Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association
130 Sessions Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02906-3444
e-mail: info@rijha.org web: http://www.rijha.org

Founder
David C. Adelman

Board of Directors 2018-2019

President Mel A. Topf, Ph.D.    Secretary Ruth L. Breindel
First Vice President Harold Foster    Treasurer David Bazar
Second Vice President Lowell Lisker

Members at Large
Michael W. Fink
Maxine Goldin
Linda Lotridge Levin
Lauren Motola-Davis
Marilyn Myrow
Larry Parness
Rabbi Raphie Schochet
Bailey Siletchnik
James Waters, Ph.D.
Marlene Wolpert
Esta Yavner

Presidential Appointees
Elizabeth Bakst
Michael Schwartz

Past Presidents
Stanley Abrams (1933-2015)
David C. Adelman (1892-1967)
Stephen M. Brown (1931-2013)
Aaron Cohen (1923-2009)
Seebert J. Goldowsky, M.D. (1907-1997)
Robert A. Kotlen (1927-2015)
Marvin Pitterman, Ph.D. (1912-2007)
Benton Rosen (1914-2002)
Beryl Segal (1898-1980)
Jerome Spunt (1929-2017)
Erwin E. Strasmich (1925-2014)

Honorary Board Members
Harold Gadon
Charlotte Penn
Lillian N. Schwartz
Philip Segal
Melvin L. Zurier

Staff
Director
Kate-Lynne Laroche
652  Editor's Comments

654  Ruth Goldstein
The Girls, Part II

664  Jonathan Kapstein
Captain John J. Kapstein, U.S. Army Air Force:
In War and Peace

681  Mel A. Topf
The Rimonim Dispute Continued: The First Circuit Court’s
En Banc Denial

684  Decision in Congregation Jeshuat Israel v. Congregation
Shearith Israel

694  Michael W. Fink
The Sisters

702  Michael Fink
Brothers

710  Edward Feldstein
What Providence College Has Meant to Me

722  Noel Rubinton
Rabbi Wayne Franklin’s Interfaith Leadership

742  James B. Rosenberg
The Education of a Liberal Rabbi

758  Josh Elkin
My Formative Years in Providence
772 Alvan Kaunfer
“There’s a New Jewish School in Town”:
The Origins of Rhode Island’s Conservative Day School

786 Susan Landau
My Little Anatevka

800 Shai Afsai
Two Pilgrimages to Uman for Rosh Hashanah

816 Janet Engelhart Gutterman
Trees of Life: Lessons from Pittsburgh

826 George M. Goodwin
Four Short Articles

841 64th Annual Meeting

843 In Memoria

850 Funds & Bequests

851 2018 Life Members

853 Index to Volume 17

874 Photo Credits & Corrections
Editor’s Comments

Aside from its considerable length, this issue of our journal is unusual in several ways. For example, not only is this the first time that a husband and a wife have written separate articles; they share the same first name! Additionally, this issue has more articles by or about rabbis than any other.

And the range of writers’ ages is also notable. Two contributors, who were high school classmates, have reached their mid-80s. Yet, one writer is only 30.

Our writers also show considerable geographical diversity. Although eight are Rhode Island natives, three have left to build lives elsewhere. Conversely, five writers have built new lives in the Ocean State. The most senior of these newcomers has been here for more than 45 years; the most junior, only a few. But most of us have also traveled far and wide in terms of our dreams, regrets, and accomplishments.

My portrait discovered in Sicily, 2018
One of the most obvious characteristics that unites us is our curiosity. Whatever our abilities, we endeavor to explain what is often complex in satisfying and compelling ways. And many of us are guided by powerful memories. Even among those writers who have reached retirement age or beyond, none seems ready to rest on his or her laurels. We still hunger for new or fresh experiences and lessons that will help us make better sense of ourselves and of our world.

I wonder how many of our writers, including the native Rhode Islanders, have met each other. Through these pages, all may now do so. Indeed, I feel honored and privileged to have helped convene this local, national, and international symposium, whose evolution began long ago and must surely outlast us all.

Creating this journal takes much of a year, and I’m grateful to so many people who help make it possible. Most have been involved for many years, and you know who you are. I also wish that dozens more of our friends and neighbors were involved. But I’m seldom discouraged because I know, eventually, that something special, if not magical, occurs. It may not become evident until December, when one issue begins to eclipse another, but it almost always happens.

Somehow, our writers make the ordinary look extraordinary or show us how little differentiates the two. Whatever our strengths and weaknesses, our successes and disappointments, we writers and readers have lived rich lives. We are blessed.

George M. Goodman
Newspaper clipping with mother & girls, 1949

Reunion in Providence: Jeannette, 14 (left) and Marie Berkovicova, united with their mother, Mrs. Rose Berkovicova, after being separated for five years. The girls were the first Jewish refugee children to arrive in foster homes in Rhone Island.

Mother Reunited With 2 Daughters Sent Here in 1944 to Escape Nazis

Berkovicova Has Happy Reunion at Home of Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Matusow on Sackett St.; to Share Girls With Foster Parents
The Girls, Part II
Ruth Goldstein

This article could have had many titles, such as “Best Friends” or “Sisters.” I would also have been happy to use a sentence from the text: “That’s what sisters do.” Whatever words suffice, this is a story about decency, goodness, compassion, love, truth, and heroism. It is also about spirituality, though this word is never used.

Ruth’s article is written in a spare, if not austere, manner. Yet, for me, style is beside the point. Indeed, I can hear Ruth’s words and pauses as she recounts this astonishing, harrowing, and uplifting saga. Readers will also grasp that she was somehow destined to share it with posterity and us.

A short while after Marie came to live with my family in Pawtucket and Jeanette was living with the Matusow family in South Providence, the girls’ paternal uncle was located in New Jersey. I remember visiting him and his wife several times here. On their first trip to Rhode Island, they took Marie, Jeannette, my sister Sally, Mom, Aunt Edith Matusow, and me shopping. The first stop was Tilden-Thurber, the Tiffany of Providence. We were each allowed to pick out a piece of jewelry. I still have the small gold locket I chose.

Then their uncle took Marie and Jeannette to a music store and bought them each a piano. The furniture was rearranged in each home, and we all took lessons. Marie’s natural musical talent far exceeded Sally’s or mine. Many years later, I learned why. Never had any of us known that, as a young child in Belgium, she had been a very fine violinist. Marie never spoke of it while she lived with us. Had she, I’m sure my folks would have encouraged her to resume her violin studies.

In 1945, about the time Marie came to our home, the Red Cross and some Jewish organizations located the girls’ mother, Rose, in Europe. One Saturday evening when Jeannette was with us, my
dad picked up the phone. Since we now had an address for Rose in France, he gave this information to an overseas operator. Dad explained why he wanted to reach Rose. The operator said she would try to locate her and would call back. Hours later the phone rang.

There were many tears of joy that night as Rose and her children were able to hear each other’s voices once again. The tears weren’t only from the Berkovics, but the Goldsteins as well.

Regular correspondence between the girls and their mother began after that. Marie had retained her French and wrote for herself and Jeannette. It took four years to clear all the hurdles and complete all the paperwork needed to allow Rose to join her girls in America. She arrived in New York on November 11, 1949. Their reunion was happy, sad, difficult, and shocking.

Although it was miraculous for Rose and her daughters to be together again, it was also quite traumatic for Jeannette. She remembered her mother through the eyes of a very young child. Rose looked nothing like Jeannette remembered. Her mother, who had been born in 1899, appeared much older and sickly. Rose’s eyes also had a haunted look. Since her arrival in America, Jeannette had tried to suppress all the horrors she remembered from the Holocaust. Seeing her mother again brought back all those memories.

When she first enrolled in school here, Jeanette was put into a first grade class so that she would learn English. It was very degrading since she should have been a fifth grader. That experience set Jeannette on a path to become an “all American” kid. Never have I seen anyone learn English as fast as she did. Her ability with other languages fell by the wayside, however. Jeannette never wanted to be known as a refugee and was very sensitive whenever questioned about her accent. If asked, she would very quickly reply, “I am from New York!”

Rose spoke no English, so she and Jeannette had no easy common language. Thus, communication between mother and daughter was extremely difficult.

It was different for Marie. Since she had been old enough to understand the events of the Holocaust, her reunification with her mother was a very positive experience. Although fluent in English,
Marie had retained her French. Her chats in Yiddish with my grandfather, Zaide, had honed her fluency in that language as well.

Rose and Marie were able to speak very easily with each other. After a bit of time had elapsed, Marie asked her Mom, “How could you have given your daughters away to strangers?” Rose replied, “How could I not take that chance when I knew what lay ahead if I didn’t?”

In America, Rose felt that she had lost her daughters to other mothers. But both my mom and Aunt Edith Matusow tried to reassure Rose that this wasn’t so.

For one last time, the girls made a move. Jewish Family Service helped Rose set up a small apartment for her little family at 39 Gordon Avenue in South Providence, not too far from the Matusows, who lived at 98 Sackett Street. This meant Jeannette would not have to change schools.

Rose was already working for one of the benefactors who had helped bring her to America. This was Benjamin Brier from Brier Manufacturing Company. By the time Rose arrived in Providence, Marie had not only completed West High School in Pawtucket but graduated from Bryant College. She was working as a bookkeeper at the Koppelman family’s floral business on East Avenue in Pawtucket and was engaged to Melvin Silverman. They were planning to be married in a few months.

So together, Rose and the girls took up the task of rebuilding their lives. But Rose had to conquer many hurdles. In addition to getting reacquainted with her daughters, she had to learn English, adapt to the American way of life, manage to support her family, get to and from work, master tasks at work, and even learn to shop for groceries.

For Marie and Jeannette, the transition also meant that they would have to live more frugally then they did in their foster homes. Thus, there were many adjustments in all their lives. Rose and her girls knew that they were family, but it was a long, slow process to feel like family once again.

Rose was a very proud and independent lady. So much had been done by total strangers to help her that she was insistent that
she pay for Marie and Mel’s wedding totally by herself. The couple knew it would take years for Rose to be able to afford to do that. They resolved the situation in a sensible way. Marie wore a navy blue suit, and she and Mel were married in Rabbi Morris Schussheim’s study at Temple Beth Israel in South Providence. After the ceremony, my folks had a reception at our home.

Jeannette remained with Rose, graduated from Hope High School in 1952, and married the love of her life, Morton Bernstein. At their wedding, Jeannette wore a white wedding gown. Times were better by then.

Rose was naturalized in U.S. District Court, in Providence, on October 24, 1955. One witness was Aunt Edith Matusow. Another was Anna Gerson, who was Edith’s close neighbor. At the same time, Rose’s name was legally changed from Ruzena. She had also been known as Rosa.

Mel and Morty always treated their mother-in-law with kindness. Together they made certain she lacked nothing. The girls and their husbands moved Rose to an apartment on the East Side and furnished it completely. It was within easy walking distance of their homes and close to a Jewish shopping area. That was important since Rose maintained a strictly kosher home. The apartment’s location on Sessions Street enabled Rose to easily attend services at Temple Emanu-El and also participate in social activities at the nearby Jewish Community Center.

I recall that Rose’s brother-in-law and his wife, who in 1944 had traveled with the girls from Lisbon to Philadelphia, came from their home in Canada to visit here several times. Although she traveled infrequently, Rose also visited them in Canada.

Rose always had a quiet demeanor, for the Holocaust’s toll was heavy. She continued to grieve the loss of her husband, Ignace, and seldom laughed. Her smiles were few and reserved mostly for Marie, Jeannette, Mel, Morty, her grandchildren, and me.

She had become my Aunt Rose. That honor came with many perks. Rose always prepared specials foods for many Jewish holidays. Along with her girls and their families, mine always received some of her delicious goodies.
After Marie, Jeannette, and I married and had children of our own, we continued to remain close. We lived near each other. Some of our children went to school together, and they have always considered each other as cousins. When I went through a long, painful divorce, the girls and their husbands were extremely supportive. They literally held me together.

As the years passed, Mel’s family business relocated to Florida. So, he, Marie, and their children, Stephen, March, and Renee, settled in Clearwater. The business flourished, and Marie became secretary of their synagogue.

Jeannette, Morty, and their sons, David and Larry, remained in Rhode Island, as did Rose. Jeannette worked alongside Morty in their family business. Everyone knew of Miller’s on Hope Street. It was the best Jewish deli in Rhode Island.

Each year Rose would spend the winter months with Marie and her family in Florida. As she aged and it was no longer wise to allow her to live alone, Marie and Mel moved her to live permanently in their home. From that time forward, Rose was never left alone. If Marie and Mel were going out, one of their children stayed with their grandmother. Only during the last few weeks of her life did Rose enter a nursing home. She passed away on January 5, 1987 at 87 years of age.

Never before or since have I ever seen anybody treated with the kindness, dignity, and love that was shown by Marie, Jeannette, their husbands, and their children.

Jeanette & Marie
Both Marie and Jeannette recognized their mother’s astounding bravery and determination to save their lives. The girls realized that during the Holocaust many parents never considered the possibility of sending their children away. Those not sent away were among the countless children and parents who perished.

Throughout their married years, Mel gradually learned from Marie what had happened to the Berkovic family during the Holocaust. It was at Mel’s urging that Marie began to tell her family’s story of survival to young and old alike so their history would not be lost.

Marie and Mel made several trips to Europe so that she could visit not only her father’s grave, but also places in France, such as Vence and Creuse, which had been safe havens for his wife and daughters. They even made a stop at the National Maritime Museum in Lisbon to see the replica of the ship, S.S. *Serpa Pinto*, which had brought Marie and Jeannette from Lisbon to Philadelphia.

No visit was made to Perpignan, where Rivesalt, the deportation camp, had been located. It would have been just too painful for Marie to relive those memories.

Jeannette has never had any desire to travel to Europe. She has told me that she would never do so because there is still too much pain.

Although Mel and Marie had known each other for only a few months when they married, their love affair spanned many decades. Unfortunately, in October 1999, at 70 years of age and just a few weeks shy of their 50th wedding anniversary, Mel died of leukemia.

Several years after Morty’s death, Jeannette moved to Florida to be near Marie. They each speak of their experiences during the war to youngsters visiting the Florida Holocaust Museum in St. Petersburg.

At one of their presentations, a founder of the museum, Walter Loebenberg, heard them mention Rivesalte. He told them that he had a cousin in Marseille, who had been in the French resistance. In fact, it was this cousin who had organized the escape network for the children of Rivesalte. Sadly, he did not survive. The Nazis shot him.
Throughout the years Marie and Jeannette still have had many unanswered questions about the events in Europe during the Holocaust, especially the circumstances surrounding their father’s death. Rose did explain that after the war had ended and before she came to America, she returned to Vence and exhumed Ignace’s remains. She was able to move them to a Jewish cemetery in Metz, where her only surviving sister lived. Otherwise, Rose never spoke of anything else that had happened during the war.

Whenever either girl would ask about those years, Rose became like a piece of stone, totally unresponsive. To this day, neither Marie nor Jeannette has any idea how Rose was able to survive in Europe after she gave them away in Creuse.

As time passed, Marie has kept trying to find some answers. A few years ago, she contacted an historian through the Internet who was researching the hidden children of France during the Holocaust. This fellow was able to give her two very important bits of information.

The first had to do with the people of Vence. It seems that many years after the war, a stone monument was placed within the town limits to commemorate the brave men and women who had fought and died for freedom. Among the names listed on that monument is Ignace Berkovic. When Marie told me this, her voice trembled. She paused and then said, “After all these years, I finally know that my father was a hero.”

The second bit of information also had to do with Vence. This time, though, it was about Joseph Fisera, who, during the war, ran L’École Freignet, where Marie and Jeannette had been hidden. Through this school, Fisera saved 82 children from Rivesalte. In addition, approximately 500 more Jewish children and adults from other areas, who passed through this school, were also saved from the death camps.

As I have mentioned, in 1988, Fisera, a Czech citizen, was recognized as a “righteous gentile” by Yad Vashem, Israel’s Holocaust Memorial Authority.

Fisera’s humanitarian work was also recognized in November 2006, when a plaque was placed at L’École Freignet during the
International Week for the Rights of Children. In attendance were dignitaries from many countries and organizations as well as members of the Fisera family.

Through the years, Marie also learned that there were several other chateaux and small schools near Creuse where Jews were also hidden.

Along the escape network, many good people in France risked their lives to save Marie, Jeannette, and Rose, as well as hundreds of other Jewish children and adults, from certain death. Those brave men and women of the underground are truly unsung heroes. Several years ago, Marie participated in the March of the Living, an annual trip to Poland’s death camps and then to Israel by Jewish high school students and survivors from across the world. They seek to remember and honor the Six Million who perished during the Holocaust.

It has been more than 70 years since Marie, Jeannette, and I met. In spite of our gray hair, we still refer to each other as “girls.” We are still there for each other during good and sad times. That’s what sisters do.

It has been a privilege to share the “girls’” story with you. Yes, the Holocaust did happen. Marie and Jeannette can attest to that.

As the years pass, there will be fewer and fewer survivors. People need to hear their stories. Now that you know the story of what happened to the Berkovic family during the Holocaust, you can tell others about the events of those terrible times and how they affected Ignace, Rose, Marie, and Jeannette.

Hopefully, from the hard lessons of the past, people everywhere will learn to be tolerant and respectful of each other so that peace can finally be achieved throughout our world.

**Epilogue**

The apartment Rose and her girls shared in South Providence, as well as the Matusows’ nearby home and bakery, are gone. My former home in Pawtucket still stands. The building in Providence that housed Brier Manufacturing Company, where Rose
worked as a carder, still stands. It has been converted into Brown University’s Medical School.

Frank Toti, Jr. wrote a play, “Trust in the Journey,” about the girls’ experiences during the Holocaust. The story is based on what Marie, Jeannette, and I were able to tell him. It premiered in Providence in March 2009 and was performed again in St. Petersburg in November 2010. A third group of performances took place in Providence in 2014. About 4,500 middle and high school students in Rhode Island have seen the play.

Though their childhood health problems persist, Marie and Jeannette continue to share their story of survival with children and adults in Florida. I continue telling their story in Rhode Island.

Marie’s love for Mel is still evident. She wears his gold wedding ring on a necklace just above her heart. Alongside his ring, she has added only one other memento of great importance. This is a small gold charm of a violin, which was given to her by a group of youngsters in Florida. They had learned about her life during the Holocaust.

Marie, now 87, continues to always be there for her sister, now 83. But Jeannette still does not cry. She did not cry when her father, mother, husband or youngest son died. More than 70 years after learning that survival lesson during the Holocaust, it lingers. Jeannette does not cry.
Captain John J. Kapstein,
U.S. Army Air Force: In War and Peace

Jonathan Kapstein

Many Brown alumni still fondly remember the author's brilliant father, Prof. Israel J. Kapstein, a member of the English department who was also a successful fiction writer and a collaborator with Rabbi William G. Braude on scholarly studies of Hebrew texts. One grateful alumnus was Marvyn Carton '38, who, in 1982, a year before his mentor's death, endowed a professorship in his honor.

Among Prof. Kapstein's numerous distinctions is the fact that, in 1946, he became Brown's first tenured Jewish professor. But many of his personal and endearing qualities were portrayed in two articles published in the 2004 issue of our journal, my first as editor. The first article, by Jay Barry, was excerpted from his book, Gentlemen under the Elms, which profiled many of Brown's legendary professors. The second article, by Prof. Kapstein's daughter, Prof. Judith K. Brodsky, was actually a double portrait of her parents.

At that time, through email correspondence, I met Judith's younger brother, Jonathan, who was working and living in Belgium. He was eager to portray his uncle, John, a hero of World War II, who was also his father's youngest sibling. I very much wanted to publish such an article, but the subject, who was still quite modest about his amazing accomplishments, preferred a posthumous portrait. Fortunately, John lived well into 2016, and Jonathan found that I, a veteran of sorts, was still deeply involved with our publication. So I'm pleased to present another chapter about the illustrious Kapstein family. (A still earlier one, by Geraldine Foster, portrayed John's first cousin, Sherwin.)

Jonathan graduated from Classical High, Brown in 1961, and then Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism. His career as a journalist and a corporate executive, lasting nearly a half-century, brought him to four continents. To be more precise, he was a regional bureau chief of Business Week in Rio de Janeiro, Toronto, Milan, Johannesburg, and Brussels and received several prestigious peer awards from the Overseas Press Club. After leaving Business Week, Jonathan was director of government affairs
in Europe and Africa for Lyondell Chemical Company and later a consultant before returning to journalism.

In 2016, while still living in Brussels, he and his wife, Nancy, decided to return home. They now reside in Woodbury, Connecticut, and Jonathan is a trustee of Congregation B’nai Israel in nearby Southbury. No doubt his experience as a Lieutenant Commander in the U.S. Naval Reserve has helped sharpen this portrait of his beloved uncle.

“T here are bold pilots and there are old pilots,” says an aviation truism, “but there are no old, bold pilots.” John J. Kapstein, a highly decorated U.S. Army Air Force combat pilot during World War II, proved the saying wrong, at least for himself. Born and raised in Providence, he lived into his 99th year still hale, hearty, erect, and in full control of his mind and body. He passed away sitting down quietly and falling asleep with a glass of vodka in his hand at one of his European residences on October 15, 2016.¹

By then he’d had a full life, including decades as one of very few businessmen accepted as interlocutors with Moscow during the Cold War. Part of his credibility was his presence. He radiated intelligence and bonhomie. And he could knock back vodka with the best of them. Equally important was his heroic American military record in what Russians call the Great Patriotic War. The Soviet Union, now the Russian Federation, suffered 20 million dead as allies fighting Nazi Germany during World War II.

**War Record**

John Kapstein earned the USAAF Distinguished Flying Cross, a major award for heroism, on September 14, 1943. He flew his B-26 Marauder, a twin-engine medium bomber used as an attack aircraft, through intense ground fire from a German gun battery that shot away his rudder and the plane’s electrical system. He continued his mission in the nearly uncontrollable aircraft, scoring hits on a critical road junction near Auletta, Italy. In the words of the citation from Lt. Gen. Carl “Tooey” Spaatz, the commander of Air Forces in Europe, “…then foregoing a return to the nearest friendly landing
ground, Kapstein formed up on the wing of his badly crippled element leader and gave him protection to a distant base in Sicily. In Kapstein’s day, medals and decorations were usually awarded for extraordinary achievement. Indeed, he suffered a major concussion while still a copilot when a 20mm round from a German fighter exploded in the cockpit killing the pilot. He ignored the concussion, landed the damaged aircraft safely, and didn’t apply for the Purple Heart medal given for injuries or wounds suffered in combat. Instead, he moved up to pilot status.

By war’s end, in addition to the DFC, he had accumulated eight Air Medal awards, the Distinguished Unit Citation with a similar unit award of the Croix de Guerre personally ordered by Gen. Charles de Gaulle, later president of France, and three invasion battle stars on his European Theater of Operations service medal, the American Defense Service medal for military service prior to December 7, 1941, and other service ribbons.

One evening in 2007, when I was dining with my uncle in France, a patron protested to the restaurant owner: “Who’s the foreigner you’re making such a fuss about?” “Be very careful, monsieur,” came the icy reply in the hauteur that only a Frenchman uses when condescending to another Frenchman. “He was decorated by General de Gaulle.”

Just as important as his awards, Kapstein was respected by his contemporaries both for his warm personality and for his excellence as a pilot. He and his crew were credited with downing 19 enemy aircraft. He also once ditched a badly shot up plane at sea, saving the lives of crewmen too wounded to have bailed out. He was picked up by anti-Fascist partisans and brought back to American hands by the Royal Navy in a submarine. He often declared that his worst experience was not being shot down but spending four days on a British submarine.

An online memoir by a fellow pilot, Lamar Timmons, pays further tribute to Kapstein’s flying skills in relating achievements in aerial combat against the Luftwaffe’s Me-109s. Timmons also referred to my uncle as his “Jewish friend,” perhaps thinking it remarkable to have a Jewish colleague.
Youth in Providence

John J. Kapstein, the youngest of Bernard and Fanny’s three sons and three daughters, was born on August 2, 1918 while his family was living at 17 Messenger Street, near Atwells Avenue, in Providence. Thereafter, the family lived at 21 Jenckes Street and later at 19 Forest Street. My uncle went to Doyle Street Grammar School, now gone, and the old Hope High School, also now demolished, directly across from its present site.

When John went on active military service, he moved in with my parents, Israel J. (1904-1983) and Stella Cohen (1903-1994) Kapstein, who were 15 years older than he. My Dad, the eldest Kapstein sibling, was known within the family as “Io” (pronounced Eye-oh). A novelist and a short story writer, he was a famous, much-loved English professor at Brown, where he had earned his bachelor’s degree in 1926 and his doctorate in 1933. In 1946 he became the first Jewish professor at Brown to receive tenure.

John told me, “My father was in his fifties when I was born. He was really sort of a remote figure when I was little. My mother was sick a lot. She died from diabetes in 1943 in her early sixties, so I looked to your Dad and Mom for guidance a lot. Your mother always took care of me,” he said fondly.

My grandfather Bernard, better known as “Barney,” was not a successful businessman and times were tough. His efforts to sell large, framed family photos to immigrant families to send back to their old countries foundered with the decline of immigration during the 1920s. The Great Depression killed the business once and for all. Although Barney spoke accentless English and was fluent in French, Portuguese, Russian, and Yiddish, family lore says his real expertise was in playing pinochle with chums late at night. Not surprisingly, relations with his children were difficult.

The Kapsteins were and are observant Jews. My uncle John became a bar mitzvah in 1931 at Temple Emanu-El. As a paperboy for The Providence Journal, he was taunted as “Jew boy” and threatened by older kids living in tough Polish and Irish neighborhoods. Although he recalled a lot of fistfights, eventually some tactical thinking took hold. John was used as bait by older or larger relatives,
who waited out of sight around a corner before emerging to fight. These allies included his older cousin, Sherwin Kapstein (1917-2009), later a football player at Brown and a Coast Guard officer during the war, and John’s much taller brother, Samuel (known as “Archie”). “Rocks would have been bad manners,” John told me. “No one ever used knives. The worst you’d get was a bloody nose.”

Always a cool hand, John’s role models were his oldest brother “Io,” and a cowboy movie star, Buck Jones, who became the source of his local tag, “Bucky.” John handled the long-established hobby of Providence lads sneaking into Brown football games, under the fence, somewhat differently: he put on a tie and jacket and gestured vaguely behind him at some adult as he sauntered past the ticket-takers. It worked.

In fact, the only time I ever saw him nonplussed was in December 1945, when he had flown home to Providence in a North American B-25 Mitchell from Stewart Field, adjacent to West Point. A snowstorm trapped him at Hillsgrove Airfield, later renamed T.F. Green Airport. Kapstein spent most of the weekend on the phone explaining away why he had landed a military medium bomber at a civilian airfield when he could have diverted to Quonset Point Naval Air Station.

After high school, John went to work for Adolph Meller, a successful Jewish industrialist in Providence who was a major importer of semiprecious stones from Europe used in jewelry manufacturing. “The owners saw the war coming and started to liquidate connections in Europe,” John said. Meanwhile, he was marking time and waiting for the war as well.

In 1934, my uncle had lied about his age and enlisted as a private in the Rhode Island Army National Guard. “I was 16,” he said, “but I said I was 18 and joined the 103rd Field Artillery. Having previously used horses, it had just converted to a motorized unit. We used old French 75mm cannons from World War I. We wore cavalry boots. The European war had started in 1939, but when France fell in May 1940, we were told that we’d be activated for duty.”

**Pilot Training**
The 103rd was activated early in 1941, and John became a sergeant by June. He wanted to get into pilot training. He recalled, “They had a very tough physical, and I had a deviated septum because I used to box. So I saw a doctor to have it fixed before I went to the physical. I remember that I had a local anesthetic, which wore off during the procedure. I told the doctor, ‘I can feel what you’re doing.’ All he said was, ‘Nearly done.’”

Having passed the physical, John was accepted as an aviation cadet and was posted to the Army Air Corps’ flight school at Kelly Field in San Antonio, Texas. In the fall of 1941, there were few if any Jewish pilots. As a sergeant with military experience, however,
he was made commanding officer (CO) of his barracks.

After three months of preflight training and meteorology classes, Kapstein’s cadet unit was sent to Pine Bluff, Arkansas, to train on Fairchild PT-19s. His flight instructor was a World War I veteran named Watkins. John recalled that the first time he walked out to the training aircraft, Watkins gave him “a mighty clout, a klop on the back of my head.” “He told me to always tip my hat to the aircraft before a flight. ‘Treat your plane with respect,’ Watkins said. ‘It is a lovely instrument and it can kill you.’”

John never forgot that lesson. A year later, when flying combat missions in North Africa, his crew complained about his meticulous preflight inspections. He told them, “When you get safely home, you can tell your mother that your pilot made you keep your plane neat and clean.”

At Pine Bluff, Watkins also told him, “If you want to stay alive, keep your head out of the cockpit. Look around.” The modern Air Force institutionalized this as “SA” training- Situational Awareness. It means constantly quartering the sky visually while also keeping an eye on the instruments.

John was sent back to Kelly Field for twin-engine training. One-third of his fellow aviation cadets had already washed out in preflight training. Another third, who did not qualify for the next stage of flight training, was sent to bombardier or navigator schools. He was determined to fly.

John’s problem was that his classmates, all college graduates, had more math knowledge than he. My uncle knew nothing about trigonometry, the key to navigation. So, on a rare weekend pass to Providence, he sought out his sister-in-law, my mother, Stella, who lived with my dad at 248 Morris Avenue. She had graduated first in her class with a mathematics degree from Rhode Island State College, later to become the University of Rhode Island. She tutored him in trig nonstop through the weekend and told him, “The rest is up to you.”

Meanwhile, he said, “Here I was from Depression-era Providence and getting $75 a month, a fortune. I sent $40 home. My mother never had so much financial security in her life.”

Kapstein
Combat

John received his pilot’s wings and commission as a second lieutenant in spring 1942. Always well-dressed then and throughout his life, he spurned the uniform issued by the Quartermaster Corps. Instead, he went into downtown San Antonio and was measured for a personally tailored, higher quality officer’s outfit. “My uniform was impeccable. It lasted throughout the war.”

At that early stage of the war, German U-boats freely torpedoes merchant vessels along the U.S. East Coast. Kapstein’s initial assignment was flying anti-submarine patrols out of Avon Park, Florida. He shortly transferred to train as an attack bomber pilot in B-26 Marauders.

The now-forgotten combat aircraft of World War II, the B-26 Marauder medium bomber was known as a particularly difficult plane to fly. Purposely designed to combine contradictory elements, the Glenn L. Martin Company gave it the agility of a fighter able to tangle with opposing aircraft and the stability of a bomber in order to complete its missions. Its Pratt & Whitney engines were reliable but the pitch-change propellers required finicky maintenance. Among other epithets, it became known as “the widow-maker” and “the flying whore” because it lacked all visible means of support.

Inexperienced pilots hated it. Good pilots came to love it. They loved the B-26 Marauder because of its ability to take punishment and give it back. Once the tactics were worked out, the B-26 had the lowest combat loss record of any allied aircraft in the European and Mediterranean theatres. John was assigned to the new 320th bomber group, which began flying combat missions in North Africa, then Italy, and later France in late 1942 and early 1943.

Never afraid and not one to look back, John and another pilot even captured a German Wehrmacht patrol behind U.S. lines while away from Montesquieu Airfield in French Algeria. My uncle recalled, “We were driving into town to celebrate a birthday. A group of Arabs stopped us. One said he had been a Word War I sergeant in the French army, and they told us there was a group of Germans over the hill in a desert hollow. They were behind Allied lines and intent on sabotage missions. We halted a U.S. quartermaster convoy
and took their rifles. Behind a sand dune, we found three German officers and three soldiers with two vehicles, one a captured British Army truck and the other a “K-wagen,” the German equivalent of a Jeep. I shouted, ‘Hande hoch. Kommen zie herein!’ These were tough Afrika Korps troops. They could have shot us but instead they surrendered.”

John continued: “We drove back to camp with them. We took them into the mess hall where everybody was having lunch, sat them down, and fed them. One of the Wehrmacht officers kept staring at my nametag and me. I finally leaned over into his face and said, ‘Ich bin ein Jude.’” He was astonished. “There are Jews in this [your] Army?” he said in wonder.”

My uncle’s story continued, “At that point a British Army major with British MPs came in to take custody and said, ‘Get up, you sons of bitches,’ and grabbed them from the tables. He told our CO, Col. (John R.) Fordyce, who was later killed in action, ‘Don’t be nice to them. You’ll learn what bastards they are.’”

The Army was not happy with John’s exploit. Pilots were worth more than the risk he ran. He was told that he should have given the matter to ground security units. “But the 320th kept the K-wagen,” he said laughing. When his unit moved to Sicily and then to Corsica, mechanics disassembled the K-wagen each time and took it along.

While participating in the victory over Nazi forces in North Africa, he became friendly with the Jewish community in Algeria, friendships which, like his later Russian friendships, lasted a lifetime. When he moved to France in mid-career, he took up again with many of his Jewish North African friends who had migrated there after Algeria received its independence.

John also kept the Wehrmacht commanding officer’s 9mm Walther P-38 pistol as a souvenir. As it happens, a decade later the Walther was stolen from a suitcase inside his storage unit in the basement of his apartment in New York City.

In 1942, the Army Air Force estimated that an attack pilot could expect to complete only eight to 12 missions without being disabled or killed. With 40 completed missions and several of his
aircraft shot to pieces, Kapstein’s pilot skills defeated the odds several times over. Rotated back to the States in January 1944, he was temporarily reassigned to Randolph Field in San Antonio while awaiting selection as the first Army Air Force inspector general at the United States Military Academy at West Point.

Religion was important to John Kapstein. As he told me, “Many pilots and aircrew had nightmares or couldn’t fall asleep before and after missions. I said the *Sh’m’a* every night and slept like a baby.”

To its credit, the Army Air Force ignored John’s Judaism at a time when anti-Semitism was prevalent in the still racially-segregated armed forces. The pre-war Army Deputy Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. George Van Horn Moseley, was a notorious anti-Semite. Many well-known Jewish officers claimed to be Episcopalians. These included Army Maj. Gen. Maurice Rose, the son of a rabbi; Marine Lt. Gen. Victor “Brute” Krulak, raised in an Orthodox family; and Navy Adm. Hyman Rickover, who arrived in America as a child fleeing a pogrom. Even West Point was known to have ostracized Jewish cadets into the 1960s.

West Point needed an Army Air Force inspector general because World War II cadets could opt to take their fourth year in pilot training. John had at his personal disposal a single-engine North American AT-6, a twin-engine Beech C-45, and any other plane not in use. Given these aircraft, a Jeep, a driver, an apartment, and a maid, he recalled later, “I never had so much money in my pocket before or since. I was tempted to stay.”

Israel

Nevertheless, in 1946, a year before the Army Air Force became the U.S. Air Force, John resigned his commission in order to assist the Jewish underground in the British Mandate for Palestine. He was called to a small, private meeting at New York’s Harmonie Club, an exclusive Jewish enclave, by Maj. Gen. Melvin Krulewitch, the highest-ranking Jewish officer in the Marine Corps. The others present were Teddy Kollek, later mayor of Jerusalem, a cabinet minister from Britain’s new Labor government, and a U.S. Navy com-

Notes
mander.

As head of purchasing for the Haganah, the illegal Jewish defense force in Palestine, Kollek said an Arab-Israeli war was coming. He requested help to purchase weapons. “Krulewitch asked if I knew where surplus military equipment was stored in Europe,” my uncle said. “I had access to all that information. It was all in the files. I knew what it was and where it was… for example, abandoned German Messerschmitts in Czechoslovakia and North American P-51 Mustang fighters left behind in The Netherlands.

“Kollek said that there was no problem buying weapons on the open market. The Dutch were very helpful. They knew where the equipment was going, and there were no roadblocks,” my uncle said. But when the British enforced a weapons embargo, Kollek sought help in getting it past the British forces.

H. Stewart Hughes, a grandson of Chief Justice of the United States Charles Evans Hughes, proved instrumental. During World War II, he had worked with the State Department and with the O.S.S., a forerunner of the C.I.A., and he was sympathetic to the plight of European Jews. Hughes provided an introduction to Count Carlo Sforza of Italy, an anti-Fascist who owned a vast tract of land with an airstrip in Foggia, at Italy’s heel.

Subsequently, my uncle met with Count Sforza, whom he called “an elegant individual.” After listening to the plea for a staging area close to Palestine, the Count said, “John, this conversation never
took place. Take the risk.” My uncle recalled, “There wasn’t any. The U.S. government took no interest in the matter.” The airstrip was used as a stopover to ferry aircraft and ordnance from Northwest and Central Europe to the Jewish forces in Palestine.

Kapstein’s secret assistance to the Haganah was not over. During 1946 and ’47, he briefly provided basic flight training to pilots who, in May 1948, would become part of Israel’s Defense Forces.

Civilian Life

My uncle John’s early postwar life resembled that of many veterans. Married to New York fashion editor Dorothy Meltzer in 1948, he had two sons, Matthew and Ethan, and became a successful manufacturer in Rhode Island and New York.

Like his oldest brother “Io,” John remained interested in literature and the arts. In 1966 he became president of Satra Corporation’s entertainment division. With authorization from the U.S. government, Satra became one of a few American companies active in trade and cultural exchanges with the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Because there were no direct flights between Moscow and New York or Washington, John moved to Paris for purposes of effective coordination.

Among other cultural activities, he was responsible for bringing the Soviet movie “War and Peace” to American theaters in 1968. This eight-hour epic, nominated for three Academy Awards, won the award for best foreign-language film. He arranged the first trip of the Bolshoi Ballet to tour American cities.

My uncle also became friendly with Marshall Georgy Zhukov, the Red Army’s premier general. He arranged for Zhukov’s memoirs to be translated and published in English. John added, “I once asked Zhukov whether I should visit Berdichev,” the Kapstein family’s former home in Ukraine. In 1941 it had been the site of one of the first Nazi mass murders of Jews; nearly 40,000 were killed.11 By war’s end, this important rail junction was all rubble, and “Zhukov simply said, ‘John, forget it.’”

Kapstein retired from Satra in 1988. Warner Communications, later Time Warner, then approached him to work as a consul-
tant. They knew of his close connections to the Soviet cultural community and wanted help with obtaining the rights to the recordings made by internationally prominent Soviet musicians. He remained a senior consultant in Europe for Time Warner until just a few years before his death. Meanwhile he met and married his second wife, Lucienne Lubelski, who, as a child, had been hidden from the Nazis and the Vichy French in Megève in the French Alps. They made their home in Megève until she died in the early 1990s.

Always a man of great charm and physical presence, he appeared as a male model in a Gant clothing catalog at the age of 85. He donated his modeling fees to charity. Still active at 88, John slipped and cracked a tibia en route to a restaurant after a day of spring skiing in the Alps. He continued to the restaurant, had dinner with a bottle of wine, sipped cognac afterwards, and only then called an ambulance. The French government provided medical attention and a suite for him to recover at a senior military officers’ luxurious rehab center.

On October 6, 2009, my wife Nancy and I traveled from our home in Brussels, Belgium, to watch as John was awarded the Russian Order of Friendship in a reception at the Paris residence of Alexandre Orlov, the Russian ambassador to France. This honor also was a back-channel signal to Washington that relations between Russia and the United States should be cordial despite disagreements. Similarly, in May 2010, he was a guest of honor in Moscow at the Russian commemoration of the 65th anniversary of the war’s end.12 On October 27, 2015, we again were present when the Russian government named my uncle a Hero of the Great Patriotic War at another ceremony in Paris. This was both a tribute to him and another positive signal to Washington. Ambassador Orlov ceremoniously dipped the medal in a glass of vodka according to wartime Red Army custom and then pinned it on my uncle’s chest. The vodka didn’t go to waste.

When asked by Americans about anti-Semitism in Russia, John agreed that it had become less strident. As a measure of the ongoing integration of Jews into Russian society, he cited the grim statistic that Jews in the Red Army suffered the same casualty rate in
World War II as their percentage in the overall population. He noted, moreover, that Moscow was well aware of his commitment to Judaism when he was twice decorated.

