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## Magazine

**EDITION 21 - Passover/Spring 2014**

**Opinion**

**Exclusive Articles**

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Shalom Magazine would like to wish all our readers and advertisers a blessed and most happy Passover.

This is a time of year when we reflect on what it means to be free men, women and children.

Our great leader Moses, by the hand of G-d, led the Jewish people out of enslavement in Egypt, through a 40-year journey, to the ultimate Promised Land of milk and honey, Israel.

"Courage," in my opinion, was the single greatest attribute that Moses constantly asked of the Jewish people during their long journey.

It is this courage, to overcome and persevere, that each and every one of us must embrace and reflect on in our own lives.

We are all enslaved to some measure by the environment we each have had to endure and overcome in our own lives.

Whether it was the Holocaust, wars, terrorism, financial hardship, illness, the loss of loved ones, and/or many other tribulations in our personal lives, many of us have endured and overcome these personal battles that, in some cases, have crushed our spirits mentally and possibly physically as well.

Shalom Magazine hopes that each and every one of us finds this courage within ourselves to be able to conquer and overcome the obstacles and hardships that almost all of us encounter, so that we can all lead fulfilling lives.

I hope you enjoy the inspiring stories and opinion articles in this edition. You will read about a variety of events that took place in many communities in the region, from Purim parties to lectures. You will also learn about future events open to all.

Shalom Magazine is sustained by contributors from all sides of our community who are willing to share their ideas and impressions with a broader audience. Because we are available everywhere, not only at Jewish stores and organizations, we are seen by many who sometimes do not feel part of the Jewish community. In this way, we achieve our goal of uniting the Jewish communities - even the "fifth son" who does not even participate in the Passover Seder. By learning from each other, we can stay together and remain stronger.

May you all have a Happy and Healthy Passover. Please share your thoughts and stay in touch with us on [www.facebook.com/shalommagazine](http://www.facebook.com/shalommagazine).

*Scott and Shirley Farber - Editors*

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# Community Event Listings

## Passover Seder at The Chai Center

The Brookline Chai Center offers two public seders.  
April 14 - Community Seder, [www.GetChai.com/CommunitySeder](http://www.GetChai.com/CommunitySeder)  
April 15 - Young Adult Seder, [www.YJPboston.org/events/Seder](http://www.YJPboston.org/events/Seder)  
For more information contact (617) 278-2424 or [info@getchai.com](mailto:info@getchai.com).

## Book Launch Party!

Saturday, April 12, 7:30 p.m. at the Boston Workmen's Circle (1762 Beacon Street, Brookline). The Workmen's Circle celebrates the publication of *The Veterans of History: A Young Person's History of the Jews*, by Mitchell Silver, former educational director of the Boston Workmen's Circle Shule for almost two decades. Written for young adults, *The Veterans of History* is a compelling narrative of Jewish history, from Biblical times to the present day. It provides the historical basis for an exploration of Jewish identity rooted in Jewish cultural literacy and traditions of social justice.

## Yom HaShoah

This year, Yom HaShoah will take place on April 27. On Sunday, May 4, 2014 from 10:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. at Faneuil Hall, the Jewish Community Relations Council will hold their annual Community Holocaust Commemoration of Yom Hashoah. This year, the event, "Sharing Memories: From Generation to Generation," will feature survivor and scholar Dr. Anna Ornstein.

## Temple Beth Abraham, Canton

Temple Beth Abraham invites the community to a Wine Tasting event on May 10 at 7:30 p.m. This fundraiser will feature wines from around the world. The evening will include delicious appetizers, drinks (2

drinks included with ticket), Havdalah led by Rabbi David, Wine Tasting, Silent Auction and Light dinner. Tickets are \$54/pp.

Temple Beth Abraham invites the community to join us for a special women's event featuring the hilarious Allison Joseph from Jew in the City. Allison will lead our conversation as she shares her story of how she found God in Hawaii. May 18 at 1 p.m. Tickets are \$36.

Temple Beth Abraham is located at 1301 Washington St., Canton. Tickets can be purchased by sending a check to the temple.

## Synagogue Council

On June 11 the Synagogue Council's Annual Tribute Celebration will honor Rabbi Sara Paasche-Orlow, Benjamin Sigel, and Leonard Davidson at Temple

Aliyah, Needham at 6 p.m. For more information and tickets, please visit [www.synagoguecouncil.org](http://www.synagoguecouncil.org).

**For information on how to include your event in listings, please send an email to: [shalomma@msn.com](mailto:shalomma@msn.com). Shalom is not responsible for the information provided by event organizers. Please contact them before attending.**



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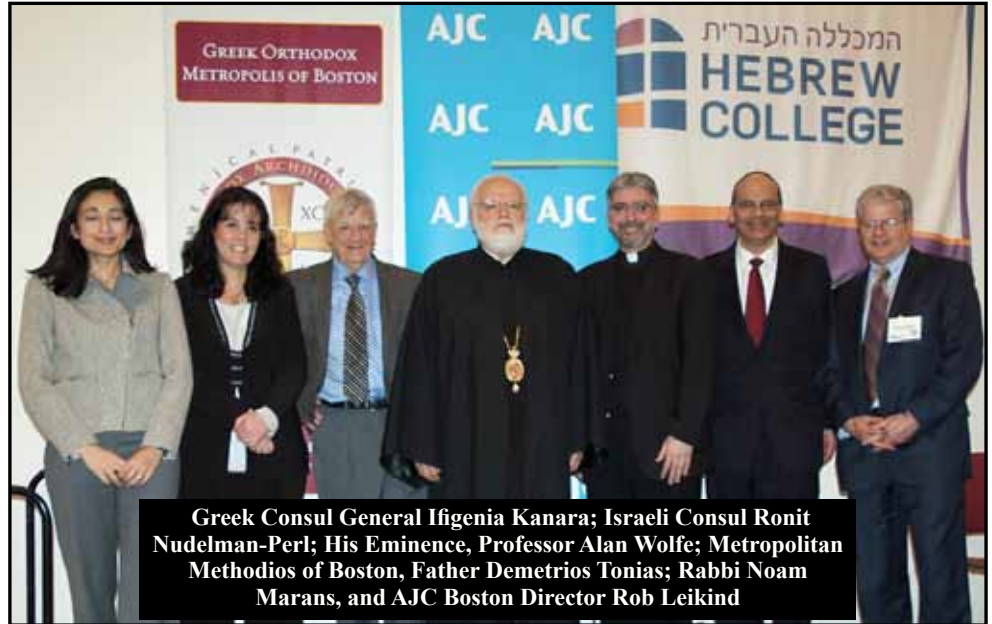
# AJC BOSTON AND GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS Host DYNAMIC COMMUNITY EXCHANGE

On January 15, American Jewish Committee Boston hosted its fourth community event with the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Boston, where over 150 members of the Greek and Jewish communities gathered at Hebrew College for an evening of conversation, food, and wine.

The theme of the program was "Finding and Losing Faith: Greek and Jewish Perspective on Religion in America," a subject of great interest to both the Greek and Jewish communities in light of the recent Pew study on Jewish identity and an earlier Pew study on the landscape of religion in America. His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios of Boston and AJC Boston Director Rob Leikind opened the program, and a special welcome was delivered by Greek Consul General Ifigenia Kanara and Israeli Consul Ronit Nudelman-Perl. Their warm, joint presence on stage presented a strong symbol of friendship and ongoing partnership between Greece and Israel.

Boston College's renowned authority on religion in American public life Professor Alan Wolfe opened the discussion with a vivid description of the dynamic forces that are transforming the relationship of Americans to religious institutions. This framed an energetic conversation between Metropolitan Methodios and AJC's Rabbi Noam Marans about the decline of religion in the U.S. and opportunities to reenergize our communities. Following the program, almost the entire audience stayed to meet people from the other community and enjoy wine and Mediterranean foods together.

It was a wonderful evening of friendship between the Jewish and Greek communities, a friendship not only of great importance in Boston but also around the world.



Greek Consul General Ifigenia Kanara; Israeli Consul Ronit Nudelman-Perl; His Eminence, Professor Alan Wolfe; Metropolitan Methodios of Boston, Father Demetrios Tonia; Rabbi Noam Marans, and AJC Boston Director Rob Leikind



Professor Alan Wolfe addresses audience on the dynamic forces that are transforming the relationship of Americans to religious institutions.

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# PROHIBITION PURIM



Over 400 young adult attended Prohibition Purim at Club Rumor hosted by the Brookline Chai Center



Photos by Nir Landau



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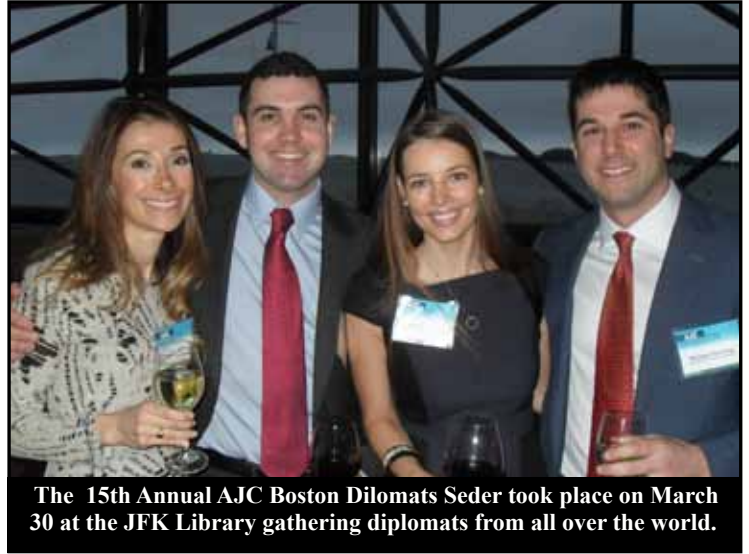
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# AJC BOSTON DIPLOMATS SEDER

Photos by Scott Farber



Larry Lowenthal and friends



The 15th Annual AJC Boston Dilomats Seder took place on March 30 at the JFK Library gathering diplomats from all over the world.



AJC Boston Executive Director Robert Leikind



AJC Boston President Mel Shuman with guests

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# AJC BOSTON DIPLOMATS SEDER



Sid Leffer with family and friends





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# CHAI KIDZ PIRATE PURIM IN THE CARIBBEAN

photos: Nathan Chow



The crowd listens during the reading of Megillat Esther

On March 16, over 550 kids and parents came to the Brookline Teen Center to celebrate Purim. The Teen Center, looking more like a ship's deck on the high seas, had hundreds of little pirates, Ironmen, princesses, and others, all enjoying an adventurous array of activities. Treasure maps helped the kids find Walk the Plank, Candlepin Bowling, Rock Climbing, Pirate Booty Swap, a Purim Cinema, A Pirate Balloon Artist, and a captivating Yo-Yo show. All enjoyed a full pancake breakfast buffet and the traditional Megillah reading by the Pirate Rabbi, accompanied by an animated slideshow of the Purim story. The energy in the building was infectious, and the Purim music had everyone clapping along. Devorah Bush, Director of Hebrew School of the Arts, said: "Purim is the holiday when we celebrate the triumph of good (Queen Esther) over evil (Haman). The message is relevant and timeless." Rabbi Dovid Bush (The Pirate Rabbi), Youth Director of the Chai Center, said: "The Jewish holidays and traditions are all so rich and fun. Here at Chai Kidz, we aim to create a truly enjoyable experience for families; one that the kids absolutely love and connect to." For more fun events, [www.ChaiKidz.com](http://www.ChaiKidz.com).



Daniel, age 2, shows how a Pirate eats a pancake



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Purim morning Shacharit at Wellesley Weston Chabad



Over 175 adults, teenagers and children celebrated Purim with a themed Wild West party complete with a Saloon Open Bar at the Beth Menachem Chabad of Newton



Close to 200 people gathered at the Wellesley Community Center for the Wellesley Chabad Purim Party

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# NATION OF IMMIGRANTS SEDER

Photos by Joe Savitch, Complete Lifestyle Photography



Representatives of various faiths and cultures joined Rabbi Elaine Zecher and Cantor Roy Einhorn of Temple Israel to present at the ADL New England Nation of Immigrants Community Seder



City Councilor Michelle Wu described her family's immigration story at the ADL Seder



City Councilor Josh Zakim, ADL Regional Director Robert Trestan, Cardinal Seán O'Malley, City Councilor Tito Jackson, and ADL Regional Board Chair Jeff Robbins

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) New England Region held its 7th annual Nation of Immigrants Community Seder on Sunday, March 23, at the UMass Boston Campus Center. This model Seder is designed to draw attention to the universal Passover themes of hope, liberation and freedom as they apply to all immigrant communities. The community Seder included not only the story of the Jewish people, but also celebrated diverse stories and cultures of the immigrant and ethnic communities that make up our nation.

