JEWISH RHODE ISLAND

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Rabbi Yossi Laufer of the Warwick Chabad blows the shofar during Elul.

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

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Does anyone really know R.I.?

I GREW UP just down Rt. 146 in Worcester, and Rhode Island is the smallest state in the country. Consequently, I thought that I would get to know Rhode Island and the local Jewish community quickly and easily upon arrival.

I was right and wrong.

The local culture really did make me feel at home after years away in Chicago. And the Jewish community has been incredibly welcoming, making any adaptation I had to do both easy and pleasant. Everyone I've met so far has been welcoming, offering their own diverse perspectives on what is important to them.



My mistake was in thinking that I could quickly "know" the community. Everyone who's grown up here knows — and will readily attest — that Rhode Island punches well above its weight. I learned that as soon as I got here and started trying to take in all the state's offerings. In Thomas Wolfe's short story, the main character opines that "only the dead know Brooklyn," meaning that the borough is so sprawling and complex that no living human can fully know it. Rhode Island is the same way, in that no human can do or partake of everything the state has to offer.

The Jewish community is no different, as I also learned. I thought it would take me a month or two to have it down — but I've been here three months, and I am not remotely close to knowing it well. I've met with rabbis and other local leaders, visited some of the synagogues, spoken with community members, eaten at the city's myriad kosher restaurants…. The list goes on, but there are still so many synagogues I want to visit, people I want to meet, Jewish restaurants to try — and more.

Writing for the paper has brought me to some interesting places. For this issue alone I went to places as diverse as America's oldest functioning synagogue and a meeting where Israeli and Rhode Island university students showcased their inventions and business proposals…

…but there is so much more. Jewish Rhode Island is a small paper in the smallest state that nevertheless serves a big community that does even bigger things. In other words, we need more people writing for Jewish Rhode Island. We have some great people contributing already (though we sadly bid Patricia Raskin's monthly column farewell in August) — but to really tell the story of Rhode Island's Jewish community, we need more journalists and more columnists.

Do you write? Does your child or grandchild write? If not, would you or they like to? A story to tell? A desire to tell someone else's story? If so, please let me know!

In the meanwhile, I look forward to starting 5787 with all of you.

***Dan Margolis,** Editor*





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

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UP FRONT

The Providence Mayoral Candidates

BY DANIEL MARGOLIS

PROVIDENCE — On Sept. 9, voters will decide which of two candidates — incumbent Mayor Brett P. Smiley or challenger state Rep. David Morales — will be the Democratic Party's nominee for mayor in the November general election.

Observers say the race is one of the most hotly contested in the state. To help voters make an informed decision, Jewish Rhode Island met with each candidate for an interview. Presented here are the full discussions, edited only for length and clarity.

To check your registration status or to find your voting location, visit vote.sos.ri.gov.



Mayor Brett P. Smiley, official photo PHOTO | PROVIDENCE MAYOR'S OFFICE

Mayor Brett P. Smiley

Jewish Rhode Island: ***Thank you for agreeing to talk with us. You weren't born Jewish but instead made the decision to convert to Judaism. Can you tell us about that journey?***

Mayor Brett P. Smiley: I felt like I had a spiritual void and went looking for a home. I had grown up in a very Jewish community, had been celebrating holidays with friends for years and had built a relationship with Rabbi Mack at Temple Beth-El. And ultimately, I reached out to her and started exploring the conversation around conversion. I ended up studying with her for a little while. The more I learned and leaned into my studies there, the more I knew I had found my place and found my people. It was a great source of joy and has become a great source of strength for me to have converted and joined Temple Beth-El — and then to continue my journey.

I participated last year in what ended up becoming a relatively well-known B'nai Mitzvah class. Happily, really, truly joyfully, it was a lot of work, but it was great. It was an incredible experience to learn some basic Hebrew. I've got a long way to go [in learning Hebrew], certainly, but to have a chance to be called to the *bima* and read from the Torah and share that moment with family and friends…it has become something very important in my life and a great source of comfort in both a difficult job, but also in a difficult time in our country and in our world.

I sit here now proudly as the second Jewish mayor of Providence. [It] has become a big part of who I am. You don't get a lot of these really life-changing moments as an adult, so it feels like a gift to have had this one.

Those who grew up Jewish can't really compare life as a non-Jew to life as a Jew. How has your life changed since you joined the tribe?

It has changed. First of all, I could not speak more highly about how warmly I've been embraced by the community, and it really feels like I have a new circle of strength and support that I find at shul and that I find in the broader community. That has been a source of comfort for me. It has been helpful and meaningful for me to have moral guidance that I get from the rabbi, but also from services and such.

Then personally, it's been fun to start to establish our own traditions at home that I know many families have been doing for millennia. I have the opportunity to set some of our own traditions. My husband did not convert, but he's been incredibly supportive, and so we've started to define for ourselves what Shabbat dinner looks like at home. Now we invite friends over to break the fast after Yom Kippur. It's been fun just to start to establish those traditions of our own. Maybe it's different for someone like me in that we're starting from scratch, as opposed to — and there are probably pros and cons to it; it's not better or worse — it's just instead of passing down the tradition from generations, we get the opportunity to create our own tradition in our own way.

You've had the opportunity to go to Israel, is that right?

I've been twice.

What were your impressions?

The first time I went, which was maybe six or seven years ago, was well before I had converted. It was an interesting and moving experience. It was well before the war. I have a cousin who at the time lived in Jerusalem. Now she's up in Haifa. It was great to connect with family and just to understand the complexity, not just of the nation of Israel, but of so much of human history that passed through that tiny place.

When I went back, which was now a year and a half ago, it was after I had converted, and so it took on a different meaning for me. This was after October 7 and after the rise of so much antisemitism in America. It really is moving to be in a place where kippot are the norm and not the exception and that people are so proudly Jewish without fear from neighbors or passersby that, sadly, too many American Jews have to experience today.

I went to the Kotel both times I went to Israel, but it was very different to be able to say the Shema at the Wall. And again, to once again visit family. It's a special place, and I look forward to many more trips to come.

Keeping briefly on Israel but moving to policy, I wanted to ask you about your position on the upcoming ballot referendum that would mandate municipal funds be divested from Israel. What is your position on that?

I'm opposed to it. I think it's both bad policy and the wrong message. The [Providence] law department has issued an opinion unequivocally [that] it's unenforceable. Were it to pass, it would go no further. It's also bad policy in that we don't make investment decisions based upon complicated geopolitical conflicts. And even though it's written in a different way, the organizers have been explicit that it's about Israel. It also furthers this narrative that I believe isolates the Jewish community, targets the Jewish community and contributes to antisemitism.

Would it really affect only Israel?

I'll take the words of the organizers. The organizers have said that they believe it would only apply to Israel at this time.

Turning to education, the Providence public schools have just come out of state receivership and now are under city control. Could you give us some background on that?

Yeah, it's cause for optimism. For nearly my entire first term, the state was running our schools, and for the last several years I stood alongside several other leaders in advocating for the return of our schools to local control because that is clearly what families in the community wanted. Now it has happened on July 1. This will be our first school year in seven years where the schools are back being governed by their mayor and their school board.

We are optimistic that will result in stronger community engagement and a stronger voice for our parents and our students, because before the accountability was from a state official to the governor and not to the actual families of Providence.

We've got a lot of work to do. There is no shortage of really incredible, ambitious, talented students here. Still, far too many of the students at PPSD (the Providence Public School District) are not achieving at levels that they should be and are not receiving the supports that they deserve.

The entire community has a stake

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UP FRONT

Rep. David Morales

Jewish Rhode Island: ***Can you tell our readers a little about your personal background and the experiences that have shaped your values and approach to public service?***

Rep. David Morales: I grew up with a single immigrant mom who came to the U.S. from Mexico. I saw how hard she had to work to provide for me and my older sister. As I got older, I realized that access to services that we had was due to public benefit programs, including Medicaid, public housing, SNAP and public schools. During my childhood, watching my mom work a multitude of minimum-wage jobs was stressful. I understand the urgent needs and struggles working families are going through, especially in our city today.

I remember the first job I had at the age of 14, picking fruits and vegetables in hot agricultural fields in central, rural California. That informed my beliefs and focus on advocacy relating to social and economic justice. For that reason, as state representative, I've focused on ensuring that we're investing in our public schools, increasing the minimum wage and building affordable housing. In the legislature, when there have been debates around bills or budget items, I often think through the lens of how would this have affected a family like mine.

You already touched on this, but perhaps you would like to expand. I was going to ask if there were any life experiences that have shaped the way you engage with Providence's diverse communities.

Absolutely. I grew up in a relatively homogeneous community of 15,000 people. It was predominantly Mexicans who immigrated to rural California seeking economic opportunity. I grew up in a tight-knit culture where neighbors knew one another, cared for each other. Those experiences motivate me to get to know my neighbors.

When I got to Providence, I remember building relationships almost immediately and getting to know community members, seeing them over and over, talking with neighbors: "Where should I get my dry cleaning done, where should I access a barber?"

An experience that sticks with me was my first job after I graduated with my master's in public affairs from Brown University. I worked as a behavioral specialist at Achievement First Mayoral Academy on Hartford Avenue. It was a direct exposure to our young students who were struggling with unmet mental health needs, behavioral issues that had gone unaddressed.

Those experiences spoke to me and the way I grew up. I had a working parent who wasn't always able to provide the empathy and care that she would have been able to if she could be at home more consistently.

Thinking back on my experiences, they helped me connect with our community. It goes back to the basic struggles that we're experiencing, but also the ways in which we find joy.

I've been happy to be part of various Providence communities over the years, including our arts community. I try to be present in different spaces, like AS220, Urban Arts. I think that there's a lot of joy that we can find when it comes to something like the creative arts.

What experiences have you had engaging with Israel or the Jewish community, and how have those experiences informed your understanding of issues important to Providence Jews?

During my six years as state representative, I've had the pleasure of serving constituents of all backgrounds, including Jewish community members. They helped inform me about the concerns and struggles they experienced in recent years, especially the rise in antisemitism over the last year and a half. We've had cases of hazing; cases of potential violence and vandalism. That's helped inform the level of urgency with which I act.

This year in the legislature, we passed an anti-hazing bill focused on making sure that any student targeted or bullied based on religious affiliation has more measures of accountability and put more protections in place. That was immediately brought to my attention by some of my constituents.

We had a conversation and understood the level of fear they were experiencing. They thought about their children and whether they would experience that, whether it would motivate copycat incidents. I've had many Jewish constituents attend my monthly community meetings and inform me of upcoming celebrations in the Jewish community and give me more understanding of Jewish history and culture. I've always welcomed those opportunities. I've always been grateful for those who have opened their doors, opened their homes and allowed for me to learn more.

What is your position on the upcoming ballot referendum that would require Providence to divest municipal funds from companies doing business with Israel, and why?

Like many, I do not believe taxpayer dollars should go toward funding any form of apartheid, illegal military occupation or genocide. The way the ordinance is written, it doesn't make a specific reference to any country.

I support the referendum, considering that, like many others, I do not believe our public taxpayer dollars should be going towards funding any form of genocide, apartheid or illegal military occupation that may be happening overseas.

Supporters and opponents disagree about the practical impact of the measure. In your view, would its effects extend beyond Israel-related investments?

Potentially so. This is based on the definition that the United Nations has when it comes to apartheid, illegal military occupation, genocide. I would hope that we do not have widespread cases of those types of atrocities happening across the globe. But even having this ordinance passed by the electorate in November demonstrates where our principles and our values are and how we use taxpayer dollars as part of that. In the future, if there are any cases of those types of atrocities, the city of Providence will be prepared to ensure that that type of funding is not contributing to it.



Rep. David Morales, official photo PHOTO | PROVIDENCE MAYOR'S OFFICE

Providence public schools have recently emerged from state receivership and returned to local control. How do you assess the current state of the school system, and what should happen next?

We're in a staffing crisis. We have elementary schools with over 300 students and only one counselor. We have too many middle and high schools with only one social worker for hundreds of students. As a result, many students are not receiving the social and emotional support that they need inside and outside the classroom. We don't have enough services readily available for students in special education classrooms or enrolled in Individualized Education Plans, and that itself has impacted academic outcomes.

As mayor, I will work directly with our school board, but most importantly our educators and families, to better assess where staffing gaps are, where we need to make the necessary investments to hire an additional counselor, more TAs in special education classrooms. Also, prepare educators to be certified in bilingual education so they could lead dual-language classrooms. These are going to require major investments. I'm prepared to work alongside our school board and city council to present a budget that accomplishes that.

I'll also work with our institutions of higher education. There's something to be said about Brown University, RISD, Providence College and Johnson & Wales contributing to the success of Providence Public Schools.

We can have more social workers and counselors who are knowledgeable to bill Medicaid, like Tri-County Family Services and Family Service of Rhode Island.

We need to improve staffing levels across PPSD if we're serious about improving academic outcomes.

What are your priorities regarding climate resilience, environmental justice and sustainability in Providence over the coming years?

We can't say that we're taking environmental justice and climate change seriously if we continue allowing large industrial facilities to pollute the Port of Providence. That ultimately impacts the residents and neighbors across South Providence disproportionately.

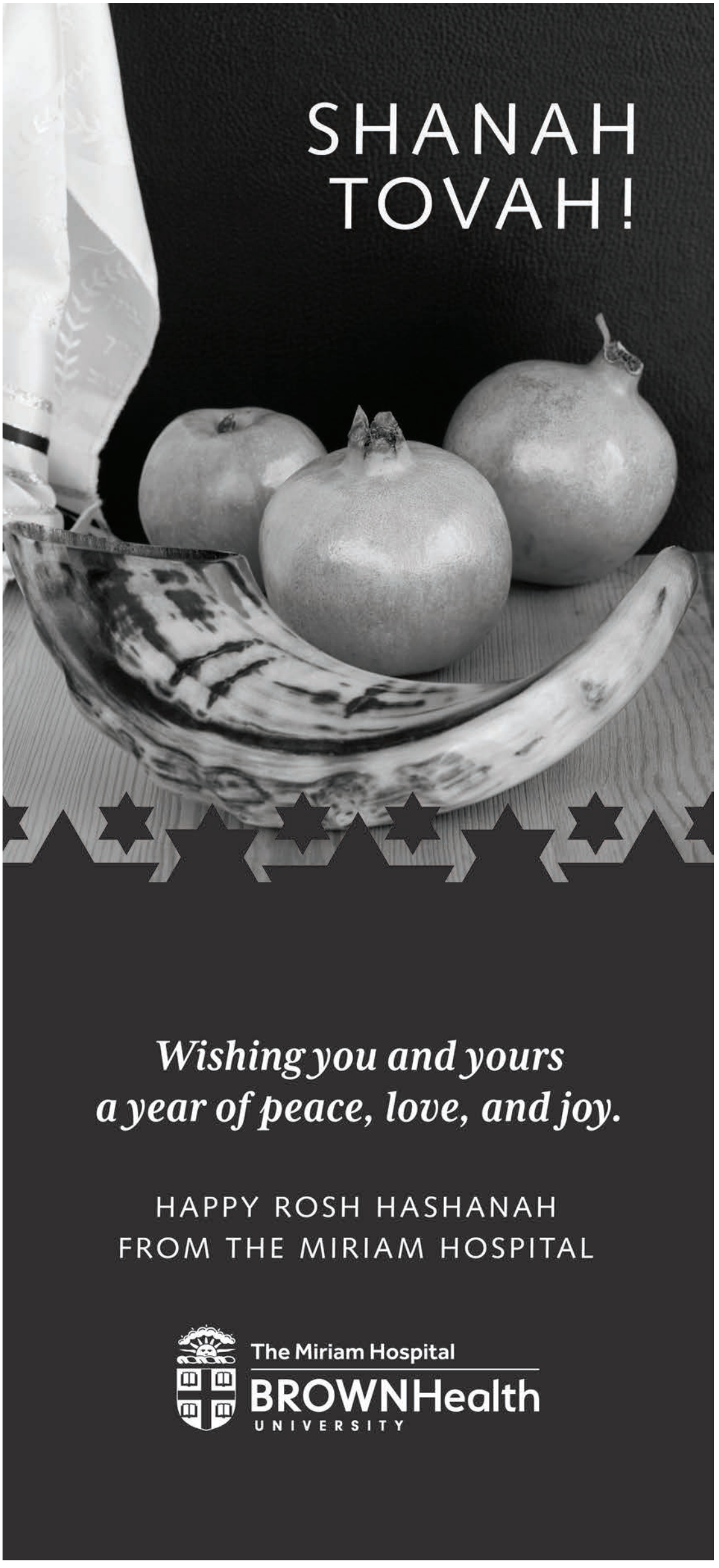
As mayor, I'll focus on building a stronger relationship between our city and the Department of Environmental Management so we can have consistent air quality monitoring. That way, any time air quality standards are violated, we can hold polluters accountable instead of waiting for a scrapyard fire or an emergency hazard to appear.