In his later years, my uncle’s companion was the Baronessa Luciana Lieto of Milan and Capri. The two spent much of the year in her villa in Capri where Kapstein experienced enjoying life while looking out over the famous rocks of Capri that had provided him with the visual cues signaling his approach to targeted Nazi installations near Naples and Salerno, Italy.

My cousin, Matthew Kapstein, became a professor of Buddhist studies at the University of Chicago’s Divinity School and the director of Tibetan studies at the École Pratique des Haute Études in Paris. His brother, Ethan Kapstein, formerly a professor of sustainable development at a French graduate school of business, INSEAD, near Paris, is now on the staff at Princeton, where he lives, and simultaneously holds an endowed chair at Arizona State University. My uncle has four grandchildren.

John Kapstein was formally interred in Moscow.
with Jewish prayers before a largely non-Jewish group of Russian mourners. He is the only American buried in Moscow’s Novodevichy Cemetery, the equivalent of Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris as a site where notable historic and cultural figures are buried. He regarded his career in bridging the two countries while remaining a loyal American as significant and had made arrangements to remain among Russian friends.

His companions there include the politicians Khrushchev and Yeltsin, the writers Gogol and Chekov, the poet Mayakovsky, and the cellist Rostropovich. In their midst lie the ashes of an heroic American Jewish pilot from Providence, Rhode Island, who was bold, old, and a fine cultural bridge between the two nations.

(Endnotes)


2 USAF General Orders no. 81 issued 14 Nov 1943 HQ12th Air Force.

3 http://www.b-26mhs.org/archives/diaries/lamar_timmons.pdf The link may not download properly. The text can be obtained on request via email to Jon.Kapstein@gmail.com.

4 “Israel J. Kapstein of Brown” by Jay Barry. RIJH Notes XIV (November 2004), 281. This article was excerpted from Barry’s book Gentlemen Under the Elms (Brown Alumni Magazine, 1982).

5 Judith Kapstein Brodsky, “Kappy and Stella”, RIJH Notes XIV (November, 2004), 304. The writer is my sister.


7 Quotes attributed to John J. Kapstein are from interviews conducted by the author in August 2010 at Kapstein’s home in Megève, France.

8 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_B-26_Marauder

9 http://320thbg.org/


Kapstein

12 See interview on the English service of Russian TV broadcast May 8th, 2010. https://rt.com/Top_News/2010-05-08/american-veteran-usa-russia.html/ The link may have been deleted. If so the video may be obtained from Jon.Kapstein@gmail.com via email request.

Grave in Moscow cemetery
The *Rimonim* Dispute Continued:
Introduction to the First Circuit Court’s
*En Banc* Denial

Mel A. Topf

As in the two previous issues of our journal, Mel is once again the ideal person to introduce readers to the complexities of this harrowing legal dispute. He does so wearing many hats. Professionally, he is both a senior professor of writing studies, rhetoric and composition at Roger Williams University and an attorney. And as if these responsibilities were not enough, he has chaired the publications committee of *The Notes* for six years and has served as the Association’s first vice-president for three years. Now we are privileged to have this thoughtful and gentle man serve as our president. I’m afraid, Mel, that, whatever this case’s controversial outcome, you will be asked to contribute additional remarks in next year’s issue.

The battle over ownership of a pair of $7,000,000 *rimonim* (torah finials) continues its long journey through the federal courts. It began in 2012 when Congregation Jeshuat Israel, at Newport’s Touro Synagogue – the nation’s oldest synagogue – attempted to sell the colonial-era *rimonim* to Boston’s Museum of Fine Arts. New York’s Congregation Shearith Israel - the nation’s oldest congregation-demanded a halt to the sale, claiming that it owned the silver finials. CJI took CSI to federal court in Rhode Island, where Judge John J. McConnell ruled in 2016 that the Newport congregation owns not only the *rimonim* but also the synagogue itself and all its appurtenances. (The opinion is in *The Notes*, November 2016, 318-60.)

CSI appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, in Boston. The three-judge panel overturned Judge McConnell’s decision, ruling in 2017 that CSI owns Touro Synagogue as well as all its property, including the *rimonim*. (The First Circuit panel’s opinion is in *The Notes*, November 2017, 515-27.) The panel held
that Judge McConnell’s ruling was too broad. It addressed doctrinal tensions between the two congregations. The U.S. Supreme Court, however, requires “a more circumscribed consideration of evidence” when “property disputes reflect religious cleavages.” The panel ruled that Judge McConnell should have considered only evidence that would be relevant in any property dispute, religious or not. The panel specified only four such documents: two leases between the two congregations; a 1945 agreement with the Department of the Interior on the care of Touro synagogue as a National Historic Site; and a 2001 agreement with CJI, the Society of Friends of Touro Synagogue, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The Newport congregation promptly petitioned the panel for a rehearing. The petition was denied. The congregation then petitioned the full First Circuit for a rehearing en banc. (In the federal court system an appeal is usually heard by a panel of three judges. In a rehearing en banc, all the active judges in the circuit would sit to hear the case.) This too was denied. The court’s one-page denial, issued June 7, 2018, said that CJI’s claims in its petition were “erroneous” and a “mischaracterization” of the panel’s rulings.

One of the First Circuit judges, though, issued an unusually lengthy dissent from the court’s refusal to rehear the case. Judge O. Rogeriee Thompson, a former judge on the Rhode Island District Court and a former justice on the Rhode Island Superior Court, argued that the full court should rehear the case in part because an appeals court must give great deference to a trial judge’s findings of fact, and must not review those findings unless there is evidence of “clear error.” The three-judge panel in this case failed both to give that deference and to show how Judge McConnell clearly erred in his findings of fact. Judge Thompson also argued that the panel’s insistence that Judge McConnell rely only on four documents ignores the relevance and importance of other documents. She also criticized the panel’s ignoring some important areas of Rhode Island law on property and on charitable trusts.

Soon after the denial was issued, a lawyer for CJI said that the congregation will appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. (On October 22, 2018, the Newport congregation indeed filed a petition with
the Supreme Court, arguing that it should accept CJI's appeal because the decision of the First Circuit conflicts with Supreme Court rulings regarding church property disputes.

The June 7 court order in which the full First Circuit denied CJI's petition for a rehearing follows. (Note that the three First Circuit judges who heard the appeal is called the “panel.” Their opinion is referred to as the “panel opinion.”)
United States Court of Appeals
For the First Circuit

No. 16-1756

CONGREGATION JESHUAT ISRAEL,

Plaintiff, Appellee,

v.

CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL,

Defendant, Appellant.

Before Howard, Chief Judge, Souter, Associate Justice,¹
Torruella, Baldock, 2 Lynch, Thompson, Kayatta, and Barron, Circuit Judges.

ORDER OF COURT
Entered: June 7, 2018

Appellee Congregation Jeshuat Israel’s (CJI) petition for rehearing having been denied by the panel of judges who decided the case, and the petition for rehearing en banc having been submitted to the active judges of this court and a majority of the judges not having voted that the case be heard en banc, it is ordered that the petition for rehearing and the petition for rehearing en banc be denied.

1 Hon. David H. Souter, Associate Justice (Ret.) of the Supreme Court of the United States, sitting by designation.

2 Hon. Bobby R. Baldock, Circuit Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit, sitting by designation.
SOUTER, Associate Justice, joined by Baldock and Lynch, Circuit Judges, statement regarding denial of panel rehearing.

The panel includes the following response in the panel’s vote to deny rehearing.

The rehearing petitioner, CJI, appears to assert at one point (p. 8) that the panel opinion holds that in litigation of religious property disputes “the trier-of-fact must consider only ‘deeds, charters [and] contracts,’ to the exclusion of all other secular evidence.” This is an erroneous characterization of the panel opinion, which holds only that when such items of evidence “and the like are available and to the point . . . they should be the lodestones of adjudication in these cases.” The holding does not otherwise purport to impose any categorical limitation on competent evidence in such cases.

Both CJI and the Attorney General of Rhode Island, in the brief supporting CJI, misstate that the panel opinion holds that CSI is free of any trust obligation as owner of the real and personal property subject to dispute. The court holds no such thing. The opening paragraph summarizes the holding that CSI holds the property “free of any civilly cognizable trust obligations to CJI” (emphasis added), and the more detailed conclusions at the end, in part III, state the holding to be “as between the parties in this case.” The opinion does not address the possibility of a trust obligation to a non-CJI Newport “Jewish society” as beneficiary. No such claimant was a party in the litigation, and no such issue was resolved explicitly or implicitly by the panel. As indicated above, the opinion neither states nor implies any particular limitation on the scope of admissible evidence in any further litigation brought by a trust claimant other than CJI. In sum, the panel holding is consistent with the Attorney General’s observation that CJI may not be the exclusive beneficiary of any trust there may be, and the holding is limited to the present parties, their controversies and their particular, contractual and contractually documented relationship.

The mischaracterization of the holding as applying to possible claimants other than CJI leads to a further assertion by the Attorney General that the (erroneously characterized) global ruling that CSI has no possible
trust obligation to anyone or to any “Jewish society” other than CJI violates the Rhode Island rule of trust common law, that one public charitable trust beneficiary cannot effectively consent to the termination of the trust, to the prejudice of any other beneficiaries. Since the erroneous statement about the scope of the panel’s holding is the premise for invoking this rule of trust law, the rule has no application.

With respect to the dissent from denial of en banc rehearing, the panel notes that the scope of its review of the trial court’s findings is limited by the dispositive significance of the record evidence of the present parties’ contractually established relationship. Accordingly, the panel holding of that dispositive character under controlling federal law in this case implies no limitation on the relevance of any rule of Rhode Island law or of any item of evidence that might be raised or offered by a party other than CJI in support of a claim to a trust benefit, the possible details of which are not before us.

THOMPSON, Circuit Judge, dissenting from the denial of rehearing en banc.

I dissent from the order denying the petition for rehearing en banc because I am concerned that my colleagues’ opinion thwarts our well-established standard of review for a district court’s decision following a bench trial and because my colleagues haven’t discussed long-standing Rhode Island law that could lead to different legal conclusions in the fact-intensive issues presented by this difficult case.

On a de novo review, a panel is certainly entitled to engage in a different analytical approach to the legal issues than that explored by the trial judge. But the panel engages its review without first establishing how the trial judge’s findings of fact clearly erred. This strikes me as at odds with our established standard of review when we are presented with a decision issued after a bench trial. Traditionally, questions of law are determined de novo, but factual findings are reviewed for clear error only. Kosilek v. Spencer, 774 F.3d 63, 98 (1st Cir. 2014) (en banc) (Thompson, J. dissenting) (citing Wojciechowicz v. United States, 582 F.3d 57, 66 (1st Cir. 2009)). To that end, we are supposed to “accept the court’s factual findings, and the inferences drawn from
those facts, unless the evidence compels us to conclude a mistake was made.”
Id. (citing Janeiro v. Urological Surgery Prof’l Ass’n, 457 F.3d 130, 138 (1st
Cir. 2006)). When an appeal presents issues that involve both legal and factual
inquiries, our review slides along a continuum; “[t]he more fact-intensive the
question, the more deferential our review” whereas “the more law-dominated
the query, the more likely our review is de novo.” Id. (citing Johnson v. Watts
Regulator Co., 63 F.3d 1129, 1132 (1st Cir. 1995)).

As the trial judge’s decision shows, this case is clearly fact intensive
and involves events and documents that go back a few centuries. While the
panel credits him for his “conscientious and exhaustive historical analy[tical]”
approach to the competing claims and for “scrupulous[ly] . . . avoiding any
overt reliance on doctrinal precepts,” it then engages in a de novo review of
the entire case without demonstrating any deference to his findings of fact
and without declaring, never mind demonstrating, that the trial judge’s find-
ings of fact are clearly wrong. After acknowledging the trial judge’s effort,
they pivot to their analysis with a simple “[t]hese are circumstances in which
we think that the First Amendment calls for a more circumscribed consider-
ation of evidence than the trial court’s plenary enquiry into centuries of the
parties’ conduct by examining their internal documentation that had been
generated without resort to the formalities of the civil law.”

The panel proceeds to emphasize secular documents such as deeds,
charters, contracts, and the like as “the lodestones of adjudication” in cases
such as this one where the court is tasked with resolving a property dispute
while dodging improper entanglement in a religious controversy. Indeed,
the trial judge’s comprehensive and thorough decision highlights several
such documents that are part of the voluminous record in this case. But the
panel only picked four contracts to support its conclusion that “CSI owns
both the [R]imonim and the real property free of any civilly cognizable trust
obligations to CJI”: a settlement agreement from earlier litigation between
CSI and CJI; a lease between the parties; an agreement between the parties
and the then-Acting Secretary of the Interior about the preservation of the
property as one of national historical significance; and an agreement between
CJI, the Society of Friends of Touro Synagogue, and the National Trust for
Historic Preservation spelling out the terms for operating the property as a

687 Congregation Jeshuat Israel v. Congregation Shearith Israel
historic site. While diving deep into these four contracts, the panel summar-
ily dismisses a couple of documents the trial judge had relied on, including 
legislation passed in 1932 by the Rhode Island General Assembly and a series 
of deeds signed in 1894. And nowhere does it mention a 1787 will that the 
trial judge had found was “incontrovertible evidence that Touro Synagogue 
was owned in trust.”

An examination of some of the other secular documents upon 
which the trial judge relied confirms my belief that this case should be 
reheard by our entire court. I’ll start with legislation passed by the Rhode 
Island General Assembly in 1932. The panel’s conclusion that CSI owns the 
Touro synagogue, property, and Rimonim “free of any trust or other obliga-
tion to CJI . . .” flies in the face of the plain language of this 1932 legislation. 
In that year, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed “an act exempting 
from taxation certain property in the city of Newport held in trust for the 
Congregation Jeshuat Israel.” If the title of the legislation wasn’t enough of an 
indication that CJI is a beneficiary of a trust, section 1 says:

The property located on the corner of Touro and Division 
streets in the city of Newport held in trust for the benefit of 
the Congregation Jeshuat Israel and used by said congre-
gation for religious and educational purposes is hereby 
exempted from all taxes assessed by the city of Newport as 
long as said property shall be used by said congregation for 
religious and educational purposes. (Emphasis added.)

Clearly the trust mentioned in the title of the legislation refers to the Touro 
synagogue and the real property on which it sits. This legislation, passed after 
the 1903 litigation settlement agreement and the 1903 lease contract, clearly 
indicates that the state of Rhode Island considers the property to be held in 
trust for the benefit of CJI.

In a footnote, the panel acknowledged that this legislation was 
relevant to determine the appropriate resolution to the property dispute, 
but quickly dismissed its significance because the act did not “reveal whether 
the trustees were those of CSI or CJI itself, let alone what difference it would
make in this litigation.” I have three problems with the panel’s cursory dismissal of this evidence. First, the panel doesn’t acknowledge the act’s express statement that the property was held in trust for the benefit of CJI. Second, the panel does not conclude that the trial judge clearly erred by relying on this evidence to support a trust in which CJI was the beneficiary. Third, and most important, the Rhode Island Supreme Court has always been clear that it would not “permit a valid charitable trust to fail for want of a competent trustee, but [would] appoint a trustee to carry out the charitable intent of the testator.” Taylor v. Salvation Army, 49 R.I. 316, 142 A. 335, 336 (1928) (citing Tillinghast v. Council at Narragansett Pier, R.I., of the Boy Scouts of America, 47 R.I. 406, 133 A. 662 (1926); Guild v. Allen, 28 R.I. 430, 67 A. 855 (1907); Wood v. Fourth Baptist Church, 26 R.I. 594, 61 A. 279 (1905)). While the “incompetent trustee” in Taylor was a reference to an unincorporated association, the principle is clear: the court will not overlook an otherwise valid charitable trust for want of a trustee. One can always be appointed by the court.

The 1945 property preservation agreement between CJI, CSI, and the Acting Secretary of the Interior (one of the contracts that the panel relied on) referred to “deed[s] of Trust” from 1894. As the trial judge explained, these deeds purported to convey the interest of the original property trustees’ descendants to CSI. While there wasn’t an express statement in the 1894 deeds that the property held in trust was for the benefit of the Jewish congregation in Newport, several of the deeds did mention that the property was held “in trust.” The panel claims that the deeds lack any significance for this case:

At best, the deeds may collectively have had some rhetorical value for CSI in dealing with the tensions between it and the new congregation of CJI; as the district court noted, the deeds contained the first statements of what later became the lease condition that worship at Touro conform to Sephardic practice as observed by CSI. The upshot is that the record fails to show that the references to a trust obligation on CSI’s part to the worshipers at Touro were anything more than terms of empty conveyances. They are, moreover, unsupported by evidence of the sort preferred in applying neutral principles meant to keep a court from entanglement.
While the deeds may not contain an express statement of the details of the trust, it is relevant evidence that a trust exists.

As CJI points out in their petition for rehearing, the panel’s decision completely ignores a will considered and relied upon by the trial judge. In Jacob Rodrigues Rivera’s will, dated 1787, he wrote:

I have no exclusive Right, or Title, Of, in, or to the Jewish Public Synagogue, in Newport, on Account of the Deed thereof, being made to Myself, Moses Levy & Isaac Harte, which Isaac Harte, thereafter Conveyed his One third Part thereof to me, but that the same was so done, meant and intended, in trust Only, to and for the sole Use, benefit and behoof of the Jewish Society, in Newport, to be for them reserved as a Place of Public Worship forever . . . .

If anything, the 1932 legislation is consistent with the express acknowledgment in this will that a trust exists for the “benefit and behoof” of the Jewish Society in Newport. In 1787, this society was not formally known as CJI because, as the trial judge explained, religious organizations were not granted charters at that time, which was why three individuals were named owners of the property on the deed. But in 1894, CJI received a charter from the General Assembly, recognizing it as a corporation under Rhode Island laws.

I am also concerned about the precedent that the panel’s decision sets for future property disputes between religious entities. In its statement, the panel is clear that there is no “categorical limitation on competent evidence” in the “litigation of religious property disputes,” but after laying out the intricacies of adjudicating property disputes between religious entities and emphasizing the types of documents on which the courts should focus, the panel relies on the formal contracts to the exclusion of these other documents. The result is that the panel’s decision implies that when contracts are available, they should be relied on to the exclusion of other relevant and potentially dispositive evidence such as wills and charters, even though the panel’s opinion indicates that these documents can be just as significant as contracts. Future parties arguing over religious properties and courts adjudicating
cating the next religious property dispute who look for precedential guidance about how to avoid unnecessary entanglement in religious doctrine are receiving conflicting messages on this point.

The panel has tried to carve a very narrow holding, emphasizing that its conclusions only apply to the lack of any obligation to CJI by CSI as owner of the subject property. The panel clarifies in its statement that “[t]he opinion does not address the possibility of a trust obligation to a non-CJI Newport ‘Jewish society’ as beneficiary.” Here again, though, the panel’s conclusions contradict findings of fact made by the trial judge -- e.g., that CJI is currently the only established Jewish congregation in Newport -- but without first concluding that the trial judge’s finding is clearly erroneous. So if there is a real possibility that CSI owns the property but with trust obligations to some other entity, then, as a practical matter, to whom might CSI owe these obligations? Who would have standing to claim status as a bona fide beneficiary and not be precluded from litigating their claims? An individual Newport resident who worships at CJI but who is not a member of CJI? A congregation in a neighboring town to Newport who wants to use the sacred, historical site for religious or educational activity? I am concerned that any future litigants who are tied to worship at the Touro Synagogue could struggle to survive a res judicata challenge based on the identity of parties prong of such a defense.

I am also concerned that my colleagues have completely omitted any discussion of Rhode Island’s extensive case law pertaining to charitable trusts. A rehearing en banc would have provided us with the opportunity to explore how Rhode Island law, when applied to the mountain of secular evidence available here, would have affected my colleagues’ conclusions about whether CSI is holding the property in trust for the benefit of CJI.

Finally, I also believe the panel’s holding that CSI owns the Rimonim outright represents a deviation from Rhode Island’s law about presumption of ownership arising by implication from continuous possession. The trial judge found that “[o]ne of the few undisputed facts in this litigation is that for over 100 years, the Rimonim have been in the possession of [CJI].” Without concluding that the trial judge clearly erred in his finding or addressing long-standing Rhode Island law that a presumption of ownership arises from
continuous possession, the panel concludes that the Rimonim are owned outright by CSI because the 1903 lease agreement included the synagogue’s “paraphernalia” and the Rimonim had been in use at the synagogue for a long time.

Accordingly, I conclude that this case is worthy of en banc review on both prongs of Fed. R. App. P. 35(a). The panel’s deviation from our traditional standard of review for a trial judge’s decision following a bench trial invokes Rule 35(a)(1). The implications of this opinion for future disputes over religious property in general, as well as the subject property of this dispute specifically, invokes Rule 35(a)(2). As a result of these concerns, I dissent from the denial of en banc review.

By the Court:

/s/ Margaret Carter, Clerk

cc:
Hon. John J. McConnell
Hanorah Tyer-Witek,
Clerk, United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island
Steven Earle Snow
Jonathan Mark Wagner
Gary Naftalis
Daniel P. Schumeister
Tobias Jacoby
John F. Farraher Jr.
Louis Mark Solomon
Deming E. Sherman
Colin A. Underwood
Krystle Guillory Tadesse
Nancy Lauren Savitt
Adam J. Sholes
Chrisanne E. Wyrzykowski
Eric C. Rassbach
Rachel Busick
Diana Verm

Notes
rimonim mean pomegranates;
this cluster found in Rome, 2017
The Sisters

Michael W. Fink

Until the publication of last year’s issue, many readers may have thought that our community could claim only one Michael Fink (“Mr. RISD”). But Michael’s wife is also named Michael. In writing, she prefers using a middle initial, which represents her maiden name.

This article pays homage to two of Michael’s dearest relatives: her mother, Florence, and her mother’s younger sister, Sylvia, who became two of the Ocean State’s most accomplished musicians. Although best known for nearly a half-century of concerts with the Rhode Island Philharmonic, these Fall River natives enjoyed performing for a rich variety of audiences at numerous venues.

Given her own musical past, Michael is highly qualified to spotlight her family. A Providence native, she graduated from Hope High School and earned a bachelor’s in music at Boston University in 1973. Like her mother, she also studied at Meadowmount School of Music in the Adirondacks.

For more than three decades, Michael has worked in maternal child health care. Having earned a master’s in health administration and management, she also became Rhode Island’s first licensed lactation consultant. She serves mothers and newborns at Women & Infants Hospital and participates in numerous professional organizations.

Michael was confirmed at Temple Beth-El, and the Finks have belonged to Temple Emanu-El for decades. She is also a board member of our Association. Michael was pleased to deepen her knowledge of Nadien family history by interviewing many relatives.

My maternal grandfather, Max Nadien (1890-1980), emigrated to America around 1903 from Bila Tserkva (or Cerkova), about 50 miles southwest of Kiev in Ukraine. This city, translated as White Church, became part of the Soviet Union and was the site of...
a terrible massacre of Jews by Germans in 1941. Had my grandfather not left when he did, this story would be over.

On his voyage to the United States, Max may have been accompanied by or even preceded by his widowed mother, Fannie, and his younger siblings, Minnie, George, and David. Initially, the family probably lived in Boston. By 1915, however, Fannie and Max were living in Fall River. He worked as a chauffeur, possibly for a wealthy industrialist who lived in Boston. By 1920, all of the Nadiens were living in Fall River. George was an amateur violinist and a champion bantamweight boxer, who fought under the name Georgie Vanderbilt Nadien. Minnie became an accomplished pianist.

Max may have also helped bring over his younger cousin, Harriet Shoob (1893-1994). They married in Boston in 1920. By the mid-1920s, Max had established The Nadien Company, which bought and sold cloth remnants in Fall River. He joined the Masons’ Watuppa Lodge.

Both Max and Harriet were musical. He played trombone. During the 1920s, she was a vocalist and sang popular songs by Harry Lauder, a Scottish singer, composer, and comedian.

Harriet’s brother Leo Shoob (1880-1956), who had emigrated in 1902, was a professional musician. As a violinist, he played in vaudeville shows, including those at the Empire Theatre in Fall River. By 1911, he was the leader of his own orchestra. That same year Leo also began teaching violin in room 17 at 34 North Main Street, and he continued teaching until at least the late 1940s. Eventually he opened the Leo Shoob Conservatory in Fall River. As early as 1918, Leo had also joined the Masons.

Max and Harriet, or Mottel and Etti as they were known, had four children who lived full lives. The eldest, Dave (1921-2005), had been born in Boston’s Evangeline Booth Home and Maternity Hospital. My grandmother felt that he contracted polio there, so her three younger children, Florence, Sylvia, and Lew, were born at home. All four Nadien children were talented musically and became professional musicians.

Dave was a pianist and played with the orchestra at Durfee High School. He studied piano with Felix Fox and also became a
piano teacher in Fall River. He was an excellent sight-reader, played in nightclubs and casinos, and entertained throughout southeastern Massachusetts.

My mother, Florence (1924-2004), studied violin with her uncle Leo while attending Durfee High. She was concertmaster of the school’s orchestra from her sophomore through senior years. She sang in the Durfee chorus and girls’ glee club and was a member of its dramatic club. Florence went on to the Juilliard School in New York City, where she studied with Ivan Galamian, a renowned violin teacher. Famous for teaching his own rigorous method of bowing and finger- ing, he founded the Meadowmount School of Music in Elizabeth-town, New York. Florence attended its first summer program in 1944.

My mother’s contemporaries at the time were the violinists Berl Senofsky, Stuart Canin, and her first cousin, David Nadien, who was also known within the family as “Little Dave.” He was the son of her uncle George, the boxer. He served in the military and won the very prestigious Leventritt Award at the age of 20. The panel of judges included Arturo Toscanini. David Nadien served as concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic under Leonard Bernstein from 1966 to 1970. Known as a violinist’s violinist, he was very highly regarded in music circles. His sight-reading abilities were legendary, and his tone was particularly sweet. He used perfect vibrato on every note, even the fastest passages.

My aunt Sylvia (1926-2006) studied cello. Her first teacher, a nun, taught her to play “side saddle.” Her next teacher, Clarence Jones, was a musician with the Works Progress Administration (WPA). She then studied with Jean Bedetti, the principal cellist of the Boston Symphony.

The youngest Nadien sibling, Lew (born in 1931), considers
himself a black sheep because he studied and plays wind instruments rather than strings. He also had a career as a jazz musician. Lew graduated from Boston University and became a teacher in the New York City school system.

When Dave, Florence, and Sylvia still lived at home, they formed the Nadien Trio. They performed on piano, violin and cello. They sometimes vocalized together as well. When playing for each other or family, they particularly enjoyed Beethoven trios. As a child, Lew used to love to listen to them.

The Nadien Trio also played in town at weddings, at nursing homes, and on radio. Lew remembers his siblings playing at the Hotel Mellon in 1954, when JFK was running for the Senate. He of course congratulated them on their performance.

After World War II, Florence and Sylvia signed up for a six-month tour with the USO. By this time my mother had graduated from Juilliard and Sylvia from Durfee High. Their “all girl” troupe of musicians entertained troops in the Pacific. The tour, which also included Japan and Korea, had such a great impact on the sisters that they spoke about it the rest of their lives. Not only did the tour inspire them to always perform together; it cemented their sisterly bond and taught Florence to always look out for Sylvia. Additionally, the trip to the Pacific and Asia gave them a love of travel and a heightened interest in politics. The sisters, who were lifelong Democrats, were appalled by the McCarthy era. They were staunch supporters of the State of Israel.

Florence and Sylvia returned to New York City for a while after their USO tour and then came home to Fall River. They were called back by their brother, Dave, who had been generously lending them some financial support. Florence taught for a time in her uncle’s conservatory, even teaching guitar as well as violin. Then both sisters married in 1948.

Florence married Morris Weintraub, a first-generation American (born in 1922) and a Providence native. His family belonged to two North End synagogues: Beth David on Chalkstone Avenue and then Sons of Jacob on Douglas Avenue. Morris was a World War II veteran.
In 1949, Florence joined the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra, which had been founded four years earlier. Sylvia joined the cello section later the same season. At the time, there were very few women members of the orchestra, and few women worked after getting married. The Nadien sisters stayed with the Philharmonic for 49 seasons, through 1997-98.

The sisters were always very professional, punctual, well dressed and well prepared. Both practiced many hours every day. They took great pride in their skills. Although supportive of musicians whose skill levels matched their own, they would not be above commenting privately if they felt a colleague fell short of their expectations.

Florence loved music. That was a given, but she did not discuss it much. She loved chamber music above all else and enjoyed playing quartets for fun with colleagues early in her marriage. Every season she loved bringing her quartet from the Philharmonic to schools throughout Rhode Island. In addition to inspiring music appreciation, she felt that she was building future audiences.

During the 1950s, Florence also sang in Temple Emanu-El’s choir on Friday nights. Arthur Einstein was its director. Most of Florence’s rehearsals and concerts were in the evening, but Morris was able to help with the kids. Sometimes babysitters were necessary. Sylvia often had live-in help in her household.

Florence did not keep too many students but she was very fond of two in particular over the years. Margaret Slawson, a Barrington housewife with four children, wanted to learn to play violin as an adult. Florence would give her a lesson, for five dollars an hour, then make her a sandwich, and they would eat lunch and chat. Peggy became quite competent and played in the Brown University Orchestra.

The other student was Diane Orson, a daughter of Dr. Jay and Barbara Orson. (Barbara, well known as a 25-year member of Trinity Rep, had also been a member of Emanu-El’s choir.) Florence was very proud of Diane when she became a professional violinist. She is also a broadcast journalist. Her sister, Beth, became a professional oboist and has played for several years with the Vancouver
Symphony. Florence had suggested that Beth study oboe.

As with most careers, there were many ups and downs during the 49 seasons that the Nadien sisters performed with the Philharmonic. Florence and Sylvia played under many conductors and through many orchestral administrations. There was often much behind-the-scenes complaining of which the public was probably unaware. To see musicians playing a concert can look quite glamorous, but it is also a job. The musicians chronically felt a lack of respect for their hard work and skills in terms of treatment and pay. Of course some seasons were better than others.

An interesting high point occurred at the Philharmonic in April 1967, when the comedian Jack Benny, also a violinist, appeared with the orchestra at a fundraising event. Governor John Chafee attended the performance.

The Philharmonic was basically a part-time job so the sisters often had other “gigs.” They played in the Eastern Connecticut Orchestra, founded in New London in 1946, and in Rhode Island when out-of-town shows needed to round out their ensembles with local musicians.

During the 1950s and ’60s, for example, Florence and Sylvia played for the Ice Capades when it appeared at the Rhode Island Auditorium (Providence’s North Main Street venue better known as “The Arena”). The sisters would wear thermal underwear under their concert dresses. Their favorite act was “The Old Smoothies.”

Florence and Sylvia were also hired many summers to play in the orchestra “pit” of the Warwick Musical Tent. The sisters thoroughly enjoyed that particular job. The documentary film eventually made about “The Tent” did not address the contribution to shows by local musicians. Some of the stars with whom they appeared were: Nat King Cole, Mitzi Gaynor, Liberace, Gina Lollobrigida, and Betsey Palmer.

Later on, the sisters played in downtown Providence at the Ocean State Theater and at the Civic Center. They performed with more recent stars of the time such as Natalie Cole and Rod Stewart.

In 1970, Florence became the Philharmonic’s assistant concertmaster. Sylvia sat as assistant principal cellist. In 1986, after
receiving his master’s degree from Juilliard, Sylvia’s youngest son, Perry Rosenthal, became principal cellist. Most likely, it was unique in an American orchestra for a mother and son to sit together in the first cello stand.

There were some talented vocalists and a jazz musician among the third generation of Nadien performers, but much of the talent seemed to be concentrated in the hands and heart of the cellist, Perry. He even most resembled David Nadien. Sadly, Perry passed away in his early forties.

After retiring from the orchestra in 1998, Florence and Sylvia formed the Hope String Quartet and continued playing for many weddings and funerals well into their late seventies. They will be remembered as the stylish sisters who were devoted to each other and to music.
Mike, Eddy & Chick,
12 Creston Way, Providence,
1937
Is Mike a historian? Not in any conventional sense. Despite his recurring contributions to our journal and so many others, I don’t think that this question much concerns him.

Usually, historians begin with facts in order to build interpretations. Mike tends to do the reverse: knowing somehow what his interpretations may be and then gathering some facts to anchor them. Generally speaking, the fewer the better.

Is it fair to ask whether Mike may be in some sense a theologian? This question too is probably counterproductive. While deeply curious about spiritual issues, he knows that the best are least answerable. And this makes them the most enjoyable too.

Mike is far more interested in identifying when, where, and how a spiritual experience occurs. In this sense, he may resemble a naturalist. In keeping with his admiration of Thoreau, I think that Mike may be happy describing himself as “Rhode Island’s Chasidic transcendentalist.” “Sage” may also suffice.

Torah teaches us that Cain and Abel were as jealous as Jacob and Esau, who were in fact twins as well as rivals. And what about Absalom and David, father and son of common blood but fallen out from pride and ambition? And David’s claim of his Jonathan, “Thy love is beyond that of women”?

I consulted a Chassidic rabbi when preparing to name my own son. I asked, “Why should I recall the father of lost tribes who said, ‘Thy blood will turn to water’?” Yet it was Reuben who saved his brother, Joseph, from fratricide, so Reuben my son became. No, our Bible does not oversimplify the search for meaning and morality.

My grandfather, Harry H. Fink, had a brother, Zelig. Not only did they once share a double house near Benefit Street, but they did so again on Pratt Street. A third time on Congdon Street. They had twin dwellings on Summit Avenue until, alas, the Great
Depression reduced their business, their wives had disagreements, and the brothers saw one another thereafter only at weddings and funerals. The Benefit Street area buildings were torn down to make way for parking spaces and, amid the gentrification era, to show off the grander and older homes. Perhaps their glory of their early pride and progress forward is manifested somehow in the statue of Roger Williams that was erected near Congdon in Prospect Park.

My father had two brothers. Half-brothers, paternally. Samuel Raphael was born to Harry and to Mira, who died shortly after giving birth to him. Herbert L. Fink was born to Harry and his second wife, Clara (Cohen). I’ve written about both brothers in previous issues of our journal.

And I am the youngest of three brothers. Eddie (officially Edward L. but also known at his bar mitzvah as Yehuda Lev) was the first-born, on November 14, 1928. As such, he had his own boyhood bedroom and received the gifts, responsibilities, and privileges of a new generation. I trusted and respected him, though every boyhood has its conflicts and varied chapters. Because Eddie was more than half a decade older, I depended on him to drive me on errands. Then he went off to Brown and graduated in 1950. Yet he wanted me to keep a friendly eye on his girlfriend when he was drafted during the Korean War and I went off to my freshman year on Yale’s old campus. I have a confession to make here: the young lady he left behind, who in his absence married somebody else, never stopped writing to me to ask about Eddie. I never shared this information for fear of saddening him! Or, perhaps worse, evoking his envy that she communicated with me!

After Eddie returned home, slightly resenting the resumption of the role of an obedient father’s son and yet adjusting to civil life, he married. Then he became the father of two boys and, later, a girl. Eddie welcomed me as their uncle. I took his eldest child to a circus and invited him, while only a toddler, to my classes at RISD. He also went with me, on my shoulders, when I visited my students’ studios.

Eddie needed to escape from the business world: the confinements of our father’s domain and a family tradition of sustaining
So he earned a master’s in education at Rhode Island College and became a successful and honored teacher of chemistry at Cranston High School. But Eddie and I were never rivals.

Yet, among the seasons of life, I knew that there were things that he and I did not quite “get” about each other. There is a Torah truth that siblings, cousins, and neighbors share moments of intimacy as well as periods of distance.

Fortunately, toward the very close of my oldest brother’s sojourn upon this earth, we became very close indeed! I visited him daily, and his excellent wife, Ruth, often declared, “He was happy and lively when you were here.” Eddie passed away in July 2016.

On Taschlich of this year, partially due to a heavy rainfall, I found myself alone at the banks of the Seekonk River to cast away my many sins and shortcomings. I watched an elegant trio of swans and a busy cormorant approach my offerings of matzoh, challah, and stones, and then I moved along to the Jewish area of Swan Point Cemetery to install the Stars and Stripes— a small flag— at the headstone of Eddie’s grave.

This was more than a mere poetic gesture or one of only ceremonial respect or affection. It spelled, for me, quietly and somehow happily, the

With Sam & Moe,
Roger Williams Park,
1936
gentle punctuation mark of a resolved relationship. We trusted and, yes, loved each other, brothers beyond passing!

My middle brother (cadet in French) was always called “Chick” or even “Chicky,” though his legal, assimilationist name was Charles. His Hebrew name, by a kind of prophetic magic, was Bezalel. The only artist singled out as such in Torah, and after whom the art and design college in Jerusalem is named. Those were the very divine gifts and talents that Chick nourished at Brown for a year and then at M.I.T.

Chick was born on August 2, 1932, only sixteen months before I came along into the chronicle and before the camera. I recall talking to or at him as we walked to school: first Summit Avenue Grammar, then Nathan Bishop, and finally Hope High. Each school, which had seemed so far and loomed so large, intimidated me. But my elder sidewalk companion had troops of friends to greet him and us, as they joined our forward march.

Plus, the girls admired him. Although Chick and I resembled each other, he stood straighter, and neither spectacles nor a squint hid his green eyes. By 1948, of course the year of Israel’s birth, I seemed to make allies or at least cordial acquaintances among his peers, and Chick dated some of my classmates. I was afraid that he might steal a girl, any I especially liked! There was, for example, a “Rhoda” I went for at Summit Avenue, who hooked up with Chick at Hope High. Nevertheless, I wrote an admiring portrait of him for my Hope graduation yearbook in 1951. His handwriting was neat, and his thoughts were witty and succinct. He seemed to have it all and to be ever going up and away.

After all, he had won the award for All Around Best Character when we attended Maine’s Camp Arundel in 1942. Chick was a smiling, somewhat stunning, embodiment of what we all thought was the American golden boy. So I was thereby free to stumble and fumble along my own rather rockier pathways.

Yet, it was Chick who brought me my letter of acceptance to Yale, and he congratulated me in public, at Hope High, with his genuine brotherly pride! In our journal, I have also written about my college roommates and how, beginning freshman year, we formed
brotherly bonds, a kind of fraternity of our own.

At M.I.T., Chick looked forward to the postwar future, and I, through poetry, sought instead a then fashionable escape into the recent past. We graduated together in 1956: he with a master’s in architecture, and I with a master’s in teaching from Harvard.

Within two or three years, following in the footsteps of our Uncle Herb, both of us were teaching at RISD. He quickly earned a tenured professorship within the interior architecture department. And I have lingered within the liberal arts department for six decades!

I’d like to thank Chick for the concept of turning words into things, dreams into spaces! Yet, my brother/colleague often invited me to attend his end-of-semester “crits,” when various questions were raised about prospects for restoring or reclaiming structures or building brand new ones. I was asked to put in my two cents or more.

When Chick and I were single, we gave little weekend, front-stoop cocktail parties. He served martinis and liked such gadgets as a glass stirring rod and a crystal decanter. I simply served whatever red or white wines I had learned to taste and enjoy during my junior year at the Sorbonne and on tours of Loire Valley châteaux (where we were sent to perfect our accents and rid our vocabulary of slang). Chick actually followed me, in a way, with an architectural journey across Europe in a tiny red roadster. He sketched and studied the rebuilding of bombed-out sites and structures.

But when Chick married in the summer of 1961, I felt somewhat, unreasonably, abandoned! The friends I made were attracted to this handsome couple, and then the couple had a charming daughter. I made do by exploring the outside world, adventurously but alone, during whatever breaks were permitted by my school routine. “Only you!” pronounced my grandfather when I made my way to explore his early life in Romania and in London. He admired my devotion to his yesterdays.