The naming of this Seder has special meaning. Back in 1958, then-Senator John F. Kennedy wrote an essay titled, "A Nation of Immigrants". The essay, which was published by ADL, highlighted the stories of immigrants and their contributions to our nation. In 2008, ADL republished a 50th Anniversary edition of the essay, which included an introduction by the late Senator Ted Kennedy.

Immigration, implicating civil rights issues and issues of discrimination, is a key priority for ADL. The Seder is one of many steps that ADL is taking to establish alliances with other immigrant and ethnic communities, to create partnerships in combating bigotry, discrimination, and hate.



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The Striar Hebrew Academy Kindergarten class studied the artist Wassily Kandinsky and his piece called "Squares with Concentric Circles." After learning what he wrote about his own art, students used cray pas to draw the circles and then liquid watercolors to paint in the squares around them. Since they had noticed that Kandinsky did not duplicate colors within any one square, the students also tried not to duplicated colors.



Judah Kosowsky

Fifth and sixth grade students presented their projects at the 2014 SHAS Science Fair, which was focused on the topic of the human body. Sixth grader Judah Kosowsky studied how various liquids stain teeth. Dr. Vicki Gale interviewed sixth grader Miryam Farren-Greenwood about her project on genetic traits. Dr. Otto Rapalino interviewed fifth grader Noam Karger on his project about left and right dominance.



SHAS Kindergartner Maya Hefetz holds up the Torah to show where the book of Shemot ends and Vayikra begins



Miryam interviewed by Dr. Vicki Gale

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## TRIBUTE TO TANIA LEFMAN

On March 23, Holocaust survivor Tania Lefman of Wellesley was honored by Congregation Or Yisrael in Newton Centre and the American Association of Jewish Holocaust Survivors of Greater Boston at Temple Reyim in Auburndale.

Lefman, who co-founded both Or Yisrael and AAJHSGB, escaped from the Koretz Ghetto in Poland with her mother in 1942. A Polish family hid her until the suspicions of neighbors forced her to join her mother in the surrounding woods, where they lived until liberation, foraging for food in the nearby fields to survive. Following the war, Lefman came to America, where she married her late husband Henry, whom she had met in Poland and who had lost his parents and his two brothers in the Holocaust. Tania graduated high school and worked for the post office, and Henry graduated college as an engineer. The couple had three children and five grandchildren, who were in attendance, as were three great-grandchildren.

"I have known Tania for a very long time," said Or Yisrael President Laurie DiBella, who said that congregation members begin planning the tribute a year ago. "She and my mother were acquainted at Mishkan Tefila, and I got to know her as a fellow regular at Shabbat services and in the Sisterhood there. We continued our relationship when we began Congregation Or Yisrael." In addition to regularly attending Shabbat services at Or Yisrael, Lefman works out at the JCC and is instrumental in many Holocaust survivor community efforts.

Or Yisrael and Stein organized a Tribute Book to Lefman for the tribute, which filled Temple Reyim's function hall and included a performance by Connecticut-based comedian Linda Belt.

Congregation Or Yisrael, which is led by Rabbi Jonina S. Pritzker, is the newest Conservative synagogue in the Newton and Brookline area and a member of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

The Tribute Book can be viewed online at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/tribute-to-tania-lefman-tickets-10738470053>.

For information, email [info@oryisrael.org](mailto:info@oryisrael.org) or visit [www.oryisrael.org](http://www.oryisrael.org).

## Holocaust Survivors celebrate Purim in downtown Canton

Some say that Jewish continuity is in trouble, but The Chai Center is busy making sure it's not. On March 16, over 150 people of all ages came together to celebrate Purim in the Wild West, the greatest party that the East has ever seen! Attendees, who enjoyed a carnival, a country singer, and a full dinner, fulfilled the four mitzvot of Purim. Holocaust survivors Aron Raboy and Leon Peru were especially thrilled to participate. It had been over 30 years since they last participated in such a joyous holiday party, with so many children. They shared how touched they were to see the Joy of Judaism being passed down to the next generation. If you have not yet been able to make it over, do not worry, as next year's Purim party will be even greater. And you do not even have to wait until next year. Just come to any of the programs the Chai Center offers to truly feel the joy of Judaism. The Chai Center and Young Israel of Randolph's brand new location in downtown Canton is spacious and sunlit. Bar and Bat Mitzvah classes, along with many other Jewish life and learning opportunities, are offered. For more information, please contact [CantonChaiCenter@yahoo.com](mailto:CantonChaiCenter@yahoo.com).



Cowgirls Rita Kuznetz and Valerie Gritskvaya welcome guests



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# Why Bible Movies?

By Dr. Rebecca Housel

Have you heard of the Great Awakenings? It was a social theological evolution or religious revival in the United States that began in the mid-1700's. And, it's happening again. Now. In the 21st century. A resurgence of religion? Not exactly. Non-denominational "community" churches have increased in popularity as members of Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Episcopalian congregations have seen a severe drop in the last decade. But people aren't turning away from religion. In fact, it's just the opposite.

Using the same model Jewish temples have used in the States for decades, community churches have no central governing body. From the ground up, these churches are being built, and funded, by the people, for the people. They're just removing some of the labels. Religion is actually bigger than ever. And like the Great Awakenings, this religious revival has to do with post-9/11 socio-economics.

Hollywood has consistently been sensitive to social trends, even kicking a few off in its history. When the world feels hopeless and helpless, there's always a beacon in the dark: The Movies! And what better symbol of empowerment can an audience ask for than a larger-than-life sized silver-screen *Noah*, played by the riveting Russell Crowe.

*Noah* director Darren Aronofsky, 44, may call himself an atheist today, but he grew up in a Conservative Jewish home in Brooklyn. Aronofsky studied film at Harvard. He's known for creating intense films about obsessive characters, like *Black Swan* (2010) and *The Wrestler* (2008), both of which earned critical acclaim and plenty of award wins and nominations, including a coveted Oscar. So why would Aronofsky, a self-proclaimed atheist, take on a film about a Biblical character like *Noah*? For the same reason all movies are made in Hollywood...money.

Of the 300,000,000 Americans residing in the United States, a whopping two-thirds are Christian. It's the opposite worldwide; two-thirds of the global population is anything but. And though *Noah* is being released in the States on March 28th, it will be opening in international theatres as well. So what does this have to do with our current 21st century "Great Awakening"? Plenty!

Trends are more about dollars than sense. When there's a shift in the economy, good or bad, people begin to look for something greater than themselves. Who could that be? Yup. You guessed it: God.

The big man upstairs has been pretty busy since 9/11. Humanity has proven that we are not heroic; instead, we have become the monsters. When things feel hopeless and helpless, God is the first thing that comes to mind. We even talk to God when we're in trouble, "Please, help me." But self-responsibility is what will save us. And that means hard work, especially when it comes to the almighty dollar. But the dollar isn't the problem. The person holding that dollar is who really matters. And apparently, Darren Aronofsky believes that, too. Although, it's not such a stretch to imagine, given his Jewish background.

Repairing the world or *tikkun olam* is one of the founding tenets of Judaism. What does it mean? Basically, the first rule of *tikkun olam* is to understand that you cannot help anyone without first helping yourself. Noah was that kind of man.

In a time when the world was going crazy, he stood against popular opinion. Stood up for himself and his family. Defied social norms. Endured social scrutiny. Noah and his family didn't just survive a natural disaster, they survived humanity. And amidst the tornados, hurricanes, earthquakes, and tsunamis of this world, we, the audience, face the very same thing each and every day we live on this planet.

Though there has been criticism of Aronofsky's take on the Biblical character of Noah, mainly from Christians, like his previous movies, *Noah* will be a critically-acclaimed blockbuster. Another moment for the Hollywood history books. And I'll be sitting in a theatre, eagerly watching history unfold. Again.

*Dr. Rebecca Housel, the #PopCultureProfessor, has been teaching in a college classroom since 1994. She is an author and editor in Wiley's Philosophy & Pop Culture series and is a national speaker on popular culture, as well as the pop culture expert for the LA Times. Follow Dr. Housel on Twitter: @DocHousel #PopCultureProfessor or visit her website and blog: www.RebeccaHousel.com*



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## Upcoming Events

**Thursday, April 24 – 7 p.m.:** A Bissel Schlissel Challah Baking Workshop (families welcome)

**Friday, April 25 – 6:30 p.m.:** Kabbalat Shabbat with Havurah on the Hill and Jeremy Goldberg of Cape Ann Brewery, Inc.

**Wednesday, April 30 – 6:30 p.m.:** Parenting Through a Jewish Lens Class Begins

**Wednesday, May 7 – 6:30 p.m.:** Judaica Uncovered – Free Artifact Appraisal and Workshop with Certified Appraiser Elizabeth Kessin Berman

**Sunday, May 11 – 11 a.m.:** The Remarkable Women of Boston! Annual Mother's Day Brunch and Film Screening of "The New Woman: Annie Londonderry Kopchovsky"

**Thursday, May 15 – 7 p.m.:** SoundMix! South Asia Meets Eastern Europe with the Music of Sandaraa

**Friday, May 16 – 6:30 p.m.:** Kabbalat Shabbat with Havurah on the Hill and Matt Meyersohn, Senior Director, U.S. Fund for UNICEF

**Sunday, May 18 – 12 p.m.:** History is Community Children's Day Co-Sponsored by the West End Museum

**Wednesday, May 28 – 1 p.m.:** Afternoon Discussion Series – "Building Beacon Hill and the West End"

**Sunday, June 1 – 12 p.m.:** Beacon Hill Art Walk and Concert on the Patio

**Wednesday, June 11 – 1 p.m.:** Afternoon Discussion Series – "Immigrant Community: Beacon Hill and the West End in the Early 20th Century"

**Friday, June 13 – 5:30 p.m.:** Young Families Musical Kabbalat Shabbat

**Thursday, June 19 – 6:30 p.m.:** Vilna Shul Annual Gala Celebration Honoring Arnold Slavet and Mike Ross

**Friday, June 20 – 6:30 p.m.:** Kabbalat Shabbat with Havurah on the Hill and Max Klau, Director of Leadership Development at City Year

**Friday, July 18 – 6:30 p.m.:** Havurah on the Hill Kabbalat Shabbat Friday Night Services

**Sunday, July 20 – 1 p.m.:** Tu B'Av Sweeties Cookie Making Workshop for the Loved Ones in Your Life

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## *The Vilna Shul Expands Learning Opportunities for K-12 and College Students*

Students and teachers are invited to visit the Vilna Shul in historic Beacon Hill this year as part of the organization's growing educational initiative. As the last remaining immigrant-era synagogue in the city of Boston, the Vilna presents an extraordinary opportunity for teachers and leaders to engage their students with local history in a fresh new way.

Nearly 100 years ago when Lithuanian immigrants built the Vilna Shul, the North Slope of Beacon Hill and the West End were very different neighborhoods. As immigrants arrived by the thousands to Boston, these neighborhoods became two of the city's most diverse areas. Jews from throughout Eastern Europe soon gathered to pray each day in the synagogues they built proudly amongst their tenements. But when city officials destroyed the West End in an urban renewal project in the 1950s, the neighborhoods changed again, leaving its residents scattered and institutions like the Vilna as one of the only synagogues standing in the area.

The Vilna Shul is a tangible connection to this complex history and its story flows across language, time, and culture to reach audiences of all ages and backgrounds. We have welcomed students from schools and universities from as far away as Japan and as close as MIT, and we invite you to bring your students for their own eye-opening experiences. From immigrant history and pre-war Jewish life, to architecture, world religions, and urban planning, the Vilna's history inspires students with a range of interests and skills.

To arrange a visit to the Vilna, email [Jessica@vlnashul.org](mailto:Jessica@vlnashul.org) or call (617) 523-2324.