We need to ensure that environmental laws are consistently applied. We must build the infrastructure needed to lessen the impact of climate change. Increased rainfall has led to excessive flooding, impacting neighbors across Providence. Go down Valley Street, Olneyville, different parts of Blackstone: There are neighbors whose basements are being flooded and properties being damaged because of the excessive rain. Our sewage system cannot keep up with it.

I will work with our city council to establish a green infrastructure bond to modernize our sewage system, invest in green infrastructure like rain gardens and bioswales citywide. That's how we ensure we're more climate resilient, as well as acting any time bad actors harm our environment and public health.

You were elected to the legislature in 2020. What is something you're proud of, and what is something you would have done differently?

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UP FRONT

Interview with Mayor Brett P. Smiley continued

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in our schools doing better. The fact that in most of our schools, seven out of ten kids are not reading or doing math at grade level is a major problem, and we have a civic responsibility, but also, I think, a moral obligation to do better by these students.

Let's turn to the environment. A few months ago, you announced the city's five-year update on the climate justice plan. Could you tell us a little about that?

Providence is really a national leader in how we're reacting to the climate crisis, and I'm particularly proud of the work that we've done — and of this community. Not only are we making changes here in Providence, but our actions are inspiring changes statewide. That's a way in which Providence is influential beyond just our borders.

We're making meaningful infrastructure and resiliency investments. We have a detailed and very realistic goal and plan for carbon neutrality. We've updated stormwater. We've improved and repaired our hurricane barrier to help protect the community. We've passed the first green revolving fund, which gives us a recurring revenue stream to continue to make these investments to ensure that we don't just have fits and starts of investment.

These are long-term, sustainable changes that will help us meet these goals, but also, ultimately, save taxpayers' dollars and make this a more resilient city.

You've been the mayor now for a few years. What is one thing that you're proudest of? Also, what is something that, looking back, you would do differently?

The thing I'm most proud of over my first term was our reaching the standard known as universal access to pre-K. Early childhood education is critically important [to] educational outcomes. Financially, dollar for dollar, it's the best investment you can make in education. It will improve outcomes for kids for their entire educational career, but it has this added benefit of helping families save money.

The cost of childcare is one of the family's largest out-of-pocket expenses. Pre-K is school, but it's also childcare. We're the only community in Rhode Island that has reached this standard. It was an explicit promise that I made four years ago, and it took sustained focus and investment to get there, but everyone in Providence will benefit from it. It's something that I think is a really great thing to have done.

Okay. And on the thing that you could have done differently?

There are plenty of things, and I don't, I don't lack humility. My first year — they were well-intended, but they were not well-received — we made some dramatic changes to the city's arts festival, PVDFest, that were roundly criticized. For an event that's meant to bring the community together and spread a little bit of joy, when people don't like it, you admit you're wrong and make changes, which is what happened.

After the festival I said, "I screwed up. I got that wrong." We changed it back to the way in which the community had enjoyed celebrating. Sometimes the best thing a leader can do is to say, "I screwed up, and we'll change."

Is there anything that you would like to add for our readers?

I would just say that it is a complicated time in the world and in the country, not just for Jews, but for many vulnerable communities. Despite some very real challenges that I'm not naive to, especially now over the last two years with the current presidential administration and some of the things going on, I'm proud to be a member of this community. I would hope that other people would count their blessings to get to live in Providence, that we have come together as a community, that we are protecting some of our most vulnerable residents. We are standing up for our values.

While there's a lot to be upset about, we are in this beautiful place that we get to call home that has not strayed from its values. And I'm going to do everything that I can to continue to protect that specialness here in our city [even] as other things are happening elsewhere.

Mr. Mayor, I want to thank you for your time.

Thank you!

DANIEL MARGOLIS *is editor of Jewish Rhode Island.*

Rosh Hashana on Shabbat: Rest is an essential part of creativity

RABBI SARAH MACK



RABBI SARAH MACK

NATURE RESTS through its own sabbaticals. Consider how trees go dormant in the winter, a process necessary for fruit-bearing in the spring. If dormancy is prevented, the species will eventually die. This biological model of imposed fallowness occurs to nourish and replenish. It is one deeply suggestive of our own necessity to find some kind of rest to cultivate our inner lives.

From Archimedes' "Eureka" in the bath to Newton's apple, history is filled with brilliance conceived in a moment of pause. Think of how many good ideas come to us in the shower. Perhaps that is because it can be the only quiet time we find in a day filled with notifications and obligations.

Shabbat is so much more than a day off. It is a system of meaning. It gives us a way to make sense of our strivings. On Rosh Hashanah, we celebrate the creation of the world. We pause on our entrance to this new year, reflect and look at what we have created in the past year. We examine our mistakes and plan adjustments for the year to come. We learn that pausing is productive. Our tradition teaches emphatically and unequivocally that rest is part of the creation story. On the seventh day God rests and contemplates creation. Rest is an essential part of our own creativity as we build the world as we hope it can be.

Shabbat is not about what we cannot do. It is about making what we can do count. Prohibitions are the least of it. Shabbat is about finding tranquility and calmness.

Even the technology that hinders our rest teaches us about this pause. What do we do when our devices are not working as they should? The first troubleshooting advice is always … turn it off and unplug it. Shabbat is that reset of our own glitches.

The idea of the sabbath is collective. In the Jewish tradition, Shabbat is not to be made alone if we can help it; it is the connections to friends, family and community that set this day apart as holy. Sociologist Emile Durkheim coined the phrase "collective effervescence." It is his way to describe the joy and connectivity people feel when they come together in a group around a shared purpose. Our ancient rabbis discovered this concept centuries before and they called it *oneg*. *Oneg* is more than the babka and cookies we share after services. It describes the specific joy in being together on a day when we have no other place we need to rush off to be.

It is within this sacred construct that we find the space to be our best selves. Shabbat is a day to reclaim our own humanity so that we may fully see that of others.

We live in a culture that pushes us to calendar ever more activities into our busy lives. When we hold up action and accomplishment as the only goal, we lose out on knowing one another and the delight in simple quiet moments.

We struggle to put down our phones, to not react to social media, return emails, answer texts. Shabbat reminds us to stop being control freaks. To step away from our work and let it be. As one scholar teaches, "God rested on the seventh day. God didn't show up to do more. God absented God's self from the office. God did not come and check on creation in anxiety to make sure it was all working." Shabbat brings with it humility in its reminders that what we do is not that important after all. Who we are and how we treat one another counts more. Few of us do such important work that we can't pause for a day.

For pausing is where we reclaim our humanity. Without it, we run the risk of doing real harm to our *neshama*, our souls. We can make Shabbat by allowing ourselves to let go of our schedules for one day and instead allowing ourselves quietude and dormancy, to regenerate and continue. A time to stop purchasing and producing, and to embrace being.

Read any opinion page in the newspaper of your choice and you will see article after article about burnout and loneliness. The struggle is real. Shabbat is an ancient remedy for modern problems. One wise teacher writes that "Sabbath is not simply the pause that refreshes. It is the pause that transforms."

Shabbat exists to teach us how we can be our best selves and in so doing build the world as we dream it can be. This Rosh Hashanah, we begin with Shabbat. Let us find *menucha*, a true repose of body and spirit. Let us find *oneg*, communal joy; and let it transform us and the world in this new year.

SARAH MACK *is the senior rabbi at Temple Beth-El in Providence.*



Greater Rhode Island

Sep. 4	6:56pm
Sep. 11	6:44pm Erev Shavuot
Sep. 12	7:42pm
Sep. 18	6:32pm
Sep. 20	6:26pm Erev Yom Kippur
Sep. 25	6:18pm
Sep. 26	7:17pm
Oct. 2	6:06pm Erev Shemini Atzeret

Interview with Rep. David Morales continued

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I'm proud Rhode Island is one of only nine states to guarantee healthcare coverage to every child, regardless of immigration status. That's an initiative I led on during my second year, Cover All Kids. I worked with legislators from across the state, from different political backgrounds, different party affiliations. We came together because we recognized that healthcare coverage for every child was progress in public health and keeping all kids healthy. It required me to work with bureaucratic agencies like the Department of Human Services and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services. It was a wonderful experience to work with them to make sure the law would guarantee the coverage kids deserve, while also ensuring we'd be ready to work with families to get them enrolled.

When I first introduced the bill, a colleague said it would to take 10 years before something like this ever happened. We made it happen in two. That we have 1,000-plus children who are now enrolled in this Medicaid program who wouldn't have been eligible a few years ago is an accomplishment I look back at, knowing we made a difference.

Something you would have done differently?

I was very skeptical of house leadership when I first entered the chamber. I was one of a few representatives who voted against the house speaker his first term, because for the longest time the status quo did not deliver. Over time, I saw that levels of collaboration make a difference in the State House.

I went in with my guard up, feeling concerned about whether we were going to deliver for working people or whether we were serving campaign donors and corporate interests. I saw that a lot of legislators actually focused on delivering for working people. My first year in the legislature, we passed the Climate Act, which had opposition from larger corporate entities. We passed a minimum wage increase and established safe staffing standards for nursing homes. Initially, my approach was more reserved than I would like it to be looking back at it. In my second year, I became more comfortable and had more of a collaborative nature with my colleagues.

Being 22 years old [then] and the youngest Latino to serve in the legislature, I give myself a little grace. Still, I might have pushed myself more to develop those relationships during that first year.

What would you like the Jewish community to know about you?

As mayor, my door at City Hall will always be open. It will be open to all our neighbors across Providence. I especially want Jewish neighbors to know that I will be ready to act when it comes to any form of bigotry, including antisemitism, if it ever makes its way into our city. I'm committed to making sure that all feel safe and welcome in Providence to practice their faith openly, that they're going to have a city that supports them.

Thank you for your time, Rep. Morales.

Thank you!

DANIEL MARGOLIS *is editor of Jewish Rhode Island.*

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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 Tuesday –Thursday) programming 11 a.m.-noon followed by lunch and discussion noon-1 p.m. *On Friday, 9/4, a "Senior Prom: Hawaiian Style" will be held at the Dwares JCC; see separate listing below for more information. No café on Labor Day (9/7), Erev Rosh Hashanah (9/11) or Yom Kippur (9/21). On Wednesday, 9/9, the café will meet in Lippitt Memorial Park at 1015 Hope St. (where Blackstone Boulevard meets Hope St.) for a picnic. On Wednesdays, programming is chair yoga. For seniors aged 60 and older as well as younger adults with a disability; all faiths and backgrounds are welcome. Suggested donation: $3 per lunch. The Kosher Senior Café is a program of Jewish Collaborative Services and is generously supported by the Jewish Alliance of Greater RI and Blackstone Health. Information and RSVP, Neal at neal@jcsri.org or 401-421-4111.

Mahjong at Temple Torat Yisrael. Tuesdays 11 a.m.-1 p.m. 1251 Middle Road, East Greenwich. Drop in and play Mahjong with us. Beginners and experienced players welcome. Free. Information, Michelle Birman at michelle@toratyisrael.org or 401-885-6600.

Fall Hebrew Classes. Tuesdays thru 11/10. Introduction to Prayerbook Hebrew 5-6 p.m. Other levels 5:30-6:30 p.m. Temple Emanu-El, 99 Taft Ave., Providence. Classes offered: Introduction to Prayerbook Hebrew, Beginners, Advanced Beginners for Spoken Hebrew, Intermediate and Advanced. Offered jointly with the Jewish Alliance of Greater RI. No class dates: 9/29, 11/3. Information, Toby Liebowitz at tobyaane@gmail.com.

Temple Torat Yisrael Virtual Minyan. Tuesdays 5:30 p.m. Via Zoom. Information, temple@toratyisrael.org.

Crafternoon Diamond Painting. Wednesdays 11 a.m.-noon. 9/16-9/30. Bonnie & Donald Dwares JCC, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence. Diamond painting is a simple, relaxing hobby that's easy to enjoy no matter your experience level. By placing tiny resin drills onto a printed canvas, you'll gradually create a beautiful, finished picture. Cost for three meetups: $15. Information, Samantha Kaufman at skaufman@jewishallianceri.org.

Delve Deeper: The World Behind the Bible. Wednesdays 7-9 p.m. 9/30-12/9. This virtual course led by Mark Leuchter, Professor of Hebrew Bible and Ancient Judaism at Temple University in Philadelphia, will look at the way the Hebrew Bible came together across centuries of ideas and experiences from the social groups behind the texts. No class dates: 11/25. Cost: $250 (for scholarship information, email larrykatz1221@gmail.com). Information or to enroll, 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.

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 9-10:30 a.m. 70 Orchard Ave., Providence. Join us in the library. Information, Jude Weinstein at jweinstein@temple-beth-el.org or 401-331-6070.

Temple Sinai Breakfast and Torah Study. Saturdays 9:15-11 a.m. 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. Breakfast followed by weekly Torah study (also on Zoom) at 10 a.m. (Cancelled on Rosh Hashanah.) Information, Templesinairi.org, admin@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

Temple Habonim Torah Study. Some Saturdays 10-11 a.m. When Shabbat morning services are not scheduled, Torah Study (currently online) is usually held. 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 Service. Most Saturdays 11 a.m.-noon. 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. Join us either in the Chapel or on Zoom. Information, Templesinairi.org, admin@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

Friday | September 4

Senior Prom: Hawaiian Style. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Bonnie & Donald Dwares JCC, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence. Tropical celebration for our senior community featuring lively music, delicious food and a fun and welcoming atmosphere. Cost: Free, but donations greatly appreciated. Information and RSVP (by 8/28), Neal Drobnis or Dorothy Richardson at 401-421-4111.

Temple Sinai Bar'chu and BBQ. 5:30-7:30 p.m. 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. Come for the service and stay for the barbecue that begins at 6 p.m. Cost: $18 per adult, $10 for children under 12. Information, Templesinairi.org, admin@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

Temple Emanu-El BBQ, Fair and Kabbalat Shabbat Services. 5:30-9 p.m. 99 Taft Ave., Providence. Join Temple Emanu-El's Brotherhood for a BBQ before Shabbat evening services. Temple Emanu-El will also be hosting an affinity group fair so people can see all we have to offer. Stay for Kabbalat Shabbat Services and dessert. Information, Shoshana Jacob at shosh@teprov.org or 401-331-1616.

Saturday | September 5

Temple Emanu-El Musical Program and Slichot Services. 7-11 p.m. 99 Taft Ave., Providence. Musical program with Shelly Katsh followed by services. Information, Shoshana Jacob at shosh@teprov.org or 401-331-1616.

Monday | September 14

Jewish Side of Things Pop Up: Israeli Honey Tasting. 10-11 a.m. and 3:45-5:15 p.m. Bonnie & Donald Dwares JCC, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence. Join us in the Lower Lobby for an Israeli honey tasting to celebrate Rosh Hashanah. Free. Information, Dori Adler at dadler@jewishallianceri.org or 401-421-4111.

Tuesday | September 15

Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Center: "Dominican Haven: The Jewish Refugee Settlement in Sosúa, 1940–1945." 6-7 p.m. Bonnie & Donald Dwares JCC, 401 Elmgrove Ave.,

Pray for Peace

May it be Your will, G-d of our ancestors, that You grant my family and all Israel a good and long life. Remember us with blessings and kindness. Fill our homes with your Divine Presence. Give me the opportunity to raise my children and grandchildren to be truly wise, lovers of G-d, people of truth, who illuminate the world with Torah, good deeds and the work of the Creator. Please hear my prayer at this time. Regard me as a worthy descendent of Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, our mothers, and let my candles burn and never be extinguished. Let the light of your face shine upon us, and bring true peace to Israel and the world.



BLESSINGS FOR SHABBOS

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם.
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק
נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת קֹדֶשׁ :

BO-RUCH A-TOH ADO-NOI E-LO-HEI-NU ME-LECH HO-OLOM A-SHER KI-DE-SHA-NU BE-MITZ-VO-SOV VI-TZI-VO-NU LE-HAD-LIK-NER SHEL SHA-BOS KO-DESH

Blessed are You, G-d our Lord, King of the universe, who has hallowed us through His commandments, and has commanded us to kindle the lights of the holy Shabbos

CAUTION FOR FRIDAYS:
DO NOT light candles after sunset so as not to desecrate the Shabbos. It is forbidden to light candles after sunset.

Come to a "FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE" Shabbat Dinner at the Chabad House
Jewish Hospitality Center
360-362 Hope St. Providence, RI 02906
Call: 273-7238

BLESSINGS FOR HOLIDAYS

Select the proper ending for the appropriate Yom Tov:

BORUCH ATO ADO-NOY ELO-HAY-NU MELECH HO-OLOM A-SHER KID-SHONU B'MITZ-VO-SOV V-TZI-VONU L'HAD-LIK NER SHEL
(on Friday add — SHA-BOS V-SHEL)
Pesach, Shavuot and Succot – Yom Tov
Rosh Hashanah – Yom-Ha-zi-Koron
Yom Kippur – Yom Ha-Kippurim

Add this blessing following each of the above blessings except for the last holidays of Pesach.