There were times on campus when Chick and I might meet yet scarcely greet each other. I tried to make light of it, but the break in our intimacy was a major part of the plot of this tale.
After the death of our mother, I lived with our father. At supper he would confide quietly to me his anxieties about his favorite son. For example: “I thought that once you came home from France you would drink too much, but it isn’t you. It’s Chick and his vodka!”

Then one day, after my marriage to Michael and the birth of our first daughter, Emily, he called and came to visit. “I need you!” he declared. Although I was astonished, I heard something of his changing circumstances. He had a magnificent condominium in Newport, directly on the waterfront, with paintings and sculptures by his colleagues. He also had sports cars, speedboats, sailboats, and chic little motor scooters inspired by the movie “Roman Holiday.”

And yet, like all family sagas, nothing is ever quite what it seems. No, Chick and Judith were never divorced. Even after she moved away, they continued to care deeply for each other.

And Chick and I never felt closer. We held hands toward the end, just as we had in kindergarten and first grade! For years we met
every week to share a coffee and a muffin until his demise in February 2018. He too is buried in Swan Point, only a few trees and stones from Edward.

If I extend my focus beyond brotherhood, I can add a footnote about friendship or fraternity. At RISD, for example, I enjoy many colleagues. One is Joe Melo, who’s in charge of the campus and its grounds. He has invited me to visit his home to see the birds of all kinds that he has rescued from pet stores or has found maimed or wounded. Joe regularly brings his birds to my classes, which include “Birds and Words.” This course and others have earned high regard from several of my colleagues, including my friend and former RISD president, John Maeda. He asked me to present my approach to the liberal arts to the school’s trustees.

I have also enjoyed friendships with many rabbis, whom, whatever their ages, I have often regarded as elder brothers. For example, Rabbi William G. Braude (and his wife, Pearl) helped me recognize the sheer beauty of Judaism in all its forms, often by encouraging my quests and respecting my questions at their table. Like my parents, the Braudes had three sons. I shared many journeys and countless conversations with Joel, their eldest, and also attended his ordination in New York City.

Still another good friend and true gentleman is my barber, Stefano, who has groomed me for nearly 50 years. He has trimmed my hair and beard not only at his salon but at my kitchen table and in my hospital bed. He has performed restorative “surgery” with the hands of a brother! And Stefano has taught his art and trade to both his sons, who are now his colleagues.

I believe that our daily acquaintances, our mates on a train or a bus, the strangers we may meet in a café or a pub, may be angels in disguise. The cobbler who fixes the sole of your shoe may be repairing the soul of your footsteps and holding up the globe like the 36 Just.

If Judaism is family, we are brothers when we behave like brothers: quarreling at moments yet reuniting profoundly at turning points in our lives. Having found tales among my trails, I pray that I have earned my brothers’, companions’, and strangers’ respect.
Political Science Students View Government Functions

By FARRELL SYLVESTER

"Mr. Pastore . . . Mr. Pearson . . . Mr. Pell . . ." droned the clerk of the United States Senate as he wearily called the roll for the final vote on the Kennedy Administration's Mass Transit Bill. The Senate Chamber sparkled with tension and excitement as senators came hurriedly dashing in to cast their votes. When the roll was concluded, the measure had passed 52 to 41 and President Kennedy's first legislative victory of the 86th Congress had become history.

Witness to the Transit Bill's successful passage were three Providence College juniors majoring in political science who, for the week of April 1, had exchanged their usual classrooms in Harrington Hall for the locale of Washington's Capital Hill. Edward Feldstein and Farrell Sylvester spent the week...
What Providence College Has Meant to Me

Edward Feldstein ’64

The author is one of PC’s most prominent alumni. As he explains in his essay, the College has meant and continues to mean a great deal to him. Of course it is somewhat ironic that PC was not Ed’s first choice. But it is also difficult to imagine what—other than Jewish women or a Jewish fraternity—may have been missing from his experience there.

Ed acknowledges but does not dwell on the point that PC helped him become a leader in Rhode Island’s Jewish community and beyond. Perhaps his college experience sharpened his powers of observation or taught him to think in more strategic terms. Perhaps it also taught him that deeds matter more than words.

As a further reflection of his understated manner, Ed does not comment on the fact that his years at PC represented the end of an era. Although the College’s undergraduate enrollment would grow substantially, with female students outnumbering males, Jewish enrollment would also sharply decline. Now there may be only a dozen Jewish undergrads. Fortunately, more Jewish faculty members have been allowed to follow in the late Robert Krasner’s footsteps.

Ed’s reminiscence also sheds light on how a Jewish commuter student, though the beneficiary of generous scholarships, was required to work part-time to help cover expenses. In some sense this disadvantage also became an advantage because it contributed to his self-reliance and steely determination.

Prologue

In last year’s edition of The Notes, Professors Arthur Urbano and Jennifer Illuzzi of Providence College wrote about their project to document the many Jewish students who attended the College during its first 50 years. I first met Prof. Urbano approximately a decade ago, when he was starting the PC’s Jewish-Catholic Dialogue Program, and
I have supported it ever since.

The speaker at the first program was Prof. John McManus of Georgetown University, who also has represented American Catholics at the Vatican. Prior to the speaking program that evening, PC’s President, Father Brian Shanley, hosted a dinner at his campus home. The guests included Father McManus, Prof. Urbano, Jeremy Kapstein (a friend of Father Shanley’s with whom I had grown up) and three members of Father Shanley’s President’s Council: Arthur Robbins, Jim Winoker and myself, along with our spouses.

Father McManus’ scholarly presentation that evening set the stage for what has developed into an impressive twice-a-year program, in the fall and in the spring, open to the entire community. Professor Urbano has brought outstanding Catholic and Jewish scholars to present programs of interest to both the Catholic and Jewish communities. In the fall of 2017, in celebration of PC’s centennial year and thanks to efforts by Rabbi Wayne M. Franklin of Temple Emanu-El and Prof. Urbano, the guest speaker was New York’s Cardinal Timothy Dolan. Given Cardinal Dolan’s stature within the Catholic hierarchy and the quality of his presentation, it was a very exciting event.

As an outgrowth of Prof. Urbano’s interest in promoting Catholic and Jewish relations, he and Rabbi Franklin have also conducted dialogue classes at Temple Emanu-El, as part of its Adult Institute, and also quarterly classes alternating between PC and the Temple. These classes present an opportunity for Jews and Catholics to study together and share learnings from both traditions. Professor Urbano has also served on the board of directors of the Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Resource Center, which is housed at the Dwares Jewish Community Center.

Following the publication of Professors Urbano and Illuzzi’s article in The Notes, I received a phone call from George Goodwin, suggesting that I write an article about my years at PC. It would cover such topics as: my family background; what led me to PC; what I liked and disliked about my four years there; with whom I maintained friendships (students and professors alike); and how PC paved the way to my legal career and civic involvement. I want to thank
Arthur and George for their interest in this subject matter, which represents many years of positive Jewish-Catholic relationships at PC and in our state.

Family Background

Both sets of my grandparents emigrated from Russia to the United States in the early 1900s, and my parents, Eva and Harry Feldstein, were born in Providence in 1913. My father grew up on Blackstone Street in South Providence (near Rhode Island Hospital), and my mother grew up on Carrington Avenue (near Hope High School); maybe this explains, in part, why I am presently serving on the board of trustees of Rhode Island Hospital and attended Hope High School! While my father’s family was not religiously observant, my mother’s father, George Pullman, was a leader of the Howell Street Synagogue. In 1924 he became one of the founders of Temple Emanu-El and served as head gabbai there until his death in 1955.

My parents, neither of whom was fortunate to attend college, married on New Year’s Day in 1937. My sister Hope was born in 1940, and I three years later. She attended Hope High School and Rhode Island College and lives in Newton, Massachusetts.

Why PC

In the fall of 1959, during my senior year at Hope, I was uncertain if I wanted to pursue a career in engineering or law, both of which interested me. I had good grades in mathematics and related classes, but I had also observed that attorneys were able to assume leadership roles beyond pursuing their own careers. To cover both bases, I applied to and was accepted at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, University of Rhode Island, and PC. I was not accepted at Brown or Harvard.

As evidenced by Professors Urbano and Illuzzi’s research, many Jews believed that they were rejected at prestigious universities, especially at Brown, because of Jewish quotas. The professors have also pointed out that, when PC was founded in 1917 to educate Catholic men, there were no restrictions in its state charter regarding race, religion or creed. Of course Catholics had also believed that
they too had suffered from discrimination at colleges and universities established and governed by various Protestant denominations. Both in theory and in practice, all seeking educational opportunities at PC were welcome.

PC was also attractive to many Jewish students because of its relatively low tuition and the availability of scholarships. Additionally, many Jewish students could commute from their homes only a few blocks away in the North End, from other neighborhoods in Providence or from nearby cities and towns. Two of my Jewish classmates from Hope High School who also attended PC were Bob Stutman (mentioned later) and Howard London (who lived in the North End). My second cousin, Howard Lipsey, presently a retired Family Court judge, had graduated from Hope High and from PC in 1957.

By selecting PC, I was able to live at home and continue working part-time in my Uncle Sydney Feldstein’s food markets, as I had during the school year and summers. Even before becoming a teenager, I had started working in his market in Central Falls (Coates Field) for 25 cents per hour. So, in a sense, I graduated to his Grand Central Market in Olneyville Square; his Shipyard Supermarket at Field’s Point, and his Hoyle Square Meat Market near Classical High.

What sealed the deal for me at PC was the award of an unsolicited “Presidential Scholarship” for 50% of the $750 annual tuition. As some doors remained closed, others began to open.

But in the fall of 1960, the beginning of my four-year odyssey at PC was somewhat rocky. And not because of my academic preparation! As a young leader within the Jewish community, I had served as president of the Bar Mitzvah Brotherhood at Temple Emanu-El and as president of AZA, a BBYO youth organization that met at the Jewish Community Center. I had also been the first recipient of the JCC’s I.S. Low Youth Leadership Award (a $25 savings bond).

At PC I found myself sitting in classrooms staring at crucifixes, which hung on the walls behind each professor. On the first Friday of my first week, I went to the cafeteria and ordered a hamburger, only to be reminded by the person behind the counter that this was not permissible (because in those days most Catholics did not eat meat

Notes
on Fridays). Accordingly, I changed my order to a tuna sandwich.

Approximately 750 students were in my freshman class, which was only somewhat larger than my graduating class at Hope High. All of my liberal arts classes were held in PC’s original building, Harkins Hall, and the rest of the campus was quite compact. Similar to my experience at Hope, PC’s student body was highly disciplined, especially under the purview of Father Jurgelitis, the dean of students. There was a dress code requiring students to wear ties and jackets to class. Students were addressed more by last name than by first.

**Likes and Dislikes**

Freshmen in liberal arts had mandated courses, including: English literature, foreign language, history, and religion. Non-Catholics were allowed to take philosophy instead of religion. Upper classmen had more flexibility, which allowed for some electives. There were no women on the faculty, and the majority of professors were Dominican priests. I recall one Jewish professor, Robert Krasner, Class of 1951, who taught biology. He was highly respected by my classmates taking premed courses.

I liked PC’s academic challenges, especially when I was invited following my freshman year to participate in the Arts Honors Western Civilization Colloquium. This seminar, enrolling about a dozen students, encompassed three years of weekly readings and discussions. Focusing on the classics, it began with the Old Testament, moved on to the New Testament the following week, and continued through to 20th-century literature. The person in charge of this program was Dr. Paul K. Van Thompson, an Episcopalian minister who converted to Catholicism and ultimately became a priest, even though he was married. He was an outstanding professor.

I also enjoyed leadership roles afforded to me at PC. These included my election to Student Congress and also my election as president of the St. Thomas More Club, for students planning legal careers. Club meetings, like every class, began with the “Hail Mary” prayer, so I would ask one of the Catholic officers to lead it in my place.

Feldstein
I also enjoyed majoring in political science, putting into practice the “politics” of the “science.” One year I ran for vice president of my class. Although I lost, it gave me an opportunity during my campaign to become better acquainted with students who lived in the dorms, the vast majority of whom were Catholics.

I also became active in off-campus political activities. For example, I worked as a page at the State House for Senator Julius Michaelson, who later served as Rhode Island's second Jewish attorney general. During my senior year, I had an opportunity to spend a week in Washington, D.C., where I interned in Senator Claiborne Pell’s office and attended Senate sessions. What a thrill it was to ride in the Senate subway with Senator Pell and his colleagues!

A factor in my decision to attend PC was the success of its basketball teams. During the late 1950s, a star player was Lenny Wilkens ’60, who became a star in the National Basketball Association and then coached the Atlanta Hawks. During my freshman year, PC’s star was John Egan, from Hartford, who went on to play professionally for the Houston Rockets. James Hadnot, Class of ’62, came to PC from Oakland, California, at the suggestion of the then Celtics star, Bill Russell. The Class of 1963 had two stars in the backcourt: Vinny Ernst, from New Jersey, and Ray Flynn, who came from Boston and later became its mayor.

One of my classmates was John Thompson, who went on to play for the Celtics and ultimately coached the (dreaded!) Georgetown Hoyas. John was also a social activist, based especially on growing up in segregated Washington, D.C. I still remember a discussion about social justice issues he had with my mother in the kitchen of my parents’ home. John, who was seven feet, towered over my mother, who was barely over five feet. My recollection is that the vast majority of black students at PC were athletes, and most lived in the dorms; only a few black students were commuters.

A highlight of each school year was attending college basketball’s National Invitational Tournament at Madison Square Garden. Given our limited travel budgets, this meant squeezing as many fellow students as possible into a hotel room and finding food
“deals” in New York City. The games were played over a two-week period, mostly from Thursdays through the weekends.

During my freshman year, this weekend schedule led to a conflict with my Uncle Sydney, my employer. After my first weekend in New York, I wanted to return for the next weekend with PC playing in the finals. The end result was the involuntary termination of my employment. My unemployment lasted for only about a week because my Russian-born grandmother, who could neither read nor write English, still ruled the family roost. She refused to talk to my uncle until he rehired me. But this was after I had attended the tournament finals!

What I disliked about PC was being a commuter. My campus interactions were inevitably limited. After spending a day in classes, in the library and in occasional club meetings, I would drive home to Wayland Avenue in my 1950 Oldsmobile. Then the cross-town travel would resume the following morning. This ritual lasted until my graduation.

My participation in weekend social activities was also highly limited because I worked on Friday afternoons and evenings and all day on Saturdays. In order to meet Jewish girls, I visited other campuses in Providence, including Pembroke (Brown’s women’s college), Bryant, and RISD, all three then located on the East Side. (Bryant later moved to Smithfield, and Rhode Island College had recently moved to its new campus on Mount Pleasant Avenue, close to the PC campus.) I would also occasionally meet girls at Wheaton College in Norton, Massachusetts, and other nearby communities.

**Friendships with Students and Professors**

My friends at PC included two of my Hope High classmates. Bob Stutman (mentioned above) went on to a successful law enforcement career with the federal government, and Michael Rocchio became a successful surgeon in Rhode Island. Many of my fellow commuters had also graduated from local high schools. Of course there was a large group from LaSalle Academy, which is only a few blocks from PC. Our class president, Frank Darigan, a LaSalle alumnus, became a Superior Court judge. In contrast to Brown,
PC did not have a separate club or house where commuters could gather. Nor was there a Hillel. I also found that Brown Hillel did not engage in outreach to non-Brown students. During the High Holy Days, Jewish students were not expected to attend classes at PC.

I was also friendly with fellow students in the Arts Honors Western Civilization Colloquium. The closest of these was Bob Fiondella, who, following law school, went to work for Phoenix Home Life Insurance Company in Hartford. He ultimately became its chief executive officer. Bob also chaired our Class of ’64 Ring Committee, and when I bought my class ring he made sure that a Jewish star was engraved on the inside (with the College insignia on the outside). We think that my Jewish star was the first on a PC ring. I am still in contact with both of these College friends.

The professor who provided me with the most guidance was the moderator of the St. Thomas More Club, Father Philip Skehan, a Dominican priest and a graduate of Fordham and Catholic University Law Schools, who taught political science. When it was time for me to apply to law schools, he was instrumental in directing me toward Boston College, although I was also accepted at Boston University and Georgetown. At BC Law there were no dorms, so I lived in apartment buildings in the Allston and Brighton sections of Boston, off Commonwealth Avenue, with some other PC graduates as well as graduates of other colleges. It seemed that there were as many Jewish students at BC Law as there were members of other religions.

During law school, Father Skehan helped me get a summer job as a clerk with the then United States Attorney for the District of Rhode Island, Raymond J. Pettine. During that summer clerkship, Senator John O. Pastore recommended him as judge of the Federal District Court for the District of Rhode Island, and President Lyndon Johnson nominated him. I had the honor of serving as Judge Pettine’s first law clerk (for about a month, before heading back to law school).

Impact on My Legal Career and Civic Involvement

When I graduated from BC Law School in 1967, I spent...
a year as the law clerk for Chief Justice Thomas H. Roberts of the Rhode Island Supreme Court. (In those days, each Supreme Court justice had only one clerk). When the state’s first Board of Regents for Elementary, Secondary and Higher Education was established in 1969, Chief Justice Roberts’ younger brother, former Governor Dennis J. Roberts, was its first chairman, and I became its first legal counsel. (Its second chairman was Robert Riesman, who became a mentor for so many of us in Jewish communal affairs.)

I had actually met Governor Roberts when I was a student and he visited a program at PC. But who could have guessed that less than ten years later we would be practicing law together in Providence? We became partners in a start-up firm that became Roberts, Carroll, Feldstein & Peirce. Governor Roberts stayed active with the firm until his death at the age of 92 in June of 1994. (In fact, he called me at the office early on the morning of the day of his death to tell me he was not feeling well and was going to the hospital.) In 2021 the firm will celebrate its 50th anniversary.

Following law school, I had always intended to come back to Rhode Island to begin my practice. In the fall of 1968, when I completed my clerkship with Chief Justice Roberts, I joined the Army National Guard and did four months of active duty in Georgia and Alabama, which was followed by monthly reserve sessions until my discharge. During this time, the Vietnam War was winding down.

After completing my active duty service, I started practicing law with the firm of Temkin, Merolla & Zurier. (My cousin was Martin Temkin.) Since I was also working part-time on Governor Frank Licht’s legal staff, and the Temkin firm needed someone working full-time, I left and joined a sole practitioner, Grafton H. Willey III, in the firm of Willey & Feldstein, from 1969 to 1971. Then we established, with Governor Roberts, his nephew (and namesake) and David Carroll, the new firm that evolved into Roberts, Carroll, Feldstein & Peirce.

Of the firm’s five founding partners, two were PC graduates and three were BC Law graduates. Through the years, many of the firm’s attorneys have been graduates of both PC and BC Law.
The firm is a general practice firm; my practice has for the most part involved the areas of business, real estate, and estate planning.

As I mentioned, my interest in politics blossomed at PC. During my senior year and following my graduation in 1964, I worked on the Providence mayoral campaign of Ed Burke, who lost in the Democratic primary to Joe Doorley. (He served as mayor for ten years until he was defeated in 1974 by the reformist candidate, Buddy Cianci.) In 1968, after concluding my Supreme Court clerkship and before departing for Army basic training, I, together with a number of other young attorneys, worked on Frank Licht’s gubernatorial campaign. Frank (a Democrat), upset the incumbent, John Chafee (a Republican), and was subsequently reelected to a second, two-year term. He was Rhode Island’s first Jewish governor. Following active duty in the Army and before becoming counsel for the Board of Regents, I served part-time on Governor Licht’s legal staff.

In 1976, I ran unsuccessfully in the Democratic primary for a seat in the Rhode Island House of Representatives. Recently, during my volunteer work at The Miriam Hospital and as a member of its nominating committee, I got to know a young Roger Williams University law professor, Jorge Elorza, who became a member of the Hospital’s board of governors. He was elected mayor of Providence in 2014. I chaired his finance committee during that campaign and have continued to do so.

Opened Doors

Had I not attended Providence College, it is highly unlikely that my life would have evolved the way it did. PC provided me with a quality education, which led to a successful professional career. I was thereby able to give back both to the Jewish and general communities by serving, often as president, in a number of leadership positions. These included, for example: the Jewish Community Center, Camp JORI, Temple Emanu-El, Jewish Federation, Miriam Hospital, Lifespan, and Newport Hospital. I have also served on the President’s Council of PC for the last four decades. While PC has changed significantly since I attended, including becoming coeducational in 1971, growing its graduate school programs, and having
a smaller percentage of Dominicans on its faculty, I remain loyal and greatly indebted to the College for providing me with a quality education and opening so many doors for me.

Harkins Hall,
Providence College
In the sanctuary at Emanu-El
Rabbi Wayne Franklin’s Interfaith Leadership

Noel Rubinton

Despite its founding as a haven for heretics and dissenters and Newport’s glory during the late colonial era, Rhode Island has produced an extremely complicated record as a sanctuary for Jews. Granted, many Protestants also discriminated against Catholics, who in 1905 became a majority of its citizens and later the largest percentage in any state. But Jewish settlers never expected to be handed opportunity.

During the late 19th century, when large numbers of Jews began arriving in Providence, they followed poor Irish immigrants to the squalid North End. And a few decades later, having attained a measure of upward mobility, Jews again followed them to South Providence. But Jews and Catholics, though often fellow victims of discrimination, were seldom allies. Indeed, during the late 1930s, under the influence of Fascist politics, many of Rhode Island’s Italo-Americans voiced their own anti-Semitic diatribes.

Nevertheless, Christian discrimination never prevented Jews from establishing their own proud, observant, and vibrant community. (Perhaps, in some immeasurable way, discrimination also served as an impetus.) No doubt our Jewish community has also suffered from its own internal divisions and sense of hierarchy.

Even some basic facts complicate a picture of Jewish acceptance and integration within the Ocean State. For example, although Brown University’s charter welcomed students from all denominations, the first Jew, a lad from Pawtucket, did not graduate until 1894. Efforts to establish a Jewish fraternity, primarily for the benefit of commuter students, were squelched by the administration into the late 1920s. And Brown did not grant tenure to a Jewish professor until 1946. But Providence College, which was established in 1917 as a haven for Catholic students and faculty, soon welcomed Jews. During the 1930s, they constituted between four and 16 percent of incoming freshmen.

There can be no doubt that the Miriam Hospital was established in 1925 because Jewish physicians were unwelcome at Rhode Island Hospital. But an autonomous Jewish hospital was also highly desirable because it could serve the dietary, language, and
financial needs of Jewish patients. Indeed, Jews were amazingly resourceful and effective in establishing their own network of social service institutions: from orphanages to free-loan associations to burial societies. Ironically, this was also a reason why a statewide Federation came unusually late.

As for Protestants’ city and country clubs, Jews were also outsiders. But Ledgemont’s founding in 1924 also promoted relaxation and camaraderie among a growing Jewish elite. Although many of these individuals had achieved considerable success in retailing or as entrepreneurs, Jewish lawyers, for example, would not be welcome in white-shoe firms until long after World War II.

In 1959, Joseph Ress, a Brown graduate (then a lawyer and an industrialist) became the first Jewish member of the University’s Corporation. Two years later, this Providence native became the first Jewish trustee of Rhode Island School of Design. In 1964, the same year that he became the first Jewish campaign chairman of Rhode Island’s United Way, he also became the first Jewish member of the President’s Council at PC.

Yet, the most compelling symbol of Jewish acceptance in Rhode Island did not occur until 1968, when Superior Court Judge Frank Licht, also a president of the Jewish Federation, was first elected governor. And two years later, Richard Israel, a Republican, became the first of the state’s three Jewish attorneys general. It was not until 1972, however, when Norman Fain was elected a trustee of the Rhode Island Foundation that a Jew entered a true Yankee fiefdom. But there have been Jewish trustees ever since as well as two professional executives.

Ironically, as Jews have continued to make impressive strides within Rhode Island’s public and private domains, Jewish cohesiveness and continuity have been threatened by two factors: outmigration and intermarriage. Alas, today’s Jewish population is no more than two-thirds of its peak of 30,000 in 1935. And aliya has also represented both a promise and a peril primarily to a small number of Orthodox congregations.

Throughout much of the past century and continuing well into the present, Rhode Island’s Jewish leaders- rabbis and lay leaders alike (men and women)- have engaged in interfaith dialogue for a variety of admirable reasons. The most fundamental has been opposition to anti-Semitism. Another has been to build respect and support for Israel. Still another has been to strengthen bonds of understanding and fellowship among neighbors and other
people of faith and good will. Many Jews have also stood at the forefront of opposing all forms of discrimination. During the 1960s, for example, Irving Fain, was the state’s leading proponent of fair housing legislation. And a truly glorious moment in Rhode Island history occurred in 1965, when three rabbis, William Braude, Saul Leeman, and Norman Rosen, along with some local Christian clergy, marched with the Rev. Martin Luther King from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama.

In keeping with the timeless Jewish ideals of building a just and peaceful society, countless rabbis and lay leaders throughout our state have endeavored to build bridges of interfaith understanding, cooperation, and solidarity. Although some individuals and organizations have been studied in our journal, many more merit articles of their own. Fortunately, in the following pages, Noel Rubinton has shed light on Rabbi Wayne Franklin’s somewhat recent but also highly fruitful efforts.

The author, who grew up in New York City and remains a Mets fan, studied history at Brown and graduated in 1977. His editorship of The Brown Daily Herald led to his career in journalism. He was both a reporter and editor for Newsday on Long Island and in the Big Apple.

Noel served as president of the Huntington Jewish Center, a Conservative congregation on Long Island, and launched the editorial content group at UJA-Federation of New York. He has been a member of our Association for more than 25 years, since his marriage to Amy Cohen, the niece of our dear, departed leaders, Aaron and Judith Weiss Cohen.

Noel and Amy moved back to Rhode Island in 2015, and he works in communications at his alma mater. The Rubintons belong to Temple Emanu-El, and Noel’s interviews with Rabbi Franklin over this past summer led to his insightful article.

The Beginnings

Rabbi Wayne Franklin’s introduction to the importance of interfaith relations happened when he was a teenager, as he watched the actions of his charismatic rabbi. And there was an assist from a high school graduation party.

Growing up in the small Texas town of Wharton, about 60 miles southwest of Houston, Franklin was part of a tiny Jewish mi-
minority in a community of fewer than 8,000 people. Protestants were by far the largest group, and there was a Catholic church. Franklin’s parents were leaders of Congregation Shearith Israel, founded in 1913, which drew from neighboring small towns to gather 100 families. His father, Mervin, served as the congregation's president, and his mother, Marjorie, was president of its sisterhood.

Franklin’s Jewish observance deepened, especially after 1955, when a new rabbi, Israel Rosenberg, assumed Shearith Israel’s pulpit. Observing Rosenberg in many ways, including how he handled relations with non-Jews and clergy, had a large effect on Franklin. Through the suggestion of his mother and of Rosenberg, Franklin decided to go in 1959, the summer before his junior year of high school, to the new Camp Ramah, in Ojai, California, which was affiliated with the Conservative movement. The camp director that summer was Rabbi Chaim Potok, just before he launched his literary career. Another person who would go on to be a prominent rabbi and writer, Harold Kushner, was one of Franklin’s teachers.

“I loved it, really grooved on it,” Franklin recalls of his Ramah experience, and he came back to Wharton more connected to Judaism and eager to be more observant. In what would be the pattern of his life, he became not a wave-maker, rather a quiet but determined persuader and organizer.

Franklin remembers that although most of his high school friends were not Jewish, they were respectful of his religion and practice. When it came time for graduation, one of the fanciest parties was planned by a classmate’s uncle, who lived in Houston. Franklin wanted to go, but it was set for a Friday night. He said he was sorry, that he’d be in synagogue and would have to miss it. He thought that was the end of it.
Then he heard that the whole party had been shifted to another day so he could attend. The new date, it turned out, was a day of Shavuot, which none of his friends knew about. Franklin decided that so much had been done to accommodate and respect his Judaism that he would go to the party.

After graduation and another summer at Camp Ramah, Franklin’s growing desire to pursue his Jewish interests pulled on him and, again with the involvement of Rabbi Rosenberg, he headed to New York City for the first time to attend Yeshiva University. Although he loved Judaic studies at Yeshiva and he decided he wanted to become a rabbi, Franklin felt more comfortable in the Conservative movement.

Following his graduation from Yeshiva in 1965, he enrolled at Jewish Theological Seminary, where he began to see more of the interfaith world. Its chancellor, Louis Finkelstein, had created an interfaith institute with workshops for rabbinical students, and the interfaith work of Abraham Joshua Heschel, one of his professors, was an inspiration. And by chance, one of his Texas high school classmates ended up at Union Theological Seminary, across the street, studying to become a Protestant minister. Franklin grew enamored with the quiet, comfortable library there and spent many days studying at that seminary. “They had the Judaic stuff that I needed anyway and that was great.”

Following his ordination in 1970, Franklin’s first pulpit was at Temple B’nai Shalom, in Benton Harbor, Michigan. His introduction to the interfaith realm there was mostly practical because there happened to be a number of “freshmen clergy.” They began getting together to “talk about community issues, personal issues, and let our hair down.”

It was a powerful experience for Franklin to feel the common interests and needs of different faiths. “We all realized that you can change the names and the issues in congregational life that we were dealing with, including the types of people, the types of conflicts or situation or needs or whatever that you had to address,” Franklin said. “Yet, we all had the same thing. It was just addressing matters from a Jewish or a Lutheran or Episcopalian or Catholic or
Congregationalist perspective, it was all the same, basically.”

The involvement with clergy of other faiths was helpful to Franklin in unexpected ways. He became part of a men’s swimming group, which included an older Congregationalist minister, who talked about losing his voice from improperly using it. He spoke highly of one of his members, a retired vocal coach. Franklin took lessons with the coach, an idea that Franklin said he might never have considered otherwise.

Franklin’s next pulpit, beginning in 1975, was at the Orange Synagogue Center in Orange, Connecticut, southwest of New Haven. He didn’t have formal interfaith contacts or projects there, but he recalled more of the same kind of informal contacts that had made such an impression on him in Benton Harbor. In this case, regular activities with the priest at a nearby Catholic church made a difference.

The Start in Providence

The year 1981 brought Franklin, then 37 years old, to Providence and Temple Emanu-El. For a relatively young rabbi, it was a large pulpit, the second largest Conservative synagogue in New England (after Temple Emanuel in Newton).

Until well into the 20th century, many Jews had sought a fuller degree of participation and integration within Rhode Island’s economic, political, educational, and social spheres that were dominated by Protestants and a Catholic population that was the largest percentage of any state. As one example, a number of prominent Providence social clubs still excluded Jews from membership when Franklin arrived.

Interfaith relations would become one of the leading aspects of Franklin’s Providence rabbinate. Building on the strengths of many of his rabbinic predecessors, he sought new ways to overcome religious ignorance and strengthen bonds of community and fellowship.

One day in 1982, something unexpected happened that led to Franklin’s interfaith work greatly expanding. Martin Temkin, an Emanu-El member and a lawyer, told him that he knew of a Catholic
priest who had retired and moved back to Providence from Washington. He was seeking Jewish clergy with whom to engage. Would Franklin be interested? Temkin then told him the priest’s name – Father Edward Flannery.

“I practically fell off my chair,” recalled Franklin, because Flannery was a giant in the field of interfaith relations. While at JTS, Franklin had studied his book, *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-Three Centuries of Antisemitism.* “This study of Christian anti-Semitism was really pioneering for me,” Franklin said. He remembers being amazed at the opportunity to meet and work with Flannery.

A new era in Catholic and Jewish relations had been launched in 1965, when the world’s bishops, meeting in the Second Vatican Council and having been encouraged by Pope John XXIII and then Pope Paul VI, issued *Nostra Aetate.* This was “The Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions.” Thus, Franklin recalled, “To have Father Flannery come here to Providence and have the opportunity to meet and become friends with this pioneer was quite exciting.”

Franklin remembers Flannery as being “very gracious and very warm” from the start of their relationship. He said Flannery was strong in his views: “He was not wishy-washy in his condemnation of the Holocaust and anti-Semitism. And if anybody tried to sort of soft-pedal these things, he wouldn’t have any tolerance of it. He was very strong.”

An example Franklin recalls of Flannery’s leadership was the denouncement of conservative commentator Patrick Buchanan, who said that Catholics were being unfairly pilloried in the debate about establishing a Carmelite convent on the site of Auschwitz. A
column by Buchanan had appeared in *The Providence Journal*, and inspired by Flannery, a Catholic-Jewish group became active in gaining signatures for a letter in opposition.

Franklin’s conversations with Flannery led to a fertile dialogue between rabbis and priests in Rhode Island that lasted 20 years, first with Flannery as his partner and later with Father Tom Trepanier. Bishop Louis Gelineau, head of the Providence Diocese at the time, supported the effort and gave Flannery a title as director of the office of Catholic-Jewish relations. Flannery recruited a group of area priests and Franklin went to the Board of Rabbis and invited his colleagues to join.

The group started meeting at the Our Lady of Providence Seminary, located in the former Aldrich mansion in Warwick, and alternated with monthly meetings at Temple Emanu-El. Later, meetings were always at Emanu-El. There would be lunch and discussion of various religious documents that the group of about 20 chose to discuss. It quickly became a comfortable way for clergy to meet and increase understanding of each other’s religion. “It was really more of a study group than a problem-solver,” Franklin said, but the relationships would carry over to other issues.

“They weren’t all as open as Flannery frankly,” Franklin recalls of the meetings. “Some of the priests still had some of the old thinking. He [Flannery] would work on them during these meetings. He would present the Jewish side of the story and he would be teaching them about new Catholic thinking.”

While lay Catholics or Jews were not involved in the dialogue group, Franklin said congregants of Emanu-El and other synagogues were aware of the ongoing work. He explained, “People believed that cooperative interfaith effort is better than hostility and distance, and they were supportive of it.”

Having grown close, Franklin spoke at Flannery’s funeral in 1998. His leadership on the Catholic side of the group was taken over by Trepanier, one of the original members of the group who had returned after a tour as a military chaplain. Franklin said Trepanier, like Flannery, was extremely knowledgeable about Jewish-Catholic relations. He had a large personal library about the Holo-
caust and also the Talmud, and he visited Israel often.

Trepanier and Franklin also became close friends, and Franklin visited him often when Trepanier became sick. He died in 2002 and Franklin, surrounded by many Catholic leaders, including then-Bishop Robert Mulvee, gave a eulogy at his Mass of Christian Burial.

“Like his mentor, Father Flannery, Tom was deeply troubled by the history of the Church’s anti-Judaism and the anti-Semitism which erupted in the Holocaust,” Franklin said to the assemblage. “Tom himself felt deeply connected to Judaism, as the fountainhead of his Christianity.”

“I have lost a dear friend, and the Jewish community has lost a true friend,” Franklin went on to say. “He showed us how to create bridges of understanding and peace, among people and faith communities.”

At the family’s request, Franklin also chose a Hebrew inscription for Trepanier’s gravestone in Lincoln. Derived from Psalm 34, it declares, “He loved peace and he pursued peace.”

Unfortunately, the Catholic-Jewish dialogue group did not survive Trepanier’s death because there was no natural successor among the Catholics. But it had brought many in the community together and helped spawn other projects.

**Interfaith Commemorations of the Holocaust**

As the Providence Catholic-Jewish dialogue had started in the early 1980s, so had another that would go on to have a long life. Early in his time in Providence, Franklin got to know Rev. Alan Shear, the pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, not far away from Emanu-El on Hope Street. “We were friendly, new young guys in the neighborhood,” Franklin recalled. One day, Shear told him that every year on the Sunday closest to Yom HaShoah, he held a service to commemorate the Shoah in his church. “How about we do something jointly with our congregations?” Shear asked. Franklin said it was a great idea and suggested something bigger: “Let’s do this as a statewide interfaith service.” And that’s what happened.

The first “Rhode Island Interfaith Commemoration of the
Holocaust” was held at Temple Emanu-El on April 30, 1984, and it has happened annually ever since. The first program included the Rt. Rev. George Hunt III, Episcopal Bishop of Rhode Island, reading “We Saw Three Gallows,” written by Elie Wiesel in Night. Father Flannery read a prayer, “Fear,” by a girl who died at Auschwitz at age 14. Melvin Alperin, an Emanu-El congregant and president of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, introduced the guest speaker, Rabbi Irving Greenberg, the director of the National Jewish Resource Center in New York. The program continued after the service with a discussion led by Greenberg and Flannery.

In the commemoration’s early years, there was considerable involvement by the top leaders of various faiths in planning meetings, including the Catholic and Episcopal bishops, and the head of the Council of Churches. Over time, the high-level involvement diminished as the event became more established. The format, held at Emanu-El by the group’s choice, has remained similar through the years, though the early custom of wearing clerical garments was dropped after some Jews expressed discomfort about seeing crosses in the synagogue.

For many years, Holocaust survivors were prominent among the speakers. As the number of survivors decreased, there were more from the second-generation, such as radio personality Martin Goldsmith. Of the outside speakers, many have been non-Jews, such as Brown archaeologist Martha Sharp Joukowsky, whose parents were honored by Yad Vashem for aiding Jews escaping Nazi persecution. Joe Fab, the producer and director of the film “Paper Clips,” was the 2017 speaker.

One of Franklin’s longest-running partners in the Holocaust services has been Judith Jamieson. A former dean at Providence College, a longtime lay leader at Central Congregational Church, and a former president of the Sandra Bornstein Holocaust Education Center, she has been on the planning committee for decades. Jamieson said the variety of Yom HaShoa programs “has been outstanding” and much of the reason has been Franklin’s guidance. “He is an amazing individual, and he knows the overall culture,” she said.

Attendance at the commemorations, which has often
topped 200, has always included people of many faiths. Lighting memorial candles, reading names of those lost, poetry and music have been constants. “I would like to believe that it’s helped keep what happened in the Holocaust in people’s consciousness,” Franklin said.

National Scholars and Conferences

In 1988, Rhode Island Episcopal Bishop George Hunt, whom Franklin knew from a number of interfaith projects, called to tell him about an intriguing new idea. The “Abrahamic Accord” would be an attempt to bring Jews and Christians together in a spirit of mutual respect, including the goal to eliminate Christian anti-Semitism. “That’s a huge, huge goal,” Franklin recalls telling Hunt. “It’s going to take a long time, but if you’re serious about it, I’m willing to work with you.”

The project was based in Rhode Island and southern Ohio, with major funding from the Procter family of Procter & Gamble. “At best, Christians have treated Jews with a liberal goodwill during good times,” said one statement of the Accord’s purposes. “At worst,” it continued, “Christians have persecuted Jews and, with Nazism, even attempted to wipe them out utterly.”

For the next decade, Franklin was one of the Accord’s leaders, and he recruited Rabbi Neil Gilman, an eminent scholar who had been one of Franklin’s teachers at the Jewish Theological Seminary. Public conferences were held in Cincinnati, Philadelphia, Providence, Palm Beach, and Long Island, and a movie, “Harmonies of Peace,” was produced and distributed.

The project wound down after 10 years when some of the key players moved on and funding ended. But Franklin pointed to dividends in the Providence area. The initiative led to more churches and synagogues working together, such as a Bar Mitzvah class from Emanu-El going to a Palm Sunday service and interfaith classes within Emanu-El’s Adult Education Institute.

A New Dialogue Partner

Arthur Urbano grew up in Providence, where he and his mother were always close to their Catholic church. He also heard
much about Jews through his mother’s work as a hairdresser at Charlesgate, an assisted living facility. “When Judaism became part of our conversation at home,” he explained, “Franklin’s name was often mentioned.” After earning a master’s in divinity at Harvard and a Ph.D. in religious studies at Brown in 2005, Urbano joined the theology department at Providence College.

There he started a Jewish-Catholic Theological Exchange program to promote interreligious understanding. It has two programs a year, often with a Jewish scholar speaking. In 2011, Urbano invited Franklin to be a speaker. Having heard about his work, “It seemed natural,” Urbano said. Franklin’s talk was “My Children Have Vanquished Me!: Decision-Making in Judaism.” Remarking on the irony of Jews meeting with Catholics on the 73rd anniversary of Kristallnacht, Franklin said, “The world is definitely a different place, thank God.”