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**The anti-Semitism in our backyard**

**Rabbi Susan Abramson**

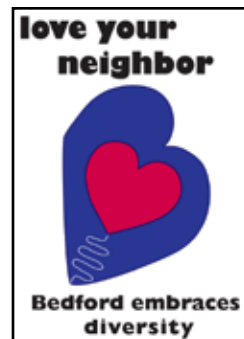
Each year at our Passover seder we are commanded to relive our ancestors' journey from slavery to freedom. I could not have imagined that in 2014, living in Bedford, Massachusetts, that this *dictum* would take on such personal and communal significance.

Beginning last Fall, incidents of anti-Semitism began rearing their ugly heads in my sleepy little suburban town. Someone had scrawled a couple of swastikas on the wall of a boys' bathroom at the high school. Someone etched a swastika and the words "Kill the Jews" on a piece of gym equipment in an elementary school playground. There were reports of graffiti written on an adjoining sidewalk about Jews going to hell because they didn't believe in Jesus. A swastika appeared on the outside wall of a school on Hanscom Air Force Base, within Bedford town limits. Along with other Bedford clergy, I was invited to numerous meetings of town and school officials. An active police and school investigation was inconclusive. Numerous ideas were proposed regarding how to respond to the incident. Some school initiatives were put in motion.

A couple of weeks ago, I was forwarded emails that the School Superintendent sent to the entire school community, informing everyone that a number of anti-Semitic incidents had been reported at the elementary schools. A first-grade student began to organize a game called "Jail the Jew." An older elementary child told a Jewish child she couldn't share her crackers because she didn't believe in Jesus. Another child was told that people were going to destroy her country (referring to Israel). There were reports of a game being played during recess called "Jews vs. Christians."

These new incidents set in motion a wide-ranging response which is still in the process of development. We held emergency clergy meetings and quickly decided to come up with a town-wide campaign called *Love Your Neighbor: Bedford Embraces Diversity*, and we have been asking town residents and businesses to post the logo in their windows. The Jewish community held a meeting at a local synagogue with representatives of the school, local government, police and interfaith clergy to share feelings and discuss ways to respond. Among the sentiments that were expressed were feelings that this was not just a Jewish issue. Teenagers and middle schoolers reported that African-American kids were harassed and Asian-Americans were made fun of. Last week there was a meeting held at the Middle School, attended by almost 400 people, where there was unanimous condemnation of these actions and the need to respond to them in a positive and forceful manner.

I have learned over the years that every crisis results in a reordering of the universe of relationships of everyone involved with it. I grew up in Newton, and during the late 1950's to early 1970's when I lived there, I never experienced an act of anti-Semitism. 98 percent of the students in my elementary school were Jewish. About a third of Newton High were Jews. From my perspective, it was the non-Jews who probably felt like the minority. But when I began to speak to my temple community about their encounters with anti-Semitism, it seemed to open up a floodgate of experiences I never would have imagined. Teenagers who live in Billerica and Burlington, as well as Bedford, discussed pennies being tossed at them in middle school. Threatening phone calls. Name calling. One woman who grew up in Burlington recalling how her house was egged. Numerous adults recalling how their parents told them not to let anyone know they were Jewish for fear of discrimination.



## The anti-Semitism in our backyard

At the recent meeting at the Bedford Middle School, I happened to meet Rachel Murphy, a woman who is part African-American, part Native American. We struck up a conversation and it turned out that she had founded a group called the *Concerned Black Citizens of Bedford* in the 1970s. The more I heard her story, the more it became clear that I needed to invite her to my temple to speak.


As the famous Rabbi Hillel said, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?" This week, she told my Confirmation class and their parents about what it was like for her to grow up in North Carolina in the 1940s. Her teachers called her dumb because she had mixed blood. No doctor would touch her. If she wanted ice cream, she had to go to a special window outside of the ice cream store which was reserved for "coloreds." If she wanted to buy something in a store, she had to wait until all the white people were done. Then she could approach the cashier and put her money on the counter, so that she wouldn't touch the white salesperson. Her family was not allowed in restaurants or hotels. If they took a trip, they had to bring their own food and sleep in their car. During the Civil Rights era, they were warned not to participate in protests or they would be lynched. If someone was missing from their community, everyone knew why. Though her husband served in the Army, they were not allowed to live off base. When she moved to Bedford in the 1970s, she said the racism here was much more covert than in the South. A woman began a petition in her neighborhood to not allow her family to move in. She would receive crank phone calls on a regular basis at night and crude drawings in her mailbox. Her three daughters had trouble finding dates to the prom because no one wanted to be seen with a black woman.

From slavery to freedom. This year, I feel as if I have retraced this journey with the Jews of Bedford, the members of my congregation, with Rachel, and with those of every minority in our community who have experienced subtle or overt discrimination. Many people I do not know, many people who are appalled by intolerance in my community, are walking with us, especially every town official, every school leader, and every law enforcement official. There are many silent partners, newer immigrants who have experienced prejudice but who are afraid to speak up. This Passover, I think of all of them.

It is appalling to think that in this day and age, we have so far to go to achieve freedom from discrimination in our country. This Passover, it is clear that we have far to go before we reach the Promised Land. But with all those people of good will around us and those who feel empowered to take up the mantle of leadership to lead us in that direction, we can feel confident that even with these new revelations, we are still moving in the right direction.

**Rabbi Susan Abramson is the rabbi of Temple Shalom Emeth, Burlington, MA and the author of the Rabbi Rocketpower Series of Jewish holiday books, [www.rabbirocketpower.com](http://www.rabbirocketpower.com).**

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## Memories of Passover Gone By

It's that time of year again: Spring cleaning and Passover preparedness.

Where do I start? I decided to check out my cabinet in the basement where I store all of my kitchen tools and gadgets - things I use once in a while.

I opened the door of the cabinet. It was filled to capacity. Enough, I thought to myself. Time to move them out. (Actually many of the items could be collectables today.)

A large handgrinder my mother used for making horseradish... My job was to clamp the grinder to an old wooden chair seat on our back porch. The horseradish root was peeled and cut into large slices and placed in the top of the grinder. Then by hand, I turned the handle on the side to grind.

Let me tell you, fresh horseradish can certainly clear the sinuses, as the fumes are very strong.

I also found a large wooden ("shisel") salad bowl used for chopping my gefilte fish, and a ("hack meser") hand food chopper used for making chopped liver. I appreciate my food processor today, but it feels good to bring back memories of many years past.

I also found the large crock my mother used to make homemade wine from Concord grapes, for Passover.

Oh, and before I forget, the pot in which she prepared mead (honey wine). The joys of getting ready for this special holiday, even with all of the work to prepare.... Whereas, today we go into the store and everything is available on store shelves, ready to bring home.

I hope that we all have the opportunity to share a joyous Passover with family and friends

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- 8 matzos
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- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 1 8 ounce package of pre sliced fresh mushrooms
- 2 T. vegetable oil
- 3 eggs, beaten
- salt and pepper to taste

Pour boiled hot water over matzos in large bowl and wait till slightly cooled. Squeeze water out, or use a colander to drain and press water out.

Sautee onion, celery, and mushrooms in vegetable oil in hot skillet.


Mix all ingredients together in large bowl.

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## *Krasa family speaks at Terezin commemoration in Berlin*

Newton resident Edgar Krasa, a survivor of Terezin and other concentration camps, recently traveled with his extended family to Berlin to take part in the spring program at the Jewish Museum in Berlin. The Krasas attended events commemorating Terezin as well as a performance at the Berlin Konzerthaus of "The Defiant Requiem," directed



by Murry Sidlin and recently made into a documentary film that debuted last year on PBS on Yom HaShoah. Krasa's two sons, Dani and Raffi, and grandson Alex sang in the chorus of the production, which recalls the staging of the Verdi Requiem in the Prague concentration camp. It was a defiant act conducted by inmate Rafael Schaechter, in which the prisoners sang (in Latin) the verses of the Requiem, spelling out doom and final judgment to Nazi attendees and their guests.

Several events were held at the Jewish Museum in Berlin, including classes that Krasa and his wife Hana, who was also a Terezin inmate, spoke to in German. While there, relatives from Czechoslovakia joined them for the weekend.

Krasa is on the board of the Terezin Music Foundation, which has established a Krasa-Schaechter Commission Fund for young composers. He often speaks at schools and community venues. "When I speak at inner city schools, I emphasize racial hatred and highlight tolerance. To music-oriented audiences, I speak about music as an instrument of resistance and defiance. For religious groups, I highlight the impact of the Holocaust on my faith at various stages of my life."

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# Omer Reflections

By Susie Davidson

Rabbi Katy Allen is the founder of Ma'yan Tikvah, a Wayland-based, environmentally-conscious "synagogue without walls," recently featured on a Page One story in the Boston Globe. She recently launched the Jewish Climate Action Network (CAN) with Eli Gerzon of the Better Future Project. This Passover, she asked seven writers in her environmental community to compose a series of "Omer reflections," for each week of the Counting of the Omer. Each day of the Counting of the Omer relates to a different level of the seven *Sefirot* (Kabbalistic emanations through which G-d interacts with the world), and each week is also associated with a *Sefira*, equalling 49 combinations of sefirot. Each writer chose an environmental aspect of Creation as a theme, and in their essays, discussed climate change and ideas for environmental actions. The Omer reflections will be posted on blogs such as the Ma'yan Tikvah blog, Jewcology, Jewishboston.com, and the Wayland Patch.

The following excerpts are from the essays written by Shalom copy editor Susie Davidson, who was assigned Week Two of the Counting of the Omer, characterized by the sefira *Gevurah* (restraint, discipline and discernment).

An omer, which means a "sheaf," is a unit of measure. In the Temple days, it was a grain offering (specifically, barley). As stated in Leviticus 23:15, we count these units for 50 days, or seven weeks, from the second night of Passover to the night before Shavuot. Passover marks

the Exodus from Egypt, but we were not truly redeemed from slavery until we received the Torah at Mount Sinai, now celebrated on Shavuot.

The *sefira* of the second week is *Gevurah*. Its root letters, *gimmel, bet and resh*, also form the word "gever," which means "man." "Geveret," consequently, means "woman."

My chosen aspect of Creation is Agriculture.

**Day One of Week 2 (8th day of Omer): Chesed of Gevurah**

Compassion and loving kindness combine here with restraint, discipline and discernment – with a measure of barley or a harvested grain. What is more basic to nourishment than recently-harvested grains? Chesed is love in all its forms. We love the earth, and each other through feeding and nourishment, which is a supreme form of love.

**Action:** Plan a recipe of healthful grains and other natural ingredients that you could serve to others for an upcoming gathering.

Research how you might grow some of your own food – even in a window-box garden.

**Day Two of Week 2 (9th day of Omer): Gevurah in Gevurah**

Focus, discipline, restraint, determination, careful measure - times two. In agriculture, power plays a role in farming equipment and the man- or woman-power needed to work the soil and produce its bounty. There is a danger of abusing power to control, rather than influence. It is best to influence others by good example.

**Action:** This 9th day of Omer is opportune to performing an action for the good of the earth. Organize a public event, promote an environmental cause.

It's spring – Envision yourself leading a workshop on organic gardening, or a talk on how we can counter climate change in our daily lives and behavior.

**Day Three of Week 2 (10th day of Omer): Tiferet in Gevurah**

*Tiferet* means harmony, compassion and mercy, and the self-love and determination that help achieve and manifest our goals - and balance, combined with the restraint and discipline of *Gevurah*.

Agriculture entails harmony in the layout of the rows of planting, the balance of crops, and requires compassionate, careful planning in order to treat the Earth with respect, such as the Torah-directed *mitzvah* of *Schmita* – letting our fields rest once every seven years. This aligns with the seven days of this week of the Omer.

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# Omer Reflections

**Action:** Study biblical methods of farming, and contrast with modern machine-driven, pesticide-oriented agriculture. List hazardous byproducts of modern agriculture. How can we spur change, perhaps through online petitions aimed at agricultural conglomerates and corporations?

**Day Four of Week 2 (11th day of Omer): Netzach in Gevurah**

*Netzach* signifies trusting in ourselves by summoning both strength and confidence (*Gevurah*) and facing challenges that can come from within. Thoughts or feelings can either inspire and empower us, or stand in our own way. *Netzach* is perseverance, endurance and victory. So hang in there, and don't be your own worst enemy! And remember, it's never too late to change - ourselves, or our environment.

We can plant our crops, eat locally, share our bounty, and succeed!

According to a March 29 article on Massachusetts farming by Boston Globe columnist Scot Lehigh, there are about 7,700 farms in Massachusetts that employ about 12,000 workers, contribute about \$492 million to the state's economy, help to preserve over half a million acres of open space, don't utilize big factory-farm practices. Only one uses cramped "battery cages" for hens, and none use pig or veal crates. Thirty-two percent are owned by women.