BORUCH ATO ADO-NOY ELO-HAY-NU MELECH HO-OLOM SHE-HEH-CHE-YONU V'KEE-MONU V'HEE-GEE-ONU LEEZ-MAN HA-ZEH

Special instructions for holidays (but not on Shabbat). It is forbidden to create a new fire by striking a match, lighter, etc., However, it is permissable to use a flame already burning since before the inception of the holiday, such as a pilot light, gas or candle flame.

Candle lighting time for the second night of the Holiday is usually about one hour after the candle lighting time of the previous night.

5786–5787 (2026–2027) Candle Lighting Schedule | *Courtesy of Chabad of Rhode Island*

Times listed are for Providence, Rhode Island. Other areas around the region may vary by a few minutes.

Sept. 2026	October	November	December	January	February
4 6:56	**2** 6:06 Erev	**1** Daylight	**4** 3:55 Light Chanukah	**1** 4:06	**5** 4:46
11 6:44 Erev Rosh Hashanah	Shemini Atzeret	Saving	candles before	**8** 4:13	**12** 4:55
12 7:42	**3** 7:05 Erev	Time ends	Shabbat candles	**15** 4:20	**19** 5:04
18 6:32	Simchat Torah	**6** 4:14	**11** 3:55 Light Chanukah	**22** 4:29	**26** 5:12
20 6:26 Erev Yom Kippur	**9** 5:54	**13** 4:07	candles before	**29** 4:37	
25 6:18 Erev Sukkot	**16** 5:43	**20** 4:01	Shabbat candles		
26 7:17	**23** 5:32	**27** 3:58	**18** 3:57		
	30 5:23		**25** 4:01		

March	April		May	June	July	August	September 2027
5 5:21	**2** 6:52	**23** 7:15	**7** 7:30	**4** 7:56	**2** 8:04	**6** 7:38	**3** 6:56
12 5:29	**9** 7:00	**27** 7:20 Erev	**14** 7:38	**10** 8:00 Erev	**9** 8:02	**13** 7:29	**10** 6:44
14 Daylight	**16** 7:07	Seventh day	**21** 7:44	Shavuot	**16** 7:58	**20** 7:18	**17** 6:32
Saving	**21** 7:13 Erev	Passover	**28** 7:51	**11** 8:00	**23** 7:53	**27** 7:08	**24** 6:20
Time starts	Passover	**28** 8:27		**18** 8:03	**30** 7:46		
19 6:37	**22** 8:19	**30** 7:23		**25** 8:04			
26 6:44							

Please do not deface or discard this paper, for G-d's name is on.

CALENDAR

Providence. During WWII, the Dominican Republic became the only country in the Americas to officially welcome large numbers of Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution. With Marion Kaplan, a leading historian of German Jewry and the Holocaust. Free. Information, info@hercri.org or 401-453-7860.

Temple Habonim presents "Reunion." 6:30-9 p.m. Avon Cinema, 260 Thayer St., Providence. This New England premiere screening is in memory of Holocaust Survivor Ruth Oppenheim. The film follows the friendship of two teenage boys in 1930s Germany as the rise of Nazism and antisemitism begins to divide them. Q&A follows screening. Tickets: $25. Information, Adina Davies at office@templehabonim.org or 401-245-6536.

Friday | September 18

Temple Sinai Soothing and Healing Shabbat. 6-7 p.m. Temple Sinai, 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. Join us in the Sanctuary as Shelley Katch and Cathy Clasper-Torch lead this special service. Information, Templesinairi.org, admin@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

Wednesday | September 23

Temple Sinai Putting up the Sukkah. 5-6 p.m. Temple Sinai, 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. Come and enjoy this time with your friends as you help erect the sukkah. Information, Templesinairi.org, admin@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

Thursday | September 24

Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Center "The Art of Listening: Engaging with Holocaust Survivor Testimony." 6-7:15 p.m. Bonnie & Donald Dwares JCC, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence. Through excerpts from Holocaust survivor testimony and discussion, participants will explore how empathetic listening can deepen understanding of memory, storytelling and the human experience. Offered jointly with the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University. Free. Information, info@hercri.org or 401-453-7860.

Friday | September 25

Temple Sinai Pizza in the Hut. 6:45-7:45 p.m. 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. Join your friends for a convivial evening of chatter and pizza. Information, Templesinairi.org, admin@templesinairi.org or 401-942-8350.

Sunday | September 27

The Miriam Hospital Women's Association presents "Behind the Badge, On the Stage." 5-9 p.m. The Met, Hope Artiste Village, 1005 Main St., Pawtucket. Join us for an evening of fun and music showcasing the talents of The Miriam's employees who are also musicians. Full bar. Proceeds go to TMHWA. Suggested donation: $20. Information, TMHWA@brownhealth.org.

Wednesday | September 30

RICI "A Night to Honor Israel." 7-9 p.m. Praise Tabernacle Church, 330 Park Ave., Cranston. Hear from Sandra Hagee Parker, Chairwoman of the Christians United for Israel (CUFI) Action Fund and daughter of CUFI's founder, Pastor John Hagee. This building was the original location of Torat Yisrael. All religious symbols will be removed from the reception room and assembly hall. Free. Information, Maria Friedman at maria@ricoalitionforisrael.org.

Thursday | October 1

Sushi in the Sukkah. 6-8 p.m. Bonnie & Donald Dwares JCC, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence. Join us for a hands-on sushi-making experience where you'll learn the basics of crafting delicious sushi rolls from start to finish as you build new skills, enjoy great food and celebrate the season. Cost: Alliance Members $40 | Non-Members $50. Pre-registration required. Information, Samantha Kaufman at skaufman@jewishallianceri.org.

Friday | October 2

Temple Beth-El Shabbat B'Yachad & Simcha Torah/Consecration Festival Service. 5:45-7:15 p.m. 70 Orchard Ave., Providence. In the Sanctuary. RSVP required. Information, jude Weinstein at jweinstein@temple-beth-el.org or 401-331-6070.

Monday | October 5

Jewish Side of Things Pop Up: Who Knew It Was Jewish? 10:30-11:30 a.m. and 3:45-5:15 p.m. Bonnie & Donald Dwares JCC, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence. Join us in the Lower Lobby and try some samples of food from Jewish-owned businesses. Free. Information, Dori Adler at dadler@jewishallianceri.org or 401-421-4111.

Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Center Leadership Institute for Teens. 6-8 p.m. Bonnie & Donald Dwares JCC, 401 Elmgrove Ave., Providence. First session of a year-long journey in leadership, learning and community. Students in grades 9–12 will engage with Holocaust survivors, descendants, scholars and community leaders while developing practical leadership, communication and critical thinking skills. Free. Information, info@hercri.org, or 401-453-7860.

Tuesday | October 6

October 7 Remembrance Event. 7-9:15 p.m. Temple Sinai, 30 Hagen Ave., Cranston. Join the RI Coalition for Israel (RICI), Temple Sinai and a representative from the Consulate General of Israel to New England for a screening of "October Shadows: An Exploration of Trauma and Healing After October 7" followed by discussion. RSVP (required) on RICI's website. Free; donations encouraged. Information, Maria Friedman at maria@ricoalitionforisrael.org.

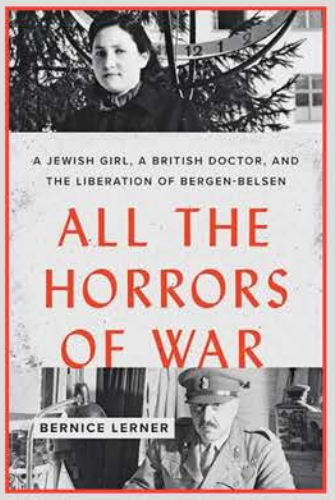
Narratives of Survival:
A Literacy Conference

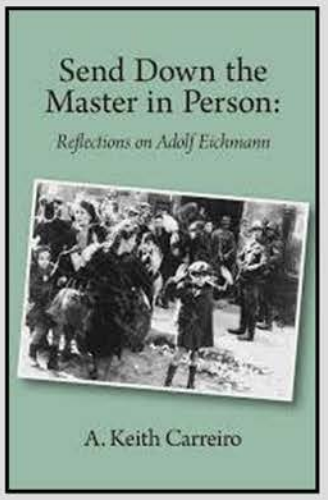
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October 7th
9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

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COMMUNITY VOICES

Bonjour, Mes Amis

BY GEORGE M. GOODWIN

As children, my parents studied Latin and French but never developed much skill. I too studied various foreign languages but became successful with only one. It was not Hebrew!

MUSINGS



GEORGE M. GOODWIN

BOTH MY PATERNAL grandparents, having been born in Eastern Europe, were native Yiddish speakers. They seldom spoke it in their children's or grandchildren's presence.

My maternal grandparents enjoyed a considerable exposure to German. My grandfather's paternal and maternal grandparents emigrated from Germany to Cincinnati before the Civil War. The German-born parents of my grandmother also found their way to the "Queen City," which sounded a lot better than its other nickname, "Porkopolis." Both my maternal grandparents studied German in school, and my grandmother also studied French.

Neither maternal grandparent ever learned a word of Yiddish (or ever ate a bagel!). Their education within the Reform movement did not require them to learn more than a few words of Hebrew. Nevertheless, they were deeply respectful of Jewish worship and active in their congregation, country club, and Jewish charitable organizations.

My maternal grandmother's father became a trustee of Hebrew Union College, the Reform seminary, which was founded in Cincinnati in 1875. My maternal grandfather's sister married a Reform rabbi, a native of San Francisco, who studied at HUC. They eventually settled in Los Angeles.

As children, my siblings and I were barely aware of the significant linguistic, religious and cultural differences that differentiated our two sets of grandparents. Fortunately, all four became our beloved and trusted mentors.

In L.A., our family lived about 50 minutes from our Reform congregation, Wilshire Boulevard Temple, where my great-uncle was senior rabbi for nearly 60 years. Beginning in kindergarten and continuing through confirmation, we kids rode a yellow school bus to and from religious school. My twin, Theo, and I were tutored in Hebrew at home.

Unfortunately, our Israeli-born tutor was a bully. Although we did not always prepare diligently for our weekly lessons, Amos never rewarded us for doing better. Theo and I often cried, and occasionally threw books at him. Our parents blamed us, and Amos remained our tutor for three years. The summer-Theo and I turned twelve we were required to stay home and not go to camp to prepare for our early September rite of passage.

Somehow, we did well enough. Even if we didn't particularly enjoy the service, which brought so many of our relatives and friends together, we felt rewarded by the luncheon that followed. With some of our junior-high friends (including some gentiles), we happily gave a concert on our woodwind and brass instruments.

In junior high school, our parents encouraged us to pursue a modern language. French was considered far more debonair than Spanish.

I was amazed to discover in eighth grade that my "student-teacher" of French, who attended UCLA, was a Jew. At the end of the year, she arranged a dinner for our class at a French restaurant, so we could display our skills. It turned out, however, that most of its servers spoke Spanish.

After Theo and I completed our junior year of high school we went on family vacation to Europe. When we stopped in Paris to use our French, our sister Betty, who began studying French in kindergarten, was by far the most polished speaker.

In college, Theo majored in French and spent his senior year in Paris. He

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COMMUNITY VOICES

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went on to master Spanish, and in recent years has served for brief periods as a volunteer teacher of English in Guatemala.

As an art history major in college, I was encouraged to study Italian. I spent a marvelous portion of my junior year studying in Florence and traveling from Venice to Palermo.

My wife, Betsey, also studied French in school and she probably speaks it better than I do. Once she explained why a guy couldn't understand me: He was Russian!

As a graduate student in art history, I had to pass reading exams in French and German. Then I flirted with Spanish.

A linguist I never became, however! But our children, who studied abroad, became accomplished. Molly did well in France, and Michael did even better in Spain and Greece. Having worked and traveled in numerous countries, he also learned some French, Brazilian Portuguese, Turkish, Arabic and Nepali.

So why couldn't my childhood exposure to Hebrew have been more gratifying? Perhaps it was the same reason why my paternal grandfather, "Mike," rebelled against his religious upbringing. The instruction felt punishing!

So that Molly and Michael would have far more rewarding experiences, Betsey and I sent our kids to the former Alperin Schechter Day School, in Providence, where they mastered basic Hebrew and became amazingly well prepared for their *b'nai mitzvot*. They also completed confirmation and post-confirmation studies at our congregation, Beth-El.

Can the study of foreign languages be fun and an engaging experience for young people? I'll ask our seven-year-old granddaughter Chloe, who's begun learning Spanish and Chinese.

Oy vey!

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





COMMUNITY VOICES

The language of home:

How Yiddish connected Holocaust survivors and their children

LAURA AUKETAYEVA, PH.D.

Francine (Fruma) Denerstein did not expect to make one of her closest friends through a virtual book club.

DURING THE COVID-19 pandemic, Temple Emanu-El's weekly discussions introduced her to Irving Weinreich. Although they had never met in person, they soon discovered they shared something increasingly rare: the ability to speak Yiddish.

What began as conversations after book club grew into regular phone calls lasting anywhere from 10 minutes to half an hour. They spoke about family and found comfort in a language that connected them to the people they loved most.

For nearly two years, those conversations became part of the rhythm of their lives.

After her father, Holocaust survivor Meyer Spitzman, passed away, she realized she missed more than speaking Yiddish. Talking with Irving reminded her of speaking with her father. His phone calls filled a space she had not realized was still empty after losing her parents. Yiddish had become more than a shared language. It had become what she later described as a safe landing place, where two children of Holocaust survivors could remember, laugh, grieve and keep their family stories alive together.

Francine's own story began in the Bergen-Belsen Displaced Persons Camp, where she was born to Holocaust survivors rebuilding their lives after liberation.

Her father was born in June 1916 in Niwka, near Sosnowiec, Poland. When Germany invaded Poland in 1939, he served in the Polish Army before being captured as a prisoner of war. He escaped, was recaptured, forced into labor and eventually deported to Bergen-Belsen. After liberation, he met Rachel Turgel, another survivor. They married in 1947 and, like so many survivors, began rebuilding their lives together.

Sponsored by the Berry family, Meyer and Rachel immigrated to Rhode Island in December 1949. Meyer became a respected furniture maker and carpenter, while Rachel worked at Brier's Jewelry Factory. Together they built a home where Yiddish was the language of everyday life. As a child, Francine sometimes wished her parents would speak English instead. Like many children of immigrants, she wanted to fit in. Only after both of her parents were gone did she fully understand what those conversations had given her.

She did not simply miss speaking Yiddish.

She missed hearing home. That longing made her friendship with Irving so meaningful. Born in Danzig to Victor and Hannah (Pollak) Weinreich, Irving also grew up in a family whose life had been shaped by the Holocaust. His family settled in Rhode Island, where his father founded Victor Appliance Distributor Co. Irving graduated from Hope High School and Bryant College, served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War and spent more than 65 years helping lead the family business. A devoted member of Temple Emanu-El, he attended daily minyan and helped organize the congregation's annual Yom HaShoah commemoration for many years.

For Irving, speaking Yiddish reopened a part of his life he rarely revisited after losing his parents. His mother spoke Yiddish with a German dialect, while his father, who came from Poland, insisted on speaking English after immigrating to the United States. Like many survivors and refugees, his parents worked tirelessly to build a new life, attending night school to learn English.



Audrey Weinreich and Francine Denerstein on July 30, 2026 PHOTO | GLENN OSMUNDSON

Irving often spoke to Francine about his mother. Before the Holocaust, she worked as a social worker in Germany. To escape Nazi persecution, however, she was forced to make an unimaginable sacrifice: She terminated a pregnancy so the family could leave Germany. After arriving in the United States, she was never able to return to her profession. Like so many refugees, she rebuilt her life from the beginning while carrying the weight of everything she lost.

Those sacrifices left a lasting impression on Irving. He also spoke about his father, Victor, a skilled shirtmaker who was forced to sew shirts for the Nazis during the Holocaust. Irving believed that Victor's skill may even have helped save the family during one raid. He also shared the devastating losses both of his parents endured. Many relatives were murdered in the Holocaust, while some who survived carried the trauma with them for the rest of their lives. One family member, after surviving

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

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to Members of Rhode Island's Jewish Community!

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COMMUNITY VOICES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

Auschwitz, sometimes hid under his bed, convinced the Nazis would return.

Francine immediately recognized those experiences. Her family's path through the Holocaust was different, but she understood what it meant to grow up surrounded by grief that never truly disappeared. Irving and Francine did not need to explain why certain memories lingered, why a Yiddish phrase could suddenly evoke a parent or grandparent, or why preserving family stories mattered so deeply. They simply understood.

Francine joked that on FaceTime she could only see half of Irving's face, but that hardly mattered. Even as Irving's health declined, the friendship remained a constant.

He continued participating in Temple Emanu-El's virtual book club from his hospital bed, determined to remain connected to the community he loved. He also continued speaking with Francine.

From the next room, Irving's wife, Ruthie, often heard Yiddish drifting through the house. Although she and Francine never met, she came to know her through those conversations and understood how much the friendship meant to her husband.

After Irving died, it was Ruthie who called Francine.

Months later, Irving's daughter, Audrey, attended Temple Emanu-El's annual Yom HaShoah commemoration, continuing a tradition that had meant so much to her father. For years, Irving helped organize the congregation's observance of Holocaust Remembrance Day, and now Audrey was carrying forward the responsibility to remember.