Subsequently, Franklin became involved in helping Urbano, and Urbano grew to consider Franklin a key mentor. Urbano said, “I see him as a man of great wisdom.”

A highlight in Urbano’s series occurred on November 3, 2016, when Cardinal Timothy Dolan, archbishop of New York, came to speak. His talk was: “Jewish-Catholic Dialogue: 2,000 Years but Just the Beginning.” Urbano was the person behind the evening, but Franklin had a special role.

When Franklin and Urbano had discussed how to invite Cardinal Dolan, Franklin said that he had become acquainted with him through a Catholic-Jewish group, and he was going to be at the cardinal’s New York headquarters for a meeting soon. He offered to extend the invitation. During a break in the meeting, Franklin asked
Dolan if he’d consider coming to Providence to speak. “Sure,” Franklin recalled him saying right away, “I’d be happy to.” Eventually a date was worked out, connecting it with PC’s centennial celebration. The room at Providence College was packed with hundreds of students, faculty, and alumni as well as many Christian and Jewish visitors. One of the first things Dolan did in his remarks was speak warmly of Franklin, who was sitting in the front row. The cardinal praised him for his profound impact on interfaith relations. Dolan’s talk was full of appreciation for Jewish-Catholic discourse. “We are all children of God. And we are all here tonight children of Abraham. There is much more that unites us than divides us,” Dolan said.

Urbano has also developed a PC course about Jewish-Catholic understandings of the Hebrew Bible, and Franklin has been a guest lecturer. And for several years, Franklin and Urbano have team-taught a course at Temple Emanu-El’s Adult Education Institute on such Jewish-Christian issues as “Biblical Prophecy and Messianic Anticipations in Judaism and Christianity.” Jews and Christians have participated.

Urbano and Franklin’s relationship led to another dialogue, a sort of bookend to the Catholic-Jewish program that Franklin and Flannery and Trepanier had nurtured beginning in the 1980s. Franklin and Urbano became co-leaders for the project, where several times a year priests (including Father John Kiley, representing the Diocese of Providence), rabbis, professors, and lay people discuss selected scholarly topics.

In 2017, in recognition of all his important efforts, PC awarded Franklin an honorary doctor of divinity degree.
Another National Stage

Early in the current decade, Franklin received a call “out of the blue” to get involved with another interfaith dialogue effort on a national level. An acquaintance at the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism asked him if he would become a representative on the National Council of Synagogues, a partnership among Judaism’s Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist movements to promote interreligious affairs.

With the Council’s purpose dovetailing with the work Franklin had been doing for decades, he accepted the offer. The multidenominational Jewish group regularly dialogues with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and with leaders of the National Council of Churches.

Having attended many sessions, Franklin describes the dialogue as being at a high intellectual level and on a variety of broad religious issues, including Israel. Scholars are often presenters. “It’s been very enlightening,” Franklin said. The Israel discussion has sometimes been complicated and difficult, especially with the Protestant group.

For Franklin, the Council has been a chance to be connected to a broader group of religious thinkers and with more diversity of thought. It has also given him a chance to put ideas into practice in Providence.

Meetings with Muslims

Franklin had no real contact with Muslims until he arrived in Providence, and most of his interfaith work with Muslims, both in Rhode Island and nationally, has come in recent years. Through the National Council of Synagogues group, he was part of an introductory conversation with a group of American Muslims in 2016. “It was a very exciting meeting,” Franklin said, but the discussion has not continued yet.

Locally, there has been more contact with Muslims in recent years. Franklin remembered a dinner at Providence Mayor David Cicilline’s house in the 2000s, where he met with other faith leaders, including Muslims. Franklin said it was a friendly evening,
even punctuated by some humor. For example, a local imam who ate only halal food heard Franklin ask for a fruit plate and said with a smile to the waiter: “I’ll have what the rabbi is having.”

When the Rhode Island Board of Rabbis met a few years ago with Muslim community leaders, the assignment was to bring a text that best represents your religious tradition. Franklin explained, “When we finished going around the table, we all commented how striking it was that almost everything that was selected was so similar.” The meeting was followed by a visit to the mosque in North Smithfield, with all participants displaying some of their sacred writings.

Franklin said there have been growing areas of solidarity between Jewish and Muslim communities in times of crisis. He and fellow Jewish leaders have shown public support for Muslims, including, for example, in early 2017, when leaders of many faiths stood outside the Islamic Center of Smithfield as hundreds streamed out of the mosque after prayers.

Franklin has also invited Islamic clergy to speak at Temple Emanu-El on Shabbat, and they brought some of their members to

With Cardinal Timothy Dolan,
Providence, 2016
observe services. While he has been pleased by what's happen-
ed, he acknowledges that there is much more to be done in collaboration
with the Muslim community.

A Surprising Dialogue Overseas

It started with a call to Franklin from Alan Metnick, a
Providence-based photographer he knew. Metnick told him about
an extraordinary program, the “Forum for Dialogue” in Poland,
which is the largest and oldest Polish non-governmental organi-
sation engaging in Polish/Jewish dialogue. Franklin admitted that
at first he didn’t understand the group, even though his maternal
grandparents had been Polish. Metnick wanted to nominate him for
a trip with the group.

Realizing that it would be useful, Franklin made his first
trip in 2015. “I was astounded by what I saw,” Franklin said. He
learned about the Forum’s work teaching young Poles about Jews
and Judaism and anti-Semitism in an original way. He remembered
one of the first evenings in Poland, when he met some of the found-
ers of the Solidarity movement, and he spoke to the former Polish
ambassador to Israel, who was married to an Israeli. “He was telling
us at dinner what a wonderful relationship Poland has with Israel,
how highly Poland values Israel, how proud they are that the Israeli
Knesset is patterned after the Polish parliament,” Franklin said.

The Forum’s “Schools of Dialogue” teach non-Jewish,
middle and high school students in Poland about the Judaism that
existed in their communities through about 50 educators deployed
in more than 300 schools. They do project-based learning to dis-
cover where Jews were in the past and what places and artifacts re-
main in places like former synagogues and cemeteries. “And so when
they bring groups like ours,” Franklin said, “they take them to one
of these towns and the kids lead the tour and show where the Jewish
places were.”

In 2016, Franklin returned to Poland for the Dialogue
group, this time bringing several others, including Emanu-El con-
gregants. He had imagined spending Shabbat in a Krakow hotel and
going to the Jewish community center for Shabbat dinner. But the
head of the Forum, Andrzej Folwarczny, had other plans. Franklin and his group were taken to Rabka-Zdrój, a small town an hour south of Krakow, where they held the town’s first Shabbat celebration in 70 years. Franklin and another of the group’s visiting rabbis conducted services. “This was an extraordinary experience,” Franklin explained. Several townspeople who had researched local Jewish history showed the group several sites, including that of a destroyed synagogue.

Franklin returned again in 2017 and met more of the non-Jewish activists involved in fighting anti-Semitism, teaching about Jewish history and culture, and preserving Jewish heritage. After so many years of searching for and working on interfaith dialogue in Providence and elsewhere in the United States, he was struck by finding it so robust in Poland.

Praying with the Pope
Since his election in 2013, Pope Francis has pursued a series of initiatives to reach out to people of other faiths. In September 2015, for example, when the pope held an interfaith gathering of several hundred clergy in New York City, at the National September 11 Memorial & Museum, Franklin participated.

“Holding the multi-faith gathering at the Memorial and Museum articulated a powerful message,” Franklin wrote in a Providence Journal opinion article. Expressing much of his philosophy about interfaith dialogue, it said, “Religion must bring people together; it must not be a wedge to drive people apart.”

“There is a great need for more bridge building, globally and locally, among people of all faiths and backgrounds. That need exists right here in Providence and elsewhere in Rhode Island,” Franklin said. “As the pope showed us so strongly, let’s not be afraid of building bridges, especially when the bridges lead to understanding and reconciliation.”

Just a few weeks after the pope’s program in New York City, a new Rhode Island dialogue group, consisting of clergy, community leaders, and law enforcement officials, organized a prayer vigil at Burnside Park in downtown Providence. Franklin was a prominently
involved. Several dozen people joined the vigil to improve relationships after altercations across the country had left many civilians and police officers dead. The names of police and civilians were read. Additionally, there were readings from Hebrew and Christian scriptures, from the Koran and Buddhist writings, by faith leaders and community activists. There were drums and the blowing of a shofar.

**Breaking Down Ignorance**

One of Franklin’s goals throughout his career has been to break down ignorance about Jews. “It’s hard to measure,” he commented, “but I know that I’ve had many conversations over the years. I tried.”

“One of my disappointments is that not more of this is going on in the United States. I still feel there’s a great deal of ignorance,” Franklin said. “There are a lot of old canards that are still in people’s heads. Still a lot of people don’t know the teachings and implications of *Nostra Aetate.*” Thus, while many think and wish that the differences, and sometimes conflicts, between Jews and Catholics are completely over, Franklin does not think that this is so.

And he has seen many Jews who are also not interested in learning about neighbors of other faiths – a prerequisite to understanding and cooperation. Looking back on his lifetime of work, Franklin said, “I do think more progress is possible, absolutely. There is a lot more work to do.”

“I think it’s easier now because our dialogists in the other communities are better educated, more open, and well-intentioned. And a lot of the old prejudices, a lot of the old exclusions have broken down, both legally and conventionally,” he said.

**“Open Hearts”**

Franklin’s announcement of his retirement plans in the winter of 2018 led to two major awards. Both honored his decades-long interfaith efforts.

In June 2018, he received the Joseph W. Ress Community Service Award from the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island. It
recognizes his leadership at the Alliance and in other local, national, and international agencies. “You have given of yourself not just to the Jewish community but to the community at large,” said Joan Ress Reeves, the namesake’s daughter, when presenting the award.

“Strengthening our community requires all of us to listen respectfully with open hearts and minds to what others with points of view extremely different from our own are saying,” Franklin said in accepting the award.

In October, Franklin, who plans to continue his interfaith endeavors after retirement, received the Honorary Chairs’ Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Humanities from the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities. He was singled out by the council for “over three decades of service as a faith leader, educator, and advocate for civic dialogues.”

“One does not dialogue alone,” Franklin said when accepting the award. “Interfaith dialogue requires people who are deeply committed to their own religious faiths, but who share open minds and open hearts. Meaningful dialogue is possible among people who are eager to learn from one another and who are interested in understanding one another. Dialogue requires mutual respect, rather than trying to convince others of the correctness of one’s position.”

In closing his remarks to the audience of about 300, Franklin cited Hasidic Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav, who taught, “The whole world is a very narrow bridge, but the most important thing is not to be afraid.” Franklin said, “Our road through life can feel like a very narrow bridge. We never know what lies ahead, or what might topple us from the bridge. Many people fear that if they engage with people whose beliefs differ from their own, they may become unmoored from their foundations and be comprised in the faith.”

Yet, Franklin added, “Bridge building can make us more secure, and less likely to experience calamity. The bridges we build help us overcome our fears of all that’s different and unfamiliar. I hope that our collective efforts will continue to lift up and affirm the human spirit, so that we can traverse the bridge of life with confidence, in harmony, and in peace.”

741 Rubinton
Wedding, Riverdale Temple,
Bronx, 1967
The Education of a Liberal Rabbi

James B. Rosenberg

In our previous issue, Rabbi Rosenberg reflected on his devoted years of service to Barrington’s Reform congregation, Temple HaBonim, from 1974 to 2007. He also reflected on many satisfying endeavors spent during his retirement years.

Clearly, writing is one, for he now shares with us a prequel, a discussion of some of the experiences and institutions that shaped his decision to become a rabbi. He feels particularly indebted to four teachers, whose ideas and methods continue to guide and inspire him. Although Rabbi Rosenberg encountered three of these mentors during his undergraduate and postgraduate studies, he is reluctant to refer to them as “professors.” Indeed, he also points out how his own professional title has been at various times both a privilege and a burden.

Perhaps unlike many of his rabbinic colleagues, the author is also unafraid of acknowledging some of his own disappointments and shortcomings. Ironically, such weaknesses may have made him a stronger clergyperson.

As Rabbi Rosenberg explains, some of his favorite novels have been epics, and he has studied some poets for half a century. Thus, it may not come as a total surprise that our friend, a lifelong learner, is planning a third autobiographical article for next year’s issue of our journal.

High School

I am the only graduate of The Pingry School to become a rabbi. The school was founded in 1861 by Dr. John F. Pingry, a Presbyterian minister, as a private, all-boys, country day school. During my twelve years there, as part of Rev. Pingry’s legacy, I regularly attended mandatory chapel services— in the presence of a cross— with Protestant hymns and readings from the Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul.

My classmates were overwhelmingly white, Protestant, and
privileged. By the time I graduated in June 1962, out of 70 or so in my class, two were Negroes (the preferred term for African-Americans at that time)- both of whom were doctors’ sons; there was only one other Negro student in the entire school. I was one of four Jews in my class.

During my student years, Pingry was housed in a newly constructed elegant and spacious building, surrounded by sprawling athletic fields, in Hillside, New Jersey. In May 2012, when I returned to Pingry for my class’s fiftieth reunion on the relatively new Middle and Upper School campus in Martinsville, New Jersey, I entered into an entirely new world from the one I had left in 1962; the student body had become coed and multiracial. African-American, Asian, and Latino faces smiled at me – in striking contrast to my generation’s senior class portraits still hanging in one hallway.

The percentage of Jewish students seemed to have increased markedly; I was more than a little surprised to see a couple of male students wearing kipot (yarmulkes). Having been asked to offer the opening benediction at the sports-jacket-required alumni luncheon, I wondered how Rev. Pingry would have responded to hearing a rabbi-alumnus begin with the Hebrew words of Psalm 133, Hineh mah tov umah na’im… (“How good and how pleasant…”), and conclude with the Motsi.

As I moved into my high school years at Pingry, I had less and less to do with the weekend social lives of my classmates. After all, none of the girls I dated or associated with had coming-out parties as debutantes; indeed, I didn’t even know what a debutante was.

My social life focused largely upon the Conservative movement’s United Synagogue Youth (USY). By my senior year, I had been elected president of our local chapter of close to 100 teenage members at Temple B’nai Israel in Elizabeth, New Jersey. I was also active on a regional level; as an Area Head, I had the responsibility of visiting a number of USY chapters spread over northern New Jersey. I still remember the excitement and sense of belonging I felt at the national USY conventions I attended in New York and Chicago.

My active involvement with USY greatly strengthened my identity both as an American Jew and as a Zionist. During the late
1950s and early ‘60s, the young State of Israel was a powerhouse of inspiration to Jews the world over. Whenever a shaliach or shalichah (a young man or woman specially trained to be an emissary from Israel to the Diaspora) would appear at a USY regional event, we treated as royalty this living embodiment of our Jewish homeland. Needless to say, as both the Israeli and American Jewish communities have continued to evolve over the decades, our relationship has become far more nuanced, complex, and at times fraught.

Looking back, I wonder whether the fact that I was in such a distinct minority at Pingry had something to do with my decision to become a rabbi. During my high school years, I became more and more assertive regarding my Jewish identity vis-à-vis my Christian classmates. As a matter of fact, when I delivered my required Senior Speech to an assembly of the entire Upper School (grades 9-12), I spoke on “Why I am proud to be Jewish.” I suspect that a touch of teenage rebelliousness prompted my choice of topic.

I see now with the benefit of hindsight that my Advanced Placement English teacher, Dr. Herbert Hahn – my only Pingry teacher to have earned a doctorate- was a far more significant influence on my decision to become a rabbi than I realized at the time. Dr. Hahn was an outstanding teacher: patient, erudite, organized, inspiring, and demanding. During my senior year, he shepherded us students through two 19th-century novels that have continued to enrich and guide me on my life’s journey: Herman Melville’s Moby Dick and Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s The Brothers Karamazov, both of which I have been reading and rereading to this very day.

Moby Dick’s Captain Ahab, in his ruthless and relentless search for the great white whale fueled by his colossal ego, appealed to my considerable adolescent narcissism. As he rages to his first mate, Starbuck, “I’d smite the sun if it insulted me.” Or, in wild defiance of a fierce Pacific storm, he proclaimed, “In the midst of the personified impersonal, a personality stands here.”

Like Moby Dick, The Brothers Karamazov forced me to dive deeply into my emerging self. Was I more like Ivan, the intellectual rationalist, or Dimitri, the emotional sensualist, or Alyosha, the spiritually sensitive young man who is determined to “love life more
than the meaning of it”? As I sensed upon my first reading, I am all three of the Karamazov brothers; however, as I have moved through life, Ivan, Dimitri, and Alyosha continue to arrange and rearrange themselves within me.

These two novels have continued to nourish my growth as a rabbi, a Jew, and a human being because they keep me wrestling with profound religious questions. How, for example, is it possible to live in dialogue with God despite all of the chaos, absurdity, darkness, and abject evil in which we are all immersed? How can we live meaningfully with knowledge of our mortality, with the undeniable fact that each of us— at least in terms of our physical body— is doomed? While both of these novels ask questions which penetrate to our very core, neither Melville nor Dostoyevsky offers answers; for both authors understand that true religion can never be dogma but rather must be a lifelong quest. Religion is a path, not a destination. Somehow Dr. Hahn had the wisdom and the pedagogic technique to sow within me the seeds of my ever-evolving understanding of these colossal works of literature.

I am also in debt to Dr. Hahn for implanting within me a life-long love of poetry. Little could I have known when he introduced Lawrence Ferlinghetti’s best-selling collection of “beat” poetry, A Coney Island of the Mind, that I would be reading, writing, and translating poetry for the rest of my life.

One final word about my deep connection with Dr. Hahn. He was the author of The Old Testament in Modern Research with a Survey of Recent Literature (Fortress Press, 1966). Though Hahn was a Christian, the faculty at my rabbinical school thought that his book was worthy of being used as a supplementary text.

College

I entered Columbia College in the fall of 1962 and spent four intense and gratifying years on the Morningside Heights campus in northern Manhattan before graduating in June 1966. As a freshman, I had no sense of direction, no idea of what I wanted to do with my life. I was content to go with the flow and take required courses in the college’s core curriculum, which focused upon the
historical development of Western thought and literature.

However, by December of my sophomore year, I had made a life-altering decision: my goal was to become a rabbi in the Reform movement. My decision seemed to surprise nobody but myself; family and friends were well aware of my four-year involvement with my Jewish peers in United Synagogue Youth, and they also knew of my religious wrestling sparked by my engagement with *Moby Dick* and *The Brothers Karamazov*. They reasoned: Commitment to the Jewish community + religious search = rabbi. *Quod erat demonstrandum*.

Although it has taken me fifty years to come to appreciate Dr. Hahn’s influence on my decision to become a rabbi, as soon as I met Rabbi Albert Friedlander, I knew that he was a role model for the kind of rabbi I would like to become. He was the associate counselor to Jewish students (along with Rabbi Isadore Hoffman) at Columbia’s Seixas-Menorah Society, an analogue to Hillel chapters found on most college campuses with significant Jewish populations. Until that fateful December day, I had dismissed the possibility of my becoming a rabbi because I thought and felt that a rabbi must accept the Torah as the word of God – a proposition which I could not and still cannot accept while maintaining my intellectual integrity. However, Rabbi Friedlander, a Reform rabbi, helped me come to view the notion of “word of God” in a far more nuanced and sophisticated way.

During my four years at Columbia, Rabbi Friedlander, a refugee from Nazi Germany, introduced me and my fellow Jewish students from both Columbia and Barnard Colleges to such significant modern German-Jewish thinkers as Leo Baeck, Martin Buber, and Franz Rosenzweig. Through the give and take of numerous discussions concerning these seminal twentieth-century Jewish intellectuals over the course of my undergraduate years, Rabbi Friedlander helped me to see our Torah as sacred not because it is the literal word of God, but because it is the record of my ancestors’ ongoing attempt to establish a relationship with the living God.

Because of Rabbi Friedlander’s example, I realized that my intellectual and spiritual home would be in the Reform movement, though I have remained deeply respectful of the Conservative movement, in whose embrace I spent my childhood and adolescent years.
Born in Germany, with German as his native tongue, and a refugee from Nazi madness, Friedlander offered students a personal perspective on the Holocaust; he shared with us the complex and nuanced story of how the Shoah was both an aberration and a consequence of German culture. Friedlander had gained immense insight from the words and deeds of his mentor, Rabbi Leo Baeck, who, after surviving the rigors of the Theresienstadt transit camp, crossed the Atlantic to become a revered teacher at the Cincinnati campus of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR). This is where Rabbi Friedlander was ordained in 1952. In 1968, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations published Friedlander’s groundbreaking anthology, *Out of the Whirlwind: A Reader of Holocaust Literature*.

When I told Rabbi Friedlander of my intention to apply to the New York campus of HUC-JIR upon reaching my senior year, I asked him what courses he thought I should take in preparation. He told me that it was fine that I would be majoring in philosophy, but that what was absolutely essential was to take as much Hebrew as possible. During my senior year, I had the opportunity to study Hebrew with the world-renowned scholar, Yosef Yerushalmi. In his class I first read the words of the father of modern Hebrew poetry, Chaim Nachman Bialik. Yerushalmi helped students work our way through his long and bitter poem responding to the 1903 pogrom in Kishinev, *B’Ir ha-Haregah* (“In the City of Slaughter”). Yerushalmi inspired me to translate the poem for publication, first in the *Jewish Spectator*, then years later a revised and more complete version in the *CCAR Journal*, the quarterly of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

As important as my relationships with Rabbi Friedlander and his circle of liberal Jewish students were to me, life as an undergraduate pulled me in many different directions; although I couldn’t know it at the time, I was to call upon these diverse experiences throughout my rabbinical life. For example, as one of many campus folksingers, accompanying myself on guitar and banjo, I frequently performed at an intimate venue behind the crypt at Columbia’s St. Paul Chapel known as the “Post Crypt” – pun intended! Years later,
during my more than three decades as rabbi at Barrington’s Temple Habonim, I sang and played guitar at worship services, religious school, and youth group events. In a similar vein, my volunteering at Christ Community Church in central Harlem was a foreshadowing of my efforts as a rabbi in Rhode Island to foster interfaith and interracial understanding.

Not surprisingly, my courses at Columbia occupied the majority of my time. As a philosophy major, I had the opportunity to grapple with some of the West's most challenging thinkers: Aristotle, Plato, Aquinas, Kant, and Hegel. While some of my teachers pushed me to improve my analytical skills – to break down complex issues into simpler parts - I was drawn to those teachers who helped me to develop my synthetic abilities – to put things back together again in an overarching context, to paint, as it were, “the big picture.” To my way of thinking, this synthesis is at the core of a process and a perspective that I would deem “religious.”

An important task of the college experience is to develop one’s interpersonal relationships – both on the intimate and communal levels. Reading over the diaries I kept during those years, I am reminded that I possess an almost infinite capacity to deceive myself. Especially with regard to the young women I dated during those four years, I had virtually no capacity to acknowledge even the slightest flaw in what I so desperately wanted to perceive as an ideal relationship—until, inevitably, the walls came tumbling down. In my emotional immaturity, I craved a maturity of relationship for which I was not yet ready.

By contrast, my interaction with male classmates proved to be open, liberating, and richly rewarding. To this very day, I maintain close ties with three members of the Class of ’66.

Sadly, the classmate with whom I was closest during my undergraduate years, Gene Leff, lost his battle with ALS in April 2018. Back in the mid-'60s, Gene was more honest with me than any other friend or family member. More than 50 years later, I still remember Gene's telling me, with uncanny perceptiveness, that I used my optimism, my positive outlook, as a WEAPON to manipulate others, to indirectly attack those who were grappling with darkness and
depression. My wife of five decades tells me that truer words were never spoken.

Rabbinical School

My first classes at the New York campus of HUC-JIR, on West 68th Street in Manhattan, began in September 1966. However, my formal rabbinical education actually began the preceding June, when I drove from my home in northern New Jersey to the College’s Cincinnati campus, where rabbinical students enrolling in New York and Cincinnati received two months of intensive Hebrew instruction. Because of my two years of Hebrew at Columbia, I was placed in the most advanced section. That summer’s Hebrew program was demanding, and we students had little time for anything other than attending classes and preparing our assignments.

As it turned out, by far the most significant consequence of that summer in Cincinnati was meeting the young man with whom I shared a dorm room. Just a few months later he introduced me to the woman who would become my wife, the mother of our two children, and the grandmother of our three granddaughters and two grandsons.

Once I began classes in New York, it did not take me long to realize that a professional school is a far different world from a college. While at Columbia, after taking my basic classes in the core curriculum and meeting my distribution requirements, I had broad latitude in choosing my course of study. By way of contrast, at HUC-JIR, with rare exceptions, I had no choices at all. If I wanted to be ordained as a rabbi in the Reform movement, I had to take whatever was required of me; I quickly learned that I would have to find a way to get along with all of my teachers, whether I happened to like them or not.

There was so much to learn: Hebrew, Aramaic, Tanakh, Mishnah, Gemara, Midrash, commentaries, history, medieval Jewish philosophy, liturgy, life cycle rites, and modern Jewish religious thought. Not to mention a host of practical professional matters, including: public speaking, congregational management, psychology, and counseling techniques. The need was infinite; and although
we had a five-year program leading to ordination, the time seemed inadequate for the task.

One of the most difficult adjustments for me was that several of my teachers appeared not to be interested in discussing matters of religion; they themselves never talked about their personal religious experience or about God or spirituality or “the soul.” Rather, these men – and all of my teachers were men – were academic experts, overflowing with knowledge in their respective fields.

To take but one example: I had a teacher who insisted that we read the biblical narratives of King David from what amounted to a Marxist perspective. He analyzed the text using the mnemonic of PIE: P=Power; I=Ideology; E=Economics. David’s religion was to be understood not as his relationship to God but as an ideology that served to shape his complex balancing of competing political and economic interest groups. While I confess that I have found this teacher’s PIE chart helpful in figuring out the dynamics of certain synagogue power struggles, I prefer other approaches to the majesty and inspiration of our biblical texts.

Dr. Eugene Borowitz, a rabbi, stood in marked contrast to the majority of my teachers; he was deeply religious and was open to sharing his spiritual struggles with his students and the world at large through his public lectures, books, and numerous articles and reviews. I sat in Borowitz’s classroom during each of my five years at HUC-JIR. While he taught numerous subjects, he was most compelling when encouraging us students to develop language that would enable us to articulate our evolving relationship with God.

By the end of our five years together, Borowitz had greatly deepened my understanding of Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzeig, and Leo Baeck, to whom Rabbi Friedlander had introduced me during my Columbia years. In addition, Borowitz had us read widely in such other 20th-century luminaries of Jewish religious thought as Mordecai Kaplan, Emil Fackenheim, and Abraham Joshua Heschel. Although Borowitz was most influenced by Buber, he prodded us to discover for ourselves the strengths and the weakness of each of these thinkers. He wanted us to know why we believed what we believed.

Though almost 50 years have elapsed since I took my
last formal class with him, Borowitz has continued to serve as my teacher. Since my ordination, I have attended many of his public lectures – some addressed to his rabbinical colleagues, others to lay audiences – and have read the majority of his 17 books and a large number of his shorter pieces.

1987 was my thirteenth year as rabbi of Temple Habonim in Barrington, my bar mitzvah year with my synagogue family. To mark this occasion, I invited Rabbi Borowitz to speak at any Friday evening service that would fit into his schedule. On the chosen Shabbat, several members of Barrington’s Christian clergy attended our worship service; so Borowitz adapted his talk to fit the interfaith context. Though his address took place more than 30 years ago, I remember his opening words as if it were yesterday: “We liberal religionists want to believe in nothing…BUT…(long pause)…a Nothing that is Something.”

As a result of that opening gambit, Borowitz held all of us—clergy and laity alike – in the palm of his hand for the duration of his remarks. He first elaborated upon the reasons for our skepticism and our doubts leading us to believe in nothing: the darkness, the abject evil, the corruption in our world. BUT…then he encouraged us to search for some form of affirmation – that Something that transforms the Nothing from negative into positive; he urged us not to abandon our struggle to identify the goodness that lies at the core of our relationships with each other and with God – however we might experience God.

More than any other person, Rabbi Eugene Borowitz, in his ongoing explication of Martin Buber, has given me language to explain myself to myself, to articulate my religious journey as my “I” in search of “the Eternal Thou.” Even after his death in January 2016, a month before his 92nd birthday, he still stands by me as a guiding presence.

Like Rabbi Borowitz, Abraham Aaroni, my Hebrew teacher during my five years at HUC-JIR, has remained a living presence even after his death in 2005 at age 97. Though “Mr. Aaroni,” as we students called him, did not hold an earned doctorate, he was one of the most erudite and cultured individuals I have ever met; he spoke
and wrote English, Hebrew, Yiddish, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Russian, and Ukrainian. He possessed a staggering command of world literature in both its breadth and its depth. He was equally enthusiastic about the visual arts and was a frequent visitor to New York City’s outstanding museums.

I had the opportunity to work closely with Mr. Aaroni during my fifth and final year at HUC-JIR, for I chose him as my faculty advisor for my rabbinic thesis: “Hebrew Poetry in the United States: American Themes, including a selected anthology of English translations.” During our several months working together, he guided me in translating sixteen Hebrew poems in their entirety as well as an additional six sections from larger works. While Mr. Aaroni insisted upon my fidelity to the original Hebrew, he encouraged me to discover and develop my own poetic voice. Included among my translations were poems by Ephraim Lisitzky on Negro life in America’s South, Benjamin Nahum Silkiner on the decline of the American Indian, Israel Efros on California’s gold rush, and Abraham Zvi Halevy on the cruel realities of immigrant life in New York City. I included a substantial introduction (53 pages plus notes and references) to my anthology of translations.

Since my ordination in June 1971, Mr. Aaroni and I managed to keep in touch until his death. In addition to my occasional visits with him and his wife Celia in their Manhattan apartment, he would send me letters – always written in Hebrew script- which became harder and harder to decipher as he grew older and his script grew tinier and tinier. Along with “catch-up” news, he would often send me alternative Hebrew translations of well-known works in English: Shakespeare’s “To be or not to be” soliloquy in “Hamlet,” for example, or William Butler Yeats’s poem, “Sailing to Byzantium.” With each such enclosure, Mr. Aaroni would challenge me to tell him which translation I thought best and, more importantly, why? Early on I understood that these letters were my teacher’s way of encouraging me to keep on developing my skills as a translator, despite all of the demands upon me as a congregational rabbi and family man.

In the fall of 2002, Mr. Aaroni was already in his mid-nineties; nevertheless, when I was working on my revised translation of...
Chaim Nachman Bialik’s B’Ir ha-Haregah (“In the City of Slaughter”) for the summer 2003 issue of The CCAR Journal: A Reform Jewish Quarterly, I knew that Mr. Aaroni was precisely the man to review my final draft. While he was generous in his overall approval of my work, he did not hesitate to point out my two or three major misinterpretations of the Hebrew text.

In my retirement, I have gone back to one of the poets from whose work I had translated five poems for my rabbinic thesis, Abraham Zvi Halevy (1907-1966). Of all the poems I translated for my thesis, those of Halevy are by far the darkest; indeed, when Mr. Aaroni gave me a signed copy of Halevy’s only published book, Mitokh ha-Soogar (From Inside the Cage), he informed me that his friend had committed suicide. In addition to those five Halevy poems I translated back in 1970-1971, during my retirement I have translated the additional seven poems that appear in the section of his collection entitled “New York.” I have also translated all fifteen sonnets in the final section of his book, “Furnished Rooms.” The opening line of the first sonnet sets the stark and isolating tone of the entire sequence: “Door sealed shut, table, bed made-up.”

Upon completing my thesis, I had returned to Mr. Aaroni the pile of Hebrew poetry books he had lent me; but he insisted that I keep the Halevy book. I have often wondered why he made Halevy’s book a gift to me. Did he somehow foresee that despite its darkness—or, perhaps, because of the stark beauty of Halevy’s dark vision—that I would someday seek to translate Halevy’s vision into English. As I continue to wrestle with Halevy’s texts, I often feel as if Mr. Aaroni is at my side, urging me to continue the task. As Robert Lowell wrote to Randall Jarrell on October 24, 1957, “Darkness honestly lived through is a place of wonder and of life.”

On a Sunday afternoon, Christmas Eve, December 24, 1967, Sandra Gail Mattison and I became husband and wife. Unfortunately, I had the flu and a fever of 104 on our wedding day. While I did manage to remain vertical for the ceremony, my former college roommate drove me home immediately afterwards, leaving the new bride to fend for herself. Of course, we needed to cancel our honeymoon in Washington, D.C.
However, because Sandy was a teacher at Riverdale Country School and I was a student in my second year at HUC-JIR, we were able to spend the entire summer of 1968 on a looping cross-country trip, hiking in numerous national parks and visiting such cities as Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. I did the driving for all of the 10,400 miles we covered since Sandy, born and bred in the Bronx, had not yet learned how to drive.

**Student Rabbi**

Before we set out on our once-in-a-lifetime adventure, a faculty member at HUC-JIR informed me that I would be spending the next three years as the student rabbi of Temple Beth Or of the Deaf. At the time, it used space at two different Manhattan synagogues—one for the High Holy Days, the other for Friday evening services. The religious school of 50 or so students met in the old Educational Alliance building on New York's Lower East Side.

Even though I would have the services of a professional interpreter for the deaf for the first year, it was clear that I would have to learn American Sign Language; two members of the congregation had begun teaching me the basics during the spring. I needed quickly to develop the dexterity to form each letter of the alphabet with the fingers of my right hand; all proper names are spelled out, while many signs are accompanied with a fingered letter. For example, “religion” is the letter R touching the heart and then moving away from the body, palm facing out. Bottom line: I found myself practicing by finger spelling every road sign from New York to Los Angeles and back.

My experience with Beth Or gave Sandy and me a foretaste of some of the inevitable stresses that congregational life places upon a marriage. In addition to working through the usual adjustment issues in a young marriage, we were beginning to confront the fact that married clergy wind up living with three overlapping and often competing families: the nuclear family, the extended family of the congregation, and the congregational family in crisis. It is impossible for clergy to satisfy the needs of all three families at the same time; satisfying one of the three families means disappointing the other two.

During the time that I was serving Beth Or—from early fall
1968 through late spring 1971—the best way for people to keep in touch with me was still the telephone. Because regular telephones were of no use to the deaf, a couple of Beth Or members came to our Inwood apartment, on the northern tip of Manhattan, to install a clunky, bulky machine called a “TTY” next to the phone in our bedroom. The TTY is essentially a typewriter that connects through the telephone lines to the typewriters of other TTY owners. When the phone rang from a Beth Or member, I would hear the tell-tale tone in our receiver, connect it to our machine, and type out RABBI ROSENBERG ON GA (Go Ahead). My congregant and I would then proceed to “talk” to each other via our special TTY typewriters. Since my congregants could not hear a phone ring, their phone would light up for an incoming call. Suffice it to say, having the TTY, the size of a small oven, in our bedroom—the only place in our apartment that was logistically feasible—was not the ideal arrangement for our young marriage.

Even though Temple Beth Or was reasonably small—100 families or so—and also relatively young, I often found myself canceling plans to attend to a congregational emergency; there were an unusual number of deaths in the Beth Or family during the years I was its student rabbi. I vividly remember driving from our apartment to a morgue somewhere in Brooklyn to identify the body of a young husband and father; his wife, understandably, was too distraught to make the identification herself.

On another occasion, Sandy and I were in a hotel room in Ottawa, when the phone rang; the daughter of one of Beth Or’s leading members was calling to tell us that her mother had just died, and she wanted me to do the funeral in two days. We cut short our vacation and drove the hundreds of miles back to New York in order to meet my obligation. Minutes after I had officiated at the funeral, someone came over to my wife to complain about my signing. Sandy wept.

After Ordination

Just a few days after my ordination in Manhattan’s Central Synagogue, a moving van took our belongings to Brookline, Massa-
chusetts, where Sandy and I would live for three years while I served as one of two assistants to Rabbi Roland Gittelsohn at Boston’s prestigious Temple Israel. Though we could not know it at the time, we would spend the rest of our lives in New England; for after leaving Temple Israel, Sandy and I and our newborn daughter Karen moved to Barrington, where I served for 33 years as rabbi of Temple Habonim.

At Temple Israel, I soon learned that along with the title “Rabbi” comes the awesome responsibility of becoming a role model. In addition to the members of my immediate family, a number of individuals had served as my role models and helped shape the person I was becoming when I began my position there. In a very real sense, Dr. Herbert Hahn, Rabbi Albert Friedlander, Rabbi Eugene Borowitz, and Mr. Abraham Aaroni had passed the torch on to me; and in an equally real sense, these men are still standing alongside me.

As a newly ordained rabbi, it was my obligation to serve as a role model for others – not as Jim Rosenberg, not as Mr. Rosenberg, but as Rabbi Rosenberg. To be a role model is both a burden and an opportunity. A burden, because, like everybody else, I am a deeply flawed individual; I can hardly keep my own self together, let alone be an example for others. An opportunity, because perhaps the expectations that others place upon me can help me to transcend myself – to be a better person tomorrow than I am today.

To be a role model is a work in progress – a journey I began at my ordination, a journey on which I continue to this very day. I take great comfort in the words of Rabbi Tarfon: “You do not need to finish the task, but neither are you free to stop working on it.” (Pirke Avot 2.21)
Abby, Esther & Josh Elkin
at Liza’s bat mitzvah, Newton, MA,
2002
This article will serve as a reunion for many readers, for they will be able to reminisce about many dear friends, including Harry and Esther Elkin, their children, Abby and Josh, and Rabbi Joel Zaiman of Temple Emanu-El. This article further brings to mind the tale of a generational exodus from South Providence to the East Side and beyond.

Josh resurrects a debate regarding the merits of an Orthodox day school education 20 years before a Conservative alternative in Providence sprung into existence. Ironically or inevitably, the author became a regional and then a national leader in the Schechter Day School movement. Josh also portrays the importance of Jewish camps within Jewish education.

Although it was not his primary intention, the author sheds light on multiple career paths available to members of the rabbinate. Indeed, he shows how his own father, though devoted to Jewish scholarship, chose a career as an educator over one as a rabbi. And, when opportunities for Jewish women were meager, his mother spent her own remarkable career, spanning nearly seven decades, as a Jewish educator.

Yet, who recalls that Josh showed some promise as a runner? Or that he once considered a career in urban planning?

I welcome this opportunity to reflect on the role that Rhode Island, and especially Providence’s Jewish community, has played in my life and in my family’s. Our relationship with this community began in 1954, when I was five years old, and continues to this day. But first let me offer some relevant family history before the Providence era.

Family History

My Elkin and Novogrodsky grandparents (with both grandfathers named Isadore) were born during the latter part of the 19th
century in different parts of Belarus. As conditions for Jews began to seriously deteriorate at the turn of the century, my grandparents joined the masses who left for America. They arrived at Ellis Island somewhere between 1900 and 1904 and settled in New York City. My parents were born on the Lower East Side: Esther in 1910 and Harry in 1912. Both families were strictly Orthodox in their observance.

My parents were educated both generally and Judaically in very intensive environments. By the time they were in their late teens, they could boast that they were trilingual – Yiddish at home and Hebrew and English through their schooling. These three languages, with a special love for Hebrew, shaped the essence of my parents. In fact, my father courted my mother on hikes and on picnics by reading the Hebrew poetry of Shaul Tchernichovsky, whose literary creations were part of the modern revival of Hebrew.

How my parents met is very relevant in this context. In 1930 or 1931, each was invited separately to a good-bye party for a couple making aliya. After the party, there was a formal send-off, right in New York harbor, where their ship would sail for Palestine. Thus, Eretz Yisrael, Zionism, and Hebrew were all vitally important to Esther and Harry.

