



RHODE ISLAND JEWISH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

First, I want to apologize to those of you who were not able to access the Fall Meeting via Zoom back in October. The meeting was set up in a way which required authentication before you could join. This authentication could only be done if you had a Zoom account. I know firsthand the frustration and aggravation this caused and I apologize for it. Those who were able to attend the Zoom meeting saw a presentation given by Ruth Breindel on the newly launched Jewish Road Tour. I would like to thank Ruth, and everyone else who helped to put the Tour together – it certainly was a long time coming. We look forward to hosting a Jewish Road Tour bus tour this spring, COVID permitting.

We have been very busy working on two very interesting and important projects at the RIJHA: the first of which is the RI Jewish Community COVID-19 Memory Book, launched by the RIJHA Membership Committee. Elizabeth Bakst will elaborate more on that in her Membership report – look for it in this newsletter!

The other exciting project we've been working on comes from a major acquisition at the RIJHA – the portraits

of Solomon and Miriam Pareira. Miriam and Solomon Pareira were the first documented Jewish settlers in Providence, and were part of a group that eventually organized what would become Temple Beth El. The portraits are in need of a good cleaning and a bit of touch up before they can be displayed for the community. To do this, we need to employ the work of an art conservator, and have had one such expert, Gianfranco Pocobene, head conservator at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, come down to give his assessment of the paintings. Gianfranco has given us an estimate for his scope of work, and we've identified two other people qualified to do the restoration and cleaning, and will compare the estimates before choosing a conservator in the New Year.

As I said, we've been very busy! Between passing the 2022 budget, moving forward on the Notes, engaging in special projects, caring for our archives and much more, we will always keep you posted on what's happening at the RIJHA.

Very best,
Harold Foster

RIJHA ABOUT TO REACH ITS FIRST \$1MILLION:
CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE MONTH OF
DECEMBER

Dear RIJHA Members,

We are pleased to share the exciting news with you that the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association's combined total assets are very close to reaching our first million! Two years ago, we moved our endowment funds to the Rhode Island Foundation, a move the Jewish Alliance also made, and the returns on our investments have been incredibly fruitful, for which we are incredibly thankful. Ensuring that the Association's financial future continues to grow is how we will continue fulfilling our mission: preserving and collecting Rhode Island's Jewish history, and sharing that history with you, our members.

To push the RIJHA's assets to the \$1 million dollar mark, we thought we would give our members the opportunity to give a special donation to help us reach this important milestone before the end of this year. Our assets are about \$4,402 shy of \$1,000,000. We are by no means requiring our members to help us reach this milestone, only making you all aware that it is plausible with your help. Please feel free to give whatever you can! For those of you who wish you give an incentivized gift, the tiers of giving are provided below.

As always, we rely on, and appreciate your support of this great organization and look forward to continuing providing future generations with a pathway to learning about Rhode Island's Jewish history.

Sincerely,

Harold Foster

RIJHA President

Gift Tiers:

\$250 – Includes a free copy of either of the Jews of Rhode Island books. (1ea)

\$500 – Includes free copies (1 each) of the Jews of Rhode Island books (2), and free admission to Spring bus tour.*

\$1,000 – Includes Lifetime Membership to the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association, free admission to Spring bus tour.

*The RIJHA is planning a bus tour to the locations on the newly launched *Rhode Tour* in the Spring of 2022! More to come!

COMMITTEE REPORTS

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

From Elizabeth Bakst

This Fall, the Membership committee sent letters asking RIJHA members, “How did your Jewish life change in the time of Covid-19 - for example, for Shabbat, the High Holy Days, Seders, life cycle events and festivals?” We plan to assemble their one page answers in a Covid-19 Memory Book to be made available this winter and placed in the RIJHA archives for future readers. We have also had articles in 3 different issues of the RI Alliance’s monthly newspaper, *Jewish RI*, inviting everyone in the community to participate in this history-making project. We explain that the Memory Book project is a continuation of 70 years of collecting and preserving RI Jewish history.

The quality and the range of the responses we have gotten so far has been really good.

However, we would like even more entries! We invite you to write a few simple sentences or to craft a more detailed response. Your reflection should fit on just one page – single space, 12 font – and sent electronically to office@rijha.org.

Please send your reflection in no later than December 13th!