"Irving and Francine did not need to explain why...a Yiddish phrase could suddenly evoke a parent or grandparent."

After the program ended, a woman approached her.

"I'm Fran."

Audrey immediately knew who she was.

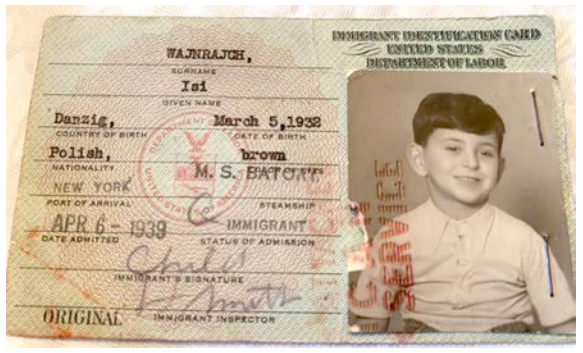
Although they were meeting for the first time, Francine had long been part of her family's life. Audrey heard about the regular phone calls and the conversations in Yiddish that had become such an important part of her father's final years. What should have been an introduction instead felt like a reunion.

The two women embraced.

Their friendship has continued ever since.

A few years ago, Audrey attended an art festival in Newton where one of the vendors was selling notecards printed with Yiddish phrases. For a brief moment, she felt unexpectedly close to her father. The language immediately brought him back to her.

Fran and Audrey reflected on the painful irony that, had the Holocaust never happened, she and Francine likely would never have met. Yet out of that history grew an unexpected friendship that has forever connected two Rhode Island families. Both Audrey and Francine think that had they met years earlier, Meyer Spitzman and Irving Weinreich would have been friends.



Irving Weinreich's ID PHOTO | AUDREY WEINREICH'S FAMILY COLLECTION.

Every Holocaust story is important because every family experienced it differently. Some survived camps, others survived in hiding or in exile and still others rebuilt their lives in new countries. Together, those individual stories form the larger history of the Holocaust. As the generation of Holocaust survivors grows smaller, remembrance increasingly rests with the next generations.

The friendship between Francine and Audrey is a reminder that even after unimaginable loss, family histories continue to create new connections, strengthen communities and inspire others to discover and preserve the stories of their own families. Sometimes all it takes is a conversation to discover that our stories are intertwined.

Perhaps that is why this story feels so profoundly Rhode Island.

LAURA AUKETAYEVA, Ph.D. *is the director of education and programs at the Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Center.*





L'shanah tovah.
Wishing you a happy and peaceful new year.

– Sheldon Whitehouse

Paid for by Whitehouse for Senate.



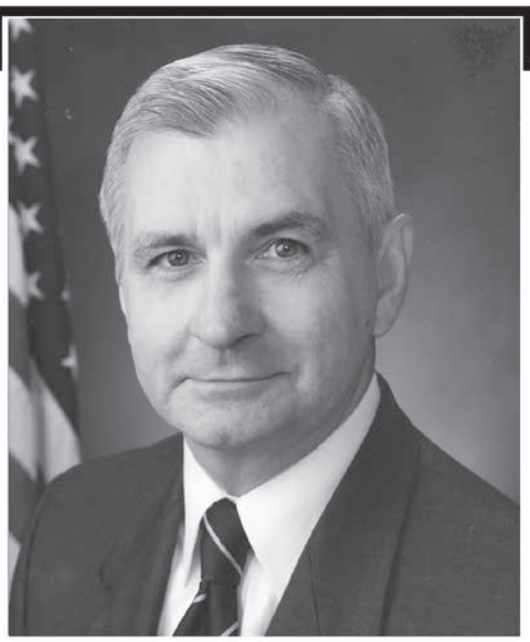
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Jeffrey B. Pine
Attorney General: 1993-1999

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25 years. Never forget.

COMMUNITY VOICES

Seen in Rhode Island: Jewish license plates





Joe Ruby, who co-created "Scooby-Doo," was Jewish. The show often featured Jewish lore, and the comic based on the series even featured a golem in Issue 3. PHOTOS | GEORGE GOODWIN

SIMCHAS

Gloria Golden celebrates 100 years



Gloria Golden celebrates 100 years at her Aug. birthday party in Cranston. PHOTO | KAREN BORGER

CRANSTON, R.I. — Gloria Golden, a lifelong Rhode Island resident and member of the local Jewish community, turned 100 in August. Her little sister Phyllis Potash is 94. Still vibrant, Gloria just won a scrabble competition of over 100 people.

My year in Israel



COURTESY OF SIMCHA ABRAHIM

SIMCHA ABRAHIM climbing a palm tree in Eilat. Abrahim, who was a recipient of the Jewish Alliance's Israel Travel Grant and Scholarship, says, "My year in Israel was a year filled with learning Torah, making friendships, getting to know my Israeli relatives and making connections with Rebbeim. I enjoyed my year very much, and I am going back for *Shana Bet*."

FOOD

Strong memories, sweet traditions

BY JODI GREENBERG

Some of our strongest memories are connected to food. Not necessarily because the food was elaborate or the restaurant extraordinary, but because of where we were, who we were with and how the experience made us feel.

I CAN STILL taste perfectly fried slivers of artichoke in Barcelona and butternut squash ravioli with crispy sage in Tuscany, the kind of dishes you're convinced could never be recreated anywhere else, though you're tempted to try. But some of my most meaningful food memories have happened much closer to home: touring an apiary with my mom to learn how honey is made, picking apples with family or arriving at a friend's house with something homemade to share.

I recently read that tradition is how we keep past experiences alive and moving forward. I love that idea, particularly when it comes to food. Traditions may evolve over time or stay almost the same – or at least as much as anything can after being passed from one person to another. Food traditions engage all five senses: the aroma of something baking, the taste of a familiar recipe, the sounds of people gathered around a table. They have a remarkable way of connecting us to people, places and moments from our past while creating new memories for the future.

Rosh Hashanah offers a natural moment to think about that connection. We dip apples in honey as a wish for a sweet new year. It's a simple ritual, but perhaps that is part of its beauty. The sweetness isn't only in what we eat; it's in the traditions we repeat, the memories they evoke and the ways we choose to share them. Perhaps it's a tradition passed down through generations, one you enjoy with friends or family, or something you create for yourself and eventually pass along for someone else to enjoy in their own way.

And in Rhode Island, fall gives us plenty of opportunities to take that tradition beyond the table.

This year, consider making the gathering of the apples part of the holiday experience by spending a few hours picking them yourself. Jaswell's Farm in Smithfield, Steere Orchard in Greenville, Sweet Berry Farm in Middletown and Narrow Lane Orchard in North Kingstown are among Rhode Island's destinations for fall apple picking. Enjoy a cup of cider or a cinnamon-sugar cider donut if the farm offers them. Take a photograph in the same spot each year. Invite family or friends or enjoy it as a solo adventure. Before long, a simple afternoon at the orchard can become part of your own Rosh Hashanah tradition.

Honey offers another way to experience the season. Rhode Island is home to a wonderful community of beekeepers and apiaries producing local honey and learning how it gets from hive to jar can bring new meaning to this familiar symbol of Rosh Hashanah. Bee Happy Homestead in Charlestown offers opportunities to learn about bees, beekeeping, honey production and pollinator health. You can also find local honey at farmers markets, some apple orchards and roadside stands such as Whaley Farm Market off Route 1 in South Kingstown — an easy way to bring a little local sweetness to your holiday table.

Once you've gathered your apples and honey, enjoy them just as they are or use them as inspiration to try something new. One idea is a simple apple-honey granola filled with the flavors of the season.

Toss 2 cups of rolled oats (avoid quick-cooking oats) with a handful of pepitas, a dash of cinnamon and a pinch of kosher salt. Add 2 tablespoons avocado oil and 1/4 cup local honey, tossing until everything is lightly coated. Press the mixture evenly onto a parchment- or Silpat-lined baking sheet and bake at 300°F for about 25 minutes, stirring halfway through, until lightly golden and crisp. Let the granola cool completely before breaking it apart. Once cooled, toss with chopped dried apples, coconut flakes and dried cranberries.

"The sweetness isn't only in what we eat; it's in the traditions we repeat."

Serve it with yogurt, fresh apples and a drizzle of honey for breakfast, sprinkle it over baked fruit or simply eat it by the handful. And just think how delicious your home will smell.

Most importantly, make extra.

Fill a jar, tie on a ribbon and share it with someone, a neighbor you know well, someone you've just met, a friend or family member, along with a handwritten wish for a sweet new year.

Because perhaps the best food memories aren't really about food at all. They're about the experiences we have as we pick it, prepare it and share it, and the traditions that allow us to keep those memories moving forward. Whether shared around a table, given to a neighbor or created simply for ourselves those small rituals can connect us to the past while opening the door to something new, passing a little sweetness from one person, and one generation, to the next.

RESOURCES

Farmers Markets: farmfreshri.org/programs/farmers-markets/rimarketguide/

Pick-Your-Own Farms: visitri.com/state/pick-your-own-farms/

Baker's Tip: Fill a 1/4-cup measuring cup halfway with avocado oil and pour it into the mixture. Then use the same cup to measure the honey. The thin coating of oil will help the honey glide right out without sticking.

JODI GREENBERG *is a member of the board of the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island.*

BMW AUDI MERCEDES BENZ VOLKSWAGEN MINI COOPER PORSCHE

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LETTERS

Rhode Island-Israel Collaborative opposes ballot referendum

THE RHODE Island Israel Collaborative (RIIC) strongly opposes the proposed "Human Rights Divestment Ordinance" [that will be on the November ballot in Providence].

The proponents of the ordinance have publicly acknowledged that it is intended to "bring attention to Palestine" by using Providence's investment policies to advance a position on an international political issue. The ordinance therefore improperly converts the city's investment authority into a platform for political advocacy, rather than a tool to protect the financial interests of Providence residents. The City of Providence's responsibility is to govern effectively by providing essential public services that directly affect the daily lives of its residents, including public health and safety, education, infrastructure, community services, economic development and land-use planning. Its investment decisions should be guided solely by fiduciary principles — preserving public assets, earning prudent returns and meeting its obligations to pensioners, retirees, beneficiaries and taxpayers — not by taking positions on complex international political controversies through municipal investment policy.

Submitted by Avi Nevel on behalf of the Rhode Island-Israel Collaborative.

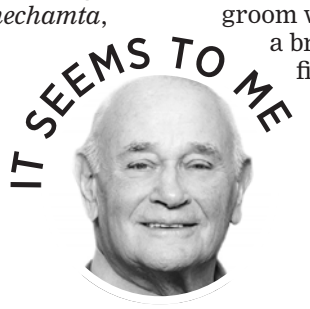
OPINION

The Prophet Who Has No Name

This past July 22 to 23, Tisha B'Av, the ninth day of the month of Av in our Jewish calendar, observant Jews throughout the world engaged in a sunset to sunset fast to commemorate the destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem by the Babylonians around 586 B.C.E.

BY RABBI JAMES B. ROSENBERG

ON THE SEVEN Shabbats following Tisha B'Av, the prophetic readings following the weekly Torah readings are known as the *sheva de-nechamta*, Aramaic for "the seven (haftarot) of consolation." Each of these readings is intended to bring comfort to us Jewish people during our journey from the dark despair of Tisha B'Av to the renewed hope and light of our new year, Rosh Hashanah.



RABBI JAMES ROSENBERG

As it turns out, each of the seven haftarah readings following Tisha B'Av is taken from the writings of a biblical prophet who has no name. As Rabbi Gunther Plaut (1912-2012) in his massive 1996 Haftarah commentary put it, "…chapter 40 (of Isaiah) opens the prophecies of the Second Isaiah. This unknown preacher-poet lived during the exile in Babylonia (sixth century B.C.E.), and at some later time, his writings were attached to those of First Isaiah, who lived well over a century earlier."

Though nobody knows the name of Second Isaiah, much of the world knows the power of his writing. Listen to the very opening words of the first of the seven haftarot of consolation: "*Nachamu, nachamu, ami.* Comfort, yes comfort, My people."

The climactic seventh of the haftarot of consolation begins with Isaiah 61.1: "I greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being exults in my God, who has clothed me in triumph and robed me in victory, as a bridegroom whose head is adorned, as a bride bedecks herself in finery."

And the final three verses of this concluding haftarah of consolation in Isaiah 63.7-9 read, "Let me recount the Lord's loving acts, the Lord's praiseworthy deeds for all the Lord has done for us and the great goodness, and mercy and love the Lord has shown the House of Israel. God said: They alone are My people, children who will not be false to Me. So God became their Savior. Afflicted in their affliction, God's Presence saved them. In love and pity did God redeem them, carried them and raised them high in all times past."

As I have read and reread the seven haftarot from Second Isaiah, I am struck by how this prophet who has no name is able to evoke God's love affair with those wretched Jews trapped in exile in Babylon. With his gift of words, the prophet brings those of us who "hear his words" to feel the tenderness between God and the people of Israel — the depth, the essence which seems to live beyond language.

I would suggest that much of Second Isaiah's poetry evokes, but fails to clearly define, what the rabbis centuries later clarify as their notion of the chosen people — an idea which we express in our chanting our kiddush every Friday evening as we welcome Shabbat. We come to the words, *ki vanu vacharta v'otanu kidashta mikol ha'amim* (for You have chosen us and have sanctified us above all peoples). I confess that whenever I come to these particular words, I feel both privileged and uncomfortable: privileged to be able to partake in the richness of Jewish experience, but uncomfortable with the words which seem to imply that God favors us Jews above all other religious groups, that we are indeed God's "chosen people."

For several decades I have been wrestling with this notion that we Jews are God's chosen people. In powerful and continuous dialogue with Catholic and Protestant clergy and laity — and, of course, with my fellow Jews — I have come to realize that every historically established religion is, in its unique way, chosen by God. We Jews are no exception; we too are a chosen people, but not the chosen people. Second Isaiah, the prophet who has no name, has given voice to a universalist perspective in a passage not included in the *sheva de-nechamta,* in Isaiah 56.7, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples."

I can only wonder how this statement meshes with the prophet's more particularistic views of his fellow exiles in Babylon of the sixth century B.C.E.

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

Nearly three years on: Notes from an ordinary life in Israel

SOMEBODY ASKED me recently what has changed most in Israel since the war began, and the honest answer surprised them. The sirens, the checkpoints, the news: All of that becomes furniture. What changes you is the calendar. Two years in, the rhythm of ordinary life here has been bent and remade so many times that a Wednesday can hold a funeral, a birthday party and a product launch, and nobody at any of the three will find the combination strange.

I want to give Rhode Island readers a sense of what that actually feels like from the inside.

In Efrat, where I live, the alert system still sends phones shuddering across dinner tables. The first year, everyone ran. Now there is a pause, a mental calculation about direction and distance, and then most people continue what they were doing. That pause is not indifference. It is a learned skill, the same one that lets a bus driver in Tel Aviv finish his route after a red-alert app chimes. Psychologists here call it functional coping.

My neighbors call it Wednesday.

The harder adjustment is the people missing from the table. Nearly every family I know has someone who served months of reserve duty, and too many have someone who did not come back. Communities have absorbed a vocabulary nobody wanted, shloshim markers, hostage posters faded by sun, the particular quiet of a family whose son is still in Gaza.

When a mother in my neighborhood needed help during her husband's third call-up, the signup sheet for meals filled in an afternoon. The same communities keep showing up for each other in ways that never make international headlines.

Reserve duty, *miluim*, is the load-bearing wall of this whole period. Roughly 300,000 Israelis were called up in the war's first months, and the call-ups never really stopped. Workplaces learned to plan around empty desks. Some companies in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

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

How to tell if you are 'pro-human'

BY MARJORIE DAVIS

FOR MANY YEARS, an artist who lived in Providence created posters in support of Palestinians. In December 2023 he wrote, "I'm a pacifist. I believe in solutions to disagreements that avoid violence. I stand with countless others demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. We are an intelligent species capable of cooperation and solving problems without violence."

Calling himself "pro-human," the artist, along with too many others, has a selective concept of humanity that somehow never seems to include Jews.

One of the posters he created depicted a Palestinian boy crying. However, we should look beyond the surface.

What does the Palestinian boy cry out for?

He cries out for a world that understands that ceasefires with terrorists do not bring an enduring peace, nor do they bring freedom to the oppressed people who are governed by the terrorists.

He cries out for the chance to attend a school that does not teach him to kill people because they are of a different faith.

He cries out for all the Palestinian children Hamas used as human shields.

He cries out for the Palestinians to build a country of their own instead of trying to tear down what Israel has built.

He cries out for countries to take in Palestinian refugees, as they opened their doors for millions of Syrian and Ukrainian refugees.

He cries out for Arab countries to grant citizenship to Palestinians. No Arab state, other than Jordan, has ever granted full citizenship to Palestinians.

He cries for the food that Hamas stole. After Israel was widely accused of causing a famine in Gaza, the U.N. recently acknowledged that 90% of the food that Israel provided was stolen.