I have no doubt that the possibility of making aliya also crossed my parents’ minds. I suspect that they were deterred from considering it seriously because they had large families in New York. My father had eight siblings, and my mother had four. Each family had also suffered the loss of one child in infancy. It was difficult to conceive of such a vast separation, even if Harry and Esther needed some distance from their parents!

So instead of making aliya, my parents went to college: Mom to Hunter, which was the women’s campus of the City College system, and Dad to the main City College campus in Hamilton Heights. They considered these two public universities as unique gifts to them and to so many others. Both my parents studied diligently and made the most of their educational opportunities. With
degrees in hand coupled with intensive Judaic and Hebraic learning, they were ready to set forth into the broader world.

But they first wanted to get married. Their wedding took place on October 31, 1935 at the Esplanade Hotel in Manhattan. It was hastily pulled together after both my parents received job offers.

Three days later, Mom and Dad left the Lower East Side for Scranton, Pennsylvania. Each accepted teaching positions in the Hebrew school of Temple Israel, a Conservative congregation. Its rabbi, Max Arzt, already a distinguished religious leader, would become a professor and a vice chancellor at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in New York City.

The move to Scranton marked the beginning another very significant chapter in my family’s story. We can call it the “wandering” years, for my parents were itinerant Jewish educators and communal leaders for two decades. They moved from city-to-city in pursuit of better opportunities. Before their arrival in Providence in 1954, my parents had lived in five cities: Scranton, Trenton, Allentown (where my sister, Abby, was born in 1943), Philadelphia (where I was born in 1949), and Camden. Their average stay was just under four years in each city.

During these years, Dad was also able to earn a master’s degree at Teachers College, the graduate school of education at Columbia University. I believe that my father had considered the rabbinate, but instead chose to pursue doctoral studies in Jewish education at Dropsie College of Hebrew and Cognate Learning, which had been founded in 1907 in Philadelphia. He completed his degree in 1954.
with a dissertation chronicling the 300-year history of adult Jewish education in the United States. (In 1986 Dropsie became the Annenberg Research Center; in 1993 it merged with the University of Pennsylvania and, since 2008, has been known as the Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies.)

Our Family Home

What is most significant about Providence is that it remained our family home for 56 years (until my mother died in 2010 at the age of 100). While my father’s coronary in 1958 and his heart failure and death in 1964 certainly played a role in keeping the family in Providence, there were clearly other forces at work which contributed to this remarkable longevity in one city.

The story goes that after my father died and I graduated from Classical High School in 1966, my mother made plans to move back to New York to be closer to her siblings. Her considerable skills as a Hebrew and Judaica teacher were in high demand, so she found a teaching job easily at a synagogue in Tuckahoe, north of the city. It was close to family but still gave her some space.

However, a move was not to be. A bout with cancer completely upended her plans and made her realize that, after 12 years in Providence, this was her home. And so it remained for the rest of her life—43 years!

My mother’s deep friendships and sense of communal cohesion made a huge difference, but eventually she became a legend in her own lifetime. Over the decades she kept running into people who, having studied mostly conversational Hebrew with her, were always so excited to see her again. And though it has been eight years since she died, I still consider Providence and Rhode Island my home. Many of the forces that shaped my career choices and many of the things that I value most were found here.

My Jewish Education

Given that both my parents were Jewish educators and served as role models, it was not surprising that I might gravitate toward that field of work. My sister was not thinking so much about
this career choice, but she found substantial connections to Judaism through Israeli dancing, Jewish camps, a program at JTS, and her junior year in Israel. Then she fell in love with and married an Israeli, Yochai Richter, and made aliya. They have two children and six grandchildren and live on a moshav, Kfar Bilu, located near Rechovot and about a half hour from Tel Aviv.

I never felt any pressure from my parents to make my career in Jewish education, but the Rhode Island environment was very compelling. The Bureau of Jewish Education (founded in 1952) was surely pivotal, but it was not the only reason why my father and mother considered Providence such a viable choice. The existence of strong synagogue schools (especially at Temples Emanu-El and Beth-El) enabled my mother to find good teaching opportunities.

But what about the choices for my own Jewish education? Rhode Island’s only day school, Providence Hebrew Day, was located on the East Side. So, after living for three years on the second floor of a duplex at 172 Whitmarsh Street in South Providence, we moved in 1957 to 366 Morris Avenue. This was the first home my parents purchased, and we lived there for ten years.

The decision regarding my Jewish education, however, was
one of the more contentious that my parents faced. My mother was all pro-Day School, even though we identified with the Conservative movement. So it was unclear how well my family would fit into the Day School community. For my mother, it was the intensity of education that mattered, so the Day School was far superior to other options. She felt that a synagogue school might work, provided that there was supplemental education at home. Whatever that meant!

My father, however, was adamantly opposed to the Day School option, specifically because of its Orthodox environment. Having grown up in a brutally authoritarian household, where religious practices were ruthlessly enforced, he had a dramatically negative Jewish experience. Thus, my father advocated for Temple Emanu-El’s religious school, which was then a six-hour, three-days-a-week program.

My parents were not big arguers, so there was an imperative to strike some kind of a compromise. My mother gave into my father’s wishes with the proviso that everything would get reevaluated after a few years of synagogue-based schooling.

Suffice it to say that, after three years in Emanu-El’s school, from 1957 through 1959, my mom won out—sort of. My dad would still not budge on the Day School option, so a new alternative was created. This was Jewish homeschooling!

Mom taught me Hebrew privately for three full years, from 1960 through 1962. We worked together four nights a week in the kitchen for an hour after dinner. It was quite intensive, and there were many evenings when I resented this experience and deliberately disappeared. I hoped that somehow she would magically forget.

Less intensive sessions were held on Sunday mornings with my father. His focus was on Israel and Jewish history. Thankfully, he would often miss these sessions because of his commitments at various schools.

My mother seldom missed a session. After three years, my Hebrew proficiency matched the Day School’s kids. In fact, starting in ninth grade, I was in their same classes in Hebrew at the Midrasha, the community Hebrew high school, which had been founded by my father as a Bureau program. It was the only high school option avail-
able. The school met one afternoon a week and on Sunday for a total of five hours per week.

One of the teachers in the community high school happened to be my mother. So it was truly a family affair, which gave me additional grounding in Hebrew language, Jewish history, and Judaic texts.

In 1981, 17 years after my father’s death, the Hebrew high program was renamed the Harry Elkin Midrasha. Thanks are due to Dr. Aaron Soviv, one of my father’s successors at the BJE, who made the suggestion. While cleaning out some files, he had discovered that my father had started the Midrasha.

**Temple Emanu-El**

Our move in 1957 from Temple Beth Israel to Temple Emanu-El proved to be powerful and decisive, for it provided me a setting where I could continue to grow Jewishly but also be nurtured by forces beyond my family. Though Emanu-El’s religious school did not prove to be successful from the point of view of how much I was learning, there were many other aspects of Temple life that were critical to my development. For example, Junior Congregation was held every Shabbat and emphasized Hazanut and Torah reading. Friday night services featured a choir, which led to my interest in Jewish choral music.

The most significant impact came through the youth group experience, which was very much part of my life from elementary grades through high school. In addition to learning High Holiday Torah readings with the proper melodies, I participated in Shabbat morning services, which were led by youth. They provided opportunities to write and deliver sermons, which, most likely, contributed strongly to my evolving interest in pursuing a career in the rabbinate.

I must mention the special role played by Rabbi Joel Zaiman, who was Rabbi Eli Bohnen’s assistant at Emanu-El during my early high school years. He had arrived in Providence in 1962, immediately following his ordination at JTS. Rabbi Zaiman took his responsibility for working with youth very seriously. Thus, during my freshman year at Classical, while I was serving as president of the
Temple’s chapter of United Synagogue Youth (USY), he called me every day at exactly the same time – as I was arriving home from school – to ask about the status of each and every project. He had to make certain that nothing in the planning fell through the cracks. I could set my clock according to when he called – his timing was so punctilious. Although I found his calls somewhat intrusive and intimidating, Rabbi Zaiman was showing me how to achieve levels of excellence. In so doing, he demonstrated an effective and inspiring leadership role. By getting results, I learned how to advance the quality of informal educational programming. I had many occasions to use and hone those skills.

Beginning in elementary school, I prided myself in being a very fast runner. As part of my identity, this trait was likely first developed on Whitmarsh Street, when I tried to escape one or two neighborhood bullies. If I could not be tall and strong, at least I could be fast.

This interest in running led me to think about joining Classical High’s track team. However, all of the meets were held on Shabbat; so my parents refused to let me participate because I would have to ride back and forth. Although a big disappointment to me, their decision gave me more time to be active in my synagogue and to focus on my leadership roles. These grew to include regional leadership in USY.

One rather unexpected development during high school was my friendship with Frank Kennedy, whom I met in Classical’s a cappella choir. He was a tenor, I a bass. He was an observant Catholic, I an observant Jew. He lived in North Smithfield, I in Providence. He was tall and heavyset, I short and thin. I guess it proves that opposites attract!

Frank went on to become a Jesuit, I a rabbi. In fact, one of our English teachers, Susan Adler Kaplan, a lifelong member of Temple Beth-El, predicted that we would both become clergy. To this day, she is very proud of her accurate prophecy.
My Father’s Death

My leadership of USY was suddenly interrupted in April 1964, during my sophomore year, when my father’s heart stopped. Yet, it was very reassuring to feel how the Jewish community rallied around our family and made sure that we had what we needed. This would include a college tuition fund for me. Abby had already studied at Rhode Island College for a year before transferring to a joint program at JTS and Columbia.

There was some difference of opinion, however, about whether I should attend Emanu-El’s morning minyan, at 7 AM, on a daily basis. At least one of the rabbis was forceful on the topic, but my mother prevailed through her interpretation of what my father would have wanted me to do. My responsibilities at Classical and at USY were more important than trying to get to the minyan at the crack of dawn. So I focused on saying Kaddish over the weekends, when my overall schedule was a bit more forgiving.

Losing my father so suddenly, at the age of 15, was a huge
blow. My approach for handling the loss was to immerse myself in work and to keep busy. During the next seven years, I actually became academically interested in death, dying, and bereavement. I wrote and spoke on the topic numerous times, and I later wrote my dissertation on the challenge of teaching adolescents and young adults about death and related topics. It took a full 15 years for me to refocus on getting in touch with my emotions of anger and intense loss and to stop intellectualizing.

Camps
I had my first experience with a Jewish summer camp, JORI, in 1957, when my parents participated in a mission to Israel for Jewish educators. This fun camp experience, which lasted nine weeks, was followed a few summers later, in 1962 and 1963, with Camp Yavneh in Northwood, New Hampshire. Although operated by Brookline’s Hebrew College, it catered to many kids from Rhode Island.

My experiences at Yavneh prepared me for 10 years of staff participation and leadership, from 1965 through 1974, at four camps – all named Ramah – affiliated with the Conservative movement. These were located in Nyack, New York; the Poconos, Pennsylvania; Palmer, Massachusetts; and Berkshires, New York. I rose to be a division head and an advisor.

These positive experiences with Jewish camps led me to dabble with the possibility that I might become a Jewish camp director. However, yearlong opportunities for Jewish educational work would win out in the end.

College
Columbia was my first choice for college. (I also applied to NYU as a safety school.) I had grown familiar with New York City through numerous visits with my grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. The fact that my parents had also grown up there was also a factor. In addition, I had spent the summer after my father’s death in New York to be close to my sister and to study Bible and Hebrew intensively for six weeks at JTS. After my sophomore year at Classical, I
returned to JTS for summer studies. So the Upper West Side became quite familiar to me.

Columbia also had a very strong sociology department. Alan Silver became one of my favorite professors.

Even while carrying a full course load at Columbia, I took at least one Judaic studies class at JTS each semester. Being at JTS for Shabbat and holidays also became my equivalent of Hillel. Unfortunately, Columbia’s Hillel was weak during these years.

During my junior year I studied at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Afterward, I recall coming home to Providence and informing my mother that I was no longer considering a career in urban planning. Living in Israel had led me to the decision to work in the Jewish community, where I was more likely needed. But I had not yet decided what part of the Jewish community.

Rabbinical School and Doctoral Studies

It cannot be surprising— to myself or others— that I enrolled in rabbinical school and emphasized Jewish education. Having a father who took Jewish education so seriously, who was part of a national cadre of leading Jewish educators, and who completed doctoral studies exerted a profound influence on me. That influence only grew once he was gone.

If my father was the role model of Jewish educational leadership on an institutional level, then my mother was the role model of the power of high-quality teaching, especially of Hebrew language on multiple levels. I was inspired by her powerful presence at home, in the classroom, and beyond. Her love of Hebrew definitely rubbed off on me and led me down the road of fluency and comfort with the language. There is no question that my decision in favor of leading an institution devoted to Hebraic learning flowed from her example.

My decisions about rabbinical school and Jewish education were influenced by factors beyond my parents, however. A reexamination of these complementary fields was gaining strength before I graduated from college. Despite positive role models provided by Joel Zaiman and Eli Bohnen at Temple Emanu-El, however, I was
worried that a pulpit rabbinate would be exhausting. It would not provide enough personal time for my family or myself. But rabbincal studies did appeal to me because their wide range of required courses resembled a liberal arts education in Judaica.

Proceeding to rabbinical school directly from college was also certainly a benefit because it assured a draft deferment. But my decision to become a rabbi had been percolating for some time before draft issues were front and center.

My decision to enroll at JTS emanated from my upbringing and from my prior learning experiences there. I felt like I was a product of the Conservative movement; the thought of attending the Reform movement’s Hebrew Union College never crossed my mind.

The proximity of Columbia Teachers College – literally across the street – was also decisive in my selection of JTS. Thus, I decided to pursue a doctorate in curriculum and teaching at TC while studying at JTS.

It may have been somewhat ironic that I became interested in the history of Jewish day school education in America – how non-Orthodox options were beginning to proliferate – while studying at TC. As a new field was emerging, I had the good fortune to be able to study and learn about it. In fact, I almost wrote my dissertation on the evolving history of day schools and their impact on the existing synagogue school network.

While studying at JTS and TC, I also somehow managed to teach part-time in supplementary high school programs on Long Island and in New Jersey. These programs further convinced me that I wanted to work in organizations that were more intensive. In fact, I was inspired by what was possible in a day school setting. I do regret the absence of a non-Orthodox day school during my youth in Providence. This meant that I had a lot of catching up to do. But I also felt called upon to be part of changing the face of day school education across the country.

Following my ordination in 1975 and the completion of my doctoral course work, I led the religious school of Temple Emunah in Lexington, Massachusetts. It provided a setting to try out my leadership skills and time to complete my dissertation.
While attending a conference on Jewish education, I met Judy, my future wife. It was love at first sight! Although she lived in Los Angeles and I was living in Boston, we managed to get together and then settled in Newton. For a good part of my life, I had enjoyed a love affair with Sephardic Judaism. So the fact that she grew up in Seattle, as part of the Sephardic community from Turkey and Rhodes, also seemed beshert (preordained). Judy and I have continued to share a deep interest in Jewish education and learning. Together we have raised three children, all of whom attended a Jewish day school, and two of whom attended Jewish camps.

In 1978, having completed my dissertation, I was selected to be head of the Solomon Schechter Day School of Greater Boston, located in Newton. This was my dream job! I remained 20 years. I have spent the past 21 years advancing Jewish education on a national level: 14 years as executive director of the Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education and the last seven years as a coach and mentor for day school leaders across the country.

I carry with me my formative years in Providence and the profound impact they had on me. I especially cherish the many memories I have of my dear parents and their powerful influence on me. By serving as gentle yet clear role models, they also allowed me to incorporate many other influences. I feel honored that I have been called upon to follow in their footsteps.
First graduating class, June, 1987:
front row, (l to r): Lynn Singband, Dorie Fain,
Rachel Alexander; top row: Elie Kaunfer,
Saul Metnick, Ari Newman, Daniel Stein
There’s a New Jewish School in Town”: The Origins of Rhode Island’s Conservative Day School

Alvan Kaunfer

The author has played at least three major roles in our community: as a rabbi of Temple Emanu-El (in two eras) and as a founder and a director of the Conservative Day School of Rhode Island. It may appear in retrospect that, sooner or later, an alternative to Providence Hebrew Day School would have eventually been established. But in the following article Rabbi Kaunfer explains that such a development was far from certain; it required efforts by many leaders and the resolution of several important issues. No less important were several young families eager to embark on such an educational adventure and other families willing to provide philosophical and financial support.

Throughout his discussion of the Conservative Day School’s early years, Rabbi Kaunfer downplays his own skills and insights (and perhaps those of Marcia, his wife and colleague). But he is also generous in giving credit to many others who contributed to the school’s remarkable success. Once again, employing his typical modesty, Rabbi Kaunfer mentions how many of the Conservative Day School’s former students and graduates have also become his colleagues: professionals within the world of Jewish communal leadership. Or, fellow dreamers, idealists, and activists!

It’s hard to believe that what is currently known as the Jewish Community Day School of Rhode Island began forty years ago, in 1978, with only ten students. It was then the Conservative Day School of Rhode Island. In many ways this new and somewhat daring project is worth revisiting now. As one of the founders and its first director, I want to present a sense of how the school came to be, what were some of its early challenges, and some reflections on communal dynamics, all of which may be instructive even today.

Kaunfer
Spring, 1978

Rhode Island’s first Jewish day school, Providence Hebrew Day School (PHDS), was founded in 1946 under Orthodox auspices and opened its doors the following year to 93 students in nursery school through eighth grade. But it also received support from non-Orthodox Jews, including Rabbi William Braude of Temple Beth-El and Rabbi Eli Bohnen of Temple Emanu-El, who sent their sons there. So one might ask, why would anyone want to start a different Jewish day school in Rhode Island?

There was the perception during the 1970s among many non-Orthodox families, including some who sent their children to PHDS or were staff members, that the school was “moving to the right” religiously. Though PHDS was always, by its bylaws, an Orthodox school, it had been led in earlier years by Hebraist principals, its Judaic faculty included a wide range of teachers with various backgrounds (from Orthodox to secular), and its student body was composed of a number of non-Orthodox students.

In many ways, the impetus for a new Conservative day school began at the PHDS open house held in the spring of 1978. A number of prospective parents affiliated with Temple Emanu-El attended, among them Ada Beth Cutler, Sheila Alexander, Marcia Kaunfer, and Penney Stein. Although none of these parents had attended Jewish day schools, they were seriously considering sending their first-born children to the school in the fall. However, the impression that they received at the meeting was that this was not the type of day school they wanted for their children and that it had indeed “moved to the right.” Some of their concerns were the religious role of girls (e.g. reading Torah), and an “openness” to religious questioning.

Each of these families had recently come to Providence from such cities as Minneapolis and Washington, D.C., which had, in addition to Orthodox day schools, a Solomon Schechter Day School founded under the auspices of the Conservative movement. The first Conservative day school, Beth El in Rockaway Park, Queens, had been established in 1951. The first in New England had been greater Boston’s Schechter School, established in Newton in 1961.
The 1970s and ’80s also saw a burgeoning of non-Orthodox day schools in America. This growth was due to many reasons, including: concerns about intermarriage, disillusionment with the quality of Jewish education in afternoon religious schools, and a sense of Jews feeling more comfortable in America. There were also concerns about the declining quality of public schools, especially in urban areas.

Having grown up in Brookline, Massachusetts, I attended its public schools and an afternoon Conservative Hebrew school at Congregation Kehillath Israel. I earned a bachelor’s degree in Jewish education at Hebrew Teachers’ College in Boston in 1968, and the following year I completed my bachelor’s in sociology at Brandeis. Marcia and I were married in 1969. In 1973 I was ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary and completed a master’s in curriculum at nearby Teachers College of Columbia University. My career goal was to work in Jewish education rather than in the pulpit rabbinate.

Before Marcia and I moved to Providence in 1975, I had served for two years as the Jewish studies coordinator at the Conservative/ Schechter day school in Toronto, which enrolled 500 students. (Toronto had a range of day schools: from Reform and secular Zionist to Orthodox.)

So, after attending the open-house at PHDS in the spring of 1978, our little group of parents, with soon-to-be kindergarteners, asked what we thought then was a simple question: “Why not have another choice in a day school here?” Of course, that turned out to be not such a simple question, but for parents in their early thirties, who had lived through the school “revolutions” of the turbulent ’60s, opening a new school seemed like a logical move.

**Professionals and Lay Leaders**

One reason we thought we could “pull this off” was my own experience in a Schechter School and Ada Beth Cutler’s as a first grade teacher in New York City public schools. But now, in addition to professional experience, we needed some political support. As associate rabbi of Temple Emanu-El, I headed both its religious
school and its Midrasha high school. (The Harry Elkin Midrasha was not yet an independent program run by the Bureau of Jewish Education). Joel Zaiman, the Temple's senior rabbi since 1973, had wanted to open a Conservative day school. He had chaired the national Conservative movement’s United Synagogue Education Commission. Additionally, he was committed to finding a way to open a Conservative day school that was different from PHDS, where he had sent his own children. Rabbi Zaiman also had a key layperson as an ally. This was Sanford Kroll, a leading businessman and Jewish communal leader, who wanted for many years to see the opening of a Conservative Schechter school in town.

Rabbi Zaiman and Sanford had been lacking one crucial element in their efforts, however. This was a group of parents willing to send their children to a start-up school. So the time now seemed right to give their vision new energy.

A core group of parents, including Sheila Alexander and I, met with a number of key leaders from the Conservative com-
munity who were also current or past leaders of the PHDS board. These included Edward Aronson and Arthur Robbins (both Emanu-El members). We initially encountered a lot of opposition, which included some of the following questions and comments. “Why do we need a second school?” “Why not get on the PHDS board and try to change the current school?” “This community cannot support two schools.” “This project may seem inexpensive now, but it will require $1 million down the road.” In hindsight, those were quite justifiable questions.

Other critiques came from some parents who had previously sent their children to PHDS and were also current teachers there. Needless to say, there were segments within the Orthodox community who were also worried that a new school might compete with PHDS and diminish its support.

**Recruitment and Location**

The next steps were organization and recruitment. Here it was, almost Passover, and we were bold enough to think that we could have a school up and running by September. After Ada Beth and I met, we put together an outline of a kindergarten and first grade program, in both general and Judaic studies, in a relatively short time. Using these documents, we also planned a number of parlor meetings to introduce the new school. In our presentations of how the school would be different from PHDS, other than through denominational labels, we tried to emphasize an “open-ended approach” to studying Bible and religious texts, equal participation of boys and girls in prayer services, as well as an emphasis on modern spoken Hebrew.

Our first parlor meetings were modestly attended, not only by our core group, but also by a number of other interested parents who had children entering either kindergarten or first grade. It became clear after a number of recruitment meetings that we had did not have enough students to open both a kindergarten and a first grade simultaneously. However, our ultimate goal was to add a grade each year and build a full elementary day school (through eighth grade).
We had the wisdom of at least one other couple, Bob and Toby Fain, who had sent their older child to PHDS and whose younger child would be entering kindergarten. They gave us a lot of support and most of all a sense of perspective in terms of our ability to make our project successful.

The next challenge was finding a home for the school. The obvious location, at least temporarily, was Temple Emanu-El. As principal of its religious school, I would have easy access to direct this new school project. In addition, classrooms were available during the day because religious school met only after 4 P.M. and on Sunday mornings.

Nevertheless, the proposal to use even one classroom had to be approved by Temple Emanu-El’s board. That proved to be more of a challenge than we expected. Although we had the support of Rabbi Zaiman, and a number of lay people, we also had the opposition of a number of board members, who were associated with PHDS as former parents or current staff. Although the opponents may have supported the idea of a Conservative day school in principle, they believed that a “competing school” would be deleterious to the community. Thus, there was a long and contentious discussion at a board meeting in late spring of 1978.

As I recall, the clinching argument revolved around PHDS. When it was constructing its new building for 350 students on Elm-grove Avenue, which would be dedicated in 1962, it had used some small classrooms above Temple Emanu-El’s meetinghouse. (In 1959, when installing fire safety protection at its previous Waterman Street home, PHDS had also been allowed to use classrooms at Beth-El.) Thus, the argument was that, if we could lend our classrooms to PHDS, we should be equally accommodating to a nascent Conservative day school. The vote in favor of using one classroom carried the day.

Next Steps

The leaders of the new Conservative day school, wanting to be independent, made a strategic decision to establish their own board rather than be governed by Emanu-El’s. This was somewhat
controversial, and Max Alperin, a key Temple and Federation leader, among other supporters, would have preferred that the school remain officially under the Temple’s auspices. However, Rabbi Zaiman and Sanford Kroll ultimately supported our suggestion that the school would be better off having its own independent board. So the new board rented space from Emanu-El, initially at a nominal one dollar per year. Sanford became the school board’s first president, and he chose a number of close friends and communal leaders to be on that board, including Charlie Samdperil, Benton Odessa, and Louis Kramer.

We still had a lot of work to do over the summer. We had to bring the building up to Rhode Island’s school code, which had stricter fire laws than for a religious school. We also had to incorporate as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Dan Kaplan, a lawyer whose oldest child would enter the second class, was dedicated to the project, and he prepared all of the legal documents pro bono. Furthermore, we had to buy equipment for a kindergarten class.

One of the great advantages of beginning a new Conservative day school, even one not intending to affiliate with the Solomon Schechter School Association, was a grant of $5,000 from the Schechter Association. These funds allowed us to purchase initial kindergarten blocks and supplies. In addition, a number of volunteers created and painted some makeshift shelves out of pressed-wood boxes that were donated by Sol Resnik, who owned a trophy company.

With all those preparations, the Conservative Jewish Day School of Rhode Island, with 10 kindergarten students, opened in September 1978, just five months after the project was first conceived! The classroom teacher was Ada Beth Cutler, with Janet Miller as her aide, and I served as the “volunteer” director. In that first class, we had five “core” families and five others who saw the new school as something different than a Jewish day school. Some of these more “marginal” families, who were less committed to a Jewish day school project, saw this new school as an opportunity for an open-style, parent-involved school. This led to an unfortunate, but perhaps inevitable, issue within the first few months of school.
A Contentious Issue

A few parents not part of the core group suggested that we admit a gentile child whose family was nevertheless willing to accept Hebrew and Judaic studies. Had we been a member of the Schechter Association, there would have been a simple solution. Its bylaws required all students to be Jewish by the definition of the Conservative movement (children born of a Jewish mother or converted to Judaism in a manner acceptable to the Conservative movement). Our school’s core founding parents, as well as Rabbi Zaiman, Sanford Kroll, and others, including myself, supported the Schechter Association standard of admitting only Jewish students.

The counterargument made by the other group of parents was that the Jewish Community Center’s nursery school, which some of their children had attended, admitted all students, regardless of religious background, as long as they were willing to accept the Judaic part of the curriculum. The dissenting parents also argued that to exclude a student strictly on the basis of religion was a matter of discrimination.

Our argument was that a Jewish day school education was more intensive than a nursery school education, which had very little Judaic content other than Shabbat and holiday celebrations. Further, a private Jewish day school had the right to restrict its enrollment to Jewish students.

Sanford Kroll appointed Louis Kramer, a former public school administrator, to develop an admissions policy, which then came to the board. The dissenting group of parents also came in force to that board meeting and presented their position paper. However, the board accepted Kramer’s recommendation, which was to admit only Jewish students, and shortly afterwards the school affiliated with the Solomon Schechter Association. Consequently, at the end of the first year, some of the dissenting parents withdrew their children and left the school.

Recognition

During that first year, it was important for us to be seen as “legitimate” in the wider Jewish community. One of the impor-
tant steps in that process was the publication of a story, “There's a New Jewish School in Town,” which was written by Roberta Botvin Landman, a freelancer, and appeared in the magazine section of The Providence Sunday Journal on June 3, 1979. That article, along with its captivating photographs, created a buzz, and the school began to be recognized outside of a narrow segment of the Jewish community.

Small symbolic acts also became important to us. For example, during a snowstorm, we were excited to hear on the radio a “no-school” announcement by a famous radio personality. Salty Brine proclaimed: “...and here’s one for you, the Solomon Schech-
ter School!” At the time, that was so exciting, that we had to tape it and continually play it for ourselves as if to prove that we were now recognized in the wider community as a “real” school.

**Early Milestones**

The relationship between the new Solomon Schechter School and PHDS greatly improved when Rabbi Sholom Strajcher became its head in 1980. I recall that he reached out to me with no
“baggage,” and I remember our pleasant walk in the neighborhood, which forged a positive, long-lasting working relationship.

Another milestone was when I stopped being the “volunteer” director of the Solomon Schechter Day School. After the first year, Ada Beth Cutler became principal, running its day-to-day operations. For the next several years, I was its titular head, consulting regularly with Ada Beth, but continuing in my full-time job at Emanu-El.

When the school was up to its fourth grade, the Temple’s vice presidents came to me and said simply: “Rabbi Kaunfer, either you are here, or you are there.” They were a hundred percent correct, and the next year, after serving as a volunteer director for five years, I became the full-time, paid director of the Solomon Schechter Day School. I stepped down from my position as a rabbi at Temple Emanu-El.

Another major step in the school’s growth was the campaign to build an addition to Emanu-El’s school building. Thanks to the efforts of the Alperin-Hirsch family, especially Max and Mel Alperin, we were able to raise over a million dollars to construct an addition that opened in 1986. In honor of this family’s efforts, the school changed its name to the Alperin Schechter Day School. The family was gracious in allowing us to retain the Schechter name so that it would continue to be associated with the network of Conservative day schools.

Another important milestone, in 1987, was the graduation of that very first kindergarten class from eighth grade. Five of the original students, Rachel Alexander, Dorie Fain, Elie Kaunfer, Saul Metnick, and Daniel Stein, were still in this class of seven, which also included Ari Newman and Lynn Singband. Most of these graduates continued at Classical High School.

There were numerous other milestones and changes for Alperin Schechter during the
following decades, many of which involved some of its founders. For example, Penney Stein became director of admissions and later served as head of school. In 1989, I completed my doctorate in Hebrew literature at JTS with a dissertation about teaching Midrash in Conservative day schools. Two years later, after having served as the school’s director for 13 years, I decided to return to Temple Emanuel as a rabbi. Nevertheless, Marcia continued teaching Judaic studies and remained at Alperin Schechter for over 25 years. In time, Sheila Alexander and Dan Kaplan became presidents of the school.

In 2006, the transformation of the school from a Conservative Jewish day school to the Jewish Community Day School of Rhode Island was a major process, one which I chaired. However, that school transformation and several others should be examined in a separate article.

**Planting Seeds**

Although the idea of creating a Conservative Jewish day school in Rhode Island began quite unexpectedly and required overcoming several challenges and obstacles, it gradually gained students, strength, and stature. The school eventually became one of the noted independent schools in Rhode Island. However, more significantly, it provided an option in the Jewish community for a non-Orthodox, intensive Jewish education.

In many ways, the school that became the Jewish Community Day School of Rhode Island has been far more successful than most its founders ever imagined. For example, several former students and graduates, with various Jewish denominational backgrounds, have devoted their careers to Jewish communal leadership.* A few former students have also made aliyah. No doubt many other former students and graduates have become important lay leaders in Rhode Island, elsewhere in New England or far beyond. Certainly, an even larger number have drawn on their rich Jewish and Hebrew backgrounds in their later adult lives. Without question, a study of former students and graduates would be a worthwhile research project.

I would like to think that our initial adventure, made possi-
by so many dedicated lay people and professionals, was successful by planting seeds that have borne fruit or blossomed in many ways. Our day school was founded with hope and optimism, and I believe that our students, their families, and our community have been and will be blessed in many unknowable ways.

*A partial list of these leaders, based on the limited availability of information, would include (in chronological order) four rabbis: Elie Kaunfer, Ami Hersh, Josh Beraha, and Susan Landau. Additionally, Jeremy Stein is a cantor, and Oren Kaunfer is a spiritual educator in a Jewish day school. Ben Rotenberg is a Jewish educator, and Shoshana Miller Jacob is a family and youth educator at Temple Emanu-El. Rachel Alexander Levy and Martha Goodwin Zaentz became Jewish Federation professionals.

Invitation for 10th anniversary party
Ordination with Rabbi Aaron Panken,
Temple Emanu-El, New York City, 2015
My Little Anatevka

Susan Landau

How wonderful to publish an article by a graduate of what began, in 1978, as the Conservative Day School of Rhode Island. Whether a direct or an indirect protégé, Rabbi Landau has become Rabbi Kaunfer’s colleague as well as Rabbi Franklin’s. What an honor for these religious leaders as well as their home, Temple Emanu-El.

In future issues of our journal, I would like to invite other graduates – clergy and laypeople – of Rhode Island’s Jewish day schools and public schools to reflect on their spiritual journeys. Indeed, Prof. Joel Gereboff, a graduate of Providence Hebrew Day, did so in our last issue. He referred to his upbringing when paying tribute to his Brown University mentor, Prof. Jacob Neusner.

I consider it an authentic expression of personal meaning and intellectual acumen when individuals, having grown up within one Jewish denomination, find a new home within another (or teach students regardless of their denominational affiliations). Unfortunately, I am also aware that many Jews, thinking theirs is the true Judaism, reject such an inclusive interpretation. Yet, three of the five rabbis profiled in this year’s issue of our journal moved from one denomination to another, as had Prof. Neusner.

Rabbi Landau’s essay also suggests that an article about Rhode Islanders’ connections with Brandeis, a nonsectarian but Jewish-sponsored university, is long overdue. Not only has our state produced a steady stream of students, but it can be proud of many friends and benefactors. A few Brandeis professors and many alumni have also made their homes here. Two of the most obvious are rabbis, Alvan Kaunfer and Sarah Mack of Temple Beth-El.

Until recently, I had been serving for three years as assistant rabbi of Temple Micah, a Reform congregation in Washington, D.C. My biographical sketch on the Temple’s website noted that I was born and raised in Providence, which I characterized as “my little
Anatevka.” I felt proud to have thought up such a clever and succinct way to convey the warmth, intimacy, and thick web of cultural connections that characterized my childhood on the East Side.

Anyone familiar with “Fiddler on the Roof” understands the Jewish bubble in which I grew up. Nevertheless, one of my former congregants tragically misunderstood my allusion and feared that I had fled modern pogroms before landing in Washington.

My close colleague, the associate rabbi and director of congregational learning at Temple Micah, was Josh Beraha, who also grew up in our beloved Jewish community in Providence. We share the same points of reference, the same origin story. And though we took different paths to the rabbinate in general and to Temple Micah in particular, we both see clearly the ways in which Providence was formative for us.

“Divine Providence”

In 2015, when I was installed at Micah, I chose a beloved friend, mentor, and Jewish communal professional, Minna Ellison, to speak that evening. Formerly director of the Rhode Island Federation’s Bureau of Jewish Education, she became the Jewish Alliance’s senior vice president for planning. Not only does Minna know me and the Providence Jewish community so well, but she helped me become the rabbi I am.

Her talk that fall evening, entitled “Divine Providence,” was most apt because it worked on so many levels. Is there a better explanation for the fact that two Providence natives, both graduates of the former Alperin Schechter Day School and nearly classmates at the New York campus of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, should end up working together at the same Washington congregation? Or is it also merely a coincidence that Daniel G. Zemel, Temple Micah’s senior rabbi, is also a Brown graduate?

When I counsel couples about to be married, the topic of parenthood naturally arises. I ask them to reflect on aspects of their own childhoods that they hope to replicate – or avoid. If I were to undergo this exercise myself, I would look back on my own upbringing and coming of age in Providence. I can honestly say that there is
so much more that I wish to replicate than hope to avoid.

“Magic of Our Childhoods”

One afternoon, my mentor, Rabbi Zemel, wisely summarized what I have felt for years. In a conversation that also included Rabbi Beraha, he explained, “We spend our adult lives trying to recreate the magic of our childhoods.”

Yes, we came from the same world: his Chicago of the 1960s and ‘70s and my Providence of the 1980s and ‘90s. This world included melodies buried deep in our memories (and our souls?), casual kibbitzing during services, and lingering feelings of nostalgia. All three of us came from places where Judaism was both lived and real.

Rabbi Zemel added, “My life has been a search for a place where I feel as connected, comfortable, accepted, and valued as I remember feeling growing up at Anshe Emet Synagogue and its Day School.” Of course. I cannot get this notion out of my head, and I think that the same is true for Rabbi Beraha.

Yet, Rabbi Zemel’s wise words may also be bittersweet. By becoming adults, we must inevitably leave much of our childhoods behind. Like both my beloved former Micah colleagues, I too have taken some steps away from the world of my childhood. But these steps have not weakened or compromised an indelible imprint on my Jewish soul.

ASDS

The institution in Rhode Island that best taught me the meaning of community was the former Alperin Schechter Day School, which I entered in kindergarten. Even after changing its name to the Jewish Community Day School of Rhode Island and severing its affiliation with the Conservative movement, I believe that the school’s soul and mission are the same. It can be illustrated with a simple story, which happened toward the end of 1994.

So take note, public relations team of the JCDSRI. If my story is not already part of your publications and testimonials, feel free to use it now!
As a first grader, I was already completely mesmerized by
the all-school sing-along concert, known as the Zimriyah. But when
hospitalized for an infection, I was forced to miss a week of school. I
felt devastated because I would miss the Zimriyah. The way the com-
munity came together in song had already worked its magic on me,
and soon my family would be swept up in it, too.

But on the night of the concert, a nurse washed and braided
my hair and wheeled me out of my room for the first time in what
felt like forever. When I arrived in the lobby with my family and my
intravenous equipment, I saw that the Zimriyah had come to me.

After the concert had ended, several students and their
families (carrying an electronic keyboard and a giant teddy bear)
made their way to the hospital, and I enjoyed my very own encore
performance. It may be hard to convey what a profound impact a
gesture like this can have on the trajectory of one’s life, but that day
I learned what it means to be part of a community. And when I was
a little older and understood that the orchestration of the whole
performance was largely due to Dr. Nathan Beraha (Josh’s father,
a fellow Emanu-El member, a neighbor, and then president of the
ASDS board), I learned what it means to love someone who is not
your relative. This is what Jews do for each other – even for one
small, sick child.

Thus, ASDS taught me not only what I needed to know,
but who I needed to be. There was a richness and an authenticity to
the Judaism that I absorbed from my teachers within the building’s
walls. I developed a sense of ownership of my Jewish identity that
many adults never attain.

In kindergarten, I had learned to emulate the first Jews’
radical sense of hospitality. I also learned that I have a homeland on
the other side of the world, where I would always be welcome. By
third grade, I learned to chant Torah. By fourth grade, I had not only
acquired the rudimentary skills of translating Torah, but could begin
to understand its narrative. In middle school, my bat mitzvah had
meaning because I had the skills to teach Torah and I could begin to
apply lessons to my own life. Where else but a day school can a child
be steeped in such lived Judaism?
But it would be misleading to give too much credit for my nurturing to just one institution. Although the eleven other graduates of my eighth-grade Schechter class had the same teachers, the same friends, the same Zimriyah and b’nai mitzvah experiences, I would wager that only half still consider Judaism to be a major facet of their adult identities. If I’m being honest, I knew even then that this golden-hued Gan Eden I am painting for you – that the day school approach – does not work for everyone. And after all, not everyone is destined to become a rabbi!

Some students will always rebel when faith is forced or prayer is required. Many children are simply unimpressed by the realm of the spiritual – at least by the ways it can be conveyed in school.

**Additional Influences**

But for me, ASDS was not the only source of my Jewish identity. Everything I learned was reinforced at home and at nearby institutions. Until I entered Classical High School and expanded my horizons to include more of the city, my little neighborhood on the East Side was my Anatevka, the entire universe of the first 14 years of life. The map of my days could be plotted out in a little isosceles triangle encompassing the Brown football stadium.

I could walk from my house off of Upton Avenue to my family’s synagogue, Temple Emanu-El, and to the Jewish Community Center, where I entered preschool and later spent countless hours rehearsing for and performing in my beloved Jewish Theatre Ensemble. I also spent summers volunteering at the Bureau of Jewish Education. Every message I gleaned in one of these institutions was simply reinforced and enriched by the others. And as I lavish credit on the school, I likewise cannot overestimate the similar feelings of warmth, belonging, capability, and appreciation I felt nearly every time I entered the adjacent Temple Emanu-El (from the other side of the block).