There are eight buy-local organizations in the state, and Boston Area Gleaners has about 700 volunteers who pick surplus crops and distribute the food to low-income communities. The "buy local" movement has spawned farmers' markets, restaurants featuring local fare, the revamping of school menus and programming to promote local foods, farm stands, pick-your-own produce site agriculture. And why not? The food is free from, it tastes great, and by eating local economy as well as Massachusetts cities:

**Action:** How can you get more local shelves?

**Day Five of Week 2 (12th day of Omer)**

*Hod* stands for humility and acknowledge the restraint and discernment of *Gevurah*; those expectations. But don't, because splendor and glory.

Sure, change can be difficult, and there old same old. But it doesn't have to be either. Eminent environmentalist Henry the journey was as important, and even the destination.

Be the power! Take those small steps on our planet.

**Action:** Write Letters to the Editor. The City-Sponsored Agricultural (CSA) group to link a school, food pantry or synagogue

**Day Six of Week 2 (13th day of Omer)**

*Yesod* is about foundations, the base of these desired changes.

With a firm foundation, a springboard platform, we can join with like-minded others in effort of healing, rebuilding, and preparing toward a more sustainable future.

In agriculture, we work with the four valleys and surfaces. Through careful attention that feed and bind us together in sustenance

**Action:** Reflect upon the different types of the varied crops that each yields. Relate of strength that we receive from each crop strength that we are also receiving!

**Day Seven of Week 2 (14th day of Omer)**

*Malchut* is about dignity, and the final change. But it is also about sovereignty and assessing if the recipients of such change if they will utilize it wisely. Although G

nishment were ultimately for the better for humanity, they have lasting repercussions, and it is our duty to continue to improve upon past transgressions. We do this during the first 33 days of the *Omer*, which is a period of mourning recalling the tragic deaths of 24,000 students of Rabbi Akiva, who were disrespectful toward one another. From Passover until Lag B'Omer (the eighteenth of Iyar, with "Lag" number 33 in Hebrew), which signifies a break in the plague said to befall Rabbi Akiva over his lifetime, we hold no weddings or events with dancing, we play no music (purely vocal music is allowed), and we don't get haircuts or shave. And we try to find ways to treat others with great respect. In this way, we try to make a "tikun" (spiritual correction). That is the ultimate form of dignity, especially as we are attempting to repair not only our own sins, but the sins of our past brethren.

It is only through proper homage and penitence for the mistakes of the past, and after we have assessed whether or not the intended recipients are deserving, that we can then move to manifest our aims.

**Action:** Think about the people that you would like to teach about the planet, about how to best feed themselves and their families, and about the ways by which they could help to repair the earth and treat it, as well as others, more respectfully. It may be painful, but consider their receptivity, and the pitfalls they may possess that could prevent their heeding your honest advice. Perhaps there are other, more deserving people who would better understand and heed your teaching.

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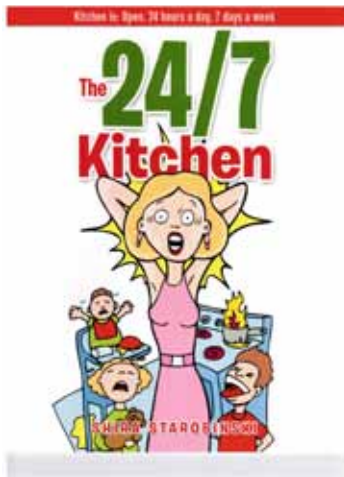


# The 24/7 Kitchen

By Shira Starobinski

*Have you ever heard of a closed kitchen?*

If this question ever crosses your mind, you should definitely read my new book, *The 24/7 Kitchen*. My book is written for children, but is dedicated to all the parents in the world who dream of closing the kitchen, the central room in the house, at least for just a little while. Every time it looks just like it's about to finally really happen, somebody, almost out of nowhere, shows up last minute at the kitchen, ignores the Closed Kitchen sign, takes something to eat, and leaves a mess behind. Can the kitchen ever be closed? You guessed it right - No!! Not even before Passover, so that one can meticulously clean it and shift all the silverware, dishes, and pots. The kitchen is now open 24/7 whether we like it or not. After living in the U.S. for fourteen years and working as a school librarian in the Greater Boston area, I am thrilled to have finally completed my first own children's book. The dream to write a book began a few years ago, when I started to get used to the American style of life, culture and humor. As a children's librarian, I felt that writing a book was the next natural step. After reading many children's books as part of my career and also as a parent raising two children, I have found myself literally immersed in children literature. While reading, I paid close attention to structure and repetitive themes. I also noticed some gaps - some topics that are missing. At that point, I turned to children's literature databases to check my assumption that indeed no books had been written on my specific topic. When I could not find a book with a similar topic to my chosen theme, I was very happy. I wanted to fill the gap right away with my very own story, before any other author did. I wanted my work to be both original and creative. This was how the *24/7 Kitchen* book was born. Up to now all children's books around the kitchen addressed



baking, cooking, and preparing foods for different life events and holidays.

My book is the first one to confront a mother's hard work in the kitchen, and her dream to close it. Moving the idea forward necessitated a long process of approximately three years. During that time, I was busy writing the book, choosing a publisher, and learning to navigate the complicated book industry, on top of my regular work in the library and my work at home as a mom. Along the way, I debated whether to write the original story in Hebrew or in English. Based on my origin and education, Hebrew language and a Judaic topic were the most natural choices. I was born in Israel and lived there for 26 years. I studied Hebrew language and literature and French language and literature at Haifa University. At graduate school, I earned my master in library science and continued my studies in languages. I earned a certificate of excellence from the Israeli parliament (Knesset) for outstanding academic achievements. I have been a Hebrew teacher at several Hebrew religious schools, but I felt that based on my actual place of residency and my comfort in English, I was ready for the challenge. Although I have had ideas for writing Judaic books, I wanted my first children's book to touch upon a universal theme and to reach as many readers as possible. I have written a book that will allow people worldwide to identify and connect. The "open-ended" kitchen issue is familiar to many families around the world, as many aspects of our life have become available 24-7. Finding a realistic good ending to the story was a huge challenge. I wanted to end the story on a positive note without embellishing too much. To find the ending, I

invite you to read my story.

Stay tuned, and Happy Passover to all!

*The 24/7 Kitchen is sold on Amazon.com and or [www.shirastaro.com](http://www.shirastaro.com)*




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# From Cairo to Cambridge: The Treasures of the Cairo Geniza

By Chaiel Schaffel

On Sunday, March 9th, Rabbi Mordechai Becher of the Gateways Foundation gave a presentation titled, "From Cairo to Cambridge: The Treasures of the Cairo Geniza," at the Young Israel of Sharon. Rabbi Becher is a native Australian and has lectured with the United Jewish Appeal and the Jewish Federation, among other key Jewish institutions. A geniza is a storage place for sacred Jewish texts that have fallen into disrepair. In Rabbi Becher's often humorous presentation, he described the Cairo geniza as a place for storing "sacred trash," a repository for any and all Hebrew manuscripts spanning almost 1000 years of Medieval and modern Jewish and Middle Eastern history. The Cairo Geniza was located in a hole behind a wall of the Ezrat Nashim (Women's section) of the Ben Ezra synagogue of Cairo, and dates back to the 9th century, CE. Rabbi Becher's presentation took a look at ancient Jewish life through the lens of the Geniza documents, whose discovery has been called one of the greatest Jewish treasures ever found.

The Geniza itself was originally discovered by Yaakov Saphir in the late 1800's and primarily explored by early 20th century historian Schneer Zalman Schechter, better known as Solomon Schechter who realized the massive potential behind the Geniza. Over the course of his lifetime, Schechter supervised the relocation of 196,000 fragments of Jewish texts back to Cambridge University in Britain. In general, historical artifacts can accurately be described as remnants of long-dead cultures, but the writings found the Cairo Geniza are surprisingly chic. Be it through children's doodles, pre-nuptial agreements, marriage contracts (ketubot), poems, music or letters of correspondence, the Geniza's depths are filled with insight into the daily life of Jews that is an echo of the broader human experience.

Original manuscripts from such Medieval Jewish luminaries such as the poet Yehuda HaLevi and legal codifier and philosopher Rabbi Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides) were found alongside the doodles of school children learning the Aleph-Bet. The zig-zags and squiggles on the projector mirrored those that I absentmindedly scrawled in class from time to time. These drawings of schoolchildren pushed me to a realization. Although the culture we may inhabit has varied dramatically over the centuries, we still retain some of the same characteristics from generation to generation. A schoolchild's desire to quash boredom has stood as a fixed remnant of the human experience amidst a sea of change.

Despite its humble beginnings, Rabbi Becher conveyed that the Geniza is only 50% translated and still has much to offer as a window into ancient Jewish thought. It is a catalyst for reflection on change in Jewish culture over the centuries. As the rest of the Cairo Geniza is translated, deeper insight into what Jewish life was like hundreds of years ago will become more readily available. This knowledge will help us understand the past, and might even guide us through the future. Rabbi Mordechai Becher, originally from Australia, is a Senior Lecturer for the Gateways Organization. He was a chaplain in the Israel Defence Forces and served in the Armoured Infantry. Rabbi Becher is the author of Gateway to Judaism: The What, How, and Why of Jewish Life, and one of the developers of the software programs, Where in Israel? and Judaica Wizard. Rabbi Becher received his Rabbinic ordination from the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem. He has been a guest lecturer for United Jewish Appeal., the Jewish Federation and the Zionist Organization of America, and has lectured in Canada, the United States, England, Israel, South Africa, Australia and Russia. Rabbi Becher, his wife Chavy and their six children live in Passaic, New Jersey.

And Why of Jewish Life, and one of the developers of the software programs, Where in Israel? and Judaica Wizard. Rabbi Becher received his Rabbinic ordination from the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem. He has been a guest lecturer for United Jewish Appeal., the Jewish Federation and the Zionist Organization of America, and has lectured in Canada, the United States, England, Israel, South Africa, Australia and Russia. Rabbi Becher, his wife Chavy and their six children live in Passaic, New Jersey.

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**Rabbi Katy Z. Allen**

The Jewish Climate Action Network (JCAN) is a new Jewish environmental awareness and advocacy program that has recently formed in Boston, spear-headed by Rabbi Katy Allen of Ma'yan Tikvah and Eli Gerzon of Better Future Project. JCAN has been launched by members of the local Jewish community who are passionate about the Earth and the critical need for action related to climate change and other environmental concerns. They are diverse in our backgrounds and in the kinds of action they take, but are united by their care and concern for the world around them.

JCAN is focused on *tikkun tevel* – healing of the Earth – through action. Their objectives and plans are five-fold:

- 1) to promote awareness and understanding of environmental problems,
- 2) to support political advocacy and action for better climate and environmental policies,
- 3) to encourage personal and communal change,
- 4) to bring attention to social and economic injustices involved with global warming, and
- 5) to provide support to everyone who gets involved in these important and amazing activities.

JCAN is focusing on a variety of ventures, in order to reach as many people as possible. They are training speakers to provide a 1-hour presentation that will briefly explain the science of climate change and provide concrete ideas and plans for advocacy, action, and maintenance of well-being. They are planning a diverse array of educational events, the first of which was "A Jewish Perspective on the Environment" with Rabbi Waskow of the Shalom Center. Other educational programs are in the planning. JCAN is also creating engaging materials that can be sent to individuals or synagogues focusing on education, advocacy, action, justice, and spiritual well-being at regular intervals through the Jewish calendar, including d'verei Torah and new and innovative Passover materials for the seder.

All who are interested in protecting and caring for the Earth are invited to join JCAN and participate in their efforts.

JCAN can be found on Facebook at Jewish Climate Action Network and can be followed on twitter @JClimateAN. If you have specific questions or would like more information, email JCANmedia@gmail.com.

*Rabbi Katy Z. Allen is a chaplain at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Rabbi at Ma'yan Tikvah - A Wellspring of Hope.*

# Researchers at Rambam Medical Center are investigating new treatment for pancreatic cancer

## Viva Sarah Press

Cutting-edge research by scientists at the Rambam Medical Center in Haifa is pointing towards development of new treatment for pancreatic cancer, one of the most deadly and difficult cancers to manage successfully.