He cries for his fellow Muslims who are citizens of Muslim countries, yet do not have the immense freedom and opportunities that Muslim citizens have in Israel.

How can you tell if you are pro-human?

If you perpetually post memes about racism but at a time when antisemitism is soaring, you never mention it, you are not pro-human.

If a Black student was harassed and told to go back to Africa, you would be outraged, but when Jewish students were harassed and told to go back to Poland, you shrugged it off, then you are not pro-human.

If you have heard the never-ending calls of "From the River to the Sea" and have no concern where 10 million Israelis (Jews, Muslims, Christians and people of other faiths) will go, then you are not pro-human.

If you think that Israel, a country continually under attack from rockets, does not have a right to defend itself, you are not pro-human.

If you create multiple posters supporting Palestinians, but after the worst massacre of Jews since the Holocaust, you could not bring yourself to create even one poster depicting the suffering of Israelis, you are most certainly not pro-human.

Many who, under the guise of humanity, championed the Palestinians knowingly contributed to the drastic rise in antisemitism.

Moreover, they contributed to an increased number of Palestinian deaths. In fact, had the Western world overwhelmingly and steadfastly stood with Israel, Hamas likely would not have prevented civilians from taking cover in tunnels, nor would they have fought from schools, hospitals, and civilian homes. Ironically, the people who supported the Palestinians ended up being their worst enemy.

The people who condemn Israel's actions in wars started by Hamas and Hezbollah fail to recognize the tragedy that after two millennia of persecution, the Jewish people are still all too often under attack. The pogroms and genocide perpetrated by Christians and Muslims against Jews for thousands of years is the biggest stain on world history and the biggest injustice by far.

It is easy to be generous when it's not on your dime. It is easy to claim virtue while expecting others to make sacrifices and take risks. It is easy to call for a ceasefire from the security of an elite university or from an artist's studio 5,500 miles away.

However, if you lived just a few miles from terrorists who, with machine guns and machetes, might come into your house and drag you into a tunnel where you would be endlessly starved, tortured and raped, your concept of humanity would change.

Whether you call yourself pro-human or not, whether you tear down posters or create them, when all is said and done, you would want your government to do whatever it takes to protect you, too.

MARJORIE DAVIS *lives in Providence. She graduated from Brandeis University with a degree in Computer Science and is a senior database specialist in a large, international technology company. She is a frequent writer on antisemitism and Israel. Another version of this essay was published in Times of Israel.*

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

my own industry, technology, lost 15 to 20 percent of staff to call-ups — and still shipped product. A friend's firm rotated engineering teams like sports lines, so that whoever was left could keep the servers alive while teammates were at the front. The same pattern held in the U.S.-Israel tech partnership, which deepened under pressure, as well as in hospitals, schools and farms.

Money got tighter for many and stranger for everyone. A war economy does odd things. Restaurants in Tel Aviv were full in the same season that small businesses in the north went under for lack of customers. Israelis describe their finances these days with a shrug that covers real anxiety, and charitable giving, remarkably, went up rather than down. The instinct to patch the hole in the boat before bailing your own cabin runs deep here.

I know some American readers picture Israel as either a war zone or a fortress. The truth is more mundane and, I think, more moving. Life continues, carefully, stubbornly, with grief woven into it rather than pushed aside. Families still argue about holiday seating. Kids still complain about school. Couples still get married, though more cautiously and more gratefully.

Two years in, ordinariness itself has become a small act of defiance, and it is the part of this country the cameras will never show you. The story of Israel right now is people insisting on their own lives. That is what I want readers in Providence to take away. Not the map, not the rhetoric. The people who keep choosing the everyday, one careful Wednesday at a time.

MARK GINSBERG *lives in Efrat, Israel, and writes about Israeli society and technology.*

TAKE ACTION: REPORT an INCIDENT



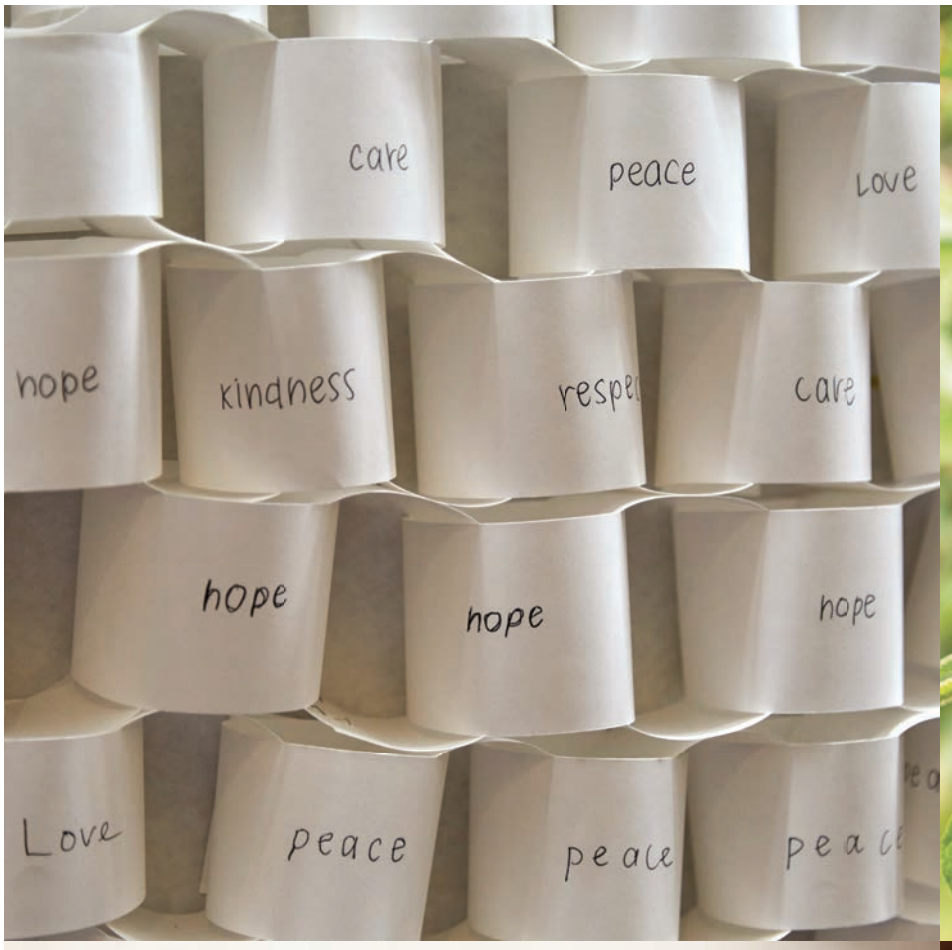
JEWISH ALLIANCE of Greater Rhode Island

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









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Blast of Shofar

BY JEREMY FRIEDMAN

TODAY the shofar
Shook me awake —
From somewhere afar —
With piercing sounds' quake
To make me take note
Taking in a blast's scream
Shivering … antidote …
Into a truer dream.

NOTE: *This poem is a take on Robert Frost's "Dust of Snow" from the author's book "11 New Roads Not Taken" (11newroads.com). It is published with his permission.*

JEREMY FRIEDMAN *is a Massachusetts-based lawyer and poet.*

NOTICE!

Lincoln Park Cemetery and its offices will be closed in observance of the following holidays:

Sunday, Sep. 13: Second Day of Rosh Hashanah

Monday, September 21: Yom Kippur

Sunday, September 27: Second day of Sukkot

Sunday, October 4: Simchat Torah

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COMMUNITY

BUSINESS 37 | OBITUARIES 38

Book lovers gather for Hadassah philanthropy, author talks



Women from Rhode Island and other areas of southern New England at Books on the Beach

PHOTO | FRAN OSTENDORF



Renee Kaminitz and Sue Mayes recite the Jewish blessing over bread.



Lynda Shuman; Jenna Blum, author of "Murder Your Darlings"; Hadassah President Carol Ann Schwartz; B. A. Shapiro, author of "The Lost Masterpiece"; and Mollyann Blumenthal, author presenter and interviewer

BY FRAN OSTENDORF

MIDDLETOWN, R.I. — On a warm summer afternoon in early August, 200 people gathered at the Wyndham Newport for Books on the Beach. The annual fundraiser, hosted by Hadassah Rhode Island and Hadassah of Southern New England, attracts women (and a few men) from all over New England to a luncheon featuring well-known authors as well as Hadassah leadership.

AFTER LUNCH and schmoozing, Carol Ann Schwartz, national president of Hadassah, opened the program with passionate words about the medical advances fostered by Hadassah's hospitals in Israel. Her remarks focused on the work of the organization and its reach.

"One out of nine Jewish women in the United States belongs to Hadassah," she said. "I travel the country and talk about how we are the bridge to peace (through medical advancements)."

Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, was founded in 1912, before the State of Israel and before American women could vote. Today, Hadassah has more than 300,000 members, associates and supporters who work to advance women's health, to fight hate and antisemitism, to support a strong and healthy nation for all the citizens of Israel and to instill Jewish values in future generations.

Books on the Beach, originally organized by the Newport chapter of Hadassah, is now in its 11th year. The event brings Jewish authors to talk about their work.

This year's author-speakers were B.A. Shapiro and Jenna Blum. Each discussed her unique writing process, featuring comments about her latest best-sellers.

Barbara Ann Shapiro, who writes as B.A., has spoken to the Books on the Beach crowd before. Now, she has written her 10th novel, "The Lost Masterpiece," and she talked about the general writing process.

For her, the writing process involves a lot of research, diagrams and notecards. With a doctorate in sociology, she loves to do research. She puts her research and ideas on index cards and moves them around to see how the story will work and then she writes. "There is no writer's block," she said. "You just have to get to work."

She told the story of how she started with several books that failed. But she kept on with the encouragement of her husband. "What a writer really needs is a spouse with benefits," she said.

He told her to forget writing in a genre; "write a book of your heart." She always wanted to be an artist and instead became an art appreciator. So she decided to write about art.

In Shapiro's case, she has chosen to write about unsung female artists. The first book was "The Art Forger," and it was a success.

Her latest, "The Lost Masterpiece," is based on tireless research with a little backstory added. According to Shapiro, that is the beauty of historical fiction. "You do just enough research, and then you can make up the rest!"

She said she works on more than one novel at a time because of the way the work process flows. She is currently working on her next novel, which promises to be a little different. Of all her novels, she said, "This one is giving me more trouble than the others."

Jenna Blum discussed her writing process with an equal measure of humor. The best-selling author's fifth novel, a thriller, "Murder Your Darlings," is in development for a film adaptation. In addition to writing novels, Blum is a podcaster and interviewer for Steven Spielberg's Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation. She also runs the online interview platform A Mighty Blaze.

Blum, like Shapiro, knew how to engage her audience.

"It is such an act of joy to see readers read the books and buy the books," she said. She gave a shout-out to Hadassah, saying "The power of women is unparalleled."

'The power of women is unparalleled.'

Blum has been writing since she was 4 years old and was inspired by her father, a news writer for CBS.

After college, she wrote stories while doing a variety of other jobs in food service — and sending out those stories. "Writing takes perseverance and grit," she said.

In graduate school, she started working on stories about what it means to be Jewish and German. Those stories resulted in the novel "Those Who Saved Us."

Readers made her first novel. She spoke to a book group and suggested they recommend it to others, and they did. Pretty soon, it was on the New York Times best-seller list. "When you recommend a book, it means everything," she said.

The latest book, which Blum called "very spicy," reflects her publishing journey, and some of the characters are right out of her life.

She switched from writing historical fiction to thrillers after another author told her "to write what you want."

"So I wrote 125 pages and never had so much fun. The Sam character is very much my own voice. The publishing part of the book is so much me."

For more information on Hadassah Rhode Island and its variety of programming, contact chapri@hadassah.org.

FRAN OSTENDORF *is the former editor of Jewish Rhode Island.*

COMMUNITY

Course on origins of Hebrew Bible offered as part of 'Delve Deeper' program

BY S.M. DE LA MONTE

PROVIDENCE — Mark Leuchter, professor of Hebrew Bible and ancient Judaism at Temple University in Philadelphia, will lead students through "The World Behind the Bible," a 10-week course offered as part of the local Jewish community's "Delve Deeper" program, starting Sept. 30 on Zoom.

In recent years, local students have expressed interest in the question of who wrote the Bible. Leuchter's course will look at the way the Hebrew Bible came together across centuries of ideas and experiences from the social groups behind the texts.

Leuchter's work and teaching focus on how the Bible's texts have been inherited and the world that the Bible created.

Organizers say the class is timely and will help students understand the origins of the Hebrew Bible. With scholarly leadership from Leuchter, the class will explore historical texts to examine familiar motifs and tales such as creation, the Exodus, law, wisdom and sacrifice. Leuchter will also lead discussions on the role of cultural memory, social cognition, language and the function of media and art in the world at the time of the creation of these texts. The course will explore the relationship between the biblical authors' literature and the communities they formed over countless generations. Leuchter will delineate the course contents, syllabus and reading assignments.

"The World Behind the Bible" will be offered via Zoom. The 10-week course will meet for two hours on Wednesday evenings, from 7 to 9 p.m. with a brief break after the first hour. The course will run from Sept. 30 to Dec. 9, with no class held Nov. 25, due to Thanksgiving.

Tuition is $250, but organizers emphasize that the cost should not be a barrier. Scholarships are available by contacting Larry Katz at larrykatz1221@gmail.com or a rabbi at a sponsoring synagogue. To learn more and to register, visit delvedeeper.org or teprov.org/delvedeeper/registration/Fall2026.html.

The Delve Deeper Program of Intensive Jewish Study, which began in 2017, is presented in cooperation with the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island and area synagogues, including Congregation Beth Shalom, Congregation Jeshuat Yisrael, Temple Beth-El, Temple Emanu-El, Temple Habonim, Temple Sinai and Temple Torat Yisrael, as well as the Jewish Community Day School of Rhode Island.

Financial support is provided by the Joseph and Jacqueline Teverow Memorial Fund at the Jewish Federation Foundation of Greater Rhode Island. Since 2017, the program has sponsored 18 fall and spring courses covering Jewish history, themes, texts and personalities.



Mark Leuchter, Ph.D., will lead the "Delve Deeper" course exploring the origins of the Hebrew Bible.

S.M. DE LA MONTE *is a professor of neurosurgery and of pathology and laboratory medicine at Brown University.*

Local Scout leads improvements at school



Liam Isaacs poses in front of improvements at Jewish Community Day School of Rhode Island. Isaacs worked with several friends to create the project.



The Adirondack chair, finished, is brought to the school.

PHOTOS | JEFFREY ISAACS

BY JRI STAFF

LIAM ISAACS, the son of Jeff Isaacs and Temple Beth-El's Rabbi Sarah Mack, led improvements at Jewish Community Day School of Rhode Island to fulfill his requirements to attain the rank of Eagle Scout.

Isaacs, a senior patrol leader of Scouting of America's Troop 28 and a junior at Classical High School, worked with others in his troop and Edge and End Studios to build a "giant Adirondack chair" and install decorations to create a community gathering spot at the school.

To accomplish the task, he worked with Aaron Guttin of Edge and End; Ryan Hagerman, Peter Shore and others at the Narragansett Council Jewish Committee on Scouting; and leaders of the day school.





COMMUNITY

Temple Beth-El welcomes two new clergy

BY JUDE WEINSTEIN

PROVIDENCE — Two new clergy members joined Temple Beth-El right as it prepares for the High Holy Days.

THE NEW CLERGY, Cantor Juval Porat and Assistant Rabbi Abi Oshins, say they are looking forward to building on the legacy of their predecessors during their first year leading Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services alongside Senior Rabbi Sarah Mack.

Their partnership makes this year special for the temple. Porat succeeds Cantor Judy Seplowin, whose 26-year tenure left an enduring impact. At the same time, Oshins joined the clergy as assistant rabbi, providing another new presence during one of the most meaningful times of the year.

While living in Germany, Porat pursued a master's degree in architecture. During that time, he also served as a cantorial soloist at several congregations. His devotion to community leadership, paired with his musical talents, brought him to the Institute of Cantorial Arts in Berlin, part of the Abraham Geiger College. He completed the academic year at the Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem.

After Porat's 2009 arrival in the United States, he served as cantor for Beth Chayim Chadashim, the world's first recognized LGBTQIA+ synagogue, founded by and for the Los Angeles queer community. He was drawn to Temple Beth-El to further cultivate musical engagement in a collaborative and accessible manner.

As cantor, Porat will play an important role in preserving the synagogue's musical integrity. To provide a smooth transition, he gained insight from Mack, Seplowin and High Holy Day Choir Director Don St. Jean. He plans to include familiar melodies from previous services while bringing in selections from his diverse background.

"I bring my own point of view, but I want to respect what has already been created here so no one feels left out," Porat said. "I will do my best to bridge this gap, offer moments of awe, humanity and reflection."

For Porat, the High Holy Days provide an opportunity for the congregation's members to contemplate their connection with themselves, the text and those around them through singing prayers.

