th anniversary of 'Nostra Aetate'

BY EMILY GAUDREAU

PROVIDENCE – On Dec. 2, the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island and the Providence College Jewish-Catholic Theological Exchange Committee hosted an interfaith program commemorating the 60th anniversary of Nostra Aetate, the landmark declaration of the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, commonly known as Vatican II.

PROMULGATED in 1965, *Nostra Aetate* – Latin for "In Our Time" – emerged from Vatican II, the 21st and most recent ecumenical council of the Catholic Church. The declaration transformed Jewish-Catholic relations and established a foundation for modern interfaith dialogue.

The program, held at the Bonnie & Donald Dwares Jewish Community Center, was moderated by Dr. Tom Bolin, Fellow in Residence in Jewish-Christian Relations at Providence College. Panelists included Rabbi Wayne Franklin, Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Emanu-El, and Dr. Holly Taylor Coolman, of Providence College, who reflected on the theological and communal impact of *Nostra Aetate* six decades later.

Most Reverend Bruce A. Lewandowski, C.Ss.R, Bishop of Providence, spoke on behalf of the Catholic Diocese, emphasizing the historical context of Vatican II, particularly its emergence following the Holocaust and the horrors of World War II.

Adam Greenman, president and CEO of the Jewish Alliance, highlighted the importance of the anniversary for Jewish-Catholic relations in Rhode Island and for future interfaith cooperation.

"As we come together to commemorate Vatican II, we again affirm our clear rejection of antisemitism in all its forms and reflect on the profound, positive influence *Nostra Aetate* has had on interfaith understanding worldwide. Here in Rhode Island, rabbis and priests have built meaningful relationships grounded in shared values of dignity, justice, compassion and religious freedom. Even as we face rising antisemitism and other forms of religious hatred, I'm hopeful and committed to continuing the spirit of cooperation that strengthens our entire interfaith community," he said.

Rabbi Jeffrey Goldwasser, Vice President of the Board of Rabbis, spoke to the importance of sustaining dialogue across faith traditions.

"It is not always an easy conversation, but it is important and necessary. Jews and Catholics need to engage in an ongoing effort to relate their ideas, their faith and their history to each other. Each needs to be willing to listen to the other with a whole and compassionate heart. That is a process that is valued both by Catholics and Jews as a way of 'coming clean' with God and with history – a process that Catholics often call reconciliation and that we Jews know as *teshuvah,"* he said.

The program underscored the enduring relevance of *Nostra Aetate* as a guiding framework for dialogue, partnership and mutual respect within Rhode Island's interfaith community as everyone works together to build a safer world.

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

Annual Hadassah gift wrappers raise funds for hospitals





FOR MORE THAN 50 years, members of Hadassah Rhode Island have been wrapping holiday gifts at Warwick Mall with the funds raised going to Hadassah medical research programs at its hospitals in Israel. The program, coordinated by Judy Silverman, attracts members year after year and the proceeds are impressive. Hadassah, founded in 1912 by Henrietta Szold, connects Jewish women and empowers them to effect change through advocacy, advancing health and well-being, and support of Israel.



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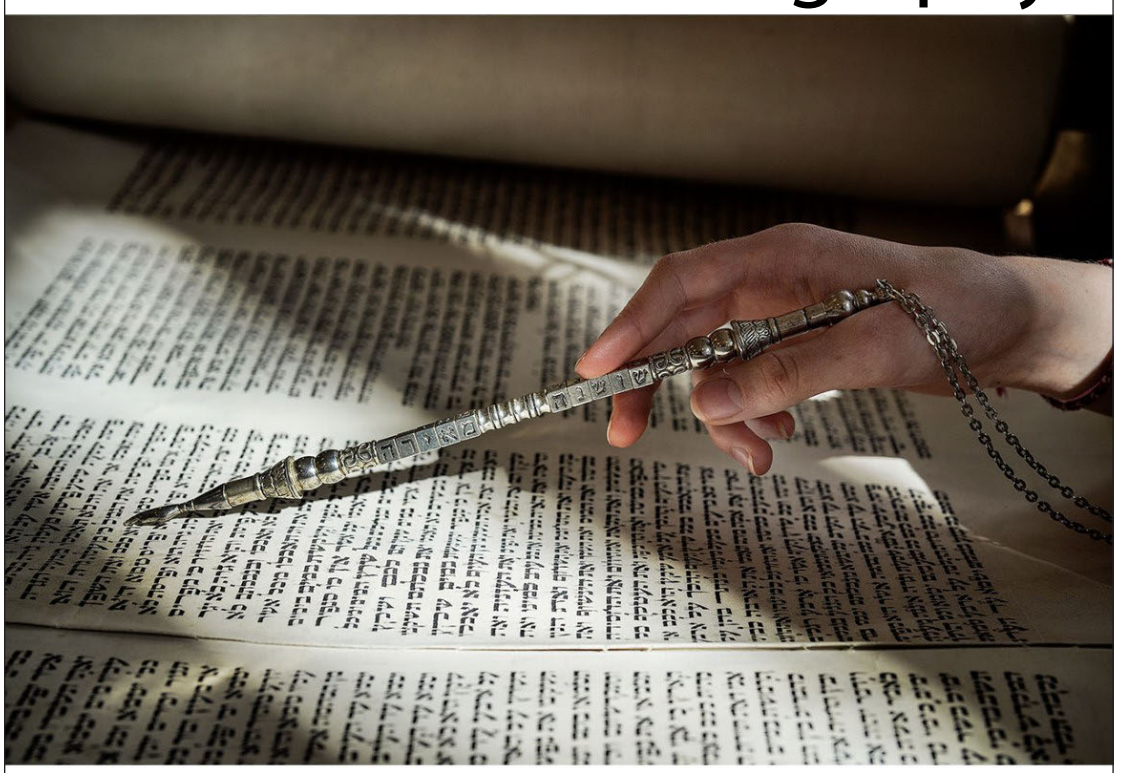
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COMMUNITY

Hanukkah with the Lonsmen



Roberta and Ken Schneider

THE LONSMEN, a Jewish Motorcycle Club celebrated Hanukkah together in Foxboro with faith, food and fun. The group is part of the National Jewish Motorcycle Alliance. One of its goals is to participate in the annual Ride to Remember event. Hundreds of Jewish motorcyclists from all over the country gather to raise money for local Holocaust centers. The club is considering hosting that exciting event in 2027 in Boston.

The Lonsmen ride on a weekly basis throughout New England. In addition they get together for dinner and they celebrate holidays together. If you are Jewish and ride a motorcycle, contact club president Ken at KenSchneider33@gmail.com about membership.

Submitted by the Lonsmen

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in front of the sculpture," he said. "It became a kind of prayer for some people."

At the museum, music from "Schindler's List" offers a haunting aural supplement to the sculpture.

"Buying the sculpture was so important to Sam that it became important to me. At the opening, I saw people who were crying and the sculpture moved and awed them," said Jeanie.

Jeanie, who converted to Judaism, described the sculpture as "speaking to all humanity's struggles." Although Jeanie had read the history of the 8 million Gentiles who died at the hands of the Nazis, that history didn't fully resonate for her until she saw the sculpture.