And still, none of these organizations would have had the power to influence the kind of person I am if their values were not reflected in that third, supremely important corner of the triangle, my home. Judaism, a dynamic presence there, was a gift from my
parents. Judaism was a commitment in which we grew together, with each family member pulling and pushing us farther in new directions based on our own interests and skills. The Jewish community was the air we breathed, and the context that made everything else possible.

This was a new direction for my parents, Bob and Lesley, who came to Rhode Island in 1983 as newlyweds. Although seeking to find a place in its Jewish community, they were perhaps unable to anticipate the way in which it would become the primary shaper of their family life. My dad, who had just graduated from law school, was recruited by Roberts, Carroll, Feldstein & Peirce, so my parents were lucky to be welcomed into the local Jewish community by none

Notes
other than Ed Feldstein. Ed and Barbara were not only active members of Emanu-El, but he also was its president.

The rest, one could say, is history. My parents’ decision to send me and my younger sister, Laura, to ASDS likely surprised their own parents and other relatives. Dad and Mom’s decision to give the day school a try was as much a testament to the new friends they had embraced as it was to the values they had committed to living, and the way they chose to find a place for themselves in the community. And it worked!

Growing up in this environment, I knew that Judaism was real. I could see it, taste it, smell it, hear it, and sing it. I was told I was as important to it as it was to me. And I believed it. This must be what my former rabbinic colleagues at Micah relate to as well.

As Rabbi Beraha and I reminisce through rose-colored glasses about our time in Providence, we sometimes reflect wistfully on what his young children will never know. For example, they attend an exceptional Reform synagogue, and his older kids attend a wonderful public elementary school in D.C. Yet, unlike us, the newest generation of Beraha kids will never know the same lazy, organic flow of a Shabbat afternoon that brings droves of teenagers from one home in the same neighborhood to another, in search of board games, relaxation, and tasty snacks.

**Shifting Orientation**

Both Rabbi Beraha and I made quite deliberate choices for change in our professional Jewish identities and in our lives. For me, the shift happened almost coincidentally for a while, before I became consciously aware of what was unfolding and how it could influence my life. In 2006, when I entered Brandeis University as an undergraduate, I was eager to study in an institution with a strong Jewish legacy and glad to be able to take advantage of its robust Near Eastern & Judaic Studies and Hebrew language departments. That Hillel had active Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox student associations and that they joined together for weekly Shabbat dinners were bonuses.

From the start, I easily transitioned into the Conservative
student group, enjoying Shabbat services that were familiar to me. And when many of my new friends and fellow freshmen invited me to join them at the Reform group’s programs, I did so and thought little of it. Then one day I went to a learning session run by a recruitment rabbi from Hebrew Union College in New York City.

Having grown up exposed almost exclusively to the Conservative and Orthodox communities in Providence, Reform Judaism was something of a revelation. I saw in it new approaches and ideas, as well as a proud and open acknowledgement and acceptance of some of the choices my family made for its own practice. My family, like many Conservative Jews, was active in our practice, but not strictly observant in a halachic sense. When I started learning about Reform Judaism, I wasn’t yet consciously investigating a potential Jewish path for myself. But I ended up finding one. I started to realize that the ways in which my halachic life did not mesh with the Conservative movement, and this had actually been causing me some stress. I became aware of the cognitive dissonance I had lived with as a Conservative Jew who was passionately involved and potentially interested in the rabbinate, but something about that idea never felt quite right.

I became aware that the Reform movement celebrated my kind of Judaism and my ability to make my own choices, and that its seminary might actually be a welcoming home for me in a way that the Jewish Theological Seminary might not. Until that point I had been considering careers that incorporated aspects of psychology, communal work, and teaching, but my discovery of Reform Judaism — specifically my interaction with Rabbi Faith Joy Dantowitz, who skillfully answered such questions — unearthed an ambition of mine that had long been pushed aside. Maybe I could combine all of those fields and more; maybe I could become a rabbi.

It was a major discovery — one that took some time for me to admit to myself- let alone accept. Much of the rest of my college experience was directed toward making this dream a reality. I took internships, studied chaplaincy in hospitals and nursing homes, and served the small Reform community in High Point, North Carolina, and larger ones in New York and beyond. I also kept in touch with
Rabbi Dantowitz when she returned to campus. I did not feel the need to study abroad as an undergraduate since I hoped I would be living in Israel for the first year of my seminary experience.

While my choice to apply to HUC rather than JTS did represent a rupture of sorts with my Jewish past, in hindsight the path makes perfect sense. It was, after all, the cumulative effect of all of my experiences in Providence that led me to be a self-motivated and dedicated Jew eager to find her own way toward a meaningful life.

Rabbi Beraha and I knew that in becoming Reform rabbis we were stepping away, to some extent, from the Providence we knew, but with good reason. Yet many of those good intellectual and spiritual reasons seem to leave nostalgia-fueled regrets in their wakes. For example, we do not theologically believe in some of the statements conveyed in the middle paragraphs of the “full” Birkat HaMazon we grew up singing; nor do we want to teach the exclusive particularism of the “full” Aleinu L’shabeich. So we do not. And yet we sometimes mourn the loss of those skills, including the familiarity of how those words taste in one’s mouth, as well as being surrounded by people who knew them just as well.

We three Micah rabbis – when we were those lucky three – could recall a melody or a bit of nusach from shacharit, hum a few bars, and instantly and wordlessly transport each other back in time. This isn’t to say that we want to still be there, but we are aware of its absence, and are always trying to recreate the childhood magic.

And while everything feels perfectly natural now, at first it wasn’t always easy or comfortable for me to begin seeking a place for myself within Reform Judaism because my Conservative community didn’t teach me that I could look for one. As much as the greater Providence Jewish community has had a remarkable ability to come together at times, there were also some factions and bias. I remember, for example, that some Temple Emanu-El congregants who didn’t live in the immediate neighborhood hid their car keys in their pockets on Shabbat mornings. I also remember- I’m sad to say- some unkind jokes told about Reform Jews. Because they were generally less traditionally observant, it was assumed that they were less educated and led less authentic Jewish lives.
I also sadly remember a few surprising and disappointing comments when I announced that I would enroll at HUC rather than JTS. The surprises I can understand. But I was deeply uncomfortable with any implication that I was selling myself short by becoming part of the oldest denominational movement in this country. It was not a communal loss; it was an opportunity for me to align myself with a theology I could confidently stand behind. By having uncovered an intellectual and spiritual honesty, I felt, ironically, that I was coming home. And once I found Reform Judaism, something clicked, and I could pursue my path to the rabbinate.

Not having grown up in a Reform community, it was a little hard to forge those deep connections later in life. But with time, I have absorbed the sounds of summer camp, the names of modern Reform theologians, the rallying cry of social justice, the passionate work of adapting to modernity and using it to expand the reach of Jewish wisdom. The more I learned about Reform Judaism, the more I came to respect it.

We three Micah rabbis, in some sense converts to Reform ideology and practice, are proud to be part of a movement in which we speak transparently about observance and identity using the language of autonomy and choice. Having been only de facto realities in our childhoods, these differences are now celebrated. We experience more racial, ethnic, and religious diversity not only within metropolitan Washington, but within our own congregation. Such diversity also makes us proud.

Rabbi Beraha’s kids will learn so many other things, including the raucous, radical song sessions of Reform summer camp. They will take pride in Debbie Friedman’s havdallah melody and know that their Jewish roots were radical and have been widely influential. They will march proudly with the movement that first ordained women, that founded the Religious Action Center, and helped champion civil rights. They will play a role in the unfolding story of an American Judaism that is modern, adaptable, innovative, and relevant. If Reform children learn the deep historical roots of our movement, then they will be unafraid to reevaluate old choices and make new ones, which are undeniably modern, egalitarian, and authentic.
HUC and Its Impact

As I write this article, I am mourning the recent and untimely loss of Dr. Aaron Panken, a beloved professor, a compassionate rabbi, and a brilliant mind. I was privileged to serve on the search committee that nominated him for the presidency of Hebrew Union College, my seminary. At his inauguration, he said the following about our movement: “For me, Reform Judaism has always symbolized what I consider to be the best of Judaism- firmly rooted in our tradition, yet egalitarian, inclusive of patrilineal Jews and intermarried families, welcoming to the LGBT community, politically active, and respectful of other faiths and ideologies.”

I believe that Rabbi Panken represented the best of Reform Judaism. He always inspired me and reminded me why I made the choice to call it home. Rabbi Panken ordained me (at New York City’s Temple Emanu-El), and we will always share that bond.

I also vividly recall the first time I heard Rabbi David Ellenson, who was Rabbi Panken’s predecessor as president of HUC, when he spoke to my newly formed rabbinic class. As a former Orthodox Jew, he told us proudly that he had come to realize that Reform Judaism was right; it was the truest lived expression of Judaism. I had left the session fuming. I thought that I had escaped this kind of closed-minded Judaism. But whether Reform Judaism is inherently right, or right for him, I needed to hear him say it. It was tremendously important for me to hear Rabbi Ellenson (and many others) claim the authenticity of the Reform movement, which I had not yet personally known as deeply as the Conservative movement.

I believe that Reform Judaism is a dynamic, ongoing project that embodies Jewish values in an authentic, honest way. I also believe that it is key to our survival as a people in this country. It took time for me to settle into my newer identity, but after the first three years of my rabbinate, I stand by it with more confidence than ever, and with much gratitude to the amazing leaders of the movement who revealed its truth to me.

This orientation is what allows me to do everything I do as a rabbi. It comes up, for example, when I guide conversion candidates through their own journeys and we discuss why Reform
Judaism is their chosen home. This orientation also provides me a platform when I teach or claim any text from our tradition or when I answer questions from my b’nai mitzvah students. These questions—and their answers—are always evolving, and I want to empower even the youngest who ask. And so far my experience in the congregational world has afforded me infinite opportunities to find my voice.

**New and Recurring Journeys**

These days I am exploring yet another facet of the rabbinate as I complete a residency in chaplaincy at Bridgeport Hospital in Connecticut. Always drawn to chaplaincy, I believe that this sacred work can only enhance what a rabbi has to offer, whether in hospital, congregational or other settings.

And because my husband, Rabbi Danny Moss, serves as assistant rabbi of Temple Israel of Westport, I still have that intimate connection to Jewish community to ground me. When we met in the seminary we knew that life as a rabbi-rabbi couple might be challenging at times because rabbis often relocate for jobs. Yet, we are both intrigued by many professional possibilities, and we are open to multiple steps in our journey.

As I explained, many of us spend our adult lives trying to recreate our Anatevkas, the magic of our childhoods. Although my adult life may have only begun, I am certain that I will continue to be shaped by those elusive childhood memories that got me this far. Yes, it was important for me to differentiate a bit from them and then challenge my childhood understanding of Judaism in order to find the Jewish expression that could comfortably lead me to the rabbinate. For someone who lives it personally and professionally every single day, those differences are not insignificant.

But in the big picture, I am just trying in
every way I can to recreate the warmth, authenticity, intimacy, and liveliness of that childhood magic. It seems fitting that Rhode Island was founded on the principle of religious freedom. And I wouldn’t trade my childhood in “Divine Providence” for anything.
Prayers at tomb of Rebbe Nachman
Two Pilgrimages to Uman for Rosh Hashanah
Shai Afsai

Many readers know that Shai is a Jewish adventurer. His articles in our journal and many others have explored some neglected and perhaps offbeat topics. But Shai also enjoys traveling far and wide, especially in search of exotic Jewish destinations. Indeed, I’m not sure to which Jewish community or celebration he would avoid traveling. The more daunting, the better!

This article is based on two articles Shai wrote for The Jewish Voice (in 2016 and 2017) and a lecture he delivered at Temple Emanu-El on November 19, 2017, which I happily attended. Perhaps it’s now time for Shai to investigate the possibility of hosting a Jewish travel show on cable television. An engaging title for the show, as suggested by the following article, might be “Merit.”

Normally, about 50 Jewish families, or about 200 individuals, make their home in the central Ukrainian city of Uman. Prior to Rosh Hashanah, however, the city is inundated by thousands of Jewish men and boys (and some women and girls) who journey to the tziyun hakadosh (the holy grave site) of the late 18th- and early 19th-century Chasidic master Rebbe Nachman of Breslov (1772-1810), the founder of Breslov Chasidism.

In 2016 and 2017 (Rosh Hashanah 5777 and 5778), I was fortunate to be among these pilgrims. Most are from Israel, though many are from the United States as well. A large percentage, perhaps as many as half, is Sephardim or Bene Edot Hamizrach.

I first traveled to Uman at the repeated urging of two longtime friends living in Israel, Daniel and Yaniv, who kept insisting that celebrating Rosh Hashanah there would be unlike anything I had experienced.

“I have had very powerful experiences at the tziyun in the days leading up to Rosh Hashanah,” explained Daniel, who mar-
ried a woman from a Breslov Chasidic family and has been going to Uman since 2002. “It’s a very special time and way to end the year, if spent wisely. And of course, Rosh Hashanah itself: what a way to begin the year! The *davening* [prayer] is incredible, and the unity between all the different people is really something beyond words, something that I have not experienced even in Israel.”

Yaniv described his two stays in Uman as perhaps the most spiritual experiences he has ever had, and I saw how he now incorporated elements of Breslov Chasidism in his religious observance and prayer.

Finally, I agreed to join them. I was hoping for a significant religious encounter in Uman, too, but prepared myself to be satisfied with an increased appreciation of the motives and practices of others making the pilgrimage. Why did they go? What were their thoughts on this religious event? What insights did it offer on the role of pilgrimage in a spiritual and communal life?

**Previous Pilgrimages**

Though traveling to and celebrating at the graves of revered rabbis may be a foreign religious pursuit for many American Jews, it has been an important part of my Jewish practice since at least age thirteen. I celebrated becoming a bar mitzvah- including reading from the Torah and delivering a speech- at the tomb of the Mishnaic sage Rabbi Meir Baal Ha-nes, in Tiberias.

Following my friend Daniel’s engagement to the above-mentioned woman, the two of us hiked and hitchhiked from Safed to the tombs of the Mishnaic sages Rabbi Yonatan ben Uziel (whose resting place in Amuka is a popular pre-marriage pilgrimage site) and Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai (the most frequented grave in the Jewish world). We also visited the tombs of other spiritual leaders buried in the Galilee.

And when my paternal grandmother, Malka, became too weak to venture far from her house in the Negev, she still agreed to travel with me and my younger brother, Amir, to the tomb of Rabbi Yisrael Abuchatzeira (the *Baba Sali*), the saintly rabbi from Morocco buried in the city of Netivot in southern Israel. Our trip there was
the last the three of us took together before she passed away.

Rather than being a form of idolatry for Jews, pilgrimage to the gravesites of righteous men and women is actually an ancient and respected tradition, as illustrated for example by the following Talmudic account about Caleb ben Yefuneh’s efficacious post-Exodus pilgrimage to the graves of the Hebrew patriarchs and matriarchs in Hebron:

It is also stated with regard to the spies [whom Moses sent to investigate the land of Canaan]: “And they went up into the south, and he came to Hebron” (Numbers 13:22). Why is the phrase “and he came” written in the singular form? The verse should have said: And they came. Rava says: This teaches that Caleb separated himself from the counsel of the other spies and went and prostrated himself on the graves of the forefathers in Hebron. He said to them: My forefathers, pray for mercy for me so that I will be saved from the counsel of the spies.¹

Rebbe Nachman

When Rebbe Nachman moved from Breslov to Uman, he directed his followers to spend Rosh Hashanah with him in his new residence, just as they had previously done in Breslov. The rabbi lived in Uman during the final months before his death from tuberculosis at age 38, less than three weeks after Rosh Hashanah, and chose to be buried in the town alongside some of the thousands of Jews martyred there for their faith. In the biography Chayei Moharan, his leading disciple, Rabbi Natan of Nemirov (1780-1844), records some of Rebbe Nachman’s pronouncements on the importance of being with him in Uman during Rosh Hashanah:

On the eve of the last Rosh Hashanah in Umeyn [Uman]…he [Rebbe Nachman] of blessed memory replied and said in a powerful voice from the depth of his heart, “And what can I say to you? There is nothing greater than this,” that is, being by him on Rosh Hashanah. And he said these words in a loud voice…And from the sum of the holy words that he spoke with us, we learned several things. We learned yet again the fact of the great obligation to be by him on Rosh Hashanah. For even though we already knew this, nonetheless from the extent of his holy words on this matter then and from his awe-
inspiring movements then, they [his followers] understood more and
more the core of the obligation, which cannot be clarified in writing.
And we also then learned that his desire is great that we always be by
him in Umeyn [Uman] on Rosh Hashanah after his passing, and that
there is nothing greater than this.  

More than 200 years later, the annual pilgrimage continues,
with ever-increasing numbers of Jews drawn to Uman by Rebbe
Nachman’s exhortation to come to him for Rosh Hashanah. Com-
munism and Nazism brought sizable pilgrimage to a temporary halt,
but beginning with perestroika, and picking up further momentum
with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the renewed mass pilgrim-
age has grown each year.

My First Pilgrimage to Uman

As my Lufthansa flight from Munich landed in Kiev in
2016, the Chasidic passengers on board burst into applause and
Hebrew song, proclaiming: “We are joyous! How fortunate is our
lot that we have merited to be close to our rabbi! Uman! Uman!
Rosh Hashanah!” I would hear and sing these words often over the
next week. The words of another Hebrew song also formed a sort of
unofficial anthem for the pilgrimage: “My Uman Rosh Hashanah is
above everything. What can I tell you? There is nothing greater than
this: to be by me on Rosh Hashanah. And whoever merits being by
me on Rosh Hashanah should be exceedingly happy all year.”

In Kiev’s baggage claim area, I met two pilgrims from
Denver, Adam and Asaf, and we shared a cab to Uman, a roughly
three-hour ride. Adam recounted how Breslov Chasidism offered
him a perspective he had not found elsewhere in Judaism. “Having
been uplifted and empowered from Rebbe Nachman’s teachings for
a few years,” he explained, “I knew it was finally time to make the
pilgrimage for Uman Rosh Hashanah, which I merited to do in 2013.
I experienced in Uman an overwhelmingly intense spirit of unity
and brotherhood amongst such an incredibly diverse group of Jews.
To me, the entire gathering felt like a glimpse of the Redemption and
times to come.”

Notes
While Adam, Asaf, and I made our way from the cab to our respective lodgings, they pointed out some of the Jewish pilgrimage facilities in the neighborhood surrounding the tziyun hakadosh (holy grave site). Much charity and organization goes into ensuring that no pilgrim goes hungry or thirsty during his stay. An enormous tent, the Scheiner Hachnasat Orchim, containing a bakery churning out pita bread, a massive kitchen, and a crew of cooks and wait staff, provides free meals for pilgrims during the week. All are welcome for food during kiddush as well. A “Starbucks Coffee” offers coffee, tea, and cookies gratis day and night, and at other locations, bread, cholent or kugel are available at various times.

Uman is a city with some 85,000 residents. The streets in the vicinity of the tziyun hakadosh are ordinarily home to a few thousand people, but prior to and during Rosh Hashanah, this same area must accommodate several times more than its usual population. Ukrainian media would report that at least 30,000 Rosh Hashanah pilgrims gathered in 2016.
Many locals vacated their homes or apartments, renting them out to visitors. Entire apartment blocks, 10 to 20 stories high, were also emptied of their inhabitants to make room for those crowding into the city from around the world. Some pilgrims slept in campers or storage containers or beneath the stars.

Hebrew letters covered storefronts and the sides of buildings, so that from a photograph one might not be able to tell that this was Eastern Europe and not Bnei Brak in Israel. Enormous Hebrew banners urged the Breslov personal-prayer practice of *hitbodedut*, stressed unity, and announced the location of synagogues.

Ukrainian soldiers and police also streamed into the neighborhood and maintained a perimeter around it. Garbage trucks circulated to collect trash several times a day. At night or in the early morning, the main streets were washed clean with water sprayed from fire hoses.

After wandering about in circles for a while, I located my building. I had what could be considered luxury accommodations for the week: a room containing three standard bunk beds, a refrigerator, a sink, and an adjoining bathroom. I shared this space with five other men, including Yaniv, his brother Yahav, and my friend Ronnie (another Rhode Islander). Aside from sleeping, however, there was little occasion to spend time in the room.

Throughout the day and night, there were classes in Hebrew, English, and Yiddish on topics ranging from meditation to marital harmony. There were also concerts. On Friday afternoon, for example, there was a performance consisting entirely of musical variations on *Lecha Dodi*, the mystical Hebrew poem welcoming the Shabbat Queen.

And there was prayer. A lot of prayer! At all hours, the *tziyun hakadosh* was full of people individually or collectively pouring out their hearts before God.

As mentioned, many pilgrims to Uman are Sephardim and Mizrachim who revere Rebbe Nachman and are stirred by his teachings. On the first night of Rosh Hashanah, Ronnie and I made our way to Chazon Ovadiah, one of Uman’s large Sephardic-*Edot Hamizrach* synagogues. It is named for the late Sephardic Chief Rabbi of
Israel, Ovadiah Yosef. (Ironically, he actually discouraged men from leaving the land of Israel and their families on Rosh Hashanah for travel to Uman. Perhaps this is an example of how Sephardim revere their sages, but don’t necessarily follow their advice.)

Not having arrived early at the synagogue, we discovered there were no longer any seats available. There was scarcely room to even stand. We managed to obtain two stools, which we carried over our heads as we waded through the dense crowd of hundreds of worshipers until we found an opening to plant ourselves.

Rosh Hashanah is Yom Ha-din: the Day of Judgment. Although American synagogues often emphasize the solemn aspects
of the day, it is also a day of celebration, the day of God’s coronation as king of His world. Indeed, the Hebrew Bible records that Nehemiah, one of the leaders of the Jews returning from the Babylonian exile, instructed those in the land of Israel to “eat a festive meal [and] drink sweet wine” on Rosh Hashanah, “for the day is holy to our Lord; and do not be sad, for the joy of God is your strength.” In Uman, one feels this joy.

After the prayer leader and the congregation recited the first blessings of the Rosh Hashanah service at Chazon Ovadiah, ushering in the holiday, the entire synagogue burst into sustained applause and cheers: God was being crowned king. The clapping and joyful shouting, encouraged by the prayer leader, went on for about 10 minutes. And during the prayer services over the next two days, the mention of God as king in the liturgy was always accompanied by sustained applause from the worshipers. Rosh Hashanah as days of coronation was tangible in a way I had never felt before.

Now I understood what Yaniv meant when he had described prayer in Uman as being electric. “I first went to Uman three years ago,” he said. “It elevated me in a certain way, through the singing and being with the crowd, and there was nothing else like it in my life. It’s just a very highly spiritual experience – probably the most spiritual experience that I’ve ever had. My soul goes to another place when I’m in Uman. It’s really unbelievable. I had never had that feeling anywhere else in the world or in any shul. That’s how it’s different.”

For some, there may be a degree of incongruity to the fact that this pilgrimage occurs outside of the Holy Land, and not everyone who might otherwise travel to Uman is willing to leave Israel on the Day of Judgment. Yahav, who, like me, traveled to Uman for the first time in 2016, expressed this position. “My experience was wonderful. What most impressed me was that people came from all streams of the nation of Israel,” he said. “And more than that, I felt no division whatsoever. But with all that, I don’t think that I would again leave the land of Israel, though I believe in the merit of the tzaddik [righteous one; i.e., Rebbe Nachman].” Yahav and Ronnie spent Rosh Hashanah in Israel in 2017.
Those living in America do not have this particular dilemma. “I now feel drawn back like a magnet, as many who taste Uman Rosh Hashanah can relate,” Adam told me. “Rebbe Nachman, his teachings, and his Rosh Hashanah— they do not belong to any one group of Jews, but are a treasure and inheritance for the entire Jewish people. Fortunate are we who have merited it.”

It may be argued, though, that Rosh Hashanah in Uman is now a gift to only half the Jewish people, because it is essentially a men’s event. The Breslov Research Institute’s guidebook, *Uman, Uman, Rosh HaShanah*, which was produced by Rabbi Dovid Sears (a former Rhode Island resident), presents the what and whys of the pilgrimage. While encouraging others to join in, it states matter-of-factly: “Special arrangements are necessary to provide food, accommodation, and synagogue facilities for the thousands who descend upon Uman. Though many women travel to Uman during the year, the logistics are such that it would be impossible to cater to both men and women for Rosh Hashanah.” In both the first edition of the guidebook (published in 1992) and its revised edition with supplements (2011), this situation is neither celebrated nor censured; it is simply accepted by the author.

Judaism in Uman functions much as it did over 200 years ago, prior to the advent of the Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, Secular Humanistic, or Open Orthodoxy movements. While the melodies or accents vary from synagogue to synagogue, each is Orthodox, with Orthodoxy’s traditional partiality toward men when it comes to synagogue prayer.

However, neither during the years immediately following his passing nor now has the yearning of Rebbe Nachman’s followers and admirers to be near the *tziyun hakadosh* been limited to the Jewish New Year. For example, replying to a letter from his son urging him to return home from his travels, Rabbi Natan explained that he planned to go to Uman and did not know how long he would remain there: “For my entire aim, and all my desire and hope, is only to be at the holy grave site many times. Perhaps I will merit communicating my prayer and pouring out my heart before God, for me and my offspring.”
Increasingly, groups of Jewish women have been traveling to Uman on other occasions, including for Rosh Chodesh, the beginning of each Hebrew month, which has
traditionally been viewed as an especially female-focused holiday. (In biblical times, women would refrain from work and would visit prophets on the New Month.)

My Second Pilgrimage to Uman

Biblical Judaism mandated a thrice-yearly pilgrimage to Jerusalem for Jewish males. Like prayer and sacrifice (of time and money, if not of animals and produce), pilgrimage is an integral and near-universal feature of religious expression. With its exertion, the incurring of expense and dedication of time, its fostering of brotherhood and sisterhood, even its contending with crowds, pilgrimage satisfies a deep religious and communal need, and remains linked to prayer and sacrifice. The prayer-filled sojourn in Uman offers a way for a contemporary Jew to partake in a potentially purifying pilgrimage experience and to satisfy spiritual longings. As mentioned, it is also a tangible way to experience Rosh Hashanah as joyous days of coronation.

In 2017 I again made my way to Uman for Rosh Hashanah, meeting up with my friends Daniel and Yaniv, who traveled from Israel. At the end of Friday evening services, as we planned to leave the packed Ashkenazic service at the Scheiner minyan where we had prayed, Yaniv and I found the aisle obstructed by two friends who were embracing each other. Rather than stepping aside when the two friends realized they were blocking our exit, they instead drew Yaniv and me into their hold. At the end of this group hug, one of the young men said in Hebrew, “Let us see us do this is in Israel!” Indeed, one of the challenges posed by intense religious or communal experiences is how to carry that energy from a specific time and place into day-to-day living.
The shared goal of answering Rebbe Nachman's call to join him for God's coronation on Rosh Hashanah creates a quick feeling of brotherhood among the joyous pilgrims. At the same time— for those not used to very large crowds – eating, learning, praying, and sleeping (or not sleeping) in close quarters with so many new brothers can require a mental adjustment. It sometimes helps to keep in mind that though the current number of Rosh Hashanah pilgrims far exceeds those in Rebbe Nachman's day, when he was joined by several hundred Jewish men, some of the basic challenges of space and accommodation have not changed. Rabbi Natan records a Chasid wondering if he might be exempt from the pilgrimage:

An individual said in his [Rebbe Nachman's] presence that it would be easier for him to come to him [Rebbe Nachman] on Shabbat Teshuva, and not on Rosh Hashanah, because he has no space to stand then in the study hall, nor does he have good accommodations for eating and sleeping, and as a result his mind is very unfocused and he cannot pray with intention – therefore, it would be better for him to be by him [Rebbe Nachman] on a different occasion and not on Rosh Hashanah. Our rabbi of blessed memory replied to him with these words: “Whether you eat or don't eat, whether you sleep or don't sleep, whether you pray or don't pray (that is, don't pray with intention as appropriate), just all of you be by me on Rosh Hashanah, come what may…”

In addition to the easy friendship of Uman, another striking aspect of Rosh Hashanah there is mizug galuyot, the integration of different Jewish communities separated in the diaspora. The early Chasidic rabbis of Europe of course drew on the Sephardic/Bene Edot Hamizrach mystics who preceded them, but in the last 70 years there has been a dramatic exchange of customs and practices (and marriage vows) between different Jewish ethnic groups. Chabad and Breslov Chasidism, in particular, have strongly resonated with Sephardim/Bene Edot Hamizrach.

I too embody this national mizug (integration). My mother's family came to Rhode Island from the Pale of Settlement. My father's family came to the state of Israel from Kurdistan and Iraq. And I have cousins on both sides of my family who identify with Chabad.
Chasidism or with Breslov Chasidism.

Because so many of the Rosh Hashanah pilgrims are now Sephardim/Bene Edot Hamizrach, it made sense that at midnight on the eve of Rosh Hashanah they took charge of the main hall of the tziyun hakadosh for a special selichot service led by a popular Israeli cantor. Ashkenazic Jews joined hundreds of Jews whose families once dwelt in Ethiopia, Morocco, Yemen, or Iraq for an exuberant chanting of Sephardic selichot.

An additional feature of Rosh Hashanah in Uman is the diversity found in the types of Jews who join the pilgrimage. Rabbi Gil Bashe of the Breslov Research Institute, whom I met and spent time with during my second trip to Ukraine, explained: “The gathering at Uman draws everyone from Chasids to hippies – from people who come for a Jewish happening to others seeking spiritual depth. Rebbe Nachman’s appeal today mirrors his efforts 200 years ago – to reach seekers.” Rabbi Bashe continued: “Uman has something for everyone, and Rebbe Nachman guaranteed that those who come for Rosh Hashanah would experience something unique and personal. That’s why the gathering grows every year, with old-timers and newcomers finding a connection across religious practice and approach.”

With more and more Jews encountering Chasidic teachings- and with the number of pilgrims increasing from one Rosh Hashanah to the next – new inns, hostels, apartment buildings, and synagogues continue to rise in the vicinity of the tziyun hakadosh. In 2017, there were already two Uman Starbucks Coffees offering free coffee, tea, and cookies. In 2016, Chabad had a modest-sized prayer tent situated near Chazon Ovadiah. This year, Chabad moved into Chazon Ovadiah’s former space, and the latter relocated to a newly-built and much larger synagogue- though this new edifice was too small to accommodate its worshipers. During services they stood inside Chazon Ovadiah and poured out into the street. Fortunately, I was again able to find a place to stand inside Chazon Ovadiah during the first night of Rosh Hashanah. As one fellow-worshiper observed, rather than being a prayer service directed by the cantor, it was spontaneously led by the crowd, who danced and clapped in the aisles.

I also attended Chabad services. What Chabad in Uman
lacks in air-conditioning (it has none), it makes up for in comfortable chairs (available to those who arrive early enough). More important, Chabad in Uman also exemplifies mizug galuyot (the integration of different Jewish communities separated in the diaspora). Its synagogue was full of Jews from many countries and backgrounds, including a large contingent of French Jews of North African origin, with their requisite holiday uniform of skinny jeans and black or white T-shirts. These men had come to Uman with a young French rabbi who read the Torah portion for the entire congregation with a thick Edot Hamizrach accent, properly pronouncing the Hebrew letters ayin and chet. His reading, preceded and followed in the prayer service by powerful Chabad nigunim (melodies), did not feel out of place. (Chabad, as it happens, also put up a mechitza and maintained a space for women in its synagogue during services.)

On Shabbat afternoon I went on a walking tour of historic Jewish Uman with Rabbi Bashe, who is a former Israel Defense Forces paratrooper and who fought in the First Lebanon War. When he led a group of mostly-American pilgrims on a two-and-a-half-hour trek through the roads, hills, and valleys of Uman, even the younger pilgrims found it difficult to keep up with him. Rabbi Bashe explained:

When Rebbe Nachman came to Uman, most residents were ‘enlightened Jews’ (maskilim) and not Breslov Chasids. They welcomed Rebbe Nachman into their homes and he welcomed them into his heart. They connected with him and found his ‘rabbi of the soul’ approach spiritually meaningful. Uman remains that vestige of welcome to all Jews. Shtreimel-wearing Chasids and baseball cap-seekers eat, pray, and dance together. Uman Rosh Hashanah is about inclusion and acceptance. Rebbe Nachman was a great leader – a leader who unified people during his time and across the generations – and his words and approach remain powerful and speak to our needs today.

The next morning at 4:00 a.m., I accompanied Rabbi Bashe on a visit to Breslov, the town from which Breslov Chasids got their name and where Rabbi Natan of Nemirov is buried. From there, after praying shacharit in a small structure near Rabbi Natan’s tomb,
we continued to the old and vast Jewish cemetery of Berditchev, the burial place of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, the Chasidic master famous for his vindications of the Jewish nation before God. By the afternoon we reached the capital city, Kiev; exhilarated and exhausted, I made my way back to Providence.

A Third Pilgrimage?

I have celebrated the Sigd festival of Ethiopian Jewry twice in Jerusalem,\(^8\) Purim with Igbo practicing Judaism in Nigeria,\(^9\) Chanukah with Jews in Cuba, Passover in Ireland, and have also observed Tisha Be-Av and attended a bar mitzvah ceremony with Jews remaining in the Republic of Georgia. All of these experiences have expanded the ways I view Judaism and the Jewish nation. Yet it is to the communal pilgrimage and collective prayer of Uman to which I am now most drawn to return, and I hope I again merit being near Rebbe Nachman on Rosh Hashanah.

(Endnotes)

1 Babylonian Talmud \((The \ William Davidson Talmud)\) Sotah 34b, <https://www.sefaria.org/Sotah.34b.7?lang=bi>.

2 Rabbi Natan of Nemirov, \textit{Chayei Moharan} \#406. See also \#220.

3 Nehemiah 8:10. See also \textit{Chayei Moharan} \#403.


5 Rabbi Natan of Nemirov, \textit{Alim Le-trufah}, Letter 193.


7 \textit{Chayei Moharan} \#404.

8 See Afsai, “‘A small window between two distant worlds’: Qes Efraim’s visit to Rhode Island,” \textit{RIJHA Notes} 17:1 (2015), 118-129.

author, Providence, 2000

Notes
Trees of Life: Lessons from Pittsburgh

Janet Engelhart Gutterman

A touchstone of the author's upbringing on Long Island was her active participation at Suburban Temple, located on Jerusalem Avenue in Wantagh. Her parents, along with many young veterans and their spouses, had been founders of this Reform congregation not far from Levittown.

Although girls of her generation did not usually prepare for bat mitzvah, Janet happily attended religious school from kindergarten through confirmation. She also much enjoyed participating in LIFTY (Long Island Federation of Temple Youth), particularly its conclaves with teens from neighboring congregations. Janet and her family regularly attended Shabbat services and celebrated holidays with numerous relatives. Although the eldest grandchild, she was often called upon to chant the Four Questions.

Having always dreamed of becoming a teacher, Janet earned her bachelor's degree in elementary education at Hofstra University. She taught for three years in New Jersey before moving with her husband to greater Pittsburgh. In 1971 she earned a master's in counseling at Duquesne University.

In the following article, Janet reflects on the tragedy at Tree of Life Synagogue and many uplifting topics related to Pittsburgh, including the evolution of her own career. Always a modest person, she neglected to mention that, when hired to lead Rhode Island's Jewish Federation in 2000, she was part of a very small cadre of women executives.

Janet soon found that our community met, if not surpassed, her considerable expectations. Of course one key to her happiness was meeting Rabbi Leslie Y. Gutterman of Temple Beth-El. She and Les were married in 2004.

Having relished her roles as the mother and stepmother of three daughters, she now derives much joy as the grandmother of three grandsons. Still a passionate and devoted educator, Janet enjoys serving as a docent at the RISD Art Museum. She has also served as a tutor at Martin Luther King School and has helped new Americans learn English.
At 11:36 A.M. on Saturday, October 27, the text came in on my cellphone from my daughter. The timing wasn’t unusual. The content was. “So terrible…Have you seen the news?’’

Eight minutes later, another text: “Gunman opened fire, killing at least seven people. Police injured and captured the suspect. The Temple closest to our house. On Shady.”

So began a heartbreaking day, touching far more people than Allison and me. Yes, more people than we ever imagined. And this was before we learned that the attack on congregants at Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh was the most deadly anti-Semitic act in our country’s history.

The news brought my mind and heart right back to the city and community where I had lived and worked for 29 years. The community where I raised my child and where many of my friends and Jewish professional colleagues still live and work. Where work responsibilities took us all over the greater Pittsburgh area—from neighborhood to neighborhood to suburbs to small towns. Eventually, I lived only three blocks from the synagogue everyone called The Tree of Life. This is a large, vibrant, intergenerational Conservative synagogue where many of my friends belonged.

Pittsburgh was the community where, beginning in 1971, my adulthood and Jewish professional life were formed. My first husband’s job had brought us there as 20-somethings. Having found a dearth of teaching jobs, I studied for and received a master’s of education in counseling, with a focus on community consultation. My first position, following several substitute teaching stints, was as a consultation and education specialist at a local mental health center focusing on children. I worked with teachers and parents in exurban, lower-income neighborhoods and schools. I left that position when we moved to a small community, Greensburg, 35 miles southeast of Pittsburgh, again following my husband’s career.

The Pittsburgh Federation was looking for a part-time professional to serve that community and then all of the outlying communities. I was a natural, with my focus on community organization and my strong familial background as a Reform Jew.

Coming from the metropolitan New York area, I quickly
learned what it meant to be a Jew in the periphery of a western Pennsylvania city. It was personally and professionally satisfying for me to bring famous Jewish speakers, such as Abba Eban and Justice Arthur Goldberg, as well as community programs to Greensburg and other small Jewish communities. During those years, as a member of a Reform congregation, Emanu-El Israel (which had merged with a smaller Conservative congregation), I wrote religious school curricula, hosted reading groups, served on its board and rabbinic search committee, and co-led its sisterhood.

I felt that people who asked “How are you?” meant it. Friends were close and meaningful, taking our entire extended family from New York into their homes for holidays and soon into their hearts. Friends became like family.

And, once I moved from the small town to a northern Pittsburgh suburb, then to Squirrel Hill in 1992, my role with Federation expanded. I coordinated the resettlement of hundreds of Soviet Jewish families with a number of Jewish agencies and schools. I helped envision social services in Squirrel Hill and beyond, to serve the largest number of elders and kids and those with special needs.

As a single mom, I lived and worked within a diverse Jewish community that, while following different interpretations of Judaism, got along pretty well. Squirrel Hill, with its many synagogues, agencies, day schools, kosher butchers, bakeries, bagel shops, delis, and Judaica bookstores, practically mandated a Jewish lifestyle. I could look out a friend’s rear window in Squirrel Hill and see sukkah after sukkah after sukkah constructed on small back decks.

Professional and volunteer leaders with much more experience in Jewish communal work mentored me. They encouraged me to speak out, try new things, and promoted me to jobs I had no idea I could do. Through their kindnesses and faith in me, I also learned how to mentor younger professionals and encouraged them to shine. Here is where I grew as a professional and was ultimately positioned to apply to be executive vice-president of the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island.

What was greater Pittsburgh like beyond its Jewish community? Arriving in 1971 as a 25-year-old newly minted elementary
school teacher from Fort Lee, New Jersey, I surely experienced culture shock. “Deer Meat Cleaned Here” read a sign I spotted my first month in town. I still remember the smell of rotten eggs many mornings, depending how the wind blew, as the last of the steel mills were spewing pollution.