Oshins, the incoming assistant rabbi, joined Temple Beth-El after her ordination at Hebrew College in 2026. Her tasks will include working closely with students and adults alike looking to further their Jewish education through meaningful programming. As she approaches her first High Holy Days at the temple, Oshins is particularly looking forward to the calls during the shofar service. She said they speak to her soul.

"There is a certain sense of New England and Rhode Island pride within this community that you can feel through the walls of this place," Oshins said. "There is a certain resilience within New England culture that can be felt through the congregation. I can sense that they are excited for this new chapter."

She appreciates the sense of tradition ingrained within the culture at Temple Beth-El, particularly through the generations of families that have worshipped, learned and connected here. She acknowledges the foundation that was built by those before her. During the transition, she finds solace in knowing that the experience will be shared collectively.

The arrival of Porat and Oshins has allowed the clergy opportunities to collaborate on the year's services through a lens that honors and respects previous years while adding new perspectives from the newest leaders.

"It is a joy to bring two new team members aboard," Mack said. "Both Rabbi Oshins and Cantor Porat bring a wealth of wisdom and experience that enriches our community. Their presence is a breath of fresh air that inspires us as we look to an exciting year at Temple Beth-El. Each brings a unique voice, and I have enjoyed getting to know them and can't wait for the community to get to know them."

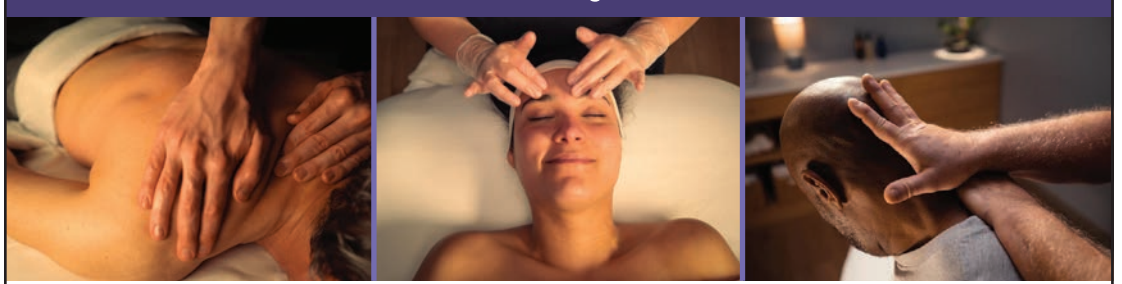
Temple Beth-El's High Holy Day services will begin Friday, Sept. 11, with the Erev Rosh Hashanah service and toast at 8 p.m. Additional information about services, attendance and livestreaming is available at temple-beth-el.org.

JUDE WEINSTEIN *is the assistant to the director and communication associate at Temple Beth-El.*

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COMMUNITY

Daughter of pastor John Hagee to speak at Israel event

SANDRA HAGEE PARKER, daughter of pastor John Hagee and board chair of the Christians United for Israel Action Fund, will headline the annual Night to Honor Israel at 7 p.m. Sept. 30 at Praise Tabernacle in Cranston.

Parker, based in San Antonio, Texas, has practiced nonprofit law for over a decade. Before that, she practiced corporate and nonprofit law with Rosenthal Pauerstein Sandoloski & Agather LLP. While there, she was chosen as top lawyer and featured in Scene in SA [San Antonio.]

The event, sponsored by the Rhode Island Coalition for Israel, aims to unite Jews and Christians and is open to the public with no registration required. The address is 330 Park Ave., and armed security will be present.

In a show of interreligious friendship, the church's pastors will remove all religious symbols from the rooms where the event will be held.



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COMMUNITY

Bernhardt, Goldowsky and Silverstein foundations: Potential grant money for Jewish nonprofits

PROVIDENCE — Local foundations are looking for tax-exempt nonprofit organizations seeking grant funds. These nonprofits are eligible to apply for a grant from the Helene and Bertram Bernhardt Foundation, the Gertrude N. and Seebert J. Goldowsky Foundation and the Pearle W. and Martin M. Silverstein Foundation.

Established in 2005 through the estates of the late Helene and Bertram Bernhardt, the Bernhardt Foundation's mission is to support nonprofit organizations, with a specific preference given to Jewish nonprofit organizations in Rhode Island and to nonprofit organizations that Helene and Bertram Bernhardt supported during their lives. The foundation also distributes a limited number of small grants (up to $250) to local charities that support the broader community.

Since its founding, the Bernhardt Foundation has distributed more than $9 million to Temple Beth-El; the Jewish Alliance; Jewish Collaborative Services; the Hillels at Brown, RISD and URI; Miriam Hospital; and others.

The Goldowsky Foundation was established in 2006 through the estates of Gertrude N. and Seebert J. Goldowsky. Its mission is to fund nonprofit organizations supported by the Goldowskys during their lifetimes. Organizations the foundation supports focus on the local Jewish community, education, medicine, public health and history. The Goldowsky Foundation seeks to award grants in amounts between $250 and $10,000 to advance these funding priorities.

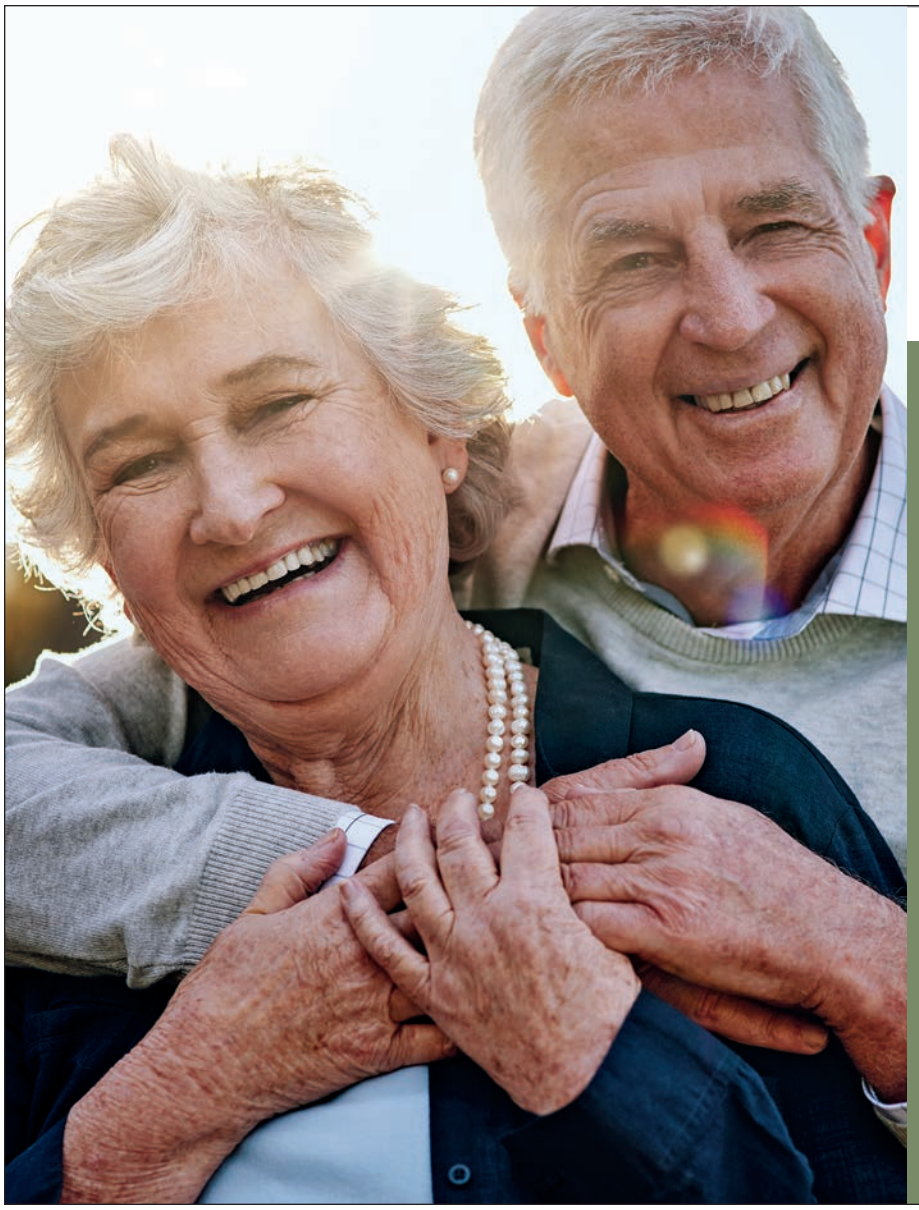
The Silverstein Foundation was established in 1989 through the estates of Pearle W. and Martin M. Silverstein. Its mission is to support nonprofit organizations. It considers organizations supported by the Silversteins during their lifetimes and those focusing on the local Jewish community, education, the arts and social justice. The Silverstein Foundation seeks to award grants in amounts between $250 and $5,000 to advance these funding priorities.

To receive the application forms and funding guidelines, contact Secretary Samuel Zurier by email at sdz@zurierlaw.com, by telephone at 401-861-0200 or by mail at 123 Dyer St., Suite 135, Providence, RI 02903.

The deadline to submit Bernhardt Foundation applications is Dec. 1, 2026. The Goldowsky and Silverstein foundations consider applications on a rolling basis.

Submitted by Samuel D. Zurier.

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COMMUNITY

At Washington letter reading, emphasis on religious liberty



Recipients of the Slom Scholarship stand as their essays are read. From left: Dylon Armstrong of Moses Brown School, Tess Margolis of Rogers High School, Nirupama Bhatt of Cumberland High School and Nicholas Wilusz of Chariho High School.



Americans United for Separation of Church and State President and CEO Rachel Laser addresses the gathering.

PHOTOS | ALLAN MILLORA

BY DANIEL MARGOLIS

NEWPORT, R.I. — Rachel Laser, a leader in the defense of religious liberty, said the wall between church and state is "under siege" and urged those attending the Aug. 16 annual reading of George Washington's letter to the Hebrew Congregation to redouble their fight for religious freedom.

ACROSS THE COUNTRY, in state legislatures and at the highest levels of the federal government, she said, there is "a coordinated strategy to dismantle church-state separation and redefine religious freedom, turning it from a shield that protects people into a sword that harms them."

Speaking as president and CEO of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, Laser issued the call in her keynote address to the event of about 150 people, which was held at the Colony House and organized by TSF Newport (formerly the Touro Synagogue Foundation). She is also a member of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, to which she was appointed by U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., in 2025.

Supreme Court justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Elena Kagan both delivered the Newport keynote address in previous years. Laser invoked them, contrasting Ginsburg's optimism in 2004 and Kagan's a few years later to the present.

"What struck me was the certainty in which both justices spoke of America living up to its promise of religious freedom," Laser said. "Sadly, I just don't feel that confidence today."

Erosion of the church-state barrier is not the only reason for many Jews' lessened sense of belonging, Laser said, but it is "potentially the least understood." Still, she expressed hope that "a future keynote speaker here will be able to speak with that confidence again."

The memory of Rhode Island's own Roger Williams was invoked by several of the speakers. His presence was felt to such an extent that, when she was about to quote him, Laser said, "Say it with me, Rhode Island." The crowd responded, "Roger Williams."

Williams famously was the first colonist to argue for a full separation of church and state, and he even created the metaphor of a hedge or wall of separation between the two. The colony he founded, Rhode Island, became the first to enshrine the principle in law.

That separation is endangered, according to Laser, in many ways, from states mandating a "Protestant" version of the Ten Commandments in classrooms to federal officials attempting to enforce a specific version of Christianity. She pointed to Vice President J.D. Vance, who said at a 2025 Turning Point USA conference, "[B]y the grace of God, we always will be a Christian nation."

Keeping religion and government separate is not an anti-Christian idea, Laser — who as a Jew is the first religious minority to lead Americans United — said. Instead, she argued, doing so protects even the majority religion, saying, "The founding generation understood that church-state separation also protects religion from being corrupted by the government."

Laser urged the building of a multi-religious, bipartisan coalition aimed at restoring the "wall of separation" — which, she pointed out, was a term used by Thomas Jefferson in his 1802 letter to the Danbury Baptists.

In closing, she turned to another founder. "When George Washington wrote to the Touro Synagogue in 1790, he promised that the United States government would give 'to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance.'"

That letter was the reason for the event. Each year, TSF Newport hosts a reading and commemoration of George Washington's letter to the congregation at the city's Touro synagogue. This year, the 79th, the event was held at the Colony House, which served as a seat of Rhode Island's colonial government and then the early state government.

As part of the celebration, the organization awarded four Rhode Island high school graduates the Aaron and Rita Slom Scholarship for Freedom and Diversity. Additionally, U.S. Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I.; R.I. Secretary of State Gregg Amore; and Lynn Underwood Ceglie of the Newport city council offered greetings. Democratic U.S. Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse also attended.

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COMMUNITY

Under the shadow of Hitler and Stalin, wartime Jewish genealogy

BY AARON GINSBURG

After a long journey, I spent April 2, 2026, in Lviv, Ukraine. Its large center is mostly pre-WWII. Just looking at the old doors is fascinating. I walked to the Lykachiv Cemetery. A sea of flags marks the graves of the soldiers killed in the ongoing war with Russia.

A 12-HOUR train trip took me 472 miles east to Poltrava. At 6 a.m. my friend Alex picked me up at the train station with his gasoline car fitted with an LPG conversion.

The next day we visited Hesed Nefesh, a charitable organization that supports the Jewish community. I gave a talk about Jewish genealogy. My initial interest in my own family history helped reunite another family separated by both the Holocaust and Stalin. This soon led to helping other families.

With Alex, I revisited Horodyshche, Cherkassy Oblast, the birthplace of my grandfather Jacob Pokross. He came to Fall River, Mass., as a child in 1892 with his siblings and parents, Pinkas and Jenny Pokross.

My visit had another motive. In nearby Mliiv, a Holocaust monument does not mention that the victims were Jewish. Since Soviet-era commemoration policies rejected the idea of targeted genocide, I needed a way to amend this. Vira, a teacher interested in local history who showed us around, added me to a Facebook group of people using old photographs to learn about Horodyshche's history. They immediately started to help me research my family history.

After I returned home, Vira told me that her friend Kateryna possessed a contract to sell a house in 1906. Aaron Pokras went to the Russian consulate in New York to authorize his wife to sell his share of a house to his two brothers, Moshko and Pinkas. Pinkas Pokross was my great grandfather's name! I already had Aaron on my family tree! Kateryna is related to the wife of one of his brothers.

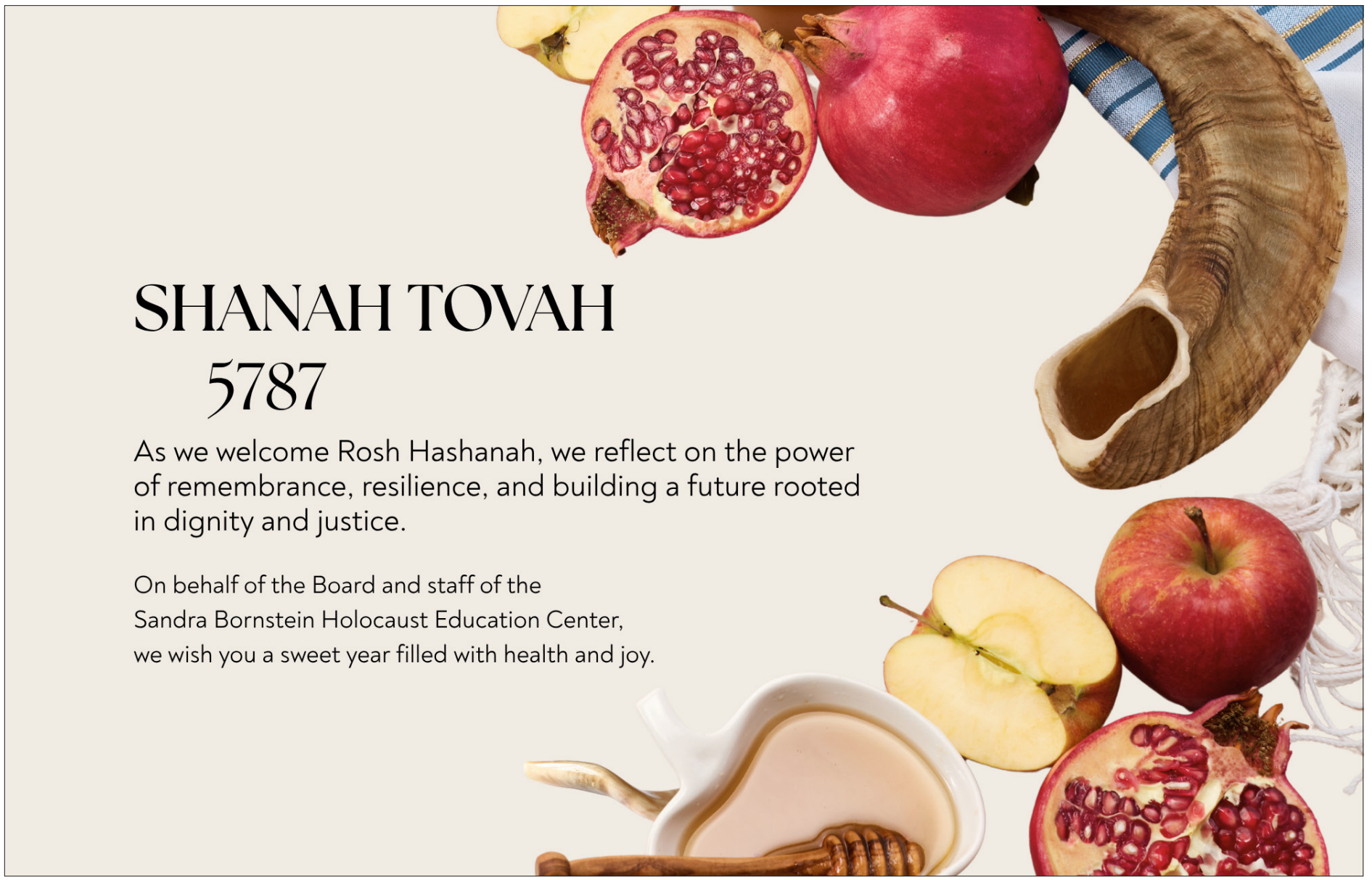
We visited two Jewish communities, Myhorod and Zvenyhorodka, meeting the leaders of both. They held religious services until COVID-19. Their synagogues were community centers and included spaces for worship, meetings, meals and museum sections. In Myhorod we were warmly welcomed by Mikhail Ruthizer.