"Although 70% of Woonsocket's population in 1920 was French-Canadian," said Anne Conway, director, Museum of Work & Culture, "the museum celebrates the diversity of current Woonsocket's populations."

In fact, during the summer of 2024, it hosted an exhibit called *Mishpaha* ("family," in Yiddish) that celebrated many of Woonsocket's Jewish luminaries.

"Our work with the Brickle Family to host this memorial sculpture reminds us of people's past struggles – struggles that we don't want to forget," said Conway. "People can come here and remember the past and, hopefully, celebrate the future."

"It's our goal here to preserve stories and to share stories," added Conway. "We want people to learn history so that we don't repeat it."

The Nazi regime, said Sam, "was a terrible thing for all mankind, not just for the Jews. It should be written in the history forever."

The Museum of Work & Culture will host the sculpture through December 2026, at which time the Brickles will decide where the sculpture will permanently reside. The museum is at 42 S. Main St., in Woonsocket; for more information, visit rihs.org/locations/museum-of-work-culture/

For more information about Julia Balk's art, visit https/juliabalk.wordpress.com.

NANCY KIRSCH, *a member of Temple Beth-El's Communications Committee, was a former editor of The Jewish Voice (now Jewish Rhode Island). This article previously appeared in the Temple Beth-El Shofar.*

COMMUNITY

FROM THE JEWISH FEDERATION FOUNDATION

Values-centered planning affirms Jewish life, learning and connection

STRENGTHENING THE Jewish Alliance's endowment (also known as the Jewish Federation Foundation) is not only a financial decision – it is an act driven by Jewish values and aligns with longstanding traditions of responsibility and foresight. Jewish teachings emphasize *l'dor v'dor* (from generation to generation), *tzedakah (*righteous giving), and *arevut* (communal responsibility). Endowment and legacy giving bring these values to life in a practical way.

Building an endowment does not require complexity or large contributions. Many legacy gifts are established simply by including the Jewish Alliance or the Jewish Federation Foundation in a will or estate plan and notifying the organization. Other donors choose beneficiary designations on retirement accounts, donor-advised funds, or life insurance policies, making the process accessible and flexible.

These approaches allow individuals and families to tend to present needs while planning for our community's future. By integrating philanthropy into everyday financial planning, donors strengthen our Jewish community and the Alliance's long-term stability without sacrificing current priorities.

In uncertain times, this kind of values-centered planning offers reassurance. It affirms that Jewish life, learning and connection in Rhode Island will continue to thrive. Legacy giving is not just a financial tool, but a reflection of who we are, what we believe and how we choose to support our community – today and for generations to come.

For more information on the many ways to invest in our community's future, visit https://jewishallianceri.giftplans.org/ or contact the Development team at endowment@jewishallianceri.org.



PHOTO | MADE YOU LOOK/JOEY GAMM

Putting our values into action this Tu B'Shevat: TE VolunTEers sneaker recycling drive

AS WE CELEBRATE Tu B'Shevat, Temple Emanu-El invites the Rhode Island Jewish community to take part in a meaningful act of environmental stewardship and communal responsibility through its TE VolunTEers Tu B'Shevat Sneaker Recycling Drive, running Feb.1–15, 2026.

Tu B'Shevat calls us to reflect on our relationship with the earth and our responsibility to protect it for future generations. Rooted in the Jewish values of *bal tashchit* (do not waste) and *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), this initiative offers a tangible way to turn intention into action - by giving old sneakers new life.

Did you know that most people throw away unwanted sneakers after just 125–200 days? Because sneakers are made from materials that are not biodegradable, they often end up in landfills or are incinerated, releasing toxic chemicals into our air and soil. The EPA estimates that 200–300 million pairs of shoes are discarded in the U.S. every year.

Through this sneaker recycling drive, Temple Emanu-El aims to keep athletic shoes out of landfills, reduce environmental harm and raise funds to support the Temple's programs and mission. All community members are encouraged to gather gently used or worn athletic shoes and drop them off at the Temple anytime during the two-week drive. The collected sneakers will be responsibly recycled through GotSneakers, ensuring they are reused or repurposed rather than wasted.

This initiative reflects Temple Emanu-El's deep commitment to Jewish living rooted in ethical practice, lifelong learning and service. As a traditional temple, Temple Emanu-El strives to foster meaningful worship, educate members in living Jewishly and create a warm, supportive community that meets the needs of a diverse membership. The sneaker drive is a natural extension of these values - combining education, mitzvah performance, community engagement and care for our shared world.

By participating, you are not only honoring Tu B'Shevat, but also modeling Jewish values for the next generation and strengthening our local Jewish community.

Together, one pair of sneakers at a time, we can make a positive impact.

Learn more at gotsneakers.com and join Temple Emanu-El this February in stepping forward for the planet and our community. And to learn more about Temple Emanu-El's impact, its programs and its ongoing support of the Jewish community in Rhode Island and beyond, visit teprov.org.

Submitted by Temple Emanu-El

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Ahmed's lawyers – including prominent Jewish attorneys Roberta Kaplan and Norm Eisen – brought up one striking comparison: to the pro-Palestinian activist Mahmoud Khalil, a green-card holder detained for months for what the U.S. government argued was exhibiting support for terrorism. Ahmed insists his case and Khalil's are nothing alike in substance; the government has so few cases of threatening the citizenship of green-card holders that a legal comparison just made sense, he said.

While Spitalnick has vocally rebuked the Trump administration over its targeting of Ahmed, his other Jewish partners have remained relatively quiet. Many Jewish organizations have found themselves torn since Trump took office as the administration has taken an aggressive stance on fighting antisemitism while also pursuing policies that Jewish communities have historically opposed, including barring immigration.

Bernard, while praising Ahmed's work, also said JFNA would review its collaboration with him and, "if there's something there we don't know about," would "terminate our relationship."

The ADL, which has found itself in the Trump administration's crosshairs, has not made any public statement about Ahmed's case and did not respond to a request for comment for this story.

Ahmed isn't bothered by any of this, though he is grateful for the Jewish support he has received. He says he's received "hundreds of texts" from Jewish supporters and even spent his first "Jewish Christmas" with some last month, chowing down on Chinese food and watching American football. Despite their years of collaboration, he didn't expect the big Jewish names to come rushing publicly to his aid.

"I'm not asking anyone else to fight this fight for me," he said, worried the spectacle will "distract us from the job" of pressuring tech platforms. "They've made this about me as a person. And when they can't defeat the message, they go after the messenger."

COMMUNITY | THEATER PREVIEWS

Touring 'Suffs,' soon at PPAC, animates the 19th Amendment with a Jewish sensibility

BY BOB ABELMAN

PROVIDENCE – For most of us, the U.S. Suffrage Movement that kicked off in 1848 and culminated in the 1920 ratification of the 19th Amendment that gave women the right to vote was glossed over or flat-out ignored in our early education.