Whereas other cancers that have seen a reduction in incidence thanks to therapeutic advances and early detection, rates of pancreatic cancer have been slowly going up over the past 10 years.

Moreover, there is a poor prognosis because of nerve invasion, a form of direct spread of cancer which occurs in more than 80 percent of patients with pancreatic cancer. Because the cancer is distributed along nerves it cannot be treated at a specific site and patients receive only palliative care to alleviate painful symptoms.

The research team, led by Dr. Ziv Gil, Head of the Applied Cancer Research Laboratory at Rambam, is investigating the mechanism that triggers nerve invasion in pancreatic cancer and identifying specific targets for drugs that can effectively reduce it.

“Treatment directed against nerve invasion could prevent cancer spread, prolong survival, and reduce morbidity,” says Gil. Gil and his team suggest the existence of a link between tumor-infiltrating macrophages (large white blood cells that reside in tissue and bone marrow) and pancreatic cancer cells, which contributes to nerve invasion. Tumor-associated macrophages secrete proteins that in turn trigger secretion of a strong growth factor that stimulates the increase and spread of cancer cells.

The experiments conducted by Gil and his team showed that macrophages located in the endoneurium (the innermost connective tissue that surrounds individual nerve fibres in a bundle) act as a first line of defense in response to nerve injury and inflammation - until they are overrun by blood-borne tumor-associated macrophages originating in bone marrow.

Based on their findings, the research team developed a central hypothesis that endoneurial macrophages “play a key role in the progression and dissemination” of pancreatic cancer, said Gil. Although there has been intensive investigation on the role of tumor-associated macrophages in other cancer types, this is the first time it has been explored specifically with regard to nerve invasion in pancreatic cancer. “Our long-term goal is to

**About 95 percent of people with pancreatic cancer will die from it**

understand the mechanism that triggers progression of pancreatic cancer and to develop the means to inhibit it,” he explained.

“It is anticipated that the data obtained here...will provide meaningful advancement of current knowledge in the field of cancer biology and for the benefit of cancer patients,” Gil says. “It is also

expected that the results will be equally applicable to other neuroinvasive cancers, including head and neck, gastrointestinal, hepatobiliary, genitourinary, and prostate malignancies.”

The research is funded by a grant from the Israel Cancer Research Fund (ICRF).

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# Shalom editor honored by State House



Scott, Shirley and David Farber with State Representative Wayne Matewsky

On Feb. 8, State Representative Wayne Matewsky (D-Everett) honored Shirley Farber with a Mass. House of Representatives citation at Oliveira Restaurant in Everett. As he presented the award, Matewsky told Farber that he watches her television program, “Bate Papo com Shirley,” a talk show geared to the Brazilian and Portuguese communities.

“The Massachusetts House of Representatives offers its sincerest congratulations to Shirley Farber in recognition for your success and professionalism as a journalist and editor,” Matewsky continued while bestowing the honor.

Shirley Nigri Farber, a native of Brazil who is a Stoughton resident, is an international journalist who has contributed to JTA and other Jewish media. She has taught Hebrew school in New York and on the South Shore. In addition to hosting and producing “Bate Papo com Shirley” since 2005, Farber is the publisher and editor of two magazines, Bate Papo and Shalom Magazine, both of which are distributed statewide. “I did not know Representative Matewsky until December,” said Farber. “It was a nice surprise.” Matewsky also invited Farber, her husband Scott, a Randolph native, and their son David to visit the State House in the near future. The Farbers met in 1999 at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem while both were visiting Israel.

“Bate Papo com Shirley” is recorded in Stoughton and Framingham studios and broadcast over local cable outlets in over 30 Massachusetts towns. The show is also available on Comcast on Demand in Mass., Conn., New Hampshire, Maine and Vermont.

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# Defining Freedom

## Rabbi Moshe Y. Bleich

Pesach is known as *Z'man Cheruteinu* - the festival of our liberation or freedom. We Jews have celebrated this festival of freedom under varying circumstances. Jews under the Spanish Inquisition had to mark their "freedom" in a secret cellar and even then, many were caught and burned publicly. Jews in Auschwitz and other concentration camps risked their lives to gather and "celebrate their freedom." Jews who lived in perpetual fear under the Soviet boot held clandestine Seders to observe the festival of their "freedom."

Yet, whether it was a Russian Jew substituting four glasses of tea and three sugar cubes for wine and Matzah, a Jew in Auschwitz using a few scraps of potatoes and memories of home, or a 21st century Jew enjoying four cups of expensive wine and the best Shmurah Matzah available for purchase, all declare equally their state of freedom and liberation at the Seder.

To explain this apparent paradox we must define what enslavement and freedom truly are. What exactly took place on the 15th day of Nissan over 3300 years ago that dramatically transformed us into intrinsically free people?

Chassidism teaches that *Mitzrayim* - Egypt - is not just a geographical location but rather also a state of mind and being. Indeed the enslavement of our ancestors in Egypt was in a spiritual sense as well as physical.

The children of Israel were steeped in the Egyptian culture of idolatry and immorality. They were slaves to Egyptian society as much as to the Egyptian taskmasters. Liberation from Egypt, it follows, was also freedom from spiritual slavery.

When G-d liberated us from Egypt He brought us to Sinai, gave us the Torah and Mitzvot, and made us His people, thereby effectively imbuing us with an intrinsic sense of freedom stemming from our relationship with Him. From that moment onward, the Jewish people could not be subjected to true enslavement by another nation. As the Yiddish saying goes, "der guf ken farshikt verin in Golus, ober di Neshama ken men nisht farshiken in Golus - Our bodies can be sent into exile, but the soul can never be subjugated." As such, no matter what type of persecution is perpetrated upon us, the freedom that dwells within the soul of the Jew cannot be taken away. It is this inherent freedom that is celebrated on Pesach, irrespective of current external circumstances.

There is, however, one possibility for eliminating this freedom. The only ones with the power to do so are we ourselves.

Philosophers define freedom as the uninhibited ability to reach one's potential. As such it means different things for different beings. For a plant, freedom is the lack of restriction on the circumstances that enhance its ability to grow. For an animal, freedom is the absence of restrictions on movement. For a human being, however, unrestricted growth and movement are not yet true freedom. Rather, freedom has much more depth. Human freedom is connected to intellectual development. When human beings restrict their intellect to the pursuit of petty

animalistic indulgences, they are robbing themselves of their freedom. As mentioned, a Jew's freedom is connected to a relationship with G-d through the Torah that was given at Sinai, and the Mitzvot contained within it. When Jews choose to live a life that is not devoted to this goal, they strip themselves of the inherent freedom that was gifted to them by G-d.



Pesach, especially for those of us who do not live in times or places of persecution, is an ideal opportunity to honestly examine how "free" we really are. Do we tap into the infinite potential of a relationship with G-d via Torah and Mitzvot, or do we waste our time on slavish pursuits? Are we prisoners of society and our desire to "fit in" and be like everyone else, when we should be concentrating on accessing our inherent freedom by allowing our souls to dictate the direction of our lives?

Let us spend this Pesach reflecting on our appreciation of the physical freedom which we are afforded and the spiritual freedom that should result. Let us commit ourselves to becoming a truly free people as evidenced by our dedication to the fulfillment of G-d's infinite will, which is expressed in the Torah. In doing so, we will experience the real freedom that became an inseparable part of our nation's psyche over 3300 years ago.

If you would like information on our community Seders in Wellesley, please call us at 781-239-1076 or check us out on the web at [www.wjewish.org](http://www.wjewish.org).

**Rabbi Moshe Y. Bleich is the rabbi at Wellesley-Weston Chabad.**

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# The Plight of the Ukrainian Jewish Community

By Sid Lejfer

As a business owner, one of the common questions that I get from my friends and associates is, “what keeps you up at night?” Without hesitation, my response is the plight of various Jewish communities around the world. With the nuclear capability development in Iran, the instability in Turkey, demonstrations in Venezuela, systemic anti-Semitism in Hungary, and the Russian invasion and takeover of Crimea, each of these Jewish communities are at risk. (The Jewish communities in France, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, and England have their own set of issues). As a son of Holocaust survivors, my family knows all too well where widespread anti-Semitism can lead. Since my mother is originally from a city on the Polish and Ukrainian border, I am particularly sensitive and concerned for the safety of the Jews in the Ukraine.

With so much focus and conflict within the American Jewish Community on the Israel/Palestinian issue, I am concerned that not enough attention is being paid to the peril various Jewish communities are facing around the world.

The current Jewish population in Ukraine is estimated to be between 50,000-70,000 people. The history of this community over the past 100 years has been filled with violence, discrimination, and turmoil.

Jeffrey Veidlinger, author of “In the Shadow of the Shtetl,” recently described the history of the Jewish Community in Ukraine over the last hundred years in a podcast interview with the Yiddish Book Center. <http://www.yiddishbookcenter.org/audio/shadow-shtetl-telling-story-small-town-jewish-life>

This time period has been filled with violence, death and despair for the Ukrainian Jewish community. It started in 1917 with the pogroms. It is followed by severe poverty in the 1920s. The late 1920s saw the collection of farms. The early 1930s brought with it more tremendous poverty. The late 1930s were a period where the Jewish community was particularly terrorized. This is followed by the Holocaust. 33,000 Jews were slaughtered at Babi Yar. 900,000 Jews were killed during the Holocaust.

After WWII, the few who survived returned to communities where they encountered animosity towards the Jews and the return of deep rooted anti-Semitism. The Holocaust was just one of many manifestations of violence and destruction that the Jewish community has had to endure for over one hundred years.

A few years ago, my wife Nancy and I, along with my two brothers and their wives, traveled to Ukraine to visit what was left of my mother’s home, and say Kaddish at a mass grave. We stared our journey in Lviv, considered the educational center of the Ukraine. The atmosphere was oppressive.

We met with Rebbitzin Bald of the Lviv Synagogue. She and her husband were sent to Lviv by the Karliner-Stolin Rebbi to provide daily study, officiate at life cycle events, and run a school for what is left of the Jewish Community. The Rebbitzin shared her daily dilemma with us. The mission set by their rebbe was to restore and build a Jewish community. But the reality is that for any young person who has a Jewish identity and wants to live a Jewish life, the Rebbitzin works tirelessly to arrange for them to move to Israel or North America.

We were impressed by the commitment of Rabbi and Rebbitzin Bald to live and raise a family in such a difficult environment. Rabbi Bald has been physically accosted and their apartment has been vandalized.

We did have the extraordinary experience of meeting with the family that hid my mother during the war. Through some ingenuity on the part of our travel agent, we were able to find and meet with the Boyko family, devote Jehovah’s Witnesses, who hid my mother during part of the war.

Leonid Boyko has lived a very difficult life, sustaining his entire family on the yield of a small family farm. Just after WWII he was arrested and jailed for many years for religious and political reason, eventually released, and he returned to his home and farm, which had been corporatized by the Soviets. What little money his family had was lost during the collapse of the Ukrainian banking crisis of the 1980s.

One of the gifts we gave Leonid was a picture of our extended family from my son Sam’s Bar Mitzvah, that included my mother, her three sons and daughter-in-laws, and eight

grandchildren. Leonid studied the picture with great intensity, was overcome with emotion, and started weeping.

A few months later, Fred Tatel, a Chicago-based dentist, had read an article about our meeting with the Boyko family. He was taking a Jewish Heritage trip to Ukraine to trace his own family roots. He asked for me to arrange a meeting with the Boykos so he too could thank them for saving Jews. When Fred arrived at the Boyko home, he was met at the door by Leonid, holding the picture from my son Sam’s Bar Mitzvah.

Leonid’s 77 years on this earth have not been easy, every day a struggle. But from the ashes of the Holocaust, he and his family were responsible for the rebirth of my family. Although Leonid may not have obtained the material possessions during his lifetime that we associate with success, he can look at that picture before he goes to bed at night and know that his life and deeds were worthy.

I say a prayer every night hoping that the Jews in Ukraine will be safe during this upheaval, and that they will not be used as scapegoats by any of the parties involved in this crisis. I can only hope that there are families like the Boykos who will stand up for their Jewish neighbors.

For every member of the Jewish community in the United States, we must stay communally and politically involved to make sure that our Jewish brothers and sisters around the world are protected and not forgotten. We do not ever want to be in a position to say that we should have done more.