Mikhail's community pro-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29



At the Zbarazh office of the mayor, from left, historian Tatania Fedoriv, Aaron Ginsburg, Mayor Roman Polikrowski and Diana Borysenko stand. Previously, Mayor Polikrowski led the construction of a small new Jewish cemetery.



COMMUNITY



In Horodyshche, Aaron Ginsburg, Vira and Alex pose for a photo. PHOTOS | AARON GINSBURG

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

vides headstones if a family can't afford one. He brought us to a Holocaust site where remains were reinterred so a factory could be built. A small Holocaust monument erected in the last 20 years stands in front of a massive Soviet one. Crumbling headstones in the Jewish cemetery don't have Jewish symbols in keeping with Soviet policy, but many post-Soviet monuments have menorahs, although no Hebrew.

Driving through Shpola on our way to Zvenyhorodka a crowd lined both sides of a busy street holding flags and banners demonstrating about those missing in action. Cars honked their approval. A nearby monument displayed 150 pictures of soldiers killed in the war with flowers at its base from their loved ones. The war was everywhere.

In Zvenyhorodka, we met Leonid Braslavsky. The Jewish community had a synagogue built in 1891. During the Soviet era, it became part of a hospital. Leonid showed us a moving photo of people at a Holocaust memorial ceremony. It takes place annually on or close to Victory Day in a forest with at least five WWII massacre sites. The monument says in Ukrainian, "Here lie the sons of our people, murdered by the fascists in 1943." Other monuments refer to them as Soviet citizens.

By their presence at the memorial ceremony and by the monument's words, the survivors speak directly to us, to the victims and to G-d.

Leonid asked, "Why did my American relatives, the Lubarskys from Lysianka, stop writing in the 1960s?" Lysianka is 23 miles NNW of Zvenyhorodka. I heard a different question, "I am the child of Holocaust survivors and don't have a lot of relatives. What happened to my American family?"

On jewishgen.org I found an 1893 Russian document for a Lubarsky family in Lysianka who subsequently emigrated to the United States. A second Lysianka Lubarsky family also came to the US. Due to the passage of time and assimilation, they can be hard to find.

From Lviv, I took a day trip with guide Diana Borysenko. We drove to Holohirky (Bare Hills), about an hour east of Lviv. The only evidence of the Jewish community is a cemetery. A friendly woman at the village office took us there. On a hilltop was an empty field with a few standing headstones and a heap of fragments overlooking the valley below.

On the outskirts of Ternopil, a city with about 225,000 residents, a lot of people stood by the roadside. Diana opened the window. It was a drone attack! Thousands had stopped their cars and exited them following official advice. Their eyes were trained on the skies. The attack was miles away in the city center. A quarter of the city lost electricity, a fire burned for 24 four hours, and thirteen people were injured, some severely.

In Zbarazh, we visited Mayor Roman Polikrowski with historian Tatania Fedoriv. On his own initiative, the mayor arranged for a small Jewish cemetery to be cleaned up; Tanya documented the headstones.

That evening in Lviv, my last night in Ukraine, I heard the persistent sound of air raid alerts. It was a false alarm….

AARON GINSBURG, *a Newport native, lives in Stoughton, Mass., and blogs at jewishnewport.blogspot.com.*





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COMMUNITY

Local coalition to honor Nevel for boosting R.I.-Israel trade

BY JRI STAFF

PROVIDENCE — The Rhode Island Coalition for Israel (RICI) will honor Rhode Island-Israel Collaborative founder Avi Nevel at its annual Sy Dill Mensch of the Year Awards Fundraiser Nov. 15.

RICI IS INVITING pro-Israel Rhode Islanders to "celebrate our accomplishments and set our sights on future progress by joining our movement to stand up for Israel, the Jewish people and our sacred democratic values."

Nevel, RIIC founder and chief executive officer, will headline the event as keynote speaker. In addition, he will be honored with RICI's annual Sy Dill Mensch of the Year Award, which goes to "a proud Zionist who has demonstrated continued advocacy for Israel and Jewish causes." Nevel will be honored especially for supporting commerce between Israel and Rhode Island.

RICI's Advocacy Award will be presented to Dr. May-Tal Sauerbrun-Cutler, a faculty member at the Warren Alpert Medical School at Brown University. She will be honored for her work advocating on behalf of Jewish students at Brown and her service as co-chair of the RIIC healthcare committee.

In addition, the group will present the RICI Lifetime Recognition Award to founding RICI board member Stanley Freedman for his lifetime of dedication to Israel and the Jewish community in Rhode Island.

The event will feature an Israeli wine-tasting, storytelling and a chance to connect with others who love Israel. Aside from wine, kosher small bites and desserts will be served.

According to the coalition, space is still available and the location will be sent immediately upon registration via email. Armed security will be present, and free street parking will be available as well as a parking lot.

Those interested in sponsorship should email maria@ricoalitionforisrael.org, both for individuals and businesses/organizations. Registration is available at tinyurl.com/2026rici.

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COMMUNITY

Save the dates: a season of connection, celebration and community

THE MONTHS AHEAD are filled with opportunities to gather, celebrate and make meaningful memories together. Each event below is designed to allow community members to strengthen one another, spark conversations, create joyful memories, and support the programs and services that help the community thrive. Whether joining for an intimate performance, a gathering of friends or an unforgettable evening, participation helps build a stronger, more connected Jewish community.

The season opens Oct. 22 with a partnership alongside the University of Rhode Island Hillel for the Mandolin and Guitar Festival. This will bring music lovers together for an inspiring performance.

In November, a conversation will follow the Evening of Jewish Renaissance (scheduled for Nov. 7) during a Nov. 8 women's brunch under the theme "What's old is new again." Guests will enjoy thoughtful discussion, connections and the opportunity to explore ideas that resonate long after the weekend concludes.

January focuses on wellness and renewal. Community members are invited to spend the "Day at the J" Jan. 31, enjoying massage, meditation, movement and self-care during Wellness Day. That evening, there will be a special appearance by Lauren Tetenbaum, author of "Millennial Menopause," for an empowering conversation filled with insight, laughter and connection.

On Feb. 7, community will gather around the table for "La Dolce Vita," a ladies' dinner — with delicious food — celebrating friendship. Come for the pasta, stay for the company and leave with new friendships and memories.

Spring brings one of the most anticipated events of the year. On March 20, guests are invited to step into the elegance and intrigue of the Black and White Purim Masquerade. Guests are invited to come — masked as someone else — for an evening of festive surprises, decadent treats and meaningful fundraising in support of the community.

The season concludes June 14 with the beloved Annual Golf Classic, bringing friends, supporters and community partners together for a day of camaraderie, friendly competition and philanthropy.

The community is invited to join throughout the year to find Jewish joy together through connection and investment in the collective Jewish future.

To learn more about the many ways to get involved, contact Brigitte Baum, donor recognition and events manager by email at bbaum@jewishallianceri.org.

Submitted by the Jewish Alliance development team

Jewish Alliance launches 2026-2027 Community Campaign, reaches out for impact

PROVIDENCE — The Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island has launched its 2026-2027 Community Campaign, a community-wide effort to raise $3.5 million from more than 1,350 donors by June 30, 2027.

All funds raised will strengthen Jewish life, support essential human services and address local and global Jewish needs. These collective investments strengthen the Jewish community and enable a proactive and impactful response to evolving community needs.

Led by Campaign Co-Chairs Reza Breakstone and Katie Ziegler, Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island Board Chair Marisa Garber and President and CEO Steven Baker, the campaign reflects the power of collective philanthropy.

"The Community Campaign is the power behind the engine of Jewish life," Baker said. "Gifts of every size come together to support our community today and ensure a strong Jewish future in the year ahead."

Campaign dollars support Jewish learning and camp scholarships; youth, teen, college, adult and senior programming such as PJ Library and Kosher Meals on Wheels; community relations and security; counseling and social services; Holocaust and antisemitism education; emergency assistance; leadership development; and global Jewish partners' human service and connection work.

"Every gift to the Community Campaign is an investment in people," said Ziegler. "Each contribution helps strengthen the community now and for generations to come."

The Alliance invites individuals, families, businesses, foundations and community partners to participate. Every gift — from $5 to $5 million — is a sign of solidarity with the Jewish people and helps build a stronger, more connected and more resilient Jewish community.

For more information, contact Jennifer Zwirn, chief development officer, at jzwirn@jewishallianceri.org.

Submitted by the Jewish Alliance Development Team.

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COMMUNITY

Building Bridges: Israeli neurotech students visit Providence

BY LAWRENCE M. KATZ

PROVIDENCE — Innovation knows no borders.

This summer, students from Brown University and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev came together here for the intensive two-week "Neurotechnology Hackathon."



Neurotechnology Hackathon participants pose for a photo, along with RIIC CEO Avi Nevel (back right) and R.I. Secretary of Commerce Stefan Pryor (back row, fourth from right).

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE RHODE ISLAND-ISRAEL COLLABORATIVE.

WORKING SIDE by side in interdisciplinary teams, the students combined neuroscience, engineering, entrepreneurship and creativity to develop innovative solutions to real-world challenges, transforming science into products using market-based research and business development. Guided by faculty mentors and professionals from academia and industry, the teams tackled current challenges in neuroscience and neurotechnology while learning from one another across cultures, disciplines and backgrounds.

This is the second summer that this program has taken place.

An introductory event at the end of the first week was hosted by Julie Owens, CEO of the Social Enterprise Greenhouse, a Rhode Island nonprofit supporting entrepreneurs and enterprises that create positive social, environmental and economic impact. She compared Rhode Island and Israel, saying they are both small in area but have big footprints in technological innovation.

Avi Nevel, CEO of the Rhode Island-Israel Collaborative, which facilitated the collaboration, introduced Professor Oren Shriki of Ben-Gurion and Stefan Pryor, Rhode Island's secretary of commerce. Pryor discussed the physical and programmatic infrastructure in Rhode Island that exists to assist entrepreneurial innovators — like the students involved in the collaboration.

In 2019, Pryor and then-Gov. Gina Raimondo participated in a trip to Israel that promoted academic and business ties between Rhode Island and Israel.

Among those present at the event were representatives of the Consulate General of Israel to New England and Eve Rubinstein of the American Friends of Ben-Gurion University. Some members of the audience, including Owens and Pryor, provided feedback following each student presentation.

Fifteen students in four teams presented their ideas. The first team, named Tantoo, is developing cute stickers that monitor biomarkers (such as body temperature and heart rate), tracking developing tantrums so that parents can handle them more effectively. Though they are a natural part of development, problems can arise depending on how parents handle tantrums, which build over time rather than suddenly breaking out.

SonaV, the second team, also dealt with stress, though in young adults who may lack a personalized way to reduce distressing sounds while remaining aware of important social and situational information. The team is preparing software for earplugs and headphones that adapts noise cancellation to specific situations, also based on biomarkers. This product could also be useful in exposure therapy.

The third team, VesselLume, noted that 80% of strokes can be prevented just before they happen. They are preparing a product that can use existing devices to map components of clots and predict the risk of strokes. This tool would provide continuous, frictionless physiological tracking using bioluminescence and could be useful in both research and clinical applications.

Syncadian, the final team, is developing a product to detect and realign misalignment of a person's circadian rhythm. A temporary solution to a temporary problem, it might be especially useful for doctors, pilots, truck drivers or simply people with jet lag. The product might be marketed especially through insurance companies that cater to the medical profession and other industries where split-second decisions may be affected by practitioners who are not completely alert.

Neurotechnology is one of the fastest-growing areas of science and innovation. By combining neuroscience with engineering, artificial intelligence, computer science and medicine, researchers are developing technologies that are transforming our understanding of the human brain. These advances have the potential to improve the diagnosis and treatment of neurological disorders, enhance rehabilitation, improve mental health and create entirely new approaches to personalized medicine. The ideas presented by these students represent the next generation of thinking in this rapidly evolving field.

Some of the world's greatest innovations begin when people from different countries and disciplines come together to solve complex problems. The collaboration between Brown University and Ben-Gurion University demonstrates the power of international partnerships to inspire creativity, accelerate discovery and prepare future scientific and entrepreneurial leaders. Programs like this strengthen the growing partnership between Rhode Island and Israel while creating opportunities for future collaborations among universities, researchers, healthcare organizations, entrepreneurs, investors and industry leaders.

The collaborators for this program are Brown University's Carney Institute for Brain Science, Ben-Gurion University and the Rhode Island-Israel Collaborative.

The Robert J. and Nancy D. Carney Institute for Brain Science brings together neuroscientists, engineers, physicians, computer scientists and entrepreneurs to better understand the brain and develop technologies that improve human health. The Brown-Ben-Gurion University Neurotechnology Hackathon reflects the institute's commitment to interdisciplinary research, experiential learning and international collaboration, providing students with an opportunity to work on meaningful challenges alongside leading faculty members and industry professionals.

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, located in Beersheba, Israel, is one of Israel's leading research universities and an internationally recognized center for innovation. BGU is renowned for excellence in neuroscience, engineering, medicine, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, sustainability and entrepreneurship.

The Rhode Island-Israel Collaborative is a nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening business, academic, research, healthcare and innovation partnerships between Rhode Island and Israel. Through strategic collaborations, educational initiatives and professional exchanges, RIIC connects universities, researchers, entrepreneurs, businesses and community leaders to promote innovation, economic growth and lasting international relationships.

LAWRENCE M. KATZ *is a board member of the Rhode Island-Israel Collaborative.*

COMMUNITY

R.I. labor history: The Saylesville Massacre

SAYLESVILLE IS a charming area today, but during the Great Depression it was the site of a labor strike that took a violent turn. Strikers and soldiers ran into the Moshassuck Cemetery, and bullets struck a rabbi's tombstone.

The Moshassuck Cemetery is just over the line from Pawtucket in Central Falls. In 1870, Cantor Abraham Jacobs organized the Congregation Sons of David, which purchased a plot of land in the northwest corner of Moshassuck Cemetery, then in the town of Lincoln (now Central Falls) on Dec. 31 of that year. This congregation merged with the Congregation of the Sons of Israel in 1874 under the name Congregation of the Sons of Israel and David. They decided to buy land in the Moshassuck Cemetery for the burial of non-members, relatives of members, and for charitable cases, that is, not for the congregation, which had its own cemetery in Cranston. Many other groups bought into the cemetery over the next 25 years. One of the tombstones has an interesting story.

During the Great Depression in 1934, there was a great deal of labor unrest, part of the nationwide General Textile Strike to demand better pay and fewer hours. Some of the Labor Day strikes were peaceful, but not at two mills belonging to the Manville Jenckes Co., a textile bleaching company, one of which was adjacent to Moshassuck Cemetery.

During the strike, the owners decided to bring in replacement workers across the picket lines, where it is said that thousands were gathered. On Labor Day, Sept. 3, 1934, two of the strikebreakers tried to push through the picket line, but the union supporters would not let them. The Rhode Island State Guard, armed with rifles and tear gas, attempted to move the strikers toward the cemetery, and a riot broke out. Strikers and soldiers ran into the cemetery, seeking cover and vantage points. Soon several men were hit by bullets and died. In addition, a headstone marking the grave of Yosef Shaul Rabinowitz, a rabbi and educator who died in 1893, was struck, leaving two bullet holes. They were intentionally left intact and are still visible in the stone today, a tangible reminder of the violence within the cemetery in September 1934.



PHOTO | RHODE ISLAND JEWISH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION.

The melee left bullet holes, shown here, in the grave marker for Yosef Shaul Rabinowitz.

The Providence Evening Bulletin of Sept. 12, 1934, described the cemetery conflict in most unflattering terms, calling the strikers "hoodlums." Despite the strike, the factory continued until it was closed in the 1960s.

To learn more about this site, as well as others, go to rhodetour.org/tours/show/47.