It was a region of contradictions. A city of such fierce sports pride that even a Yankees fan was shocked. Yet Pittsburgh, thanks to Carnegies, Mellons, Heinzes, and many other benefactors, is also one of the country’s finest cultural centers. Indeed, thanks to Edgar J. Kaufmann, a Jewish merchant prince, and his wife, Liliane, Frank Lloyd Wright received the 1935 commission to build Fallingwater, probably the greatest modern home of the twentieth century. Jonas Salk, while a researcher at the University of Pittsburgh Medical School from 1947 to 1955, discovered his miraculous polio vaccine. From 1952 until 1976, William Steinberg led the symphony orchestra. But Pittsburgh is also a friendly, casual place, where strangers on the street say hello.

Yet, this was also the place where I experienced my first anti-Semitic comments and actions when I was a substitute teacher in the Steel Valley, close to where the 1978 Academy Award-winner, “The Deer Hunter,” was filmed. The region’s residents demonstrated strong ethnic pride within neighborhoods that remained stubbornly segregated. So I understood the kindnesses of these “nearly Midwesterners.” I also comprehended the frustrations of steelworkers being displaced during economic devastation. I moved to Western PA just at that time of transition.

For more than a century, Pittsburgh’s Jewish community has been centered in Squirrel Hill. But smaller pockets also developed in about a dozen communities, across a distance greater than that of Woonsocket to Westerly. That 70-mile trip was my first Federation job: five years of bringing speakers and other professionals from town-to-town (Greensburg in the east to Beaver Falls in the west).

Pittsburgh’s is also an historic Jewish community. Its first families arrived in the early 1840s from southern Germany. Peddlers ventured into the smaller towns. The Rauh Jewish Archives, estab-
lished at the Senator John Heinz History Center in 1989, tell us that from its beginnings, “anyone in need was helped.” The Jewish Federation was established in 1912 to centralize fundraising, and that early sense of tzedakah continues to this day. And speaking further of American Jewish history, Rabbi Prof. Jacob R. Marcus, who founded the American Jewish Archives at Hebrew Union College in 1947, was born southeast of Pittsburgh in 1896.

Rodef Shalom, Pittsburgh’s oldest surviving congregation, which was chartered in 1856, affiliated with the Reform movement. Indeed, the movement’s “Pittsburgh Platform,” a declaration of beliefs and principles, grew out of a national conference held there in 1885. Tree of Life, originally an Orthodox congregation chartered in 1865, joined the Conservative movement in 1886. In 2010 it merged with a smaller Conservative congregation, becoming Tree of Life-Or L’Simcha. And still later, a Reconstructionist congregation, Dor Hadash, has used its facilities.

I was not yet aware of the friendship between two rabbinic scholars, Rodef Shalom’s Solomon B. Freehof and Beth-El’s William G. Braude, but Pittsburgh and Providence felt similar from the October day I stepped into the RI Federation office in 2000. Both boasted dedicated community leaders, who knew their counterparts across the country. All held similar goals and values to build strong Jewish communities locally and overseas, with an unbending connection to and love of Israel. Rhode Island’s Norman Tilles, for example, traveled to national meetings with Pittsburgh Jewish Community Relations leaders like Judy Palkovitz and Frederick Frank. They all shared a passion for Soviet Jewry, social justice, and Israel. Similarly, Rhode Island’s campaign leaders like Mel Alperin and Hershey Rosen ran family businesses, as did Pittsburgh’s Ed Berman and Stanley Ruskin. All these leaders also carried on family lessons of tzedakah, which they had learned at the knees of their fathers and grandfathers.

Not to be outdone, women leaders also shared a communal passion and assumed leadership roles learned from many of their mothers or grandmothers. They kept Jewish hospitals vital, helped Jewish families in need, taught Jewish traditions to their families, founded local Jewish agencies, marched for social justice, and helped
build a strong Jewish homeland. All three of United Jewish Appeal’s national chairwomen from Rhode Island, Selma Pilavin, Sylvia Hassenfeld, and Roberta Holland, were well known to and respected by Sylvia Busis and Hannah Kamin in Pittsburgh.

National meetings and missions to Israel served to bond leaders across communities. They learned from one another and took new ideas to their own communities. A strong national federation system united and enhanced every community, and it helped this Jewish professional feel comfortable in my new home in Rhode Island.

Although Rhode Island’s Jewish history is far older, both communities are notable for their warmth, aging members, and geographic core. Yet, Pittsburgh’s Jewish community, while always larger, has recently grown to about 50,000. Both communities include many proud, smaller Jewish communities, which seek additional social and educational services and more funding for smaller, struggling congregations.

Yes, coming from Pittsburgh to Rhode Island felt very familiar.

But there’s an itch that’s scratched in Pittsburgh in a unique way. It’s hard to articulate. Maybe because it’s a city maligned by its industrial sludge that makes all of us who have lived there want to tout it and protect it. Maybe because of its economic struggles, it cherishes every kid who chooses to stay as an adult and every young adult who moves to the Steel City. Maybe because it’s so Jewishly diverse yet Jews of all stripes live close together. Maybe because it’s a city of grit that refused to give up when its entire economic base collapsed. Pittsburgh Strong.

For me, more than this, it was because I was fortunate to be nurtured, encouraged, and promoted to greater communal responsibility. This climate of cooperation and caring was not always evident. But you certainly knew that it was expected. When my first interview for a prestigious national fellowship fell short, our federation’s chief executive, Howard Rieger, used his personal contacts to go to bat for me. He did the same when promoting me for the prestigious Leonard & Doris Rudolph Jewish Professional Award.
My first community trip to Israel in 1994 was unforgettable, of course. But just as unforgettable was when a top volunteer leader, Stanley Ruskin, a box manufacturer who had been to Israel at least two dozen times, came onto my “First Timers” bus for the day, just so he could enjoy my sense of wonder.

An electrical business owner and Federation vice-president, Ed Berman, thought that my enthusiasm for our community agencies qualified me to direct an allocations process exceeding $11 million, even though I had no budgeting experience. “It’s more important that Federation has good relations with service agencies than the bottom line,” he explained. “That helps our community.” I’d get the budgeting quickly enough, he believed. So my job was to see how we could help agencies provide services, not to trip them up over nickels and dimes.

During allocations season, I spent many an hour thinking about how to make dollars stretch so that creative program ideas could come into fruition. Indeed, “Agency Allocations” became “Community Building” by function and title.

It turns out that Federation-agency coordination was critical for the rapid community response to the tragedy at Tree of Life. In a local Jewish Chronicle article a couple of weeks later, Jordan Golin, chief executive of Pittsburgh’s Jewish Family & Community Services, credited personal relationships with the quick response to families and community members who were hurt or traumatized by the attack. The JCC became a staging ground, and counselors from JFCS were available there. Federation volunteers helped survivors and families. “We were really able to build on preexisting relationships as a trusting presence to be able to help. Our community has placed strong emphases on relationships, collaborations, and partnerships,” said Golin.

Jeff Finkelstein, Federation’s chief executive, agreed. “The immediate response to this tragedy could not have happened without the amazing collaboration among the Federation, JCC, JFCS, and many other agencies,” he explained. “We have built these relationships over years, so we didn’t even need to think to work together in a moment of crisis.”
On the Monday evening following the Pittsburgh attack, as I stood with hundreds of members of our Rhode Island Jewish community at a memorial vigil, I was so moved by the support of other faith communities. We too have built those relationships over many years.

I couldn’t help but recall the endless hours of outreach that professionals and volunteers of Pittsburgh’s Jewish Community Relations Council had spent over decades with other faith leaders. After all, this is a place also known as “The City of Bridges.” Countless meetings with politicos – mayors, city council members, county officials, and governors – were validated when Pittsburgh’s mayor, Bill Peduto, said after the massacre, “This is the worst day in Pittsburgh’s history.” Not in the Jewish community’s history. In Pittsburgh’s history.

I must admit that occasionally I questioned the JCRC professionals, Edie Naveh and Lew Borman, for their endless community meetings. But, no. Their dedication to building a larger and stronger community made it impossible for city, county, and state leadership to turn a blind eye to the Tree of Life tragedy.

The example set by political leaders also encouraged Pittsburgh sports teams to join in support, which is essential to reach the overall community. For example, the Penguins had a special shoulder patch designed for their hockey uniforms. It featured their iconic logo in the shape of the Star of David with the words “Stronger than Hate” underneath. Then they donated nearly $350,000 to benefit victims of the massacre. So the relatively small Jewish community was not isolated, but embraced.


But it will sustain itself after this unthinkable tragedy because of its strengths. Deep history. Concentrated and far-flung geography that encourages all to live Jewishly. Highly educated young people who are attracted to its high-tech and clean-energy industries.

Pittsburgh also boasts a strong tradition of tzedakah, and a large web of creative communal agencies. Strong lay-professional
relations illustrate how volunteers understand that their strengths are enhanced by strong professional leadership. It is fortunate to be a city rich in community, corporate, and private foundation resources. A large Jewish hospital foundation supports health initiatives. Leading universities invest in the city’s and region’s future.

Every Jewish community worldwide mourned with the Pittsburgh Jewish community and Tree of Life. Perhaps that’s because each of us feared that this tragedy could happen to our community, to any community. For me, the unthinkable in Pittsburgh felt personal. I worked with the late husband of Joyce Fienberg, who was murdered. Steve, a Carnegie-Mellon professor and researcher, was Hillel’s president in those days. I ran into the Rosenthal brothers, of blessed memory, hundreds of times at the JCC. Friends and colleagues in Pittsburgh are forever impacted.

But the strengths that aided them during the tragedy will serve them well in the future—a feeling of family, of one for the other. *Etz chaim.* A Tree of Life. That’s the most any community can hope for.

extended Gutterman family,
CapeCod, 2017
trio of Italian synagogues: Rome, Florence, Siena
I'm pleased that over the past four years, my friend and colleague, Fran Ostendorf, a Pittsburgh native, has published approximately 25 of my occasional articles in *The Jewish Voice*. A few have dealt with current events; many have focused on my observations or experiences in Little Rhody or far beyond. Virtually all have been short, at least compared to my more labored (or belabored) efforts written here or elsewhere in an academic style. For a variety of reasons, Fran decided not to publish several other articles that I had also submitted. Often she didn’t have sufficient space or questioned whether a topic was timely. Perhaps she believed that some articles lacked significant Jewish content or had little to do with Rhode Island.

Do some readers worry that, more than 30 years after my arrival, I'm still a newcomer? The question of my residential loyalties doesn’t much interest me. I write what’s on my mind, drawing upon a lifetime of mostly positive experiences wherever I go. The same is true with my photography. I shoot what intrigues or surprises me: essentially, what I don’t know or what hasn’t yet come into focus.

The danger of exaggerating the Ocean State’s importance is epitomized for me by a bumper sticker. Perhaps you’ve seen it. Some motorists proudly (or facetiously?) proclaim, “I never leave Rhode Island.” I’d prefer a sticker that declares, “Proud to be a citizen of the world!” How, I wonder, can a Jew have a narrow point of view?

Fran may also reject some of my articles because I sound egotistical. If this is true, I’m sorry. I hate egotists – Jews included. But egotism would be a good topic for my next article.

I. Italy and Israel: Glimpses of Perfection

In 1969, as a college junior, I was extraordinarily privileged to study in Florence. Since the day of my arrival, it felt like a magical place. Of course I won’t bother to read what I hastily wrote in my...
journal, but I soon aspired to make Italy a permanent part of my life by becoming an art historian.

Nevertheless, because Florence resided so deep in my heart—or at least in my abundant imagination—I thought that I could never return. No subsequent sojourn could ever measure up. Not until the summer of 1981 did I persuade myself to tempt fate and make a pilgrimage.

But so much of Florence had changed—and me too—that I could no longer walk in my own footsteps. I even tried to sleep in the same modest pensione (apartment) where I had so happily resided, but I was granted only one night’s stay, on a slender cot, in its tiny kitchen. What I coveted was the panoramic view from my window. Or perhaps I wanted to be 20 again.

Yet, even after visiting many other Italian cities, I could not get 1969 out of my mind. In 1987, before our daughter was born, I suggested to Betsey that we name her Florence. She’s Martha.

In 2008, having savored so many facets of Italian spectacle and splendor—painting, sculpture, architecture, cinema, music, fashion, food, and wine—Betsey and I decided to visit Venice. This was the first Italian city with which I had become enamored. Nevertheless, despite many highly enjoyable encounters, it no longer seduced me—or at least not in the same ways. Modern art meant so much more to me, as did Venice’s ghostly ghetto.

You may wonder how, as a Jew, I had once been so enthralled by tides and torrents of Christian art. Occasionally, I ask myself that question. The simple answer is that I felt swept away by art; religion was merely its messenger.

Perhaps I am simply susceptible to fantasy and bombast. Neither Spanish nor Flemish streams of Catholic art ever threatened my identity as a liberal Jew. Indeed, I thought that I was rather ecumenical: gaining knowledge about one religion might deepen my understanding of others. How Jewish!

There may be a more basic spiritual explanation, however. Never a wanderer nor a seeker, I was secure in my basic understanding of Judaism.

In 1969, for example, upon arriving in my pensione, I
removed the small icons – pretty paintings of saints – hanging above my bed. With perhaps a dozen Jews, I also stood vigilant near Florence’s cathedral and baptistery to protest the execution of nine of our Iraqi brethren and five gentiles falsely accused of being Israeli spies.

Nearly a decade later, when making the first of three trips to Israel, I had many deeply moving experiences—many visual—but others transcending art. During such exhilarating moments, I felt a renewed sense of Jewish pride.

So in the fall of 2015, when Betsey and I traveled to Tuscany and Umbria, did I feel any tension or conflict between my various spiritual loves and loyalties? No, but Italy’s gentle topography—hills, valleys, and vineyards—surely reminded me of Israeli landscapes. I also wondered why our Jewish homeland could not enjoy such tranquility. Yet, more than ever, I also became mindful of Italian portrayals of biblical heroes, such as Moses, David, and Judith.

As we often do, Betsey and I made special efforts to visit synagogues. With Hebrew and Yiddish beyond our reach, we redoubled our efforts to speak Italian.

We felt particularly rewarded by Siena’s synagogue, where, for more than an hour, we were the only visitors within its small but majestic interior. Surely the bright light, streaming through the eastern wall’s high windows, helped welcome and comfort us. The gentile guide, who had studied Holocaust literature, also seemed to appreciate our curiosity and devotion.

I dare say, however, that our visit to Florence’s monumental, domed-synagogue—visible across the Arno valley—was not as gratifying. Soldiers stood guard near towering gates, cameras were not allowed, and the gruff ticket seller couldn’t bother to say “shalom” or even “buon giorno.” But our Jewish guide seemed a bit pleased with my superficial knowledge of Italian Jewish history, and she appeared to enjoy learning something about Rhode Island’s—also rooted in Sephardic tradition.

On a Sunday morning, however, the synagogue’s vast interior—once lavishly decorated and now carefully restored—seemed rather eerie. Something powerful was missing. Was it a gleeful and
cacophonous gathering of Jews? We were told that a nearby structure, built for a day school, is now used only for supplemental instruction. Yes, there is a danger here, as elsewhere in Italy, that Jewish life could disappear—its remnants relegated to a gorgeous museum.

And this too could be Florence’s fate. I once thought that the city could and should be nothing more than a marvelous shrine or reliquary—one of the world’s grandest arrays of indoor and outdoor treasures. But now I better understand or am at least more willing to concede the impossibility of such a reckoning. The past can exist only within the present, the present only within the past. I have also learned—long after 1969—that Judaism helps us bridge past and present because each fulfills or redeems the other.

But does Judaism also resemble its own majestic museum—an idealized place or a state of uninhabitable yearning? A palace of dreams, virtue, and learning? Despite striving to do our best, must we always fall short and reside within humbler confines and circumstances?

I believe that Judaism, while offering tantalizing glimpses of perfection, teaches us, in the end, to do only what we are able. Yet, like the quest for great art, it requires nothing less.
II. Cecily, Bermuda, and London

For most of his adult life, Dad had a dear English friend. I didn’t know until a few days ago, however, whether Cecily Bolsom was still alive. If so, she would have been about 95. My next-to-last attempt to contact her and her son, John, occurred nearly four years earlier, in 2014, after Mom died and seven years after Dad’s passing. Unfortunately, neither of the Bolsoms replied.

During World War II, as a Jewish teenager growing up in London, Cecily was evacuated to Bermuda. I don’t recall if she had relatives living there. Cecily and her younger sister, Madeline, were probably accompanied by their aunt, Hettie Jacobs Diamond, who also fled the Blitz. Or perhaps a Jewish family living in or near Hamilton sheltered this frightened and displaced trio.

Dad met Cecily after the war through one of his buddies, Lew Dreyer, who was his classmate at UCLA and again at USC Law School. Lew had probably met her while serving in the Navy during the war. Was he ever stationed in Newport? I don’t know. He may have been sent to Bermuda or perhaps to London before his discharge late in 1945. Another possibility is that Lew and Cecily somehow met in New York City in 1944 before her voyage home. At any rate, Cecily married David Bolsom, a Londoner, in 1946, the same year that Mom and Dad were wed in Los Angeles.

I don’t know if Lew had fallen for Cecily before introducing her to Dad. Perhaps he was engaged or already married. His first engagement, in 1938, to a young lady visiting Los Angeles is somewhat noteworthy. Esther Friedman, from Sioux City, Iowa, became the advice columnist “Ann Landers” (and her twin sister, Pauline, became “Dear Abby”).

I met Lew on only a few occasions: once or twice in Los Angeles, when his son attended UCLA, and again in suburban New York, where the Dreyers made their home. As I recall, Lou was taller than my father, so perhaps Cecily was too petite. But compared to Dad he also seemed extroverted, so perhaps she was too demure.

Most likely, Dad and Cecily met in New York City while he was still a young lawyer and she was preparing to return home. Even if smitten with one another, perhaps they figured that marriage
could never work. Dad could not have given up his profession to live abroad, and she could not have turned her back on relatives to build a new life in Hollywood.

In 1964, Cecily and David’s younger child, John, vacationed with us in Los Angeles, and then we traveled together to New York for the World’s Fair. I recall that we Goodwins also visited the Dreyers at that time. By the late 1960s, Dad and Mom began visiting London almost annually, and Cecily and David also journeyed to California for a few vacations.

Mom did not merely tolerate Dad’s friendship with Cecily. She too enjoyed the rather quirky and exotic Bolsoms. Eventually, Mom encouraged her parents, her brother and sister-in-law, and Los Angeles friends to meet Cecily’s larger family. And on a few occasions, Dad and Mom vacationed with the Bolsoms at their home in the south of France.

Before studying in Italy and on a few other visits to London, I too visited Cecily and John, but I don’t remember meeting his older sister, Marilyn, and her family, who lived in the English countryside. Years later, Betsey and I also enjoyed some visits with Cecily and John, which included high tea at our hotel or at their club, Royal Automobile.

David was a successful antiques dealer who operated Pride’s of London, a stylish shop not far from Harrods in posh Knightsbridge. Intrigued by antiques, especially furniture and gadgets, Dad acquired several pieces for our home and his office. One of the handsome curiosities he eventually gave me was an 18th-century barometer. Another was a big brass key.

I recall that David had expanded his business before he suddenly died short of his 60th birthday. Cecily sought to perpetuate Pride’s, but her managers wanted an ownership stake, which seemed unlikely given John’s involvement in the business. He had graduated from Stowe, a prestigious “public” school in Buckinghamshire, but did not pursue a university degree. After Pride’s closed, he continued to buy and sell antiques and to enjoy an epicurean life style. Eventually, he and his American wife, whom I never met, went separate ways.

Cecily’s and David’s grandparents, originally from Eastern
Europe, had probably settled in London’s East End before 1900. Quite naturally, their progeny learned to speak the king’s English—not Yiddish. Cecily and David belonged to a synagogue—presumably near their home in fashionable St. John’s Wood—but I doubt that they attended services more than a few times per year. Saturday was surely the busiest shopping day in Knightsbridge, and I’m not aware that they observed any dietary laws. But I also believe that Marilyn’s marriage to a gentile caused a deep and lasting rift.

So how close was Dad and Cecily’s friendship? Fortunately, I’ll never know. No doubt, Mom never felt threatened because she always said and wrote exactly what was on her mind. Without having to say so, honorable thoughts and deeds also meant a great deal to Dad. Both my parents did their best to lead exemplary lives.

After Dad passed away, I cared enough about Cecily and John to write them a note on behalf of our family, and she called me in Providence to express her condolences. Perhaps she felt like my distant aunt or I like her New England nephew. She cherished the bond with Dad and our family that lasted far longer than anybody could have reasoned or imagined.

I recently heard from John after contacting Stowe’s alumni office. Cecily, who suffered from dementia, spent her final years in London’s Jewish Home. She died a year ago. At her funeral, both John and Marilyn remarked that Dad and Mom had been among the Boolsoms’ closest friends.

Despite its horror for most European families—especially Jews—World War II brought a blessing to my own. Some thanks are surely due to Dad’s friend, Lew, who sadly passed away in 1972 at 57 years of age.

III. A Hockney Portrait

I much enjoyed David Hockney’s 2017 retrospective exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Organized to celebrate his 80th birthday, it had previously attracted record crowds at London’s Tate Gallery and Paris’s Centre Pompidou.

For those unfamiliar with Hockney, he is one of Britain’s leading artists, if not one of the most talented and accomplished
in the world. He began acquiring both notoriety and acclaim soon after completing his studies in London, during the late 1950s and early '60s. A few years later, while living in Los Angeles, Hockney gained further renown through his playful and impudent paintings of swimming pools, palm trees, and acquaintances, including many gays.

Our RISD Museum has a small but notable painting from this phase of his blossoming career. In a kind of goofy but charming way, it portrays an artificial tree and, behind it, a phallic City Hall.
As a teenager in L.A., I was probably not yet aware of Hockney’s considerable talents, which would become manifest not only in paintings, but in drawings (ink, pencil, and pastel) and prints (especially etchings). By the time I got around to meeting him, he was already 40 and the subject of a major exhibition at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. This show, in some sense a mid-career retrospective, featured several of his whimsical and enchanting posters and stage designs, which had been commissioned by many European music festivals and opera houses. Always drawn to experimentation, Hockney would later play with still photography, video, and computer-generated imagery. But he was also a traditionalist because he frequently paid homage to great artists of the distant and recent past.

One of my favorite portraits in the Met show – indeed, one of the most dignified – depicts Henry Geldzahler, a Belgian-born Jew. A close Hockney friend, he had been the Met’s first curator of modern and contemporary art during the heyday of Thomas Hoving’s dazzling directorship. Geldzahler, a short, pudgy, bearded, and bespectacled man, stands in profile. He is surrounded by small reproductions of paintings by Vermeer, della Francesca, Van Gogh, and Degas, which are attached to a folding screen. Perhaps I flatter myself, but this could be my portrait!

In 1977, however, Hockney wasn’t very nice to me when I asked him to autograph an exhibition catalogue for my sister, Betty, who was a fan and an aspiring collector. Through countless newspaper articles and several books, she too would make her mark as a chronicler of epicurean and effervescent Los Angeles. Although I never met Hockney again, I have grown to admire even more of his captivating artistry.

During the mid-and late-1970s, as a researcher in UCLA’s Oral History Program, I conducted scores of interviews with many prominent members of the local art community. These included a few artists, but mostly tastemakers: art museum directors and curators, art dealers, and collectors. I enjoyed almost all of these tape-recorded sessions, including a 1978 series of seven interviews with Marcia Weisman (1918-1991). As a leading collector of contemporary art, she was at the peak of her discerning powers. I also met...
her husband, Fred, on visits to their enchanting Beverly Hills home, which was decorated with key paintings by Rothko, de Kooning, Still, Johns, and Rauschenberg. And their backyard had been the setting for a well-known Hockney double-portrait, the source of much curiosity in the Met show.

Marcia would become a founder and an important benefactress of L.A.’s Museum of Contemporary Art. Fred, already a trustee of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, would establish his own museum at the University of Minnesota, his alma mater. This museum was designed by the L.A. architect Frank Gehry (born Ephraim Goldberg), who, before achieving stardom, had renovated the Weismans’ kitchen. And Fred would eventually establish another art museum, open only a few hours per week, within his new home.

Marcia and Fred’s efforts were both inspired and overshadowed by one of the country’s greatest art collectors, Norton Simon, who established his own extraordinary museum of old master, modern, and Asian art in Pasadena. Norton was in fact Marcia’s older brother, and Fred had spent much of his career working with him before venturing out on his own.

Marcia and Fred were nominal members of Wilshire Boulevard Temple, where my family belonged, and Marcia helped decorate the corridors of Cedars-Sinai, L.A.’s Jewish-sponsored medical center. But as far as I know, no member of the powerful Weisman-Simon family had much interest in Jewish philanthropy. Like some other major Jewish collectors in L.A. and elsewhere, they thought that gifts of art to public or private institutions would suffice. Fortunately, some key Jewish benefactors of our own RISD Museum – Selma Fain Pilavin Robinson and Dr. Joseph and Helene Chazan, among others – have also been quite committed to Jewish causes.

Fred and Marcia had of course posed for portraits by Warhol, which I had seen in their beachfront, Malibu home. I once went with her to see some of the artist’s latest paintings at a hip gallery in Venice, but the ride in her Rolls Royce was far more fun.

Marcia explained to me how, in 1968, she and Fred had commissioned their Hockney portrait. This acrylic painting, ten feet wide by seven feet high, is one of the largest and strangest in the
Met show. It shows the Weismans in front of their pool cabana, surrounded by some sculptures, including a Moore bronze and a Native American totem pole. Fred, standing in profile on the far left, looks dazed. Marcia, standing on the right but facing forward, also looks a bit disturbed or demented.

Far from a happy scene, the portrait actually documents a traumatic time for the Weisman family. After receiving a beating by one of Frank Sinatra’s bodyguards, Fred suffered considerable brain damage, and Marcia became responsible for his care. Understandably, the Weismans, hurt by Hockney’s painting, refused to take possession of it.

In 1984 it was acquired by the Art Institute of Chicago, where I have seen it quite prominently displayed on a few occasions. I urged the Art Institute to obtain a transcript of my interviews with Marcia, which consists of about 450 typewritten pages.

When I saw the Weisman portrait at the Met, I didn’t want to explain to visitors why Fred and Marcia looked ghoulish. Rather, I wanted to say that Marcia had been kind to me and responsive to my numerous questions. Indeed, we had challenged, surprised, and enjoyed each other. If not beautiful, she was a thoughtful and animated person, and art helped heal a deep wound caused by a child’s incurable illness.
I believe that Hockney is a hugely talented artist, and I much enjoyed looking back over his astonishing career. Inevitably, most important art outlives the circumstances in which it was created, but mockery is a dangerous weapon. Most likely, however, the Hockney portrait, while a reminder of tough times, did not become a factor in Marcia and Fred’s divorce.

Though they usually exist on the margins of Jewish life, I wish that there were more passionate and knowledgeable collectors like the Weismans. Timing is surely a factor, but ultimately the best collectors, like the best artists, possess nearly inexplicable gifts- and chutzpah!

Addendum:
On November 16, 2018, Hockney’s “Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures),” painted in 1972, sold at Christie’s in New York City for $90.3 million (including fees). This was the highest price ever paid at auction for a work by a living artist.

IV. Tom, My New Best Friend

Almost every day I walk a few blocks from my East Side home to the YMCA on Hope Street. When strangers ask if I “work out” there, I reply, “No, it’s social.” I may play Ping-Pong or huff and puff on a treadmill, but I’m mostly there to schmooze with old friends and meet new ones.

Last Thursday I recognized a familiar face. He may be a decade younger than I, but I hadn’t seen him in at least six months. Although I didn’t remember his name, I did recall his curiosity about and enthusiasm for Judaism. This seemed notable because he’s a proud Christian.

This past week Tom stopped in Providence to continue visiting his daughter and her family, who had just returned from a bat mitzvah in Israel. When I asked where, he replied, “The Wall, of course.”

As Tom explained to me, his son-in-law, Stephen, will be ordained in a few weeks at Boston’s Hebrew College. For the past few years he has served as a rabbinic intern at URI Hillel and at a Conservative congregation, Shaaray Tefila, in Glen Falls, New York. Tom

Notes
has visited there on several occasions to see his daughter, Bethany, Stephen, and their two-year-old daughter, Anav, as well as many congregants. Indeed, the bat mitzvah’s family encouraged him to make the trip to Israel. But this was his third or fourth trip there.

As a member of a Y branch in Phoenix, Tom may not be so remarkable. But his goal of making 1,000 new friends seems virtually unknown in Rhode Island. His eagerness to both share and question his religious beliefs also seems highly unusual.

For instance, Tom refers to the never-ending challenge of refilling his “love pot.” The typical ingredients, he explains, are faith, friends, food, books, and music. “G-music,” I learned, refers to the gospel genre.

Although he’s belonged to churches at various times in his life, Tom’s not particularly impressed by or dependent on organized religion. Indeed, he has often felt encumbered by it. Several years ago he sought a regimen that would deepen his sense of humility. But he became so proficient at achieving his goal that he sought something more daunting.

Out of the blue, Tom asked if I could try to identify his three favorite rabbis. I guessed that his son-in-law, Stephen, would be at the top of the list. I was wrong: he’s only third. “Heschel,” he explained, “would be number two.” Tom had read several of his books and was also aware of his significance as a civil rights champion.

When the Arizonan asked me to guess which rabbi belongs at the top of his list, he offered a clue. This person’s name begins with the letter “J.” I thought of several remote possibilities, such as Rick Jacobs and Marcus Jastrow, but then I decided to interject some merriment, so I answered, “Jehovah.” “Sorry,” Tom responded, “the correct answer is Jesus.”

My new best friend grew up on a dairy farm near Sacramento. “Cream,” he interjected, “rises to the top at least twice a day.” His favorite subject in school was history and, as an adult, he’s endeavoring to read 2,000 books. He writes down favorite quotations, hoping to find one suitable for his own headstone. His current favorite is: “He didn’t have much to give, but he gave it all.”

Tom’s childhood was filled with hardship and suffering, and
he felt quite relieved when his father was sent to prison. And now, after more than 40 years of marriage, Tom is experiencing a painful divorce. But he’s also quite proud of his four, home-schooled children. Some joined the military, sought vocational training or enrolled at a community college. All his kids, he claimed, have become quite accomplished.

Bethany, the eldest, may be the most illustrious. Following her 2003 graduation from Michigan’s Hillsdale College, she became interested in Judaism. Indeed, Bethany’s attraction only deepened while living in Israel for four years. Soon after becoming a convert, she decided to seek rabbinic ordination. But a year of study in Los Angeles and another in New York City led her in a somewhat different direction: a master’s degree in Jewish studies at Oxford University. For the last several years, Bethany has been studying for a doctorate in comparative theology under Prof. Ruth Langer, a rabbi, at Boston College. Tom thinks that this will enable her to become a “posthole digger.”

Stephen, also a Hillsdale graduate, earned a master’s in Jewish studies at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. His attraction to Judaism met with considerable disapproval by his family, for both his father and paternal grandfather had spent decades as medical missionaries in Africa. Stephen had lived there too and is fluent in French as well as Hebrew. Ironically, he became intrigued by the idea of seeking ordination as Bethany’s curiosity waned.

Tom’s family will soon be leaving Rhode Island, for Stephen will become rabbi of Temple Beth-El, in Birmingham, which is Alabama’s largest Conservative congregation. As previously demonstrated by his efforts to help African refugees in Israel, he hopes to become involved in interfaith and civil rights endeavors. Bethany will be working on her dissertation while caring for Anav.

I, for one, will miss Tom, a swimming pool repairman, around the Hope Street Y. What a colorful and gregarious character! I’m afraid that many other Y members will feel relieved, as they return to their solitary routines and rituals.
Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association

64th Annual Meeting

Longtime officer and board member Maxine Goldin chaired the meeting held on May 6, 2018 at the beautifully renovated Dwares Jewish Community Center. More than 100 members and guests enjoyed the upbeat event sponsored once again by the Arline Ruth Weinberg Memorial Fund.

Ruth Breindel reviewed many of the highly successful initiatives undertaken during the past three years of her presidency. She also thanked many leaders and supporters who helped bring these to fruition.

No doubt the most impressive achievement, as Treasurer David Bazar explained, was the Association’s capital campaign, which raised over $263,000 to enable our move to impressive new quarters within the Dwares JCC. The largest gift was donated by the Gertrude Regensteiner Revocable Trust, and the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island contributed $30,000 of in-kind services. The move, which cost $73,000, included new furniture, shelving, lighting, and signage. It will facilitate research by historians, students, and genealogists for generations to come. David also reported that the Association’s endowment, before the campaign, had increased to approximately $550,000.

Ruth installed the new slate of officers, board members, and two presidential appointees. Maxine cast her ballot to symbolically complete the nominating process.

Prof. Mel A. Top, the Association’s twentieth president, introduced himself and several of his goals for the upcoming year. He also praised Ruth’s significant accomplishments.

The afternoon’s speaker was Rabbi Joshua Breindel, who spoke three years ago when his mother began her presidency. Currently the spiritual leader of Temple Anshe Amunim in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, he is about to move with his family to Sudbury, where
he will assume the pulpit of Congregation Beth El. Rabbi Joshua’s talk was “Most of Us Live Off Hope,” which focused on his upbringing in Providence during the 1980s. He paid tribute to such influential institutions as Temple Emanu-El, the JCC, the Friday Group, and Chabad. Jewish food, Jewish youth organizations, and a trip to Russia with Project Harmony were also key factors in his personal development.

After adjourning the meeting, Maxine invited members and guests to participate in a festive reception.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth L. Breindel, Secretary
In Memoria:

November 2, 2017-November 1, 2018

Bazar, Beverly, born in Providence, was the daughter of the late Samuel and Henrietta (Weinbaum) Wishnevsky. She was predeceased by her son, Joseph.

A graduate of Rhode Island College of Education, Mrs. Bazar also earned a master’s degree in special education there. She began her teaching career working with students with special needs at the Children's Center in Warwick. Later, for a decade, she was president of the board of St. Dunstan’s School in Providence.

Also an entrepreneur, Mrs. Bazar worked with her husband, Banice, selling Panasonic electronics at military posts. She opened her own chain of Impulse stores at malls in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. She also owned and operated an inn in Waterville Valley, New Hampshire.

Mrs. Bazar belonged to Crestwood Country Club and was a member of Temple Beth-El. She was a life member of our Association.

Mrs. Bazar is survived by Banice and their children, Peter, David (a longtime treasurer of our Association), and Karen Bergel.

Died on June 27, 2018 in Providence at the age of 88.

Cohen, Dr. Elie, born in Cairo, was a son of the late Joseph and Rachel Cohen. In 1959, after earning a medical degree at Ein Shams University in Cairo, he sought advanced training in the United States. He completed an internship at The Miriam Hospital and a residency at Rhode Island Hospital.

Dr. Cohen became the first orthopedic surgeon to establish a practice in Newport. He was also a pioneer there in the practice of numerous surgical procedures. Dr. Cohen was a president of the Newport County Medical Society and of the medical staff of Newport Hospital. He was also a governor of the Newport HealthCare Corporation and served on the state’s Workmen’s Compensation Committee and the Medical Examiner’s Committee. In 2013, following his
retirement from private practice, he remained active on Newport Hospital’s senior staff.

Fluent in French and Arabic, Dr. Cohen enjoyed worldwide travel. For more than a half century he belonged to the Newport Lions Club. He was also a mainstay of the Newport Yacht Club and the Newport Sail and Power Squadron.

Dr. Cohen, who belonged to Congregation Jeshuat Israel, was a founding member of Touro National Heritage Trust. He was also a past president of B’nai B’rith of Newport.

He is survived by his wife, Marcia, and their children, Renee, Audrey Pavia, and Lawrence.

*Died on March 1, 2018 in the Caribbean at the age of 87.*

Cohn, Rosalea, born in Boston, was the daughter of the late Joseph J. and Celia (Weinfield) Elowitz. She was predeceased by her husband, Newton.

Mrs. Cohn graduated from Hope High School and Rhode Island State College in 1949. She was employed as an accountant in her late husband’s practice.

Mrs. Cohn was a secretary of Miriam Hospital’s Women’s Association and a treasurer of the Silver Haired Legislature. In addition to serving as a president of Temple Beth-El’s Sisterhood, she was the first woman president of the congregation’s board. (There have been three others.) For decades, she was also active on its art committee. The Temple’s annual meeting was named in her honor and Newton’s honor. Mrs. Cohn was also a life member of our Association.

She is survived by her daughters, Ellen Cohn and Anne Pitegoff.

*Died on January 16, 2018 in Providence at the age of 90.*

Feibelman, Hannah, born in Providence, was a daughter of the late Jack and Sadie (Marks) Davis. Her siblings included the late Rabbi Maurice Davis.

Even before graduating from Central High School, she began working in offices. Soon she assisted her husband in establishing
and maintaining several businesses.

Mrs. Feibelman was a lifelong member of Temple Beth-El and a founding member of Temple Sinai. She was active in both congregations’ Sisterhoods. She was also a life member of our Association. An avid bridge player, she belonged to the American Contract Bridge League.

Mrs. Feibleman is survived by her husband, Jack, and their children, Jeffrey and Barbara, and their daughter-in-law Caryl.

Died on December 20, 2017 in Cranston at the age of 98.

Fradin, Estelle, born in Providence, was the daughter of the late Milton and Cora Goldsmith. She was predeceased by her husband, Jack, who served many years as our Association’s treasurer. Mrs. Fradin graduated from Syracuse University, where she was active in Sigma Delta Tau sorority.

A highly accomplished and beloved educator, she taught kindergarten for 38 years in Providence and Cranston. Upon her retirement in the latter city, she was honored with the naming of a playground. Mrs. Fradin also volunteered for many youth organizations as well as Special Olympics. Her favorite Jewish endeavors were the National Council of Jewish Women and Hadassah. She was a member of Temple Emanu-El.

Mrs. Fradin is survived by her children, Neil, Charles, and Ruth Singer.

Died on January 8, 2018 in Cranston at the age of 88.

Fradin, Paul M., born in Providence, was the son of the late Hyman and Dorothy (Bernstein) Fradin. He was predeceased by his wife, Janet.

Mr. Fradin, a graduate of Classical High School and Rhode Island State College, served as a lieutenant in the Rhode Island Air National Guard during the Korean Conflict. He worked with his father in the family business, Charles Fradin, Inc., and then significantly expanded it. Additional ventures included Copley Distributors, which eventually became part of Horizon Beverage Group. Mr. Fradin’s son, Charles, was also involved with these enterprises.
In 1985 Mr. Fradin became a trustee of the Teamsters’ Health and Welfare Fund and served as its cochairman from 1990 until 2016.

A lifelong member of Temple Beth-El, he was also active in the Jewish Federation, Miriam Hospital, Providence Hebrew Day School, The Groden Center, and the University of Rhode Island, where he established the Hyman Fradin Scholarship Endowment.

Mr. Fradin was also a member of Ledgemont Country Club and the Aurora Club. His numerous interests included fishing, skiing, travel, reading, and entertaining.

Mr. Fradin is survived by his daughter, Marjorie Diaco, and his son, Charles.

_Died on June 1, 2018 in Providence at the age of 88._

**Gaines, Prof. Abner J.,** born in Atlantic City, New Jersey, was the son of the late Jacob and Lilly Ginsburg. He was predeceased by his wife, Rosalyn.

After graduating from the University of Michigan in 1944, he served in the Marine Corps during the remainder of World War II. He saw active duty in the Pacific and in China.

Mr. Gaines earned a master’s degree in library science at the University of Pennsylvania and worked in Temple University’s library, also in Philadelphia. In the early 1960s, he became an associate professor of library science at the University of Rhode Island and taught there until his retirement.

Prof. Gaines and his wife traveled to all seven continents. Beyond his bibliomania, he was a supporter of the American Civil Liberties Union and the Rhode Island Historical Society and enjoyed football.

Prof. Gaines is survived by his daughter, Barbara.