*Sid Lejfer is the Managing Partner of Harvest Solutions and is involved and supports a variety of Jewish causes.*



An elderly member of the Lviv Jewish Community

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Events and news update





# Raise Up Workers, Raise Up Massachusetts



Collecting signatures at the Convention Center



A demonstration in front of the State House

The Passover story demands the end of slavery. Modern day slavery exists in several forms, including robbing workers of an appropriate wage. Massachusetts' current minimum wage is not enough for most people to afford rent, food, transportation, health visit co-pays, and other crucial necessities. Raising the minimum wage would impact 500,000 workers in Massachusetts, giving them the economic stability to provide for themselves and their families. Together with the campaign for earned sick leave for the nearly 1 million Massachusetts workers who do not have a single paid sick day, these two campaigns could result in healthier families for Massachusetts; healthier families would mean improved child well-being, a more successful workforce, and a more vibrant economy, which would benefit us all.

JALSA, the Jewish Alliance for Law & Social Action, is one of the leading members of the *Raise Up Massachusetts Coalition*, a grassroots group of community, faith, and labor organizations working to ensure that working families are able to earn fair wages and care for themselves and family members when they are sick. The coalition collected more than 285,000 signatures to put raising the minimum wage and earned sick time for all workers on the 2014 ballot. Many Jewish organizations and synagogues, including Moshe Kavod, Temple Sinai of Brookline, and Temple Israel of Boston joined with JALSA and other organizations to collect the largest number of signatures ever collected in a Massachusetts ballot signature drive.

As we celebrate Passover, we need to remember our hard-working sisters and brothers who await the freedoms afforded by fair wages, benefits, and protections.

*Sheila Drechter is the Director of the Jewish Alliance for Law & Social Action.*

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Photos by Nathan Chow



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## 9th Annual Passover Jazz Brunch at Ahavath Torah Congregation

Great music and delicious breakfast will go hand in hand at Stoughton's Ahavath Torah Congregation's (ATC's) Ninth Annual Passover Jazz Brunch. The synagogue's brotherhood has brought back this signature event by popular demand, and it will take place this year on Sunday, April 20, at 10 a.m. Savor a full gourmet kosher-for-Passover brunch with the soothing sounds of the Tal Shalom-Kobi Quartet. This amazingly talented group of musicians are not to be missed by fans of quality jazz. The quartet plays everything from swing to bossa nova, from rhythm and blues to Latin music. The brunch includes champagne, mimosas, lox, home fries, salads, Passover rolls, fruit, tea and coffee. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for children ages 5-12. Cost at the door are \$25 for adults and \$15 per child. Reservations close on April 13; seating is limited. Pre-payment is strongly advised. New members signing up at the introductory rate of \$95 are offered free tickets to this event. RSVP to the office at [office@atorah.org](mailto:office@atorah.org) or phone 781-344-8733. Please mail your check to Ahavath Torah Congregation, 1179 Central Street, Stoughton, MA 02072 Attn: Passover Brunch.

Tal Shalom-Kobi, a native of Israel, is a bass player and a music educator who has been active in the world of music for the past fifteen years. Tal holds a degree in Music Education from Berklee College of Music, and Masters in Jazz Performance from New England Conservatory. Tal has performed in jazz festivals overseas and locally in venues such as the Berklee Performance Center, Ryles Jazz Club, and Jordan Hall, among others. Tal is the leader of the "Four N' More" jazz group, and co-leads the "Jazz Marauders" Latin jazz quartet. Together with her performance career she has stayed active in the field of education, teaching piano and teaching youth ensemble groups in her home studio in Newton. For more information on the quartet, visit <http://www.talmusicworld.com/>

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# The Jewish Calendar

By Rabbi Mendy Uminer

The story is told about a man and women on a dinner date together. For over two hours, the gentleman talks all about his hobbies, his great accomplishments, his travels around the world, and his wonderful personality. Finally, after all of this time, he looks up at her and says: Enough of me talking about me, I'd like to know what do YOU think about me?

This month, we prepare to commemorate the holiday of Passover, which celebrates the Jewish people leaving Egypt and journeying into the desert - with the land of Israel their final destination.

In Exodus, chapter 12, the Jewish people receive their first Divine commandment, the instruction to establish a lunar calendar. G-d instructs Moses and Aaron to command the Jews to begin counting time based on the moon's 29.5-day cycle, and to no longer use the solar calendar, which was the method used by the Egyptians. Indeed, G-d shows Moses a vision of the moon's silver crescent, and tells him that the Jewish months shall now be determined based on the appearance of this new moon.

Thinking about this for a moment, it does seem somewhat unexpected that G-d would choose this particular mitzvah, important as it is, as the first to command to His people. One would expect that there would be a more fundamental law - perhaps the belief in G-d, rejection of idol-worship, or the commandment to love one's fellow. Why is the formulation of a new calendar the first divine commandment?

Chassidism teaches that the calendar shift from solar to lunar was meant to signal a major shift in the spiritual orientation of the Jewish people. As they were set to experience liberation from a spiritual bondage, this reorientation would prepare them to receive the Torah, the divine legacy and mandate, just seven weeks later at Mt Sinai. The commandment to adopt a new way of counting time was meant to teach them to also adopt a new way of thinking, a new way of living, a new philosophy of life.

Let's take a moment to explore ancient Egypt. A central objective of the ancient Egyptian culture was material prosperity and power. The sun represented the beneficence of nature, as it provided heat and light and promoted agricultural growth. The Egyptians deified the sun and developed many rituals which they believed would make the sun gods

happy and ensure an uninterrupted flow of material blessings. Perhaps we can say that their relationship with the sun was like a child's view of an ATM machine - you push the right button, out comes the cash!

This same philosophy is seen in their worship of other gods; the Nile River was a deity as it irrigated their crops; the constellations were worshipped as they believed they influenced their fate; and they also deified the lamb and the zodiac sign of Aries, as the docile and subdued animal was the perfect example of trouble-free material abundance. In a sentence, the way the ancient Egyptians looked at everything was for the subsidiary benefits: "what's in it for me?"

The moon, on the other hand, represents a philosophy that symbolizes the exact opposite. The moon represents a relationship that does not seek the sun's light for its own benefit, but only to reflect that light to a world that sits in darkness.

The moon is a symbol of *Malchut*, Kabbalah's term for a selfless identity, one whose ultimate concern is not one's own personal needs, but rather the focus on others, the ability to see the Divine intent in creation, the G-dly purpose in all of life's blessings.

By commanding the Jewish people to reorient the way they kept time, the Torah establishes a fundamental principle of what life is all about, and what lies at the heart of our very purpose. G-d wanted to remove the notion of a self-centered existence. G-d sought to wean the Jewish people from expecting a relationship based on material returns, and instead to valuing the relationship itself.

As our ancestors left Egypt, G-d crushed the self-serving deities of the Egyptian people. He smote the Nile River and instructed the Jews to slaughter the lamb for the Passover offering. At the dawn of the Exodus, G-d taught the Jewish people to reject the selfish worship of the sun, and instead to embrace the selfless characteristics of the moon.

Passover teaches us to view each of our material resources not as an end to itself, but as a means to end - as a means to serve G-d and bring perfection to all of creation.

May G-d bless each of us all with an abundance of material blessing, and increased spiritual sensitivity.

A kosher and Happy Passover to all.

**Rabbi Mendy Uminer is the director of Chabad at Chestnut Hill.**

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# Our Trip to New York

## Shirley Nigri Farber

My family, along with the thousands of tourists from around the world who inundated the streets of Manhattan, began 2014 in New York.

It was both the busiest season and the coldest days of the year. But we managed to book hotels located in the center of it all, Times Square, so it was easy to go out and come back often to the hotel, to take a break from the cold. We stayed in the **HK Hotels** chain ([www.hkhotels.com](http://www.hkhotels.com)), which includes the **Casablanca Hotel** on 43rd Street, next to Times Square, the historic **Hotel Elysée** on 54th Street, the **Library Hotel** at the corner of Madison Avenue and 41st Street, and **Giraffe Hotel**, located on Park Avenue and 26th Street. The four hotels are considered “Boutique Hotels” by definition, and are truly charming hotels with personalized service, few rooms and first class amenities. All four offer continental breakfast, and every evening, a complimentary cheese and wine reception exclusively for guests. So while we relaxed, drinking champagne with cheese, my son enjoyed a cup of hot chocolate, fruit and cookies. Throughout the day, the hotel serves complimentary coffee and snacks. This way, we were able to take a break between one activity and the next, relaxing in the hotel lounge with cappuccino and muffins instead of waiting for a seat at one of the always packed Manhattan Starbucks. Hotel rates vary according to the season and room size, ranging from \$250 per room to \$1500 for the large suite. For anyone who needs special attention or just likes to be pampered, I recommend staying in this type of boutique hotel, as the staff is always helpful - even when it comes to choosing and booking restaurants and Broadway plays.

A good tip for anyone going to New York for the first time is to buy the **CityPass** ([www.citypass.com](http://www.citypass.com)). The pass costs \$109 for adults and \$82 for children, and includes major attractions of the city that if purchased separately would cost \$185. For nine days, you can visit six attractions, including the Empire State Building Observatory, the Museum of Natural History (kids love to see the huge dinosaurs), the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Top of the Rock (Rockefeller Center), the Guggenheim Museum, the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, and the Circle Line Cruises. For those planning to visit the Statue of Liberty, it is worth mentioning that the CityPass does not include access to the monument entrance or to the crown of the statue these are only by reservation. See more at [www.statuecruises.com](http://www.statuecruises.com).

Another worthwhile pass is [www.newyorkpass.com](http://www.newyorkpass.com), which includes a tour bus, and tickets to the attractions. Prices range from \$85 for a day up to \$230 for 7 days. I would not recommend the bus pass to anyone who is traveling with the family, as a taxi would be cheaper. The advantage of both passes, beyond the savings, is avoiding the queues at the ticket lines.

A visit to New York must include a Broadway show. At the TKTS booth in Times Square, one can buy discounted tickets for the same day. But if you do not want to stand in line, you can buy tickets in advance at [www.broadway.com](http://www.broadway.com), and even choose your seat and read



Central Park



Guggenheim Museum



Casablanca Hotel at Times Square



Jewish Museum

# Our Trip to New York

more about the play. Once you leave the theater after the show, I recommend the *Cafe Un, Deux, Trois* (non-kosher) on 44th Street near Broadway. There, you can have a late dinner or just a snack before bedtime.

When staying in Manhattan, no car is needed. We drove from Boston and left the car in the garage next to the hotel for five days (about \$30/day), and navigated around by foot, taxi and subway. My son was curious to ride the metro, as he always sees it in movies and television shows. One area that I really like to tour is Little Italy. We took the subway to Chinatown, walked through the area, and then went to lunch in the Italian neighborhood.

For those who want to save money on museums, some offer free entrance at certain times, or simply accept donations. The **Jewish Museum**, which is in the 5th Avenue with 92nd Street, does not charge entrance on Shabbat. We visited a wonderful Chagall exhibition, where he used the image of Jesus in the context of the Second World War. The exhibition has ended, but the museum has some very interesting individual pieces.

At the **Guggenheim Museum**, you can enter with a donation of any amount Saturdays from 5:45 to 8 p.m. At the **MoMa** (Museum of Modern Art), which is on 53rd Street near 5th Avenue, admission is free every Friday from 4 to 8 p.m. At the **Metropolitan Museum**, admission is always "suggested." When I studied in New York, I liked to spend Sundays at the Met, especially during the winter. In the beginning, I paid the full entrance fee, until one day when I went to the information counter and said I was a student and liked to go there every Sunday, but that was weighing on my budget. They then explained to me that the price was only suggested, and that if I wanted to donate one dollar, it would be welcome. I also enjoy the gift shop of the Metropolitan Museum.

Traveling with children has its difficulties. Therefore, it is important to fit in programs that are interesting to them, and to be aware of the times that they usually get tired. Among the Broadway shows that are suitable for children at the moment are the *Lion King* and *Matilda*. Favorite places for kids include Central Park (especially the zoo), the large toy stores, and the skating rink at Rockefeller Center. My son enjoyed huge stores such as Toys R Us, Lego, and FAO Schwartz and for chocolates, the Hersheys and M&Ms stores, all in Times Square.