I FIRST LEARNED about suffragettes by watching Glynis Johns's mild-mannered portrayal of Mrs. Winifred Banks, who was always leaving her family in the hands of a nanny so she could attend a meeting or a march in the 1964 Disney classic "Mary Poppins."

New York's The Public Theater, infamous for offering groundbreaking and controversial perspectives of the American experience – including our founding ("Hamilton"), our families ("Fun Home") and our fortitude ("Caroline, or Change") – sought to set the record straight on suffrage. The result was its 2022 off-Broadway premiere of "Suffs," which would go on to become a 2024 Tony Award-winning musical. Its inaugural national tour will be arriving in Providence later this month.

The ambitious, sung-through musical was written and composed by then-25-year-old Shaina Taub, with whom my daughter A.J. attended Stagedoor Manor – the world-renowned theater camp in New York's Catskills Mountains – when they were teens. Taub recently returned there to workshop a pilot youth production of "Suffs." But I digress.

The show opens with the song "Let Mother Vote," led by Carrie Chapman Catt (Marya Grandy), an old school suffragist who favors a ladylike way of asking men for women's rights. Enter Alice Paul (Maya Keleher), a young and unrelenting firebrand appalled that in the 60-plus years since Susan B. Anthony began the movement, women have still not claimed a victory. After attempting to work within Catt's National American Woman Suffrage Association, Paul forms a splinter group and organizes a march in Washington, DC in 1913.

During the seven-year homestretch to ratification, Paul enlists a group of like-minded progressive women that include college pal Lucy Burns (Gwynne Wood); young devotee Doris Stevens (Livvy Marcus), a shy yet undeterred student from Nebraska; Polish-born labor organizer Ruza Wenclawska (Joyce MeiMei Zheng); and savvy socialite and lawyer Inez Milholland (Monica Tulia Ramirez). Black activists Ida B. Wells (Danyel Fulton) and Mary Church Terrell (Trisha Jeffrey) also join the fray.

Everyone gets a musical

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21



Maya Keleher, center, as suffragist Alice Paul in the national tour of "Suffs," which runs Jan. 20-25 at the Providence Performing Arts Center PHOTO | JOAN MARCUS

Touring 'Clue' at PPAC – a comical, contrived stage adaptation of the whodunit board game

BY BOB ABELMAN

PROVIDENCE – Touring entertainment can sometimes be an iffy proposition. We've all encountered sketchy traveling carnivals, second-tier circuses and aged-out performers seeking a final payday. Amusements like Mattel's "American Girl Live" tour and "Disney on Ice" blatantly exploit children as consumers. The nomadic "Shen Yun," which seems to be everywhere all at once, is religious-political propaganda in the guise of a colorful cultural dance pageant.

AT FIRST GLANCE, it seems as if "Clue" — a touring, live-action stage adaptation of the Hasbro whodunit board game – could also be low-hanging fruit. The show was written by Sandy Rustin, whose credits include the above-mentioned "American Girl Live" tour. And while the show is part of PPAC's 2025-2026 Broadway Season, it never actually played on Broadway, and it never previously played in Providence even though it is part of the Encore series.

"Clue" premiered at the Bucks County Playhouse in Pennsylvania in 2017 and then hit the road after being field-tested at a handful of regional playhouses and receiving some positive press. I happened to see an early production at the Cleveland Playhouse.

Going on tour was a wise choice considering the abysmal track record for the few existing plays based on board games. "Monopoly: The Musical" never got to pass go after stalling on its way to Broadway in 2017. "Clue: The Musical" made its off-Broadway debut in 1997 but got killed off after a mere 29 performances, by poor box office sales, in a Greenwich Village theater. In its review, The New York Daily News noted that making a play from a board game "is the kind of bizarre task that only a genius or a fool would undertake. And there is no sign of genius here."

There's little genius in the touring non-musical "Clue" as well, though it's a pretty entertaining piece

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22



The company of the North American tour of "Clue," at PPAC from Jan. 16 - 18 PHOTO | EVAN ZIMMERMAN

COMMUNITY

Annual meeting highlights the best of JCS

BY FRAN OSTENDORF

WARWICK – An annual meeting is a celebration of hard work and a year of a job well done. Jewish Collaborative Services' recent gathering was no different. More than 75 people came together at Tamarisk Senior Living to celebrate the past year and honor the agency's staff and volunteers.

Those in attendance heard about such accomplishments as increased occupancies in both of the agency's housing complexes. Shalom Apartments in Warwick are at full capacity as is Tamarisk Senior Living, also in Warwick. Tamarisk has both assisted living apartments and a memory care unit.

They heard remarks by President and CEO Pamela Morris as well as outgoing board chair Mindy Stone. Incoming board chair Kayla Rosen spoke as well. All three honored the staff and volunteers, thanking them for making the organization what it is today. This was the eighth annual meeting of Jewish Collaborative Services, which was formed in 2018 from Jewish Family Service of Rhode Island and Jewish Seniors Agency of Rhode Island.

Three honors were announced.

The Dittelman Family received the Ruth and W. Irving Wolf Jr. Award for Multigenerational Philanthropy. This family's involvement has spanned more than three decades of JCS history, and their legacy continues to strengthen the agency today and into the future.

Marisa Garber received the Maurice Glicksman Leadership Award. Garber, currently chair of the board of the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island, helped guide the combining of JFS and JSA when she was chair of the board of JFS. She then served as chair of the JCS board from 2019-2022. She is receiving this award in recognition of exceptional service and profound impact to the Jewish community.

Stephanie King received the Erin Gisherman Minior Award for Staff Excellence. Since 2006, King, a CMT, has been a member of the Tamarisk Senior Living Team where she has served residents with commitment and compassion.

All those honored received awards crafted by JCSRI staff members, including vases made by Neal Drobnis, Senior Café and Meals on Wheels coordinator, and ceramic platters crafted by Tamarisk Executive Director Helayne Goldtein-Ramirez.

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



Incoming board chair Kayla Rosen, outgoing board chair Mindy Stone and Maurice Glicksman Leadership Award recipient Marisa Garber.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

moment, as do unsung heroes like Phoebe Burn (Laura Stracko, singing "A Letter from Harry's Mother"), the mother of the Tennessee state senator whose vote decided the fate of the amendment.

All this is presented with theatrical flair, an omnipresent educational imperative that adds weight to the undertaking and a wonderful and award-winning musicality that is at once witty, impassioned and empowering. This play brings an entertaining element to the story, noted the New York critics, without diminishing the seriousness of the subject or skipping over the darker aspects of the movement – the physical attacks, the imprisonment and the threats of psychiatric institutionalization.

While Taub takes some poetic license with the characters (both the male and female parts are played and sung by an all-female cast), she largely sticks to the historical record.

And because the playwright/composer/lyricist (Taub), director (Leigh Silverman), and

co-producers (Rachel Sussman and Jill Furman) are Jewish women, the musical's message about the power of faith and sisterhood – something curiously missing from "Mary Poppins" – is neither subtle nor ambivalent. In fact, says Furman in an email exchange, it drives the musical "and serves as its central thesis and guiding principle."

