

# Shalom

## Magazine

**FREE**

EDITION 8 - Chanukah/Winter 2010

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Opinion

Photos & Events

Community News

**Inside the Brookline Chai Center**

*By Matt Robinson*

a 55 and older community



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# Community Events listing

## Boston's Center for Jewish Culture



Explore Judaism and Jewish history at the Vilna Shul, Boston's Center for Jewish Culture. Ask questions about Jewish history, culture, and spirituality in a welcoming, non-judgmental environment. All are welcome (Jews and non Jews), regardless of background. The Vilna Shul is open to visitors year round on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 11 am - 5 pm and on Sundays from 1 - 5 pm from March 15 to Thanksgiving. Group tours are available, and we are also open by appointment by calling 617-523-2324 or contacting us at info@

vilnashul.org. Once a month lay-led Friday night services are held and open to all, and are followed by an interesting speaker and a kosher buffet meal. The suggested donation for the evening is \$10.00. We hope to see you soon!

## Canton Chai Center Chanukah Party

Canton Chai Center invites for the Chanukah Wonderland at the Canton Public High School, 900 Washington St., on Sunday December 5th at 12:30 pm. The event is free and open to the public. It will feature Steve Zany, master ventriloquist and comedy magician. There will be hot latkes and sufganiyot and Chanukah crafts, moon bounce, face painting, music and much more. Please RSVP CantonChaiCenter@Yahoo.com.

**Shalom Magazine offers free event listing to all non-profit Jewish organizations. One event per organization up to 3 sentences, space is limited. Please email (no attachments) to: shalomMa@msn.com.**

Dear Friends:

As Hanukkah quickly approaches, I would like to extend warm holiday greetings to the members of our Jewish community. This is a special time of year where families and friends can join together to honor their heritage and celebrate their good fortunes. Boston is a proud city, rich in diversity and skilled minds. Our Jewish community's talent for innovation and growth, combined with the spirit of its religion and culture, makes Boston a more culturally welcoming environment and an even stronger city. I hope that this holiday season is filled with joy, celebration and family. Happy Hanukkah!

Best wishes,  
**Thomas M. Menino, Mayor of Boston**

Dear Friend,  
As Hanukkah approaches, I can't help but reflect on what the holiday season means, especially for children. For most kids, it means spending time with family, enjoying familiar traditions like the menorah or latkes, and receiving gifts.

But some children are not so lucky. Their families struggle to make ends meet, and finding the extra resources to give gifts or provide a special holiday meal feels almost impossible. It is these children that we must remember as we celebrate this season.

This time of year is busy for all of us. But we must take the time to share what we have with those who are less fortunate. Spend time volunteering at a shelter like the Women's Lunch Place. Let your children pick out a toy for a needy child and donate it to the Home for Little Wanderers. Helping others enriches all of us.

Happy Hanukkah,  
**Michael P. Ross, President, Boston City Council**



# Happy Hanukkah

May the spirit of the holiday be with you now and throughout the year.

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**EDITORIAL**

**Happy Chanukah**



This edition of Shalom Magazine comes with an exclusive article by Matt Robinson on how the Chai Center of Brookline has become one of the most popular local Jewish organizations among young people. As we are always looking for ideas and successful ways to attract Jewish people to community events, we use this magazine to portray organizations, places and event that we believe are making a wave and getting people involved.

Matt Robinson also writes about an organization that gathers together people who like to volunteer. We bring you coverage of the first Limmud Boston, a

two-day learning experience organized exclusively by volunteers. While there, I had the wonderful opportunity to speak to an audience about my Brazilian and Sephardic Jewish Heritage.

While Israel debates prevailing issues such as the status of settlement policies, the peace agreement, and the two-state solution, here in America it is important for the Jewish people to ensure that the next generation has a strong connection with our holy land. In this issue, David Bernstein from the David Project gives us some ideas on that subject.

In this issue you will also find news from organizations that support our publication, which include schools, temples, and some non-profits. Shalom Magazine features extensive coverage of Arts and Culture, with book reviews, Jewish Film Festival reports, art exhibits, and personal life stories.

As we approach the festival of Chanukah, I hope that while you enjoy time with your family and of course eat some latkes and sufganiot, you will reflect on matters important to the Jewish community. And after you reflect, please share it with our readers. One of our goals is to make this magazine an open forum of ideas that would support Shalom magazine's main goal, to connect all the Jewish community in Massachusetts and get them more involved in the various activities offered in our area.

Please remember that when you mention to our advertisers that you are a Shalom reader, you are supporting this free magazine. So don't forget to let them know you saw them here. Please visit us online at [www.ShalomMA.com](http://www.ShalomMA.com) or email us at [ShalomMA@msn.com](mailto:ShalomMA@msn.com).

Chag Sameach,

*Shirley Nigri Farber* - Editor

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# Canton Chai Center



*The Jewish Women's Circle (JWC) of the Canton Chai Center met on November 14 to study and learn from experienced educator and life coach Judy Elkin.*

On November 4th, over 300 people participated in the launch of AJC Boston's Global Voices Initiative featuring AJC Executive Director David Harris at Congregation Mishkan Tefila in Chestnut Hill, MA. Harris spoke about the Iranian nuclear threat, Israel's pursuit of peace and security, and the struggle for regional stability in the Middle East.