## Kosher Restaurants

My favorite itinerary when in New York is to dine in kosher restaurants. I love the fact that there are a variety of choices, spread all over the downtown areas. This time, I was disappointed to see that three eateries that I used to frequent when I lived in New York back in my 20s were closed: *Kosher Delight* and *Jerusalem Pizza* on Broadway, and *Estichana*, which was located uptown. My favorite kosher restaurant, however, *Le Marais*, is still there. It may not be the best, but it offers a combination of a great location (near Times Square), reasonable prices, good food, and a nice atmosphere. Before traveling, I checked a book entitled "Great Kosher Restaurants" to see what might



Central Park



Blessing Hands from Tiferet Israel Synagogue Boston at the Jewish Museum

be new. I was really tempted to try them all. But it is hard to choose from a magazine, so I went online to each restaurant's website to check their menu and of course, their prices. Once we got to New York, we called the restaurants that we wanted to try to see if they were open.

But unfortunately, our schedule of late dinners did not match the restaurants' hours of operation. Also, due to the bad weather, many had closed earlier. We ended up trying only one, which was located on Broadway. We had seen a beautiful picture in a magazine, but I was not impressed at all by the ambiance, the service, or the quality of the food.

On our last day, we stopped in **Borough Park** in Brooklyn. It is interesting to see how much my son enjoys seeing Jewish people together. It gives him a feeling that we are not so different: that he is walking among other people who eat matzah on Passover and do not celebrate Christmas. But inside one store, a little boy with *peyot* and a kippah gave him a strange look. My son asked me "why is this boy staring at me?" So while my son was feeling "so Jewish" in that Judaica store, I told him we may not look "Jewish enough" without a kippah.

From there, I visited a hat store. As my husband and son entered, an attendant behind me informed us that

my husband and son would have to wait outside in the freezing weather. Only women were allowed inside the store, due to modesty laws (women were trying hats on inside the store, and are not permitted to show their hair to other men). It was a lesson in Judaism. From there, we went to one common ground in the Jewish world: Chinese food.

I believe that it is important for Jewish people to learn how other Jewish people live. There should be some kind of tour that would bring non-Orthodox Jews to visit an Orthodox community, and vice-versa. How can we be respected and get along with other communities if we do not know our own? In fact, when a non-Jew sees an Orthodox Jew, they think we are all the same. They see us as one unified community, with the same customs and ways of life. Yet in fact, most Jews actually know very little about Jewish communities outside their own world.

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# Collection Spotlight

## From the American Jewish Historical Society, New England Archives

From 1939 to 1940, Dr. S.I. Konig spent months trying to get his whole family out of Germany, with no success. In Desperation, he eventually asked that only his three children be placed with "... a religious family anywhere in America... I heard here it is not hard to send children to America as it is for adults because sometimes families ask for children from Germany." His request was referred back to Germany by the German-Jewish Children's Aid, with a notation in that letter which reads in part "You probably know that at the present time, all departures from Germany and Austria are practically impossible, except via Russia and Japan." The correspondence ends here and sadly we do not know the fate of the Konig family. Were they successful in getting out of war torn Europe? Or did they perish like so many others? This is just one story that can be found in the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society Collection (HIAS), housed at the American Jewish Historical Society, New England Archives.

The HIAS collection is one of the Society's most popular for its wealth of genealogical information and for its historical significance; containing both individual case files and arrival cards for many Jewish immigrants who passed through the Port of Boston and required assistance or for those requesting help with immigration. The collection contains ship manifests, tracer correspondence, scrapbooks and some passenger lists and photographs dating from 1886 – 1977; the collection is particularly rich in records dating from 1938 to 1954.

Along with immigration issues, the HIAS organization insured that Jewish immigrants had access to holiday and religious services and kosher food; provided shelter and social services; and assisted immigrants with finding employment and schools. After World War I, HIAS worked with individuals to locate displaced families, replace legal documents, and develop an educational program to help immigrants become naturalized citizens. During World War II, immigration was at the forefront of the HIAS mission as, like the Konig family, Jews attempted to flee Europe for the United States and Palestine. HIAS arranged for sponsors and worked continuously to assist the many Jews who wrote to them for help. Unfortunately for many, United States immigration quotas and laws made it extremely difficult, even when HIAS procured affidavits of sponsorship from relatives.

Although this is a collection in much demand at the American Jewish Historical Society New England Archives, it is restricted due to the extremely fragile condition of the documents. Our goal is to digitize the HIAS collection and make it available online, free of charge, to all researchers and genealogists.

If you would like to learn more about the HIAS collection, or any other collections at the American Jewish Historical Society,

New England Archives please contact Judi Garner at judi.garner@ajhsboston.org or by phone at 617-226-1245.



Assorted Documents from the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society Collection



Seder for detainees at the East Boston Immigration Detention Center, 1921

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# Despair in the desert: Waiting for a peace agreement

By Tucker Lieberman

As the Hebrew slaves began their escape from Egypt to the Promised Land, before the sea parted, they said to Moses: “Weren’t there enough graves in Egypt? Why did you have to bring us out here to die in the desert? How could you do such a thing to us, bringing us out of Egypt?” (Ex. 14:11) Their incessant complaining is often poked fun at during the Seder, but another interpretation is that they were feeling genuine despair.

This passage evokes some of the deep, complex emotion that people feel about Israel’s political situation today. The peace negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians, led by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, are at a critical juncture. The originally stated April 29 deadline will arrive quickly after Passover ends. There is doubt as to whether an agreement can be reached by that date; the revised goal is to keep the parties at the table a little longer. In considering the possibility that an agreement is not imminent, and for so much energy and goodwill has been invested, it is normal to feel frustrated, disappointed - even despairing.

In broad brushstrokes, the expected future agreement has been known for years. The new border will be based on the pre-1967 lines with land swaps, Jerusalem will be divided, and Palestinians will not be allowed the right to return to Israel *en masse*. If there were fundamental opposition to this kind of political arrangement, today’s peace talks would not be happening. And yet, when the moment comes to make the concessions to which history has pointed, the parties have trouble saying, “It’s time.” Despair, pain, and anguish are felt on all sides.

## Peace is possible

To rally support for the ongoing negotiations, J Street has led a series of “Town Hall” events across the country. Over 200 people, eager to see a negotiated two-state solution, turned out in Boston on Feb. 5 – amidst a snowstorm – to express support and ask questions about Israel’s prospects. J Street president Jeremy Ben-Ami said at the Town Hall that a two-state solution “is a necessity to ensure that future generations of Jewish and Palestinian children can grow up in peace and security.”

“To those who don’t believe that it is possible,” MK Amram Mitzna told the crowd, these people must nevertheless accept its necessity and understand that “we must do it.”

In Mitzna’s framing, peace is possible, and permanent occupation is not. “I don’t want to go on with ruling over other people,” he said, to applause. “It is impossible.”

## The responsibility of hope

Mitzna is not alone. Increasing numbers of Israelis are ready to see the occupation come to an end. It is surely possible, as framework agreements demonstrate,

but is there room for hope?

When the Leventhal-Sidman JCC in Newton hosted former Israeli state prosecutor Talia Sasson, former head of the Shin Bet and MK Ami Ayalon and journalist Gershom Gorenberg for a panel on March 6, the speakers all emphasized opportunities in the current situation. Sasson said, “I think that democracy is all about change. It is a market for ideas, and a struggle for ideas, and no one stays in power forever.” Israelis will realize, she said, that “the price of doing nothing is too high for them to pay.” Ayalon’s perspective was that “If we do not use the power that we have, we are just doomed to be influenced by the [other] powers.”

Of the obligation to have some measure of hope and optimism, Gorenberg said pointedly, “Despair is political irresponsibility.”

## Reasons to be hopeful

When despair threatens to take over, we may remember our shared values of democracy, human rights, the idea of homeland, freedom of religion, and respect for individual conscience. We hold onto the desire for people to treat each other fairly and with dignity. We know that we can achieve political support to realize these aspirations on a large scale. We will have to walk a long way yet, but we will not die in the desert. We will not despair.

**Tucker Lieberman is the social media chair of J Street Boston and the site curator of Humanities360.com.**

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MK Amram Mitzna at J Street Town Hall at Temple Israel

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## *Palestinian: 'Right of Return'*

*David Bedein, Director, Israel Resource News Agency and the Center for Near East Policy Research*

It is universally understood that current talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority will not lead to an end of the long protracted Arab Israeli war.

However, there is no reason why at least one aspect of that war cannot be resolved: the continuing humanitarian crisis facing descendants of Arab refugees from 1948, who wallow in UNRWA refugee facilities under the nation of "return" to villages from 1948 - which no longer exist.

In that context, the Center for Near East Policy Research, which has conducted news investigations and films on UNRWA for the past 25 years, has launched U.R.I. – THE UNRWA REFORM INITIATIVE - to facilitate a policy change in UNRWA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency.

While UNRWA long ago adopted the logo of "Peace Starts Here," UNRWA working mantra could easily be described as "War Starts Here." UNRWA's schools educate half a million students with the notion that they must prepare to take back their homes in what is now Israel - by force of arms.

The Center's July 2013 documentary, CAMP JIHAD, received unprecedented attention from news agencies, politicians, and even from UNRWA itself. Shot on location in summer camps near UNRWA facilities near Nablus and Gaza, the Center's Palestinian TV crew filmed UNRWA campers singing songs of martyrdom, UNRWA instructors describing Jews as 'wolves,' and UNRWA camp counselors leading children in chants for their right to 'return' to Israeli cities such as Tel Aviv and Haifa.

It is wrong to think that only the UN General Assembly can change such UNRWA programs. UNRWA operates under directives from 38 donor nations, who could pull on the purse strings of their power to ask that UNRWA programs reflect an agenda of peace and reconciliation. Therefore, the agenda of the UNRWA REFORM INITIATIVE is to ask legislators of all donor nations to ask that UNRWA funding be predicated on a change in UNRWA policies. In reality, every citizen of every donor nation can take the initiative to reform UNRWA, by asking each respective legislature to ask that UNRWA :

1. Not use texts or teachers that encourage children to engage in acts of war
2. Stop support for designated foreign terrorist entities such as Hamas;
3. Cease promotion of the "right of return" through the "armed struggle"
4. Adopt internationally accepted UNHCR definitions of a "refugee" and not to bequeath refugee status on descendants of refugees from 65 years ago.

With these goals in mind, the Center for Near East Policy Research will dispatch experts to conduct high-profile briefings for legislators of nations that fund UNRWA, so that policy makers of donor nations will become aware of the UNRWA war education curriculum that should not continue.

At a time when the whole world discusses possibilities of peace in the Middle East, this is one aspect of middle east peace that can be resolved. Link to the UNRWA REFORM INITIATIVE: <http://israelbehindthenews.com/bin/content.cgi?ID=6938&q=1>

Link to a study of UNRWA education for the right of return: <http://israelbehindthenews.com/bin/content.cgi?ID=4648&q=1>

**For more on this subject visit: [www.israelbehindthenews.com](http://www.israelbehindthenews.com).**



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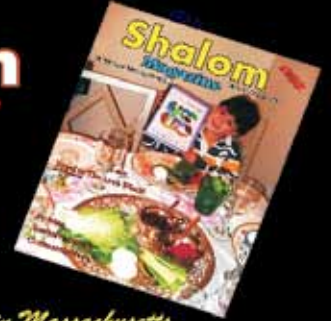


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# *The internal bra that supports on the inside*

## *An Israeli plastic surgeon invented Orbix, an 'internal bra' to help heavy breasts fight the pull of gravity*

By Abigail Klein Leichman  
www.Israel21c.org

Women's breasts naturally sag over time. Held up by little more than skin, they are victims of gravity – especially when they are naturally large or have been augmented with implants in cosmetic or reconstructive surgery.

Israeli surgeon-inventors are coming to the rescue. One solution ISRAEL21c reported on earlier is the B-Lite implant weighing 30 percent less than other implants.

Another is an “internal bra” from Orbix Medical, which is affixed to the strong rib bones underneath the breasts of women whose natural or already augmented breasts are gravitating southward.

ISRAEL21c first reported on this advance in 2007, three years after the company was founded as part of the Meytav technological incubator in Kiryat Shmona. At that time, a final prototype was ready for testing, based on the original concept by plastic surgeon Dr. Eyal Gur.

The product has now earned the CE mark and will go on the market in Europe this year. Meanwhile, Orbix is starting an advanced round of clinical trials to supplement the results of six years of testing.

### **Successful clinical trials**

The idea came to him at an international convention of plastic surgeons nine years ago, relates Gur, who is head of plastic surgery at Tel Aviv-Sourasky Medical Center and chairman of the Israeli Society for Plastic and Aesthetic Surgery.