Submitted by the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association.

Father-daughter duo 'Ride for the Living'





Madison Litwin and father, Alan, prepare for the "Ride for the Living," starting at the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp.

PHOTO | ALAN LITWIN

ALAN LITWIN TRAVELED to Poland with his daughter, Madison, as part of a group organized by Temple Emanu-El.

"No book, movie or lecture could ever have prepared us properly," Litwin said.

The father-daughter duo took part in the eleventh annual Ride For The Living, a 60-mile bike ride from Auschwitz-Birkenau to the Jewish Community Center in Krakow, Poland. After the Nazi concentration camps were liberated eight decades ago, many survivors made the same trek — on foot.

The father-and-daughter duo then made their way to Warsaw with the group from the synagogue, later journeying to Ciechanow, the town from which Litwin's family emigrated.

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COMMUNITY

Supporting Beit Ruth's work with vulnerable women in Israel

BY BRAD SWARTZ

When the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island supports partners overseas, it does more than provide funding. It strengthens the connections that bind the global Jewish community and ensures that no one faces challenges alone.



A young woman in a Beit Ruth STEM training program works on a robot. PHOTO | BEIT RUTH

THAT COMMITMENT inspired the Alliance's Community Development Committee (CDC) to fund Beit Ruth for Young Women & Girls at Risk, an Israeli organization that empowers young women overcoming trauma, abuse, neglect and family instability. Through this year's Community Campaign, Beit Ruth received an allocation, as they have for the past several years.

At Beit Ruth, young women find more than a safe place to live. They receive therapeutic care, educational support, mentorship and life-skills training that help them build stable, independent futures. For many, it is their first experience of safety, encouragement and hope.

"We're so grateful for the Jewish Alliance of Rhode Island's partnership with Beit Ruth, and we're proud to share in the work of building resilience for Israel's girls and young women at risk — and for Israel itself," said Danielle Burenstein, Beit Ruth's executive director. "Knowing we share in each other's guiding values, especially at this challenging time, fills us with gratitude, hope and resolve, and we thank you."

The organization's mission reflects a core Jewish value: Every person has inherent dignity and deserves the opportunity to thrive. That belief aligns closely with the Alliance's commitment to strengthening Jewish life in Rhode Island, Israel and around the world.

Community Development Committee (CDC) member Hanina Rosenstien said, "I value the partnership between the Alliance and Beit Ruth because it reflects the heart of our community — our commitment to caring for one another, building relationships and making a lasting impact beyond our own walls. Beit Ruth brings incredible dedication and purpose to its important work, and I am grateful that our community has the opportunity to live our values by supporting their mission to serve some of our most vulnerable members."

The CDC, chaired by Sara Miller, evaluates requests from local and overseas organizations, guided by the principle that Jewish communities share a responsibility for one another regardless of geography. That commitment feels especially meaningful during a time of ongoing challenges in Israel and across the Jewish world.

For Community Campaign donors, support for Beit Ruth demonstrates how local generosity can create global impact. Gifts made in Rhode Island help provide counseling, education, mentorship and stability for young women working to overcome extraordinary obstacles.

Partnerships like Beit Ruth illustrate the power of collective responsibility. Support for Beit Ruth is made possible through gifts to the Jewish Alliance's Community Campaign, which raises critical dollars to strengthen Jewish life locally and globally. To learn more about the campaign or the allocations process, visit jewishallianceri.org or contact Brad Swartz, fundraising and partnership manager, at bswartz@jewishallianceri.org.

BRAD SWARTZ *(bswartz@jewishallianceri.org) is the partnerships and fundraising manager at the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island.*

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COMMUNITY

Hahn memorial: Maintaining the presence of the past

PROVIDENCE — The Judge Marjorie Yashar and Dr. James Yashar Evening of Jewish Renaissance (ERI), scheduled for Nov. 7, 2026, from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., will kick off the Hahn Memorial Project, dedicated to the first Jewish person to hold elected office in Rhode Island.

The ERI, one of the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island's signature programs, will feature diverse learning opportunities, workshops and discussions focused on Jewish life and culture. This year's theme is inspired by Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook's teaching that "the old will be renewed, and the new will be sanctified."

Organizers say Kook's maxim is a reminder that Judaism is a living tradition — one that honors its roots while continuing to evolve. The Jewish people can look to the wisdom, stories, traditions and values of the past. They can find new ways to make them meaningful and relevant today, while also embracing new ideas, creativity and innovation through a Jewish lens. This can take many forms, from reimagining rituals and bringing modern sensibilities to centuries-old mitzvot to finding new ways to connect Jewish traditions and values to contemporary life.

Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association Executive Director Jaime Walden will offer the evening's keynote address, followed by presenter sessions during which attendees can choose from a selection of offerings.

Walden will present the memorial project, entitled, "A Memorial Legacy: The Hahns of Providence."

According to Walden, the project tells the story of J. Jerome Hahn, his family and the role they played in preserving the land that has become part of Roger Williams National Memorial in Providence. The Hahn memorial was dedicated in 1933 in memory of Hahn's father, Isaac Hahn, the first Jewish person to hold public office in Providence.

"Through this project," Walden said, "RIJHA has worked to bring this history back to life through a traveling exhibit, educational materials for students, an interactive digital story and a LEGO model of the memorial."

"The evening's theme fits very closely with what RIJHA has tried to accomplish with its project," Walden said. He pointed to J. Jerome Hahn's writing that "the past must be linked to the present."

Walden said Hahn understood the importance of preserving the historic place for future generations. Almost 100 years later, he noted, RIJHA continues that work by ensuring the story of the Hahn family, the memorial, and the site's history are not forgotten.

The project itself reflects Rabbi Kook's idea of taking something from the past and finding new ways to make it meaningful today. It uses technology, interactive storytelling, educational materials and even Legos to introduce this history to people who may never have known the story. We are not changing history but finding new ways to tell it and connect it to the present. In doing so, we are continuing what Hahn believed was so important: preserving the past while making sure it remains relevant for future generations.

To learn more about this event, visit jewishallianceri.org. Session details and registration will be coming soon.

Submitted by the Jewish Alliance Development Team

The Voice of Greater Rhode Island's Jewish Community

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APPLIANCES

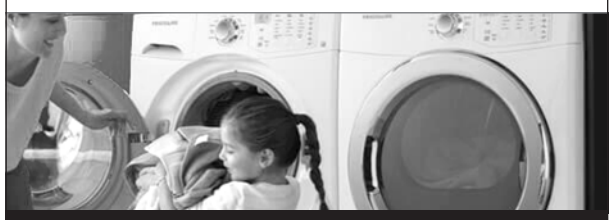
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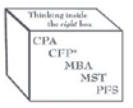


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OBITUARIES

Miriam Hadassah Babin, 72

FALL RIVER — Miriam Hadassah Babin, 72, of Fall River, passed away unexpectedly Aug. 19.

Born in Chicago, she was the daughter of the late Rabbi Moshe and Helen (Klein) Babin.

A graduate of B.M.C. Durfee High School, class of 1971, Miriam went on to earn a bachelor's degree from Barnard College in 1975 and a law degree from Boston University in 1978. She was an accomplished attorney, beginning her practice as an assistant district attorney in Bristol County. She went on to establish her own firm and then worked in the probate court in Bristol County.

Miriam was a member of Temple Emanu-El in Providence for many years. A skilled seamstress, Miriam was the designated tailor for her family, making all of her nieces, nephews, great-nephews and great-niece their baby blankets and countless other beautiful handmade pieces of art.

She is survived by her two loving sisters, Nehama Babin of Bethesda, Maryland, and Dena Levine and her husband, Stuart, of Barrington, Rhode Island; two nephews, Daniel Rosenthal and his wife, Elizabeth Shaw, and Nathaniel Levine and his wife, Sarah Bakst; three nieces, Abigail Levine and her husband, Kevin Dillener, Rebecca Levine and her husband, Daniel Heller, and Sarah Rosenthal and her husband, Erik Laby; four great-nephews, Samuel Rosenthal-Shaw, Ethan Heller, Ezekiel Heller and Max Bakst-Levine; and one great-niece, Emma Rosenthal-Shaw.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in her memory may be made to the Jewish Theological Seminary Development Fund or the Massachusetts Bar Foundation.

J. Richard Rose, 77

WARWICK, R.I. – J. Richard



"Rich" Rose, 77, passed away peacefully at Rhode Island Hospital on June 24, 2026, with his loving wife, Francine, by his side. They celebrated their 20th Anniversary in May 2026 vacationing in Virginia.

Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., Rich was raised by his parents, Harry and Martha (Karp) Rose, in Queens and Westbury, New York, where he treasured the lifelong relationships he formed with his relatives and friends. He graduated from Hicksville High School and earned a B.S. from the University of the State of New York.

Rich's career in health care started when he was a psychiatric attendant at Creedmoor Psychiatric Center and in a laboratory in a hospital in New York. In the early 1990s, Rich moved to Rhode Island, where he was a supervisor of the blood bank at Rhode Island Hospital. He also volunteered in a soup kitchen in Providence. In the 2000s, Rich worked at Bay State Medical in Springfield, Massachusetts; Sturdy Memorial in Attleboro, Massachusetts; and Brockton Hospital in Brockton, Massachusetts as a laboratory supervisor. He taught clinical laboratory at Bristol Community College in Fall River, Massachusetts, and Stonehill College in Easton, Massachusetts. He took pleasure in mentoring students and employees. He obtained an M.S. in Labor Relations and Human Resources from the University of Rhode Island in 2006. His seminar research paper "Condition Critical: American Hospitals Face a Severe Undersupply of Allied Health Professionals" is published in DigitalCommons@URI. Rich was a lifetime learner and obtained a Master of Science in Jurisprudence from Seton Hall Law School and a certificate from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law.

Rich was an avid Mets fan and was proud to be a URI alumni. His interest in jazz music started when he was young and listening to John Coltrane. With Francine he attended numerous music festivals and travelled through the U.S. and Europe to numer-

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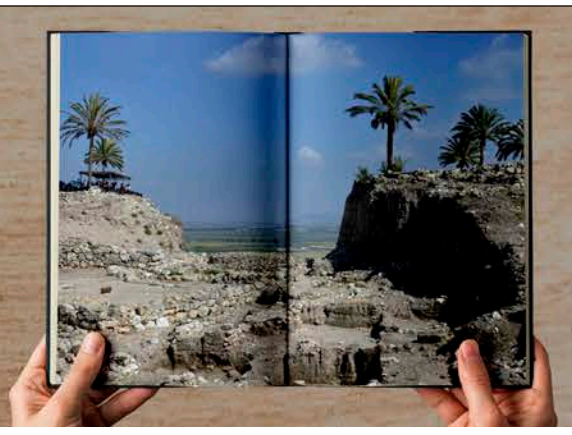
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OBITUARIES

ous art museums. During summers, Rich and Francine relished in a picnic lunch and listening to classical music on the lawn at Tanglewood in Lenox, Massachusetts.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by his brother, Steve, and his wife, Karin, of Charlottesville, Virginia; his sister, Faren, of Los Angeles; his nephew, Quinn; his niece, Molly; and great nieces, Lola and Ramona Boothman.

Rich's caring and warm demeanor, his devotion to his wife, his brilliance and humor will be missed.

David L. Salk, 71

PROVIDENCE — David L.



Salk, 71, died Sunday, Aug. 9 at Rhode Island Hospital. He was the beloved husband of Lori (Levin) Salk for 41 years. Born in Providence, a son of the late Lewis and Charlotte (Gilden) Salk, he had lived in Cranston for 33 years, previously living in Warwick. He worked in business paper sales for over 20 years and for Verizon selling plans and phones for 11 years, retiring in 2022.

David was a graduate of Pilgrim High School Class of '73 and Bryant College Class of '80. He was a member of Touro Fraternal Association. David enjoyed baseball and was a huge Red Sox fan. He also liked golf, skiing, walking and cats.

Devoted father of Tyler and Brandon Salk. Dear brother of Richard Salk and his wife Cate of Warwick and Amy Rottenberg and her husband Jim of Clarksburg, Md.

Contributions in his memory may be made to Kidney Cancer Foundation through the American Cancer Society.

Roberta A. Shuman, 91

PROVIDENCE — Roberta



A. "Bobby" Shuman, 91, of Lake Suzy, Fla., died Aug. 13. She was the beloved wife of the late Salomon Shuman, her devoted husband of 52 years who predeceased her.

Born in Providence, a daughter of the late Rose (Schoenberg) and Paul Goldstein, she lived in Providence, Warwick and Narragansett until moving to Florida in 1991.

Bobby was a legal secretary for many years, both in Rhode Island and in Florida. She was the first and founding president of the PTA for Cottrell F. Hoxsie School in Warwick. She was a member of Temple Beth Am in Warwick for 35 years, and in Florida she was a member of Temple Beth El in North Port from 1992. There she served as president for two years, and was a member of its Sisterhood, where she was also president for two years. She was a member of ORT's Affinity (book review group), was an avid needlewoman and enjoyed mahjong, gardening and other activities. She was an active member of Kings Island Homeowners Association and served as its secretary.

She leaves two beloved daughters, Cindy Shuman (David Bernstein) of West Greenwich, R.I., and Risa Shuman (Peter Gerard) of Foster, R.I.; dear brother Sheldon Goldstein of Jacksonville, Fla.; and many nieces, nephews and cousins. She also leaves her beloved dog, Hope, who lives with Risa and Peter in Foster, and cats Lance and Talli.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to the charity of your choice in her name.

Claire Silverman, 94

WARWICK, R.I. — Claire Silverman, 94, a woman whose eye for beauty and whose warmth toward everyone she met left an indelible mark on all who knew her, died Aug. 14. She was the beloved wife of the late Arthur Silverman for 59 years.

For more than 50 years, Claire was the heart and soul of Antique Haven, her beloved shop in historic Pawtuxet, where her extraordinary gift for spotting beauty and history in the smallest of objects became the stuff of local legend. She had a rare talent: an antique savant in the truest sense, able to look at a piece and see not just its worth, but its story. Customers came for the treasures, but they stayed for Claire — her warmth, her stories and the way she made every person who walked through her door feel like they'd found not just an antique, but a friend. Antique Haven was never simply a business; it was an extension of who Claire was: a place built on curiosity, history and love.

It was Claire's gift for people, even more than her gift for antiques, that defined her. She had an uncanny ability to bring out the best in everyone she met — family, friends and strangers alike. She listened. She encouraged. She believed in people, often before they believed in themselves. Kindhearted, active and endlessly warm, Claire moved through life with a generosity of spirit that made the people around her feel steadier, brighter and more capable simply for having known her. Claire was a former member of Temple Sinai and its sisterhood and a member of the former Temple Beth Am. She was a member of Hadassah and the Antique Association.

Claire was the devoted mother of Beth Dodier of Warwick and the late Steven Silverman, whose memory she carried with her always. She was the dear sister of Shirley Schreiber of Warwick; beloved grandmother of Jason Dodier and his fiancée, Nima Saleh, and Shelby Guerra and her husband, Mitch, of Coventry; and the cherished great-grandmother of Grant and Eleanora, who brought her boundless joy in her later years.

Claire's legacy lives on in every life she touched — in the treasures she uncovered and passed along, in the shop she built with her own hands and heart and in the countless people who left her presence feeling a little more seen, a little more valued and a little more themselves. She will be remembered not only for what she found, but for what she gave: her time, her wisdom, her kindness and her unwavering belief in the goodness of others.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in her memory may be made to American Parkinson Disease Association, P.O. Box 41659, Providence, R.I. 02940.

Claire Silverman leaves behind a legacy of love, beauty and generosity that will endure for generations to come.

Bernard Wasserman, 96

PROVIDENCE — Bernard



Wasserman, 96, of Providence, passed away peacefully Aug. 14 at his residence. He was the devoted husband of Ina (Dwares) Wasserman, with whom he had shared a remarkable 69 years of marriage.

Born in Brooklyn, a son of the late Joseph and Faye Wasserman, Bernie spent his youth in New York before relocating to Providence many years ago.

A veteran of the United States Navy, Bernie served during the Korean conflict. He later earned a bachelor's degree from Lowell Technological Institute and spent many years as a real estate developer before retiring.

Bernie always made every effort to attend his grandchildren's sporting activities, from golf to field hockey to football. Bernie would be found on the sidelines cheering for his grandchildren.

Until the very end, at the age of 96, he continued to attend the kids' games and traveled to the finals in Connecticut last fall. He would spend the night at a hotel to ensure he was there to cheer them on.

In addition to his wife, Ina, Bernie is survived by his sons, Richard Wasserman and his wife, Kristiana, of Seekonk, Massachusetts, and David Wasserman and his wife, Kate Solomon, of Scarsdale, New York. He also has six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren, along with his brother and sister-in-law, Donald and Bonnie Dwares.

Bernie was a devoted philanthropist and was especially fond of the Marc Adam Dwares Fund at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. In Bernie's honor, the family kindly asks that donations be made to the Marc Adam Dwares Fund at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, 450 Brookline Avenue, Boston MA. 02215.





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– Dan Margolis, Editor

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