Judaism is not explicitly depicted or discussed on stage, largely because Alice Paul was an American Quaker. But in Taub's 2024 Tony Award acceptance speech for best original score, she quoted a portion of the Talmud that she said serves as the show's Northern Star and foundational philosophy: "You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it."

The quote, which appears just after the title page of the musical's script, is attributed to Rabbi Tarfon and found in the canonical text of Jewish ethics, Pirkei Avot. It is part of the Mishna, the code of oral law that is at the core of the Talmud. The saying, according to The Jerusalem Post, has "animated legions of Jewish activists." Add Taub to the list.

In an earlier interview with Hey Alma (a feminist Jewish culture site and online community), Taub noted: "So much of the language of activism is about this finality of finishing a struggle — never again, enough is enough, if not now, then when. But the fights and the struggles for equality and justice are never finished, and no generation really completes that work. It doesn't mean you don't still have to work and fight and organize as if you could finish it. It's holding that contradiction in your head as an activist, and as any person working towards a better future."

Taub seems to believe that the audience for her musical consists of people working toward a better future. If some of us are not quite those people going into the PPAC performance, it is highly likely that we will be coming out.

BOB ABELMAN *is an award-winning theater critic who also writes for The Boston Globe. Connect with him on Facebook.*

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/

This project was supported by Grant No. 15PBJA-22-GG-01558-HATE awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice

COMMUNITY

Community Campaign fuels local and global impact through Jewish Alliance partnerships

BY BRAD SWARTZ

Because of the generosity of donors across our beloved community, the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island continues to strengthen lives locally and around the world through its Community Campaign. Contributions from donors like you allow the Alliance to allocate critical funding to 19 partner organizations that deliver essential and varied programs and services addressing a range of community needs.



Camp JORI's waterfront. PHOTO | GLENN OSMUNDSON

AT THE HEART of the Alliance's work is a longstanding mission and vision that guides every funding decision. Through this framework, the Alliance ensures consistent and meaningful support for human and social services, formal and informal Jewish education and opportunities for community engagement and collaboration. While many programs serve greater Rhode Island residents, the Alliance's reach extends well beyond state borders, supporting Jewish communities worldwide, including focused regions in Afula-Gilboa, Israel; Warsaw, Poland; and Rosario, Argentina.

Of the 19 partner organizations, 13 operate locally, and six are based overseas. Regardless of geography, all partners address vital needs – from food assistance and mental health support to services for vulnerable populations. Funding also supports efforts to combat antisemitism, provide formal and informal Jewish education through day schools, summer day and overnight camps and Hillels on college campuses. This enriches community life through arts and culture programming. Together, these efforts demonstrate the Community Campaign's geographic and philanthropic reach – and the powerful impact of every donated dollar.

So how does the Community Campaign work? Nearly 1,600 donors contribute annually to the Community Campaign, and every gift is ultimately distributed to our program providers. Each year, the Community Development Committee (CDC) – supported by Alliance staff and chaired by Alliance Board member Sara Miller – carefully reviews funding requests. This year-round committee, made up of eight to ten dedicated volunteers, researches and evaluates submissions to determine allocations that best meet community needs and priorities.

Committee member Abigail Anthony said, "As a lifelong Rhode Islander, I know how fragile Jewish life can be outside major population centers. The organizations supported by the [work of] Community Development Committee are essential to sustaining vibrant Jewish life here, from education and basic services, to campus support and Jewish camp. Investing in these institutions is how we maintain agency over our Jewish lives in Rhode Island. If we lose them, we lose the very infrastructure that makes Jewish life here possible."

Another CDC member, Jeff Isaacs, said, "The committee's work is both challenging and deeply rewarding. We have the opportunity to direct the extraordinary generosity of our community toward achieving the greatest possible impact, guided by the alliance's mission and values. I feel privileged to serve alongside a diverse, dedicated and thoughtful group, led with wisdom and experience by Sara and Brad."

The importance of donor support cannot be overstated. The more the Community Campaign raises, the more funding can be distributed to partners locally and around the globe. This year, the Alliance's goal is to raise $4 million through the Community Campaign. Reaching that goal will allow even more needs to be met and could deepen – and potentially expand – partnerships, positioning the community for greater success in the years ahead. In a year that has seen increased needs, antisemitism and economic concerns, donors to the Community Campaign matter more than ever as it reinforces a donor's commitment to the Jewish community.

Every gift plays a role in protecting and strengthening the shared Jewish future. Those interested in making a difference – whether by contributing to the Community Campaign or getting involved in the allocations process through committee membership – can visit jewishallianceri.org/support-us/featured/donate-now or contact Brad Swartz, fundraising and partnership manager and the staff who support the Community Development Committee, at bswartz@jewishallianceri.org.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

of work. The show takes much of its inspiration from the star-studded but success-stunted 1985 film of the same name – so much so that the screenwriter Jonathan Lynn shares top billing. The script is similarly chock full of deliciously groan-worthy one-liners and over-the-top embellishments of classic murder mystery tropes. And the stage is filled with slapstick from actors whose resumes list plenty of comedies in their past.

It's 1954, during the height of McCarthyism, and six strangers have been invited to a secluded mansion in the dark of night where they are met by Wadsworth the butler (Adam Brett), Yvette the maid (Zoie Tannous) and the cook (AT Sanders). Each guest — the inane Colonel Mustard (Nate Curlott), the tragic Mrs. White (Sarah MacKenzie Baron), the flighty Mrs. Peacock (Madeline Raube), the accident-prone Mr. Green (TJ Lamando), the underqualified and overconfident Professor Plum (Kyle Yampiro), and the sardonic Miss Scarlet (Camille Capers) — is introduced to Mr. Boddy (Joseph Dalfonso), whom Wadsworth reveals has been blackmailing them for engaging in un-American activities.

Soon Mr. Boddy is found dead. So are the maid, the cook, a motorist whose car had broken down, the cop who found the car and a singing telegram delivery girl.

Everyone's a suspect, but who is the murderer? The board game asks players to find the murderer, the crime scene and the weapon used from the clues that surface during the game playing. Based on the cards drawn, the mystery has 216 possible endings. But this play, like the film, thankfully acts out only the most entertaining options, in addition to Wadsworth's manic 11th-hour madcap recap of the play's proceedings.

Tour designers (Lee Savage (scenic), Jen Caprio (costumes), Ryan O'Gara (lighting), J. Jared Janas (makeup/wigs) and Jeff Human (sound)) nicely capture the period and the proper murder mystery ambience, complete with a mansion of epic proportions and secret chambers. Production bells and whistles, including the flying in and flying out of scenery, help generate the same lightning-quick pace as the film's cinematic momentum.

It is fortunate that this national tour – the production's second – was launched just last October, so the actors and crew should not be road weary upon their arrival in Providence. With that said, they will be closing in Portland, Maine the night before opening at PPAC. So, stamina as well as superb comic timing will be the things to look for during the upcoming production.