“Everyone was talking about how to avoid or repair sagging,” he tells ISRAEL21c. “A week after [augmentation or breast lift] surgery,

women are happy with the results, but a month later they come back and ask why their breasts keep moving lower. About eight percent of malpractice lawsuits are related to sag-

ging after a breast lift. So there was a need, and I thought how I could compensate for it.”

Knowing that only bone could adequately anchor whatever device he might invent, Gur worked with engineer Adi Shfaram to design an internal harness connected with specialized sutures and micro-titanium screws to the ribs.

“It took a long time to prove it was safe and that it could withstand the gravitational forces on women's breasts, so we did a lot of studies with physicists. Once we were sure, we took it to animal studies to show it doesn't create injury to tissue, and then to cadaver studies to see if the result looks good.”

Successful clinical trials were performed in Belgium on 15 women, and on 10 patients at Sourasky Medical Center. Additional trials will start soon in London and Germany.

### **'The idea is genius'**

Orbix CEO Yossi Mazel tells ISRAEL21c that the privately funded company is focusing on three or four countries where there is a good market potential.

“We have leading surgeons in Israel, Germany, France, Belgium, Sweden, Poland and the UK interested in being key opinion leaders,” he says.

“To market a medical device, you need people highly considered in the profession, so they can start training other surgeons to be certified in performing the surgery safely. We also have local companies ready to serve as distributors and establish a network of salespeople who can visit surgeons and offer the product and invite them for training.”

In Israel, one of those opinion leaders is Dr. Dov Klein, a breast surgeon in private practice in Tel Aviv.

“I think the idea is genius, and it's kind of a revolution in what we call internal elevation of breasts,” Klein tells ISRAEL21c. “I am very interested in trying it.”

He points out that Orbix could also be used for abdominal lifts, face-lifts and other applications. “You can elevate any soft tissue with this technology,” Klein notes. “I believe we will see a big change in the technique we use now. The results will stay longer and we will not have to redo operations so frequently after breast augmentation or other surgeries. My patients will be happier.”

### **Made in Israel**

Mazel says the Orbix product could be used in some 1 million procedures every year, with Europe representing 30 percent of that global market.

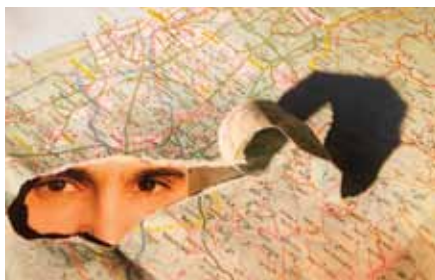
“For every breast procedure, this is a natural add-on that will conserve results for a long time, reduce scarring and lead to more satisfied patients.”

Patients who opt for the Orbix device will pay about 15 to 20 percent more on top of the cost of the procedure. Mazel plans to expand to the rest of Europe and then to investigate markets in Canada, Brazil and the United States.

The device is made in Israel, Mazel adds, “and it will stay that way as long as we run the company.”

Given the potential market, however, it might not be surprising if Orbix is one day acquired by one of the major US breast implant companies, such as Johnson & Johnson's Mentor, Allergan or Sientra.

For more information, see orbix-medical.com.



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# Remembering a Sephardic Passover

By Sara Cohen

In 1956, my parents and I left our close-knit family in Athens, Greece, and found ourselves as in Boston, our new home. Since the Greek Jewish community was devastated by the Holocaust, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee had brought us to the U.S. in order to start a new life. They were supposed to help my parents find work, establish us in the Jewish community and to lead us to a better future. The idea was great, but the reality was not. We were Sephardic Jews who spoke Greek and Ladino, an ancient Spanish language. American Jews assumed we spoke Yiddish, and that we were from Eastern Europe. We soon discovered that Boston Jews were from a different world.

Our first taste of American Jewish life was on Blue Hill Avenue, a Roxbury neighborhood where we were settled in the fall of 1956. Here we saw numerous Jewish temples, but noticed they had boarded-up windows and locked doors. The people in our new neighborhood on Normandy Street didn't look Jewish, they were all African-American, and my mother had me ask in my beginner's English, "Excuse me, are you Jewish?" Over and over again we were told, "No, we're not Jews, you missed them by ten years!" Where had they gone? Where was Mat-tapan, Newton, Brookline? We wondered why droves of Jews had evacuated from one place to disappear to another. Were there any Jews in America? My father wondered if we had just made a mistake in coming altogether, and how we could go back to Greece. We never did.

Later when we finally moved to the "Jewish" section of Dorchester, we found the Jews we were looking for. We heard their language, Yiddish, which to us was German, and therefore frightening. We tasted Ashkenazi foods, bagels, lox and fish balls packed in jars, and wondered where the eggplant, okra and spinach pies were sold. We located numerous temples in every flavor, Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, whereas in Greece, there was no distinction.

In 1956, we left the small but tightly-knit Athenian Jewish society where we had celebrated all of our holidays with large family get-togethers and programs at the local temple. All of our holidays were spiced with Sephardic songs, recipes, and family visits. And my favorite holiday, Passover, was the one memory I treasured the most. Getting together

at Tia Ester's house, we had at least 25 people crowded around a table that stretched out to the small atrium garden. The singing began and continued through the feast, with familiar Ladino songs from our Sephardic heritage. The foods, all with Spanish names included, were Roasted Lamb, *mina* and spinach matzo pies, and *huevos haminados* (red-tinted eggs boiled in onion skins). The sweets included "karitho-pita," walnut cake, and "maronchinos," or marzipan. Uncle Ilias, the master of ceremonies, read the Hagaddah in Hebrew and cued us in to join him in song. My aunts brought platters of delectable foods from their own family traditions, and the children, excited with all the festivity, found it hard to stop giggling. As the service wrapped up, we heard the wonderful family stories passed down to us from the elders.

We also had time to reflect on all of the relatives missing from our table. They were the ones who were taken by the Germans in a previous Passover of March, 1944. That was the year when just before Passover, the Gestapo had come into our neighborhood and rounded up all the registered Jews. On that day, a Friday just two weeks before Passover, our neighbors and relatives had gone to the local Jewish temple for the weekly attendance-taking. No one thought that this would be a sting operation and that all 1,200 registered Athenian Jews would be ultimately sent to Auschwitz to be annihilated.

A new generation of Jewish children like myself were born after the war, and our parents tried to raise us in a happy setting. One way to do this was to make big productions of each Jewish holiday, so that we could continue our traditions and rich cultural heritage.

Years later, as we celebrated Passover with new friends, my mother recreated all of the dishes straight from my grandmother's kitchen. These recipes from our Sephardic culture had come from the expelled Jewish community of Spain. Like the Israelites, our journey too was long and difficult, but we had finally found our niche in America. We had a lot to be thankful for.

*Sara Cohen, an art educator and video documentary maker, moved to Boston with her parents in 1956. As Greek Jews, they kept their holiday customs and recipes and with yearly trips back to Greece, they remained connected to their roots. Cohen is currently creating a series of short documentaries to record the ancient and rich culture of the Greek Jews.*



Sara with parents at Franklin Park, 1958



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## Wishes for a Happy and Sweet Passover

From the Board of Directors and Staff of



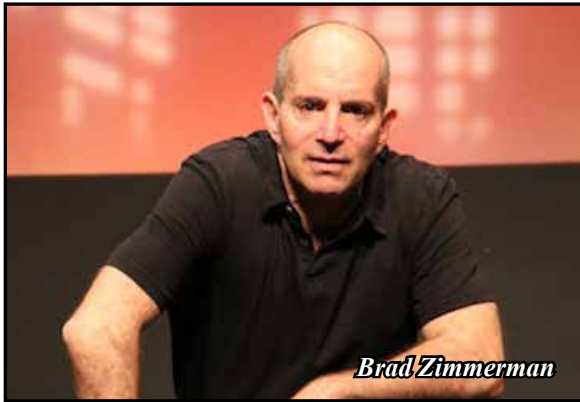
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# COMMUNITY NOTES & EVENTS

## ***“My Son the Waiter: A Jewish Tragedy” comes to The Regent***



The long, long wait has been worth it. After 29 years of waiting on tables for his big break in show business in New York City, Brad Zimmerman decided that now is the time. Zimmerman will tell his hilarious, insightful and sometimes poignant story when “My Son the Waiter: A Jewish Tragedy” comes the Regent Theatre in Arlington, Mass. from April 23-May 25, 2014.

Produced by the same group behind “My Mother’s Italian, My Father’s Jewish & I’m In Therapy,” “RESPECT: A Musical Journey of Women” and “A Jew Grows in Brooklyn,” Zimmerman’s one-man show combines his training as an actor with years on the standup comedy circuit. If you’ve ever longed for something; if you ever desired it with all your heart; if you were willing to wait tables for 29 years to pursue your dream, “My Son the Waiter” is for you.

This hybrid 80-minute show weaves a bittersweet tale of one man’s lengthy - and we do mean lengthy - struggle in the Big Apple.

His send-ups on his family, career, childhood and misbegotten love life are as warm and poignant as they are hysterical.

The Fort Lauderdale Sun Sentinel called the show “hilarious.” “What makes audiences connect with this story is that it’s true,” the 60-year-old Zimmerman says. “I really had to struggle as a waiter until I was in my mid-50s. My life began to change when I wrote a play about my life starting in 2005.”

Zimmerman, who lives in New York City, said audiences “like that it’s honest. It makes an audience pay attention. They’re listening. They’re interested in your journey. They, in turn, relate it to their own journey. Are they doing what they want to do?”

“My Son the Waiter” is a performance for anyone who aspires to get the most out of their talents and is willing to follow his dreams. His career now includes opening for the late George Carlin and being Joan Rivers’ opening act going on eight years.

“I’ve had three great opening acts in my lifetime: Billy Crystal, Garry Shandling and Brad Zimmerman,” Rivers says. He’s also worked with Dennis Miller, Julio Iglesias and Brad Garrett, and he played Johnny Sack’s lawyer, Ron Pearse, in one of the favorite television shows of all time, “The Sopranos.”

Performances at the Regent are scheduled at 2 and 7 p.m. on Wednesdays, 7 p.m. on Thursdays, 8 p.m. on Fridays, 2 and 8 p.m. on Saturdays and 2 p.m. on Sundays.

Ticket prices are \$47 on Wednesday and Thursday and \$57 on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. All seats are reserved and can be purchased online at [www.regenttheatre.com](http://www.regenttheatre.com) or at the Regent Theatre, 7 Medford St., Arlington, or by calling 781-646-4849.

“My Son the Waiter: A Jewish Tragedy” is produced by Philip Roger Roy and Dana Matthow. For more information, visit [www.mysonthewaiter.com](http://www.mysonthewaiter.com).

## ***“Three Days of Rain”: from Broadway to Boston***

The Hub Theatre Company of Boston opens its second season with *Three Days of Rain*, a modern-day masterpiece by Tony Award winning playwright Richard Greenberg at the First Church in Boston April 4-19.

*Three Days of Rain* tells the story of a dysfunctional family’s tumultuous relationships over the course of two generations. The first act, set in 1995, finds the adult children of architect Edmund Janeway dealing with the aftermath of his death, including surprising revelations that provoke long-delayed confrontations. In the second act, in the same apartment but in 1960, young Janeway and his business partner struggle to design the house that will shape their destiny, but their tempestuous relationship - with each other as well as with a complex and troubled woman - lay an emotional minefield for the next generation to wade through.

Richard Greenberg has penned such works as *Take Me Out*, *The Violet Hour* and the Broadway adaptation of *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*. *Three Days of Rain* was a Pulitzer Prize finalist in 1998, and was recently on Broadway featuring Bradley Cooper, Julia Roberts and Paul Rudd.

Daniel Bourque directs a trio of Boston’s finest actors, Marty Seeger Mason, Tim Hoover, and the Hub’s Artistic Director, John Geoffrion.

The Hub Theater Company of Boston was founded in 2012 to develop Boston’s theatre artists, and to break down barriers between audiences and arts. All tickets to all performances are Pay-What-You-Can.

*Three Days of Rain*, by award-winning playwright Richard Greenberg, presented by the Hub Theatre Company of Boston, April 4-19 at the First Church In Boston, 66 Marlborough St. All tickets are Pay-What-You-Can and may be purchased via [www.hubtheatreboston.ticketleap.com](http://www.hubtheatreboston.ticketleap.com)

For more information please visit [www.hubtheatreboston.org](http://www.hubtheatreboston.org)

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