_Died on August 16, 2018 in Kingston at the age of 95._

**Lev, Varda H.,** born in Jerusalem, was the daughter of the late Earl and Anna (Grossman) Sherman. She and her family soon moved to New York City, where, through her parents’ influence and participation at Camp Massad, she accelerated her understanding of Hebrew. She became a bat mitzvah long before the ritual was well
Mrs. Lev, a lifelong musician, studied piano at the High School of Music & Art before attending the University of Pennsylvania. After earning a master’s degree at Teachers College of Columbia University, she taught kindergarten in New York City schools. While a member of Temple Emanu-El for 40 years, Mrs. Lev became a font of musical instruction and inspiration in its religious school.

She was also active in the Temple’s Percelay Museum and participated in advanced Hebrew programs at the Bureau of Jewish Education. For decades Mrs. Lev inspired youth in her Hebrew choir, klezmer band, and in private piano instruction.

As a leader of the Rhode Island Chamber Music Committee, she brought many world-renowned musicians to perform in this area and often hosted them in her home. She also enjoyed hosting countless Jewish holiday celebrations for family, friends, and strangers alike.

Mrs. Lev is survived by her husband, Robert, and their daughters, Leora, Rebecca Murray, and Zoe.

*Died on September 6, 2018 in Providence at the age of 86.*

**Michaels, Harvey,** born in Providence, was a son of the late Thomas and Martha (Saunders) Michelovitch. Originally a car dealer with his father and brother, he became a real estate developer with Michaels Management Group.

Mr. Michaels, a former member of Temple Sinai, belonged to Temple Beth-El. He was an enthusiastic member of both congregations’ Brotherhoods. He participated in numerous other organizations, including: Jewish War Veterans’ Post 23, Fraternal Order of Police’s Post 7, Masons’ Redwood Lodge, Knights of Pythias, Touro Fraternal Association, and South Providence Hebrew Free Loan Association.

Mr. Michaels, the beloved companion of Ann Winograd, also resided in Key Largo, Florida.

*Died on August 9, 2018 in Warwick at the age of 90.*

**Robin, Elaine,** born in New York City, was a daughter of the late
Charles and Mollie (Weissbloom) Mark. She was a graduate of the High School of Music & Art and Hunter College.

During the early 1960s, while training as an elementary school teacher in Providence, Mrs. Robin participated in one of Jean Nidetch’s first Weight Watchers classes in New York City. As the first owner of a regional Weight Watchers franchise, she oversaw classes in Rhode Island and eastern Massachusetts from 1965 to 1981. She and her husband, Will, retired to Centerville, Cape Cod. The Robins had also resided in Easton, Pennsylvania.

Mrs. Robin, an adventurer and optimist, enjoyed numerous pursuits, including: gardening, sewing, knitting, quilting, carpentry, and ceramics in addition to cooking. She was also an early technology buff who loved teaching and other challenges. She was a life member of our Association.

Mrs. Robin is survived by Will and their children, Susan Bookbinder, Ellen, Beth, and Deborah.

*Died on April 19, 2018 in Hartford at the age of 92.*

**Samdperil, Ruth,** born in Providence, was the daughter of the late Joseph and Celia (Sack) Matzner. She was predeceased by her husband, Charles, and their son, Henry.

Mrs. Samdperil graduated from Hope high School and attended Rhode Island School of Design. She was a member of Temple Emanu-El.

A talented artist, Mrs. Samdperil enjoyed drawing and painting as well as introducing her children and grandchildren to the arts. She also relished spending summers in Narragansett and Jamestown and winters in Jupiter, Florida.

Mrs. Samdperil is survived by her children, Stephen, Debra, Terry Schuster, and Karyn Rosenfield.

*Died on October 8, 2018 in Providence at the age of 86.*

**Schupack, Prof. Mark B.,** born in New Britain, Connecticut, was the son of the late Edward and Betty (Saltzman) Schupack Chesley.

He earned his bachelor’s degree at M.I.T. and was employed as an industrial engineer before serving as a lieutenant in the Air
Force. He then earned a master’s and a doctorate in economics at Princeton. He taught economics at Brown for four decades, from 1959 to 1999. His illustrious academic career included several other positions: chair of the economics department, associate provost, dean of the graduate school, and vice provost for affiliated programs.

Beyond College Hill, Prof. Schupack chaired the board of the Graduate Record Exam and served on the Rhode Island Consumers’ Council. His hobbies included serving as a docent at the RISD Art Museum and model railroading. He was a member of Temple Beth-El.

Prof. Schupack is survived by his wife, Helaine, and their children, Andrew, and Roberta Senecal.

*Died on September 27, 2018 in Providence at the age of 87.*

**Sharpe, Gertrude Edelston**, born in Providence, was a daughter of the late Harry and Anna (Shatkin) Chaet. She was predeceased by her husbands, Harold Edelston and Norman Sharpe.

Mrs. Sharpe was a graduate of Hope High School and Rhode Island School of Design.

She is survived by her children, Hattie Katkow, Marcia Kas-part, and Bruce Edelston, and by her stepdaughters, Dr. Arlene and Rochelle Sharpe.

*Died on August 18, 2018 at the age of 97.*

**Silverman, Irma**, born in Providence, was the daughter of the late Robert and Sophie (Gabrilowitz) Cohen. She was predeceased by her husband, Eugene.

A 1941 graduate of Hope High School, Mrs. Silverman was a member of Temple Sinai and a life member of Hadassah. She chaired the March of Dimes campaign in Franklin County, Massachusetts. Mrs. Silverman enjoyed painting and bridge, which she taught in many assisted living facilities. Throughout her life she enjoyed cheering for the Red Sox.

Mrs. Silverman is survived by her children, Stephen, Peter, and Robin Sciarcon.

*Died on April 13, 2018 in Warwick at the age of 94.*
Funds & Bequests of the
Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association

General Funds
Arnold T. and Alice Axelrod Galkin
Ira S. and Anna Galkin
Frederick and Sylvia Kenner
Rhode Island Jewish Fraternal Association
Erwin E. and Pauline E. Strasmich

Book Fund
Benton H. and Beverly Rosen

Research Scholarship Fund
Dr. Seebert J. and Gertrude H. Goldowsky

Memorial Funds
Judith Weiss Cohen
Eleanor F. Horvitz Award for Student Research
Arline Ruth Weinberg

Bequests
Lillian G. Abrams
Claire Ernstoff
Max Kerzner
Jeannette S. Nathans
Samuel and Charlotte Primack
Harold Soloveitzik
B. Ruby Winnerman

Support for Publication of *The Notes*
Dr. Isadore and Helen Gershman Fund
The Harold A. Winstead Charitable Foundation Trust

The Fred, Gertrude, and Henry Regensteiner Offices
Established through a distribution of the Gertrude Regensteiner Revocable Trust

Notes
2018 Life Members

Mrs. Sandra Abrams
Mrs. Betty Adler
Mr. and Mrs. Mark Adler
Mr. and Mrs. Melvin G. Alperin
Mr. and Mrs. Nathaniel Baker
Mr. Banice C. Bazar
Mrs. Rosalie Adelman Beloff
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Berkelhammer
Mr. and Mrs. Stanley P. Blacher
Mr. and Mrs. Elliott Brodsky
Mr. Neal Bromley
Mrs. Sylvia Bromley
Mrs. Susan Brown
Mrs. Earle F. Cohen
Mr. and Mrs. Donald H. Dwares
Mr. and Mrs. David Engle
Mr. Barry and Dr. Elaine Fain
Ms. Lois Fain
Mr. Jack Feibelman
Mr. and Mrs. Carl H. Feldman
Mrs. Walter Feldman
Mrs. Geraldine S. Foster
Ms. Judith Foster & Mr. Mark Andres
Mr. Charles Fradin
Mr. and Mrs. H. Alan Frank
Mr. Robert T. Galkin
Ms. Ellen Geltzer
Mr. and Mrs. James Gershman
Mrs. Maxine Goldin
Dr. and Mrs. George M. Goodwin
Mrs. Hazel Grossman
Rabbi and Mrs. Leslie Y. Gutterman
Mr. and Mrs. Alan Hassenfeld
Dr. and Mrs. James K. Herstoff
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hicks
Mr. and Mrs. David M. Hirsch
Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Hurvitz
Mrs. Betty Jaffe
Ms. Marilyn Kagan
Ms. Patti Kaplan
Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Kaufman
Mrs. Rachel Kaufman
Mrs. Estelle R. Klemer
Mrs. Betty Kotlen
Mrs. Anne Krause
Mrs. Elaine Kroll
Mrs. Barbara Levine
Mrs. Dorothy Licht
Mrs. Bess Lindenbaum
Mrs. Judith Holzman Litt
Ms. Andrea Losben
Mr. Ronald Markoff
Dr. Darielle Mason
Ms. Gabrielle Mason
Dr. Edwin S. Mehlman
Mr. Mathew L. Millen
Prof. and Mrs. Leonard Moss
Mr. and Mrs. Milton Nachbar
Mrs. Jane S. Nelson
Mrs. Phoebe Nulman
Dr. and Mrs. Mark D. Olken
Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence D. Page
Ms. Charlotte J. Penn
Mr. and Mrs. Warren Rabinowitz
Dr. James E. Reibman
Mr. Kenneth Resnick
Mrs. Marcia S. Riesman
Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Robbins
Mr. William L. Robin
Mr. and Mrs. Harris N. Rosen
Mr. and Mrs. Jay Rosenstein
Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Rumpler
Mrs. Frances Sadler
Mrs. Ruth Fishbein Salkin
Mr. Jerrold Salmanson
Mr. and Mrs. Jerome Sapolsky
Mr. Harold Schein
Mrs. Lillian Schwartz
Mr. and Mrs. Philip Segal
Mr. and Mrs. Norman M. Shack
Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Sherman
Mrs. Roslyn Sinclair
Dr. Sonia Sprung
Mrs. Selma Stanzler
Mrs. Polly Strasmich
Mrs. Sylvia S. Strauss
Mr. Joshua Teverow
Prof. Mel Topf
Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Wasserman
Mr. and Mrs. Jack Waxman
Mr. Eugene Weinberg
Mr. and Mrs. Howard S. Weiss
Mr. and Mrs. James R. Winoker
Mrs. Gloria Winston
Mr. and Mrs. Irving Wiseman
Mr. Joseph Zendlovitz
Mr. and Mrs. Melvin L. Zurier
Mrs. Sydney Zurier
Index to Volume 17
Kate-Lynne Laroche & George M. Goodwin

A
“Aaron T. Beck: The “Golden Ghetto” of Providence and Cognitive Therapy,” 244-55
Aaroni, Prof. Abraham 752-54, 757
Abrams, Max & Son, cabinetmakers 13
Adelman, David C. 274
Adelman, Dr. Maurice 45, 47, 51
Adler, Walter 89
Afsai, Shai 118-29, 370-403, 475-86, 800-15
Agai, Rosa & Nissan 469
Albany, New York 29
Alexander, Sheila 774, 776
Algeria 673
aliyah 259, 275, 370-403, 461, 467-74, 724, 784
Allen, Avraham & Nehama 372-73
Alperin, Max 551, 779, 783
Alperin, Mel 98, 732, 783, 821
Alperin Schechter Day School 772-85, 788-91, 793
Alrose Chemical 69
“Alton: A Camp Beloved by Rhode Islanders,” 97-104
Amber, Willie & Rose 70-71
“America’s Oldest Synagogue Wrestles With Court Battle and Its Own Decline,” 160-67
American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee 241
“An Album of my Alums,” 168-175
Angelone, Ed 69
anti-Semitism 51, 74, 101, 120, 205, 245-46, 259, 261, 279, 379, 401-02, 538-42, 724, 731, 733
Arbeter Bund (Jewish socialist movement) 280
Aristides de Sousa Mendes Society 94
Armon Hanatziv Promenade 122
Aronson, Edward 777
art museums (see also RISD) 833-37
Artz, Rabbi Max 761
Atlantic Tubing and Rubber Company  69
Attleboro Braiding Company  273
Austria  426-28

B
Bachrach, Rabbi David  39
Baeck, Rabbi Leo  748
Bakari, Ibn  95
Baldwin, Rev. Charles  577
bar mitzvah  56, 106, 239-240, 280, 303, 308
Barrington, RI  581-93
bat mitzvah  398
Bazarsky, Etta  38
Beck, Dr. Aaron T.  244-55
Beck, Harry S.  245-46
“Becoming a Jewish Writer and Storyteller,”  104-14
“Before Lady Michael,”  594-603
“Beginning My Career, Part I: Medical Training, Early Years of Practice, and the Draft,”  42-55;
Part II, 226-42
Beiser, Binyamin  382-84
Beiser, Reuben  380-82
Bell, Bernard  406-10
Bell, Joshua  273
Ben-Ari, Sandra  120
Benny, Jack  694, 700
Beraha, Rabbi Josh  788-89, 793, 795-96
Beraha, Dr. Nathan  790
Berger, Betty  38
Berkovic family  438-51, 654-63
Bermuda  831
Bernhardt History Gallery  115
Bernstein, Morton  658-59
Beth Israel Hospital, Boston  45, 48
Bible  101, 106, 121-22, 125-26, 131, 135-55, 158,
161-63, 171, 703, 706, 709, 731, 735, 740, 808, 811,
829
Bierman, Herman & Ida  77, 81
Binder, Mark  105-14
Blake, Mel  115-17, 362-69
“The Blessing,”  510
Blum, Jeffrey  541
B’nai B’rith Youth  93
Bohnen, Rabbi Eli  247, 562, 774
Bolotow, Louis  247
Bornstein Holocaust Education Center  712, 732
Borowitz, Rabbi Eugene  587, 751-52, 757
Boston Camerata  279
Boston Latin School  97
Boston Museum of Fine Arts  131, 143-44, 162
Boyman, Alter  248
Boy Scouts  56, 88-91
Branford, CT  56-57
Braude, Rabbi Joel  709
Brier, Benjamin  657, 662
Bristol, RI  19
Broad Street School  50, 283
Brodsky, Prof. Judith Kapstein  665
Brookline, MA  47-48
“Brothers,”  702-09
Brown, Cantor Remmie  585
Brown-RISD Hillel  97, 119
Buitekan, Isaac  23
Bureau of Jewish Education  22, 561, 776, 788
Bush, President George W.  578

C
Cambridge  11, 48, 58, 205
camps (summer)  294-315
Alton  96-103
Arundel  706
Bauercrest  314
Highland Nature  97
JORI  450, 720, 768
Kehonka  101
Kennebec  296
Laurel  97
Mataponi  97
Ramah 726
Tel Noar 282
Vega 295-97
Waredaca 106
Winnebago 297
Yagoog 89
Yavnah 768

“Captain John J. Kapstein, U.S. Army Air Force:
In War and Peace,” 665-80
Carreiro, Eleanor Kelman 22, 25-26
Chafee, Gov. John 694, 700
chaplaincy 798
Chepachet, RI 28-41
Chicago 789
Cicilline, Mayor David 736
“A Clarification: The 1889 Masonic Cornerstone
Ceremony at Temple Beth-El,” 475-86
Classical High School 61, 97, 276, 280, 290, 372, 378,
380, 408, 665, 791
Cohen, Aaron & Judith 725
Cohen, Adolf 272-73
Cohen, Amy 170
Cohen, Beatrice 280
Cohen, Bernard 272-73
Cohen, Dr. Earl 68
Cohen, Esther 279-81
Cohen, Gussie 273
Cohen, Harold 272-73
Cohen, Israel 279
Cohen, Jacob 23
Cohen, Jacob Israel 280
Cohen, Joel 279-93
Cohen, Jules 89, 259
Cohen, Paul 538
Cohen, Samuel 272-73
colleges (see universities)
Commercial High School 38
congregations (see also temples)
Ahavas Achim 165, 453-54
Ahavath Sholom (Howell St.) 39, 247
Am David 362-69
Anshee Kovno 561
Barrington Jewish Center 583
Beth Sholom 124-26, 316, 370, 398, 402-03
B’nai Israel, Southbury, CT 666
Habonim 580-93
Humboldt Boulevard Temple, Chicago 241
Huntington Jewish Center, Long Island 725
Jeshuat Israel (also known as Touro Synagogue)
131-58, 94, 125, 131-58, 160-67, 238-40, 269,
279, 316-61, 454, 512-27, 681-93
Kehillath Israel, Brookline, MA 775
Linat HaZedeq 562
Mikvah Israel 145
Mishkon Tefiloh 561
Orange Synagogue Center, CT 728
Rodef Shalom, Pittsburgh 821
Shaaray Tefila, Glen Falls, NY 839
Shaare Tikvah 237, 241
Shaare Zedek 125, 562
Sha-arei Tefilla 125
Shearith Israel, New York City 131-58, 455, 517-27,
681-93
Shearith Israel, Wharton, TX 726
Sons of Israel and David (see Temple Beth-El)
Sons of Jacob 537, 698
Sons of Zion 537, 561
Tree of Life, Pittsburgh 816-25
United Brothers Synagogue 19
Connecticut 56-59
“A Conversation with Percival Goodman,” 487-511
Cranston High school 705
Cuba 815
Cutler, Ada 774-75, 779, 783
Czechoslovakia 661

D
Dantowitz, Rabbi Faith 794-95
“Decision in Congregation Jeshuat Israel v.
Congregation Shearith Israel,” 515-27, 684-93
De Gaulle, President Charles 667
Depression, Great 51, 56, 70, 164, 453
Deutsch, Jan 261
Diwinsky, Hy 257
Diwinsky, Rhea 378-80
Dolan, Cardinal Timothy 734-35, 737
Dolinger, Rabbi Barry 124
Doyle Street Grammar School 668
Drazin, Rabbi Moshe 561

E
Eban, Abba 819
“Echoes of My Musical Upbringing,” 279-93
“The Education of a Liberal Rabbi,” 742-57
Egozi, Rabbi Akiva 562
Ehrenhaus, Barbara 563
Eichenbaum, Ray 72-87, 213-25, 426-37
Eisenhower, President Dwight 228
Eisenstein, Arthur 699
Eliezer, Rabbi Yisrael Ben 238
Elkin, Rabbi Josh 758-71
Ellenson, Rabbi David 797
Ellison, Minna 788
Elorza, Mayor Jorge 720
England 73
English High School, Providence 10
Ethical Culture Society 94
Ethiopia 118-129, 815

F
Faber, Faiga & Samuel 38-39
Fain, Irving 725
Fain, Norman 724
Fall River, MA 696-98
Falls Village, CT 124
Feinberg, Sarah & Saul 461-65
Felder, Dr. Michael & Elissa 124-25
Felder, Yaakov 393-95
Feldstein, Edward 541, 710-21, 792
Feldstein, Harry & Eva 712, 717
Feldstein, Sydney 714, 717
Felix, Rabbi Cathy 578
“Fiddler on the Roof” 788
Fine, Bob 103
Fink, Charles & Edward 702-09
Fink, Clara & Harry 170

Notes
Fink, Emily  268-69
Fink, Harry 703
Fink, Herbert 707
Fink, “Lady” Michael W.  169-70, 257, 594-603, 694-710
Fink, Michael 168-75, 256-69, 406-10, 594-603, 702-09
Flannery, Father Edward 729-32
Florida 658, 660, 663
“For Anne,” 176-79
Forman, Bertram 530-31
Foster, Geraldine S.  22-27, 29, 92, 177-79, 461-65, 467-72
Foster, Libby Agai 466-74
Foster, Warren 461-74
“For Four Short Articles,” 826-40
Fox Point, Providence 22-27
Fox, Roberta 29
France 441-43, 656, 660-62, 667, 677
Franklin, Mervin & Marjorie 726
Franklin, Rabbi Wayne 712, 722-41
Freedman Jewish Retreat Center 124
Freehof, Rabbi Solomon 521
Friedlander, Rabbi Albert 747-78, 757
Friedman, Rabbi Edwin 586
Friedman, Phyllis, 163-65
Friedman, Robert 162

G
Galkin, Herman 89
Gelineau, Bishop Louis 730
Gemilath Chesed  (see Hebrew Free Loan) 275
Gentile, Edward 538
Gereboff, Joel 559-73
Germany 66, 73-82, 748
Gerson, Anna 658
“Getting from There to Here: My 43 Years as a Rabbi in Rhode Island,” 580-93
Gilman, Rabbi Neil 733
Gittelsohn, Rabbi Roland 583-84, 757
Goldberg, Justice Arthur 819
Goldberg, Rob 574-79
Goldberg, Ruth 45
Goldowsky, Bonnie 43-44, 48, 53, 227-28
Goldowsky, Seebert J. 42-55, 226-35
Goldstein, Alice & Sidney 364
Goldstein, Herman 69

Goldstein, Jacob 447
Goldstein, Morris & Sarah 447
Goldstein, Ruth 438-51, 654-63
Goodman, Percival 487-509
Goodman, Rabbi Sol 89
Goodwin, Eugene S. 56-59
Gordon, Charles & Frances 561
Gorfein, Theodore 538
Gorin, Jeremiah 273
Goshen, CT 58
Greenberg, Ernie 68
Greenberg, Rabbi Irving 732
Greenstein, Maurice 538
Guilford, CT 58
Gutstein, Rabbi Morris 237-42, 454
Gutstein, Rabbi Naftali 237
Gutstein, Solomon 237-42
Guterman, Janet Engelhart 816-25
Guterman, Rabbi Leslie 114-17, 817, 825

H
Hartford, CT 56
Hassenfeld brothers 248
Hassenfeld, Sylvia 822
Hebrew Free Loan Association 31, 275
Hebrew Union College 148, 583, 750-55, 770, 788, 794-97, 821
Heschel, Rabbi Abraham 727
Hiatt Institute, Israel 467
Hillel 718, 793, 825
Himmelfarb, Burton 64
Hockman, Alex 471, 473

Notes
Hoffman, Morton 539
Holland, Roberta 822
Hollywood 56, 62, 208
Hope High School 70, 119, 249, 561, 658, 668, 706, 713-15, 717
Horvitz, Eleanor 29, 89, 92, 119
hospitals (see also Miriam & Rhode Island) 42-55, 226-35, 248
“How I Came to Live in Chepachet,” 28-41
Hunt, Bishop George 732-33

I
“I Called Him “Mr. Bell,”” 406-10
Illuzzi, Prof. Jennifer 528-58, 711
immigrants 22-25, 31, 34, 56, 205
“Introduction to the First Circuit Opinion,” 512-14
Iraq 812
Israel 10, 56, 70, 119-28, 202, 257, 259, 275, 279, 370-403, 661, 674-75, 706, 732, 745, 802-03, 808, 812, 814, 823
Israel, Atty. Gen. Richard 724
Italy 675, 678, 826-30
“It’s in the Cards”: The Evolution of the Sackett Family’s Business,” 8-21

J
Jacobs, Al 70
Jacobson, Libby 68
Jagolinzer, Rabbi Marc 166
Jamieson, Prof. Judith 732
Japhet, Beth & Nathan 375-77
Jerusalem 467-74
jewelry 51, 74, 174, 188
Jewish Alliance of Greater RI 121, 740, 788
Jewish Community Center 712, 714, 720, 780, 791
Jewish Community Day School of RI 125, 789
Jewish Family Service 97, 446, 448, 657
Jewish Federation of RI 720, 723-24, 732, 779, 816, 821
Jewish fraternities 45, 56,
Menorah Society 205
Phi Delta Epsilon 45, 47
Pi Lambda Phi 62
The Lambs 205
Tower Club 61-62, 71
Zeta Beta Tau 612

“Jewish Lawyers Admitted to the Rhode Island Bar: 1883 to 1927,” 277-78

Jewish Ledger, The 563
Jewish Museum, New York 134, 140-41
Jewish Orphanage of RI (JORI) 89
Jewish Theological Seminary 241, 562, 727, 729, 733, 770, 784, 795-96
Jewish Voice, The 22, 89, 582, 827
Jewish Welfare Board 240
“The Jews of Fox Point,” 22-27
Joukowsky, Martha 732
“Jugglers: Two Brown Writers of the 1920s,” 204-12

K
Kapstein, Bernard & Fanny 668
Kapstein, Jeremy 712
Kapstein, Jonathan 664-80
Kapstein, Prof. Israel & Stella 665, 668-89, 671
Kapstein, Matthew & Ethan 678
Kapstein, Sherwin 669
Katz, Rabbi Heinrich 454
Kaunfer, Rabbi Alvan 772-85
Kaunfer, Marcia 774-75, 784
Kelman, Elizabeth 25-26
Kelman, Harry & Harvey 25
Kelman, Morris 24-26
Kelman, William & Anna 25-26
Kerman, Rabbi Dan 576, 578
Kennedy, Patrick Rep. 105
King, Rev. Martin Luther 725
Klein, Rabbi Andrew 582
Korean Conflict 68, 169, 598, 704
Kramer, Louis 779-80
Krasner, Prof. Robert 538, 551-52, 715
Kroll, Sanford 779-80
Kronish, Maxine 577
Kushner, Rabbi Harold 587, 726

L
Ladd Center 94
Landau, Robert & Leslie 792
Landau, Rabbi Susan 786-99
Lauffer, Rabbi Moshe 583
lawyers 273-78, 454
Ledgemont Country Cub 724
Leeman, Rabbi Saul 725
“Leo Tobak and His 1933 Letter from Palestine,” 452-59
Levin, Henry 538
Levine, Tova Stark 398-401
Lewis, Rabbi Theodore 165
Lewisson, Lewis 23
Licht, Gov. Frank 719-20, 724
Linden, Kenneth 28-41
Lindenbaum, Bess 28-41
Lindenbaum, Roberta Fox 29, 39
Lipsey, Judge Howard 549, 714
Logowitz, Stephen 6-7, 510-11
London 831-33
Los Angeles 56-57, 831-37
Lopez, Aaron 163

M
Madeira, Francis & Jean 285-87
Maine 17, 63
Mandel, Rabbi Marc 125, 132, 161-67
Marcus, Rabbi Jacob 82
Marker, Rabbi Rick 577
Markoff, Charles & Samuel 13
Markoff, Florence 97
Markoff, Gary 98
Markoff, Ronald C. 96-104
Matusow, Edith & Ben 446, 655, 657, 662
Marwil, Dr. Daniel 585
Marx, Rebecca 39
Mauthausen 224-25, 427-29
Mayerson, Hymen 275-76
Meller, Adolph 669

Index
Menorah Society 205
Metnick, Alan 738
“Michael Fink’s Predecessors: The Earliest Jewish Rhode Islanders at Yale,” 270-75
Michaelson, Julius 716
Middleboro, MA 93
Miller’s Deli 659
Mintz, Michael & Orli 388-92
Miriam Hospital 50, 248, 720, 723
Montreal, Canada 48
Moss, Rabbi Danny 798-99
Muslims 736-37
“My Black Soul and White Skin: A Memoir,” 92-95
“My Dinner(s) with Jack,” 575-79
Myers, Meyer 131-37, 143-58, 161-68
“My Family’s Summer Camps,” 294-315
“My Formative Years in Providence,” 758-71
“My Little Anatevka,” 786-99
“My Mentor, Prof. Jacob Neusner,” 559-73

N
NAACP 94
Nachbar, Rona 29
Nachman of Breslov, Rabbi 741, 800-15
Nadien, Florence Weintraub 694-701
Nadien, Max & Harriet 695-96
Nadien, Sylvia Rosenthal 694-701
Naftalis, Gary 132
Narragansett 71, 98, 233, 240
Nathan Bishop Junior High 14, 706
Nathan, Ernest 69
National Council of Synagogues 736
National Yiddish Book Center 105
Nazis 72-88, 142, 169, 213-24, 426-37, 660, 667, 672-73, 696, 733
Nemtzow, Harry & Joshua 164-65
Neusner, Jacob 559-79
“Never Far from South Providence, II: A Momentus Decade,” 60-71
New Bedford, MA 15
New Britain, CT 56-57
New England Academy of Torah 125

Notes
New Hampshire 17, 97
New Jersey 28, 38, 44, 59, 63, 820
Newport 23, 53, 90, 125, 132-33, 142, 152, 156,
161-71, 205, 237-40, 276, 289-90, 316-61, 375,
392, 403, 708
Newport Mercury 453
Newton, MA 106
New York City 10-11, 18, 39, 71, 170, 208-10, 237,
246, 272, 275, 296, 312,
New York State 10-11, 17-18, 20, 59
Nigeria 119, 815
Nisson, Irving 232
Nisson, Solomon 53
Norton, Jacob 479-85
Novogroski, Joel & Max 534
Nuremberg Trials 435

O
Obama, President Barack 95
Operation Moses 123, 125-26
Orson, Barbara 699
“Our Daughter Made Aliyah,” 466-72
Outlet Company 23

P
Palestine 452-65
Panken, Rabbi Arron 786, 797
Paramount Greeting Cards 13
Paris 67
Passover 26
Pastore, Sen. John 718
Pawtucket 13, 655, 657
Pawtucket West High School 450
Paxson, Pres. Christina 212
Pell, Sen. Clairborne 716
Perelman, S.J. 205-12
pilgrimage 900-15
Pingry School, NJ 743-6
Pittsburgh 816-25
pogroms 9
Poland 31, 33-34, 39, 72-88, 213-24, 426-37, 662,
738-39
Pope Francis 739
Potok, Rabbi Chaim 726
“Proud to Be a Yankee,” 56-59
Providence 9-13, 15, 23, 25, 31-32, 36, 38-39, 47-48,
50-51, 62, 98, 105, 112, 120, 161, 205-206
Providence Community Kollel 125
Providence Hebrew Day School 470, 561, 763-64,
776-78
Providence Journal 22, 115, 291, 477, 730
Providence Passover Journal 245-46
Providence Preservation Society 22, 25
Pullman, George 713

R
“Rabbi Gutterman's Study,” 114-17
“Rabbi Morris A. Gutstein: A Portrait of My Father,”
236-43
“Rabbi Wayne Franklin's Interfaith Leadership,”
722-41
Red Cross 655
Redwood Lodge (Masons) 475-85
Regensteiner, Fred 69
Ress, Joseph 551, 724, 740
Rhode Island Council for Humanities 741
Rhode Island Foundation 724
Rhode Island Hospital 50, 52-53, 102, 228, 250-51,
713
Rhode Island Jewish Herald 108
Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association 42, 247,
274, 531
Rhode Island Philharmonic 699-701
Rhode Island Supreme Court 682-83
Rhode Island Civic Chorale & Orchestra 290
Rhode Island Philharmonic 285
Ribicoff, Abraham & Irving 56
Richmond, RI 69
Riesman, Robert 103, 551, 719
“The Rimonim Dispute Continued: Introduction to
the First Circuit Court's En Banc Denial,”
681-83
rimmonim 130-58, 161-67, 316-61, 512-27
Rivera, Jacob Rodriguez 163

Notes
Rivesalte, France 441-43
Robbins, Arthur 712, 779
Roberts, Gov. Dennis 719
Roberts, Chief Justice Thomas 719
Rogers High School, Newport 454
“Romek’s Odyssey, Part II: The Lodz Ghetto,” 72-88
“Romek’s Odyssey, Part IV: Austria, Germany, and New York,” 426-37
Roosevelt, President Franklin 228
Rosen, Hershey 821
Rosen, Louis 549
Rosen, Rabbi Norman 725
Rosenberg family, Chepachet 28-41
Rosenberg, Rabbi Israel 726-27
Rosenberg, Rabbi James 580-93, 742-57
Rosenhirsch, Alfred E. 275
Rosenthal, Perry 701
Rosner, Rachael I. 332-35
Rouslin, Nathan & Annie 24
Roxbury, MA 47
Rozovsky, Fay 537
Rubin, Alvin 92-95
Rubinton, Noel 723-41
Russia (and USSR) 9, 24, 30, 32-33, 78, 86, 120, 213, 666, 673, 676-67, 679, 712
Rydultau, Poland 218-24, 426
S
Sackett, Herbert & Shelley A. 8-21
Sacofsky, Ettie & Israel 9, 19
Saltan, Cheryl Mizrahi 384-85
Samperil, Alfred 537
Schechter School, Boston 774
Schechter School, Toronto 775
Schneerson, Rebbi Menachem 583
Schussheim, Rabbi Morris 658
Schwartz, Abe 62, 68
Schwartz, Barbara Amber 61-62, 69-72
Schwartz, Morris P. 61-71
Scribner, Milton 461-65
Second Vatican Council 729, 740
Segal, Beryl & Chaya 22, 470, 473
Seixas, Moses 164
Semenoff, Judah & Leon 273
seminaries (see listings by name)
Sephardim 801, 806, 812-13
Sessler, Rabbi Morris 477
Shartenberg, Charles & Jacob 271-72
Shetrit, Shara Zuckerman 395-98
Sholes, Leonard 541
Shoob, Harriet & Leo 696
shtetl 30, 32
“Shul v. Shul: Judge McConnell’s Decision,” 316-61
Silverman, Melvin 451, 657-60, 663
“The Sisters,” 694-701
Slom, Aaron 548
“A Small Window Between Two Distant Worlds: Qes Efraim’s Visit to Rhode Island,” 118-29
Smith, Abraham 536
Smith, Harold 95
Somerville, MA 11
“A Son of Eli,” 256-68
“Sons of Providence: The Education and Integration of Jews at Providence College, 1917-1965,” 528-58
South Kingston 94
Soviet Jewry (see Russia)
Stein, Hyman 538
Stein, Penny 774, 784
Strajcher, Rabbi Sholom 782
Strauss, Alexander 477
Sudan 119-20
Sugarman, Mitchell 62
Summer, Irwin 62
Summit Avenue Grammar School 706
Swan Point Cemetery 705, 709
Swansea, MA 18
Switzerland 67
synagogue architecture 487-509

T
Taunton, MA 15
Temkin, Jack 19
Temkin, Martin 719, 728
Temkin, Max 248
Temkin, Samuel & Jacob 248
Temples (see also congregations)
    Am David 362-69
    Beth El, Queens, NY 774
    Beth Israel 89, 274, 279
    Beth Or of Deaf, NY 755-56
    B’nai Israel 56
    B’nai Israel, Elizabeth, NJ 744
    B’nai Sholom, Benton Harbor, MI 721
    Beth David 561, 698
    Beth-El (Sons of Israel and David) 29, 39, 42, 71, 89, 115-17, 134, 232, 272, 280-82, 291, 298, 365, 404, 410, 470, 475, 487-509, 537, 562, 611, 774, 821
    Beth El, Birmingham, AL 840
    Emanuel, Lexington, MA 770
    Emanu-El Israel, Greensburg, PA 819
    Habonim 119, 581-93, 752
    Howard Street 713
    Israel, Boston 757
    Israel, Scranton, PA 761
    Israel, Westport, CT 798
    Michah, Washington, DC 787-89, 795-96
    Ohawe Shalom 448
    Shalom 106, 166
    Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles 297, 609, 836
Tesler, Jerome 536-37
    "There’s a New Jewish School in Town: The Origins of Rhode Island’s Conservative Day School," 772-85
    “Thirty-Six Years,” 473-74
Tilles, Norman 821
Tobak, Charles & Gussie Nass 453-54
Tobak, Helen Weisman 457
Tobak, James W. 453-59
Tobak, Leo 452-59
Topf, Mel A. 316, 404, 512-14, 681-83
Torah (see Bible)
“To Remember and Cherish: My Life as a Museum,” 604-25
Touro Synagogue (see congregations, Jeshuat Israel)
“Trees of Life: Lessons from Pittsburgh,” 816-25
Tregar, Samuel & Fannie 447
Trepanier, Father Tom 730-31, 735
Trinity Repertory Conservatory & Company 108, 699
“Two Homes: Thirteen Rhode Islanders Who Have Made Aliyah,” 370-403
“Two Pilgrimages to Uman for Rosh Hashanah,” 800-15

U
Ukraine 33, 695, 800-15
Union of American Hebrew Congregations 475
United Hebrew School, Newport 165
“U.S. Court of Appeals,” 515-27
U.S. Supreme Court 682-83
United Synagogue Youth 744, 744, 766-67
United Way 724
universities & colleges (separate listings for seminaries by name)
American, Biarritz, France 67-68
Arizona State 570-72
Boston College 97, 718, 840
Boston University 44, 94, 103, 563, 718
Brandeis 451, 467, 775, 793
Bridgewater State 93
Brown (see separate listing)
Bryant 657, 717
California, Los Angeles 56, 831
Carnegie-Mellon 825
Chicago 237
CCNY 760
Columbia 107, 665, 746-50, 761, 768-70, 775
Connecticut 590
Dartmouth 44
Dropsie 761-62
Duquesne 617
Edinburgh 44

Notes
Georgetown 712, 718
Harvard 43-44, 48, 58, 94-95, 232, 707, 713, 734
Hebrew University 437, 563, 769, 840
Hillsdale 740
Hofstra 817
Hunter 760
Julliard 697
MIT 706-07
Mount St. Joseph 95
Naval War College 169,
New York 238, 562
Oxford 740
Pennsylvania 246
Princeton 44
Providence 95, 528-58, 710-21, 732-34
Radcliffe 47
Rhode Island College 14, 95, 108, 119, 71, 713
RISD 72-87, 704, 707, 709, 717, 724, 817, 834, 836
Rhode Island University 14, 44, 70-71, 95, 671, 713
Roger Williams 132
Rutgers 44
Simmons 45, 563
Southern California 56, 835
Stanford 453
Trinity 57
Tufts 44, 209
Vassar 599
Yale 58, 133, 145, 256-78, 598-99, 704, 706
Yeshiva 92-93, 470, 727
York 571-72
Urban League 94
Urbano, Prof. Arthur P. 528-58, 711-12, 733-34
USO 698

V
Vietnam War 719
“Views of Palestine from the 1930s: Postcards from the Archives,” 460-65
Voss-Altman, Rabbi Howard 115

W
Wagner, Jonathan 135
Warwick Chemical Company  69
Washington, President George 239
Weinstein, Nathan  209-10
Weintraub, Morris 694, 698
Weisberg, Mark  69
Weiss, Ben  170
Weiss, Leo  562
Weissblum, Rabbi Eliezer  238
Werner, Florence  454
Werner, Herman & Virginia  454
Wethersfield, CT  58
West, Nathanael  206
West High School, Pawtucket 657
Wharton, TX  725
“What Providence College Has Meant to Me,” 710-21
“When a Congregation Vanishes: Warwick’s Am
David,” 362-69
Widmer, Edward L.  204-12
Wiesel, Eli  732
Williams, Roger  22
Winoker, Jim  712
Wolk, Rabbi Ian  106
“Wondrous Rimmonim: Ownership, Holiness,
Beauty, Rarity, and Value,” 130-59
Wooff, Betty  461-65
Worcester, MA  23
World War I  30-34, 75, 235, 426, 447
World War II  13, 24, 44, 52, 59, 61-68, 78, 80, 169,
225-34, 246, 269, 275, 445, 539, 664-80, 831, 833

Y
Yad Vashem 732
Yales, Rabbi Cary  590
Yerushalemi, Prof. Yosef  748
Yiddish, 657, 668, 833
YMCA  838
Yom HaShoah  731

Z
Zaiman, Rabbi Joel  569, 765, 769, 776, 778, 783
Zemel, Rabbi Daniel  788-89

Notes
Zhukov, Marshall Georgy 676
Zion, Ilan Ben 391-93
Zion-Lawi, Efraim 119
Zurier, Melvin 273
Photo Credits

FRONT AND INSIDE FRONT COVERS: Fink Family
EDITOR’S COMMENTS: Betsey Goodwin
GOLDSTEIN: The Providence Journal and author
KAPSTEIN: author
POMEGRANATES: editor
THE MICHAELS FINK: Fink Family
FIELDSTEIN: author and editor
RUBINTON: Rabbi Franklin, Temple Emanu-El, Providence College
ROSENBERG: author
ELKIN: author
KAUNFER: Jewish Community Day School of Rhode Island and The Providence Sunday Journal
LANDAU: author
AFSAI: author
GUETTERMAN: author
GOODWIN: editor and Michael Goodwin
INSIDE BACK COVER: John Kapstein and Bachrach Studios
OUTSIDE BACK COVER: The Providence Journal

Correction
In the 2017 issue, the photo on page 452 shows Julius Nass with his daughter and son-in-law, Gussie and Charles Tobak, and not his grandson, Leo.