BOB ABELMAN *is an award-winning theater critic who also writes for The Boston Globe. Connect with him on Facebook.*

COMMUNITY

From Auschwitz to Rhode Island: A survivor's story

BY SEONGBIN HYUN

This month, the Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Center, together with communities around the world, will commemorate International Holocaust Remembrance Day on Jan. 27, marking the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1945 by Soviet forces. On that day, surviving Jews and other prisoners, including Roma and Sinti, were freed from the largest Nazi killing center. Approximately 1.1 million people were murdered at Auschwitz, most of them Jews. Of the roughly 232,000 children and young people deported to the camp, only about 700 were found alive at liberation. These numbers point to the scale of Nazi brutality and the systematic murder carried out by Germany and its collaborators.



Judith and her son Edward in Rhode Island, 1950 PHOTO | EDWARD NEWMAN

FOR RHODE ISLAND, this history resonates in a particularly intimate way because some survivors of Auschwitz eventually built their lives and families here in our state. Among them was Judith Sternberg Newman, a Jewish nurse from Breslau, Germany. Her memoir, along with the interview she recorded with the Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Center in 1998, offers a detailed and emotionally powerful account of a brave woman who suffered and survived the hell of Auschwitz.

Despite facing escalating danger, Sternberg and her family resisted and pursued every possible avenue of escape. They repeatedly applied for visas to foreign territories. Sternberg later recalled that she had opportunities to emigrate on her own but chose to remain with her family. Before they were deported to Auschwitz, the family had secured immigration visas for Paraguay, but they were unable to obtain the necessary transit visas in Bremen. Without the exit papers required to leave Germany, they were forced onto a transport from Breslau to Auschwitz.

Sternberg also described the profound despair that pervaded the transit camp. Many people took their own lives rather than face what they feared awaited them. She witnessed a mother poisoning her child and then herself. It was not a choice in any meaningful sense, but an act made under conditions of total terror, where escape from torture, sexual assault and certain murder felt impossible. Sternberg later recalled the unbearable hopelessness in the transit camp, where some people tried to claim even the smallest fragment of agency in a situation designed to strip them of all control.

Inside the overcrowded train car, Jews stood pressed together, praying and singing for salvation on Shabbat, filled with dread about what was coming. When they arrived at Auschwitz, the reality far exceeded even their worst fears. SS men beat and terrorized the prisoners. "Mothers were calling for their children; children cried for their mothers," she remembered. After a brutal selection, Sternberg walked with the women toward the camp.

Life inside Auschwitz defied full description. Survivors recalled lice infesting their clothing, minuscule rations and thousands of women sleeping like sardines on wooden bunks. While Jews and others weakened from starvation, disease and exhaustion, SS men and women beat and executed inmates mercilessly. Most killings, however, occurred in the gas chambers and crematoria. The SS carried out constant roundups to send Jews and others to their deaths. As the camp expanded and the war progressed, the killing facilities operated at full capacity day and night. "The transports kept coming in. The furnaces were burning day and night, without interruption, at maximum capacity. The sky was blood red. The whole camp smelled of smoldering bones."

New arrivals were told they were going to shower and receive food afterward. This deception prevented panic and made mass murder more efficient. Children played, unaware that they and their parents would be dead within minutes or hours.

As the end of the war approached, the Germans forced tens of thousands of prisoners on death marches across Europe. During the march, some German civilians offered small acts of kindness, such as potatoes, apples or a place in a barn to rest. At the same time, the German population knew about the camps and what was happening. Sternberg also witnessed many prisoners being shot on the spot when they could not keep pace. Realizing she was growing weaker, she escaped the march with a friend she had made in the camp. After liberation, she returned alone to Breslau, searching for any trace of her family. Her home was reduced to rubble. Her mother, Regina, her brothers Arthur, Sally and Siegfried, her sisters Charlotte and Hedda, and her fiancé, Dr. Martin Tallert, all perished in Auschwitz-Birkenau. She was the only survivor of her immediate family.

What Sternberg endured was more than enough to break anyone's spirit. Yet she survived. She later married a man who, like her, was the sole survivor of his family of 10. They immigrated to the United States, where they worked tirelessly, he held two jobs, to support their family and rebuild their lives. Although she could never repair the wounds left by the loss of her entire family, she raised children who embodied a powerful defiance of the Nazi attempt to eradicate the Jewish people.

Her memoir and testimony are essential for understanding the Holocaust and the lasting trauma borne by survivors. Sternberg's words are vivid and deeply affecting, yet the truth of what she witnessed speaks louder than any interpretation. With fewer survivors alive to tell their stories, it remains our responsibility to remember and to teach the history of the genocide they endured, so that we never allow such horrors to happen again.

The Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Center in Providence invites community members to visit and attend the International Holocaust Remembrance Day program on Jan. 25, 2026, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. The evening will feature a lecture by Professor Alexandra Garbarini. Drawing from her research and work on her book "Numbered Days," Professor Garbarini will reflect on how the survivors' memoirs illuminate the history of the Holocaust and the power of memory. All are welcome to attend this free program. For more information or to RSVP, please email: info@hercri.org

SEONGBIN HYUN *is the Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Fellow for 2025–2026. He earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees in history from the University of Rhode Island, where his master's thesis focused on the Santo Tomas Internment Camp in Manila during World War II. He has also written on Manchuria through a remote internship with Pacific Atrocities Education (PAE) a non-profit organization dedicated to raising public awareness about the atrocities committed in the Asia-Pacific theater during World War II.*

The Voice of Greater Rhode Island's Jewish Community

JEWISH RHODE ISLAND

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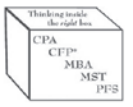


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OBITUARIES

Sara Beer, 91

RIVERSIDE, R.I. – Sara (Minkus) Beer passed away peacefully with her devoted children by her side on Dec. 15, 2025, at the Philip Hulitar Hospice Center in Providence. She was the beloved wife of the late Stanley Beer for 43 years.

Born in Brooklyn, Sara grew up in Forest Hills, Queens. She was a daughter of the late Jacques and Mary (Steinman) Minkus. She lived in New York for 89 years before moving to Warwick in 2023. She was a proud elementary school teacher with the Oceanside School District in New York for 20 years, retiring in 1992.

She was the devoted mother of Andrew Beer, his wife, Victoria (z"l), of Dunedin, Flordia, and Lawrence, his wife, Cheryl Beer, of Riverside. She was the dear sister of the late Beatrice Hessen. She was the loving grandmother of Scott and Matthew. She was the cherished great-grandmother of Cooper, Dawson, Finley and Natalie.

Contributions may be made to a charity of your choice.

Fanya Berin, 99



Fanya Berin passed away at home in Providence on December 24, 2025, surrounded by her loving family. Born in the shtetl of Rechitsa, Belarus, on March 10, 1926, to Borukh and Rakhila Frenkel, she lived a very full 99 years. She was very excited to rejoin her husband Avram, and her son Mikhail, who predeceased her.

"Baba Fanya" was incredibly loved by all who met her. She spoke her mind, lived with kindness, and had more love in her heart than anyone ever thought possible. She was well known for her incredible wit, intelligence and humor - in both Yiddish and Russian. Stubborn in the best way possible, Baba Fanya would never take no for an answer - especially when feeding those she loved.