GRANTS COMMITTEE REPORT

From Ruth Breindel

The Committee is currently working on 2 grants. One is for changing the format of our extensive collection of oral history CDs so that they can be put up on our website for researchers to use. This collection was moved from audio tape to CD 10 years ago and needs this upgrade. The second is for the rehabilitation and preservation of two important historical portraits of the first Jewish settlers in Providence: Solomon and Miriam Pereira. As historical documents, they are priceless, but need extensive work as they have deteriorated over the years. We hope that the funds from the grants we have applied for will cover the costs of

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

From Larry Ginsberg

I have just completed my first budget /finance committee meeting as the newly appointed treasurer. As a newcomer, it’s a learning curve in terms of how we at the RIJHA do things. With much input from Harold, Jaime and Kate-Lynne, the 2022 budget was hammered out. It’s been interesting learning all that’s going on in the office. Thanks for the opportunity to get involved with this important organization. As a 3rd generation Rhode Islander, I am happy to help keep the organization moving forward.

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

We are sure many of you—if not all of you—are anxiously awaiting the arrival of the 2021 *Notes*. Editor George Goodwin and his steadfast team of editors and readers have worked tirelessly over the past several months to ensure that the 2021 edition will be sent out before the end of this year! Chock full of stories that grab readers attention, this edition will be one to remember. As always, once the latest edition is sent out to members, the 2020 version will be made available for viewing on the RIJHA website, so look for that as well!

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

This year has brought a lot of excitement for the RIJHA. We have faced a lot of hardship over the past two years, and thanks to great leadership from our board, support from our members and the community, and the tenacity of our staff and volunteers, we have pulled through and are beginning 2022 stronger than ever.

We just finalized applications for two different grants which will support two different projects the RIJHA is working on: the conservation and preservation of the Pareira Portraits, and the digitization and uploading of our 420-disc oral history collection. We are always trying to make the archival material we have here in the office more accessible to our members, and to those across the globe who might benefit from them; we thought the oral history collection was the perfect way to continue that initiative and hope to have them up on the website in the New Year.

As you have read, our committees are plugging away helping the RIJHA stay busy! We have just secured a second art conservator to look at and give us an estimate on the Pareira portraits in the New Year, which is helping to move that project forward. We are hoping to present the Pareira Portraits at our annual Spring meeting, providing they have gone through the necessary treatment and are ready for viewing, if not, we will present them in the Fall.

The New England Jewish History Collaborative is still active, and is putting a seminar together on New England Jewish Summer Camps. The seminar will be held online on June 12th. More to come on that as more is planned!

We are continuing to work with and get used to our new digital cataloguing system, Past Perfect. Our goal with this system is to catalogue each piece in the RIJHA's collections, so that the archive can be better utilized for scholarly material, and be more widely used and made accessible to the general public. Jaime, our Office Manager, is currently taking a course on how to use it as it is a very new technology.

I recently assisted the Jewish Alliance in a timeline project that will help them complete an initiative of showing Rhode Island's Jewish history in the Alliance hallway of the Dwares JCC (upstairs). Pinpoints on a timeline are shown by newspaper headlines from the variously named "Jewish Rhode Island".

These projects are keeping the RIJHA going; we cannot wait to see what 2022 has in store for us!

DONATIONS TO THE RIJHA

GENERAL DONATIONS

Patty and Melvin Alperin
Anonymous
Norman Jay Bolotow
John A. Froehlich
Thomas Gleckman
Ross Grossman
Robert Kemp
Ellen J. Kleinman
The Herbert E. Sackett Charitable Trust
Jerrold Salmonson Foundation
Peter Silverman
Ted Winston
Allan Wolf

DONATIONS GIVEN IN MEMORY

Susan Brown in memory Janet Gutterman
Linda Cohen and Family in memory of Miriam Silverman
Lois Cohen in memory of Jerald Goldstein and Selma Aronson
Gloria and Martin Feibish in memory of Arthur Fixler
Harold Foster in memory of Melvyn Blake
Harold Gadon in memory of David Korn
Beverly Goldberg in memory of Arthur Bergel
Eileen Horwitz in memory of Dr. Harold Horwitz
Betty Kotlen in memory of Betty Adler
Barbara Schwartz in memory of William Revin and Lawrence Guss
Betty Kotlen in memory of Marilyn Winoker
Marsha Krohngold-Gerson in memory of David Gitlitz
Lowell Lisker in memory of Melvyn Blake
Anne and Gerald Sherman in memory of Melvyn Blake
Rob and Mindy Sherwin in memory of Dr. Howard Coleman
Susan Tejada in memory of The Mondshein and Schindler families
Ellis and Debbie Waldman in memory of Morris Schwartz
Harriet and Howie Wasser in memory of Edmund Jordan Silverman
Eugene Weinberg in memory of Marilyn Winoker

DONATIONS GIVEN IN HONOR

Harold and Sara Foster in honor of Kate-Lynne Laroche's completing her master's degree.
Vivian Foster in honor of Harold Foster becoming president of the RIJHA.



Thank you for your continued support.