



RHODE ISLAND JEWISH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

Volume XXXI—Number 1—January 2018

Letter From the President

Each Newsletter seems to chronicle more and more changes to our Association. We are now in the new quarters, and they are just lovely! We had a good turnout at the Open House, with both members of our Association and the community in attendance. The new wall, with the plaques honoring those who donated, stands out, and the various other named areas speak for themselves:

The Gertrude Regensteiner Revocable Trust – 1988; Norman Jay Bolotow and Bank of America, Trustees; The Bazar, Manville and Sigal Families; The Gertrude N. and Seebert J. Goldowsky Foundation; Dr. George M. and Betsey Goodwin; The Hassenfeld Family Foundation; The Hockman and Foster Families; Rosalyn K. Sinclair; Elaine and Howard Weiss; Melvin and Janet Zurier, and Robert and Miriam Berkelhammer.

I want to thank three people for donating their time and energy: Marilyn Myrow, who came the day we moved; Mel Topf, who went through boxes of papers with me; and Lowell Lisker, who helped so much with the move from the old space to the new, with the move from the Archive to the storage unit, and with moving things around in the Archive space. Without their help, we would not be where we are today.

The office staff has also changed. Joshua Jasper, who was with us for 2 years, has moved on to other opportunities. He strengthened our collection, moved us into the digital age with our on-line book catalog and worked to preserve our history. We wish him the best in his future endeavors.

Kate-Lynne Laroche, originally hired as our Office Manager, has taken over as Executive Director and Researcher, too. While she will be on maternity leave for 2-3 months, she will keep a close eye (when the baby sleeps!) on what is going on in the office. Because of this transition, we will not take any research requests during February, March and April.

Our Annual Meeting will be Sunday, May 6 in the Social Hall at the JCC. As when I became President, so now that I am ending my term, my son Rabbi Joshua Breindel will speak about growing up as a Jewish child in Providence in the 1980s.

In terms of our digitization efforts, we now have all the *Notes* in digital format and those up to 2012 are on the website. It is the custom not to post the most current 5 years of a journal. Also on the website is a true find: the *Providence Passover Journal*. This is over 1500 pages of a newspaper that was published sporadically from the 1920s to the 1960s. For more information about this, consult (on-line!) *Notes* Volume 8.1, pages 55-61 and Volume 10.3A, back cover (pages 277-278). In addition, we have begun to work with a photographer to digitize old copies of the *Jewish Herald/Voice*, also going back to the 1920s. Stay tuned for more on this.

I hope that you have been enjoying the articles that Jerry Foster and I write for the *Jewish Voice*. We want to keep our Association in the public view so that people learn about the wonderful treasures we have. If you didn't make it to the Open House, please feel free to stop by in May and see things for yourself.

Sincerely,

Ruth Breindel

President

Letter From the Executive Director & Office Manager

In this new year, we at the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association have begun a season of change. Last year we began instituting new procedures, invested in relationships with other organizations, and made many other changes that will ensure the longevity of this Association for generations to come. With “seasons of change” in mind, here are the updates.

First, we rang in the new year by appointing a new Executive Director, me! While I will still continue to oversee all of the office work for the time being, I now have many more responsibilities which include, but are certainly not limited to: organizing the archive and office, getting to know our membership better, and most importantly, helping our membership to grow to ensure that the RIJHA will continue for generations to come. For the sake of updating you all, I also will tell you that I will be going on maternity leave starting on January 24th, should my unborn daughter decide to cooperate and not come sooner than she is expected! I will be out of the office for about 10-12 weeks, but will be available by email should a desperate need arise. In my absence, my mother Charlene Mastrostefano, will be taking over the office duties and will be your primary contact should you call or email us. That being said, since I will be unavailable to physically be in the office, we are postponing all research requests until the beginning of May. This does not mean requests that come in will go unanswered forever, it simply means we will get back to anyone looking to do family research or otherwise in our archive when I return.

Second, as part of my ongoing effort to engage with you, the membership, we will be hosting and co-hosting several events this year that we hope to see you attend. We will begin these events with our Annual Meeting, which will be held in the Dwares JCC Social Hall on Sunday May 6, 2018. We will be welcoming a new Association President, Mel Topf, and a few new Board of Director members as well. The speaker for this event will be Rabbi Joshua Breindel, the son of our current President Ruth. Additionally this spring, we will be collaborating with Rabbi Raphie Schochet and several others, to put together a lecture series on four historical synagogues in Rhode Island; this program will begin at the end of April and continue through June. To close out Summer 2018 (official date TBD), we will once again be working with the Rhode Island Historical Society to participate in their event series focusing on “Rest and Relaxation in Rhode Island”. This event will focus on Jewish summer camps, vacationing, and lots of other exciting topics. We will hold our Fall Meeting sometime in October, and will update you on that as the

details arise. As you can see, we have a very busy and lively year ahead of us! Stay tuned for more information on these events and other goings on in the Association with our planned Quarterly Newsletters, event invitations, our Facebook, and the RIJHA website www.rijha.org.

Speaking of our website, this too has been brought up to date! We now have even more publications available to you and the general public with the more recent issues of the *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, and a new addition to the website entirely: *The Providence Passover Journal*. These publications were digitized using grant money we obtained in 2017. Since we have such treasures in our archive, expect to see more of them showcased on the website for the world to see. We will also be using the website as a secondary form of communication to update you on events and the general goings on in the organization, so be sure to check in on it periodically.

As you know, our Office and Archive move has been completed, and was extremely successful. We have celebrated with our Open House, have shown you the beautiful new space designed for us, and have given credit where credit is due: thanks to all of our generous donors. The Capital Campaign we began to fund this monumental move this past summer was extremely successful, and we have acknowledged those most generous to the Association from the campaign in the beautiful new signage in our Office. We want to thank those who worked tirelessly to organize the Archive, and put the Office into working order, and give special thanks to the wonderful people who orchestrated the design and execution of our new home.

To conclude, there is a lot changing here in the Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association, but these changes will help to fulfil our mission, and secure our future. As always, please feel free to call or email us with any questions, comments, or concerns you may have, and rest assured in the fact that your continued support is both appreciated, and acknowledged.

Wishing you all a very happy and healthy New Year,

Kate-Lynne Laroche

Executive Director & Office Manager

Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association Open House

General Donations & 2017 Capital Campaign

Now that our 2017 Capital Campaign has come to a close, we want to give a special thank you to the Capital Campaign Committee: David Bazar, Harold Foster, George Goodwin, Lauren Motola-Davis, Michael Schwartz and Maxine Goldin for their diligent work in raising the funds to make the move to our new space possible.

We want to thank every single member and non-member who gave monetary donations, and donations of time, talents and treasures to ensure the continued growth and well being of this organization.

Capital Campaign Donors \$2500 and Above

The Gertrude Regensteiner Revocable Trust - 1988, Norman Jay Bolotow and Bank of America, Trustees, George M. and Betsey Goodwin, Harold & Sara-Ann Foster, Jan & Alexander Hockman, Judith Foster, Libby & Miko Aggai, Peter M. Hockman, Vivian & Rodolphe Drolet, The Hassenfeld Family Foundation, Rosalyn K. Sinclair, The Gertrude N. & Seebert J. Goldowsky Foundation, Melvin & Janet Zurier, The Bazar, Manville & Sigal Families, Elaine & Howard Weiss, and Robert & Miriam Berkelhammer.

Capital Campaign Donors \$500-\$2499

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Norman Shack - *in honor of Dr. George Goodwin*
Betty Kotlen - *in honor of Trudy Galkin's Special Birthday*
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