She surmounted incredible challenges in life and thrived in spite of them. Wherever she went, she forged her own path and always left an everlasting and positive impression. She took incredible pride in her grandchildren and great grandchildren, reminding them of her love up until her last breath.

She is survived by her daughter, Lyubov (and Leonid) Kratik, her daughter-in-law, Galina Berin, her grandchildren Anna (and Jeff) Berin Wright, Alex (and Chaya) Kratik, Irina (and Tom) Bennett, and Abraham (and Leah) Berin. She is also survived by her 10 great-grandchildren, Amelia, Arianna, Arabella, Twyla, Mikhailla, Maxwell, Mikhail, Eliza, Gavriel and Benjamin.

Arnold Brown, 92



PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Arnold B. Brown, of Providence and formerly of Florida and Connecticut, passed away on Dec. 1, 2025. He was the loving husband of the late Sue (van der Byl) Brown, with whom he shared 40 years of marriage. Born in New Haven, Connecticut, he was the son of the late Louis Brown and Rose (Sokoloff) Brown.

Mr. Brown was a police officer in the Town of Hamden, Connecticut, for 20 years before retiring. A car buff, Arnold enjoyed all things paranormal, watching martial arts and horror movies, fishing, collecting guns and playing 7-card stud poker.

Arnold was a great storyteller and funny guy.

He is survived by two daughters, Arleen Kennedy and her husband, John "Ted," of Plymouth, Massachusetts, and Diane Brown, of Florida; one sister, Linda Daigle, of Milford, Connecticut; five grandchildren, Craig Kennedy and his wife, Alison, Jason Kennedy, Christopher Amarante and his wife, Brandi, Samantha Barmak and her husband, Josh, and Matthew Amarante and his wife, Cassidy; five great-grandchildren, Logan, Hannah, Peyton, Rylan and Maisie; and his cousin, Shirley Frumento.

Contributions may be made to the ASPCA, P.O. Box 96929, Washington, D.C. 20090-6929.

Nancy Fain, 85

WARWICK, R.I. – Nancy Lois Fain passed away peacefully on Nov. 20, 2025. Nancy was the devoted companion of Rhonda Little, with whom she shared over four decades of their lives.



Born in Cranston, Nancy was the daughter of the late Leonard and Frances (Alter) Fain and the sister of the late Janie G. (Fain) Dressler.

Nancy became the first female licensed barber in Watertown, Massachusetts, and worked at various local barbershops in Boston before opening her own, "Haircutting Ltd." After several years of ownership, Nancy's insatiable thirst for knowledge and desire for experience led her back to the thrilling adventure of travel.

Despite facing numerous adversities, Nancy's passion for learning and exploring new places knew no bounds. She found immense joy in visiting museums, antiquing and simply traveling wherever her heart desired. Over the years, Nancy and Rhonda had shared their lives in various cities, including Tampa and Sunrise, Florida; Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona; and finally, settling in Warwick several years ago.

Nancy's absence will leave an indelible mark on everyone who knew her.

Sally Friedman, 96

WEST KINGSTON, R.I. – Sally Friedman affectionately known as Sal, passed away peacefully on Dec. 16, 2025, at South Kingstown Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. She was the beloved wife of the late Isadore Friedman for 46 years. Born in Chelsea, Massachusetts, Sally graduated from the Comptometer School of Boston. After her marriage, she became a longtime resident of Providence.



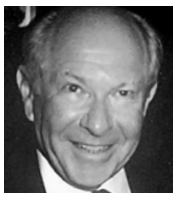
After the passing of her husband, she moved to Shalom Apartments in Warwick, where she formed many friendships. Sally enjoyed knitting, crossword puzzles, reading and playing bingo. Her favorite passion was following the Boston Red Sox and New England Patriots. But most of all, she especially loved spending time with her family.

She was the devoted mother of Marilyn Hochman (Alan), Gerald Friedman, Janice Karnes (Richard) and Joseph Friedman (Lisa). She was the loving grandmother of Jason Hochman (Mor Perets), Samuel Karnes, Danielle Sands (Hayden), Jonathan and Grant Friedman. She was the cherished great-grandmother of Avital, Aviv and Jackilyn. In addition to her parents and husband, she was predeceased by her siblings, Isabelle Blaustein and Harold Cobb.

Contributions may be made to St. Jude's Children's Hospital and Tunnel to Towers.

Elliot Goldman, 89

KING OF PRUSSIA, PA. –



Elliot Leonard Goldman passed away peacefully of natural causes on Dec. 24, 2025, in King of Prussia, with his cherished wife of 64 years, Muriel (Mudge) (nee Freedman) Goldman, by his side. Born on March 16, 1936, in Providence, Elliot's life was filled with love, laughter and a foundation of unwavering devotion to family.

Elliot's career as a chief financial officer showcased his talent for guiding companies through turnarounds and reorganizations. Later in his career, he transitioned into a successful consulting role, where his experience and expertise positively impacted many businesses. His educational journey began at Classical High School in Providence, leading him to Harvard College, from which he graduated in the Class of 1957, and subsequently earning an MBA from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania in 1959.

A man of many passions, Elliot was immensely proud of his family, placing them at the very center of his life. He shared a deep bond with Muriel, whom he adored beyond measure. He adored any family gatherings – especially during cherished Jewish holidays. weddings and Bar and Bat Mitzvahs. These occasions were a highlight for Elliot, as they brought his loved ones together to create unforgettable memories.

His outgoing personality radiated a special light; Elliot was known for his keen sense of humor, always ready with

JEWISH RHODE ISLAND's This Month in History



Star-Studded Night

THIS REVUE on January 7, 1952 was no ordinary B'nai B'rith event: Attendees saw Ray Leizer, a concert pianist who had lost both hands in Israel's War of Independence and used two fork-like prosthetics to play the instrument. The audience was also treated to Jan Bart, a multi-talented performer who recorded songs in seven languages, and Elyakum Shapira, a conductor who studied with Leonard Bernstein – not bad for a free engagement. "A Night in Israel" took place on a Monday night at the Rhode Island School of Design, celebrating Israel-associated talents less than four years after the modern nation was founded.

Newspaper courtesy Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association

OBITUARIES

a joke that could lift anyone's spirits. His love for the Philadelphia Phillies and Philadelphia Eagles matched his affection for his alma mater, Harvard University. Whether he was cheering for his teams, enjoying great food – particularly steak, Jewish deli delights, or his famous chicken soup with matzoh balls – or embarking on travels across the globe, Elliot approached life with an infectious enthusiasm. He was a devoted fan of jazz, and he could always be found with it playing in the background (except during sports).

He is survived by their son, Arthur David Goldman, and daughter-in-law Melissa Beth Kurtzman, along with his precious grandchildren – Audrey Leigh Goldman and Samuel Louis Goldman, and Anthony Leonard Scialabba. Elliot also leaves behind his loving sister, Ruth (Duffy) Page, his brother-in-law Dr. Laurence Page, his sister Marjorie Surden, and many beloved nieces, nephews and cousins who were blessed to know his kind spirit.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Dr. Harry Goldman and Rebecca Katz, along with his in-laws, Dr. Harry Freedman and Anne Freedman, and beloved brothers-in-law Marc Freedman and Louis Surden. His legacy of love, laughter, and family bonds will continue to resonate in the hearts of those he leaves behind.

Memorial contributions may be made to the **The Aging Brain Initiative Fund** [giving.mit.edu/form] or by check: Make a memorial gift to MIT with a check by mailing it to: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, P. O. Box 412926, Boston, MA 02241-2926. Attention: Memorial Gifts Office

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Richard Griffin, Jr., 67

WARWICK, R.I. – Richard A. Griffin, Jr. passed away suddenly on Dec. 8, 2025, at Brigham & Women's Hospital in Boston. He was the beloved husband of Lorie (Klemer) Griffin for 42 years. A lifelong resident of Warwick, he was the son of the late Richard and Jean (Baughan) Griffin and the stepson of Dorothy Griffin, of Warwick.

Rick enjoyed a long and fulfilling career as a goldsmith, most recently with Ephraim Doumato Jewelers.

He is survived by his children, Seth (Kimberly), of Johnston, and Rachel, of Warwick; his sister, Debra Borrelli (Vincent), of Greenville; and his grandson, Wesley.

Donations may be made to the Brown University Health Cancer Institute, Development Office, P.O. Box H, Providence, RI 02901.

Spencer Golub, 77

LINCOLN, R.I. – Spencer J. Golub, of Lincoln, passed away on Nov. 22, 2025. He was the loving husband of Jeanie (Lynch) Golub, with whom he shared 45 years of marriage.



He was born in Queens, New York, to the late Lawrence and Vivian (Block) Golub and grew up in North Bellmore on Long Island.

Spencer earned his undergraduate degree from Union College, master's degree from Syracuse University, and Ph.D. from the University of Kansas. His teaching career began at Wayne State University, followed by the University of Virginia and Brown University, where he taught for 35 years.

At Brown, Spencer was Professor Emeritus of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies and Professor Emeritus of Slavic Studies. He was chair of the department of Theatre, Speech and Dance from 2001 to 2007 and was a founding architect of the Brown/Trinity Consortium. He authored seven books, co-wrote a novel, contributed 150 entries to "The Cambridge Guide to World Theatre" and "The Cambridge Guide to American Theatre," and published essays in a wide variety of books and professional journals. He was a Fulbright, IREX and two-time NEH Fellow; worked as a professional stage director, journalist, script consultant and associate artistic director in New York City; and served as a guest scholar at professional regional theaters. He directed more than three dozen productions over his career. His research interests included mise en scene, film, philosophy, Russian theater and creative non-fiction.

Spencer was grateful throughout his career for the opportunities to inspire new dimensions of thought, perspective and imagination. When he wasn't busy educating and writing, he enjoyed spending time with his family on Cape Cod and following Kansas Jayhawks basketball.

In addition to his loving wife, Jeanie, he is survived by his children, Rachel Ellis Golub, of Rhode Island, and Ethan Golub and wife, Anna, of California; his sister, Mindy Golden and husband, Bruce, of Maryland; as well as beloved cousins, nieces, nephews and in-laws. Spencer will forever be an irreplaceable part of the Golub and Lynch families.

The family asks that you share a photo, video or special memory of Spencer at https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/12628612.

Deborah Kaplan, 76

NORTH SCITUATE, R.I. – Deborah Kaplan passed away on Dec. 22, 2025, in her home surrounded by her family. She was the beloved wife of Murray Kaplan for 57 years.

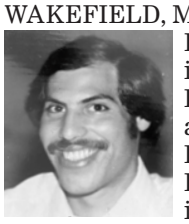
Deborah was born in Providence and was the daughter of the late Albert and Anna (Goldman) Yuloff. She had lived in North Scituate since 1980, previously living in Cranston. She started her career at Rhode Island Hospital Trust National Bank and eventually became co-owner of the former Rainbow Bakery in Cranston with her husband Murray. Deborah was a former member of Temple Emanu-El, helping as a volunteer. She also was a lifetime member of Hadassah and Rhode Island Women in Business.

Deborah was the devoted mother of Scott Kaplan and his wife, Heather, of North Scituate, and granddaughter Marielle Kaplan of Irvine, California; Melissa Kaplan of Norwich, Connecticut; and Anne R Kaplan and her husband, Ronald Pacciano, of Bardonia, New York, and grandson Benjamin Kaplan.

Contributions may be made to the Hope Alzheimer's Center 25 Brayton Ave. Cranston, RI 02920.

Marc Konicov, 74

WAKEFIELD, MASS. – Marc Bennett Konicov died on Dec. 22, 2025, at the Care Dimensions Hospice House in Lincoln, Massaschusetts. He was the beloved partner of Roberta Ingemi. Born in Norwich, New York, and raised in Warwick, he was the eldest son of Monte and Shirley (Cohen) Konicov. He lived in Wakefield with Roberta for 28 years. Marc was a proud recipient of a master's degree from Brown University and Rhode Island College, focusing on Education Psychology. he received a bachelor's in philosophy and religion from Boston University.



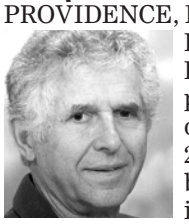
Marc was passionate about his work as a mental health counselor, going above and beyond to assure that his clients remained safe and thrived. Marc was committed to Judaism and Israel, and had a close relationship with teachings, customs and rituals. Marc's mind was expansive and creative, and he was a lover of the arts, whether music, film and especially literature.

He was the devoted father of Andrew Konicov. He was the dear brother of Dr. David Konicov, of Providence; Ellen Ellin and her husband, Barry, of Baltimore, Maryland; and Howard Konicov and his wife, Judy, of South Orange, New Jersey. He was the cherished uncle of Bruce (Marni), Carys, Jenna (Bashar), Benjamin, Jacob and Justin.

Contributions may be made to Lewy Body Dementia Association, https://www.lbda.org.

Joseph Porath

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Joseph B. Porath, of Providence, passed away on Nov. 29, 2025. He was born in 1936 in Timisoara, Romania, the son of the late Yaakov and Bluma Fruchter. A child survivor of the Holocaust, Joseph overcame hardships related to the war and went on to build a remarkable life.



After fleeing the war, he moved to Israel, where he served as a tank commander in 1956. After marrying his

OBITUARIES

beloved wife, Bella (Feder), in Israel in 1963, they moved to Brooklyn, New York, before finally settling in Providence in 1968.

Joseph was married to Bella for over 61 years. Together they raised their daughter, Rebecca, and their son, Ashley. He was a proud grandfather to Avi, Jacob, Ethan, Sophia, Talia, Benjamin, Joshua, Rachel and Jonathan, and a cherished great-grandfather to Lyla, Dylan, Ella and newly born twins, Baby Boy and Baby Girl.

Joseph's greatest joy in life was spending time with his family, especially his grandchildren, who brought him endless happiness. His legacy of resilience, love and devotion will live on in the hearts of all who knew him.

Donations can be made to Congregation Shaarei Tefillah of Newton, Massachusetts, at www.shaarei.org/ or Chesed 24/7 at www.chesed247.org/donate/ or the Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Center at https://form.jotform.com/221265710853150.

Caryl-Ann Nieforth, 88

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Caryl-Ann Miller Nieforth died in the comfort of her home and in her own bed surrounded by her devoted family. A lifelong resident of Providence and Barrington Beach, she was the daughter of Meyer S. Miller and Beatrice Wattman. She was the granddaughter of Betty Wattman, whom she cherished and loved, often sharing her memories of their visits and walks to the "Birdie Park." Caryl-Ann was the beloved wife of Dexter Nieforth, whom she adored.



She graduated from Classical High School and attended Pembroke College (Brown University) and stayed active with their alumni affairs as president of her class until her death. Her devotion to higher education encouraged her son, Andrew Feldman, Brown '86, MD '91; niece, Emily Miller '19; as well as many other relatives to attend Brown University. After graduation from Pembroke, she received a Master's Degree in Education from Boston University.

She was the director of the resource center at the original Children's Museum in Jamaica Plain and was instrumental in developing the resource center at The Metropolitan Art Museum in New York City.

She loved books and reading and coordinated the Rochambeau Library book sale for many years. She was a member of two book clubs, one that began in 1969, and remained an active member until her death.

She traveled extensively, loved all games – especially Scrabble and mahjong. She devoured mysteries, always had a jigsaw puzzle on a card table, and enjoyed Sunday morning pancakes with Deck while they watched an old movie.

She and Deck shared a passion for waltzing, contra-dancing and music. She loved hearing him play the harmonica and any of the reels and jigs he played.

She loved her home at Barrington Beach and spent summers there, beginning in childhood.

She is survived by her husband, Dexter E. Nieforth, and her children, Andrew Feldman, MD, and Deborah Bloomberg, RN - her own medical team, of which she was so proud.

She is survived by her grandchildren, Lindsey Marks (Brian), Matthew Bloomberg (Cornelia) and Alma Feldman Chicoma; two great-grandchildren, Parker and Sydney, who were the joy and sparkle in her life. She was the sister of Donald E. Miller, Esq. of Potomac, Maryland; aunt of Emily Miller; and cousin of Joan and Linda Wattman. Caryl-Ann was well loved and enjoyed being surrounded by family and friends.

Contributions can be made to Brown University, Gift Cashier, Box 1877, Providence, RI 02912 or Temple Emanu-El, 99 Taft Avenue, Providence, RI 02906.

David Satloff, 70

PAWTUCKET, R.I. – Dr. David P. Satloff, formerly of Pawtucket, passed away on Dec. 19, 2025, at Hebrew Senior Life in Roslindale, Massachusetts, where he was living following a stroke.

A lifelong Rhode Islander, David was the son of the late Morris and Beverly Satloff of Providence. A graduate of Providence Country Day School, Tufts University and Tufts School of Dental Medicine, David practiced dentistry in North Attleboro for 30 years. Thousands benefitted from the personal care he devoted to his patients throughout his career, including the innovative holistic therapies that characterized his practice.

From growing up at Temple Emanu-El in Providence, to summers at Camp Avoda in Middleboro, Massachusetts, and working on a kibbutz during his college days, David was a devoted Zionist and committed to the welfare and security of Israel and the Jewish people. Almost as important to him was his devotion to the Red Sox. David especially enjoyed the up-close views of McCoy Stadium, which he visited to watch future major league stars play even after his illness struck.

David is survived by his son, Ezekiel; his brothers, Dr. Lewis Satloff of Los Angeles, California, and Dr. Robert Satloff of Chevy Chase, Maryland; and 14 nieces and nephews, sprinkled from Jerusalem to Brooklyn to Florida to LA.

Barbara Silverman, 90

NAPLES, FLA. – Barbara (Goldberg) Chipman Silverman, of Naples, Florida, and formerly of East Greenwich, passed away on Nov. 19, 2025, surrounded by love.



Born in Chelsea, Massachusetts, she was the daughter of the late George and Sophie (Fremerman) Goldberg. While Barbara lived in Rhode Island for many years before retiring to Naples in the late '90s, she and her family moved around the country prior to that, making their homes in Connecticut, Ohio and Pennsylvania before settling in Rhode Island.

Barbara became a working mom later in her life and spent many years working as a legal secretary as well as an administrative assistant to a large jewelry distributor before retiring. An avid reader, Barbara also enjoyed music including her much-loved Frank Sinatra, playing mahjong, going to the theater and being a season ticket holder for the Naples Philharmonic. She enjoyed going to the beach and especially loved spending time with her friends and family. Barbara enjoyed and was an ambassador to the YMCA of Collier County, Florida, for many years.

She was married to the late Sheldon Martin Chipman, of Lynn, Massachusetts, before his passing in 1977. She remarried years later to the late Irving Silverman, of East Greenwich. She and Irv were able to enjoy their later years together in both East Greenwich and Naples, Florida, before his passing.

She is survived by her two children, Barry Chipman and his wife, Cheryl, of Richmond, Rhode Island, and Deborah Chipman Beisner, of Jupiter, Florida; one grandson, Elliot Beisner; and many nieces and nephews. She was the sister of the late Ruth Goldberg Kaplan and Frances Goldberg Garber.

Memorial contributions in her honor may be made to the YMCA at ymcacollier.org.

Dr. Ezra Stieglitz, 81

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Dr. Ezra Stieglitz, beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother and friend, passed away on Monday, Dec. 22, 2025, surrounded by his family in Providence. He leaves behind a legacy of kindness, wisdom and unwavering dedication to his family, students and community.



Born on June 25, 1944, in New York City, Ezra was the son of Oscar and Rae Stieglitz. He received his undergraduate education at City College of New York, where he met the love of his life and wife of 56 years, Varda. He went on to earn his Ph.D. at the University of Pittsburgh and built a distinguished career as a Professor of Education and Holocaust Studies at Rhode Island College.

Throughout his decades-long career, Ezra was known for his compassion, deep integrity and commitment to helping others.

He published numerous academic articles and books in literacy education and developed a student and faculty exchange program between Rhode Island College and universities abroad. He also proudly helped develop Holocaust and genocide education curriculum across the entire State of Rhode Island, ensuring future generations would learn, remember and understand. He served as a senior board member and Vice President of the Bureau of Jewish Education and held additional leadership roles at Providence Hebrew Day School and Congregation Beth Shalom.

Ezra is survived by Varda Stieglitz, his devoted wife; two sons, Eric Stieglitz of New York, New York and Daniel Stieglitz of Jerusalem, Israel; one daughter, Eve Stieglitz of Aventura (Miami), Florida; one grandson, Joshua Isaac Stieglitz-Minen and one brother, Dr. Howard Stieglitz, New Rochelle, New York.

Donations may be made to Congregation Beth Shalom, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence, RI 02906 and Providence Hebrew Day School, 450 Elmgrove Ave., Providence, RI 02906, two organizations that were deeply meaningful to Ezra and the Stieglitz family.



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