"The issue of the Iranian bomb is not only a Jewish or Israeli issue," said Harris. "The Iranian bomb would be a global game changer." AJC Boston director Rob Leikind emphasized AJC's credibility on the world stage and its ability to effectively combat global challenges today. "AJC has truly global reach," said Leikind. "With offices around the world from Brussels to Jerusalem and Mumbai to Boston, AJC is a global voice for a global era."

AJC Boston will continue to host world leaders and opinion makers as part of its new Global Voices Initiative series. For more information about the Global Voices Initiative, please contact Boston@ajc.org or visit www.ajcboston.org.

# Holocaust Studies in Reading, MA



Local journalist and Shalom Magazine contributor Susie Davidson's book and film "I Refused to Die: stories of Boston Area Holocaust Survivors and Soldiers who Liberated the Concentration Camps of World War II" was accepted into the Reading, Mass. (Middle and High) school system for new Holocaust Studies program. The program debuted in a student ceremony featuring Holocaust survivor Edgar Krasa on November 9 (Kristallnacht anniversary).

# AJC Boston



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# Limmud Boston

This Boston has a new tzedakah. Limmud Boston is both the conference dedicated to the encouragement of lifelong Jewish learning and the volunteer teams that create the annual Limmud Boston conference.

Shalom Magazine readers may recall my summer piece, in which I wrote, "A girl can dream, can't she?" I am writing today to say that dreams can come true. I envisioned a Jewish community where learning is key, and where members of all area Jewish communities would gather in order to "do Jewish together." On October 30-31, 2010, during the first LimmudBoston, that is exactly what happened. From the first note of singer/songwriter Julie Silver's concert, to nearly 24 hours later when Rabbi Goldie Milgram led the closing circle, Limmud Boston offered more than 120 workshops and concerts.

Limmud conferences take place in 46 cities worldwide. New England is finally a Limmud locale, too. Based on the annual week-long Limmud conferences in the UK, Limmud Boston honors the core Limmud values which recognize that everyone is a learner and everyone can be a teacher. Limmud conferences are also about choices. Most essentially, Limmud conferences are created by volunteers—and encourage participants to volunteer, too. Our food team and program team, the volunteer coordinator and the marketing teams—all are volunteers. Each presenter offered time and expertise as volunteers. The creation of Limmud Boston was an extravaganza of Jewish generosity.

Limmud Boston 2010 took place at Temple Israel of Boston, which generously offered their building for our first conference. This first Limmud Boston received generous support from Combined Jewish Philanthropies. An amazing, anonymous donor supported Limmud Chavruta—which uses books that are created by an international collaboration that are published by Limmud UK.

After a short dessert & schmooze, Saturday night at Limmud Boston included stellar tellers from the Jewish Storytellers Coalition, "Making Trouble," a film from the Jewish Women's Archives, a songwriter showcase and a live performance, called The Black Jew Dialogues, starring Larry Tish & Ron Jones.

Sunday's choices were no less fabulous than Saturday evening's entertainment. There were more than 20 LimmudBoston workshops every hour, covering text and thought, arts and culture, movement and music, lifecycle and spirituality and, of course, Israel. The food demonstrations included making a delicious Passover Chocolate Pecan Tart and a demo for "Heavenly Hallah." One session combined the weekly portion with food,

All photos by: Nir Landau  
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President of Hebrew College, Daniel Lehmann

"Biblical Rivalry—Text & Tasting in the Kitchen." Bubbe and her grandson Avrom, of "Feed Me Bubbe" fame were there, offering delicious samples and lots of recipes.

Those of us on the Program Team found little gems in the wording of each offering, including "G'd on my iPod," and "Diving into Mikveh." From Future Shul to Yiddish Poetry, intermarriage to miracles, Judaic needlework and Hebrew Play, and the Place of Holiness, there was truly something for everyone at Limmud Boston.

In the 52 page program book, most sessions included suggestions for "Encore" -- ways for participants to continue their engagement with these topics. Whether actual classes, or the names of books, or places to enroll, LimmudBoston encourages both attendance at our conference and continued engagement in Jewish studies. Look for Taste-of-Limmud Boston events using the Limmud Chavruta books. Quite the treat!

Limmud Boston by the numbers: Nearly 700 attendees; over 140 presenters; more than 120 sessions; over 65 organizational co-sponsors. We are ready to start again! We invite the entire community to join us to plan the next volunteer-run Limmud-Boston, which we hope will take place on December 3-4, 2011. We're looking for volunteers to help us find a location, reach out to the community and join our dream. Go to our website, [www.LimmudBoston.org](http://www.LimmudBoston.org) to get involved.

**Steffi Aronson Karp, founder of LimmudBoston, is a self-confessed 'Jewish conference junkie' who lives in Waban with her husband, Eric.**

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*Ellen & Peter Allard, musicians from Worcester*

# Limmud Boston

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*author Jonathan D. Sarna talked about Jews and the Civil war*



*Shalom Magazine editor Shirley Farber talked about Growing up Jewish in Brazil*



*Noam Sienna talked about Jewish Henna body art*

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# Raising Kids Who Love Israel

Several years ago I was asked by an Israeli-born Hebrew School principal to speak at a program on Israel for Jewish high school students; there was a lack of enthusiasm for Israel among her students. I was given one hour to impart what these teens had failed to grasp in the past 15 years. Needless to say, I failed miserably.

A recent study conducted by Brandeis University showed declining commitment among young Jews toward Israel. Commitment to Israel should be rising. We can do better. We all know that education must be reinforced at home. Why should we think any differently about instilling in our children Ahavat Yisrael—love of Israel? Groups like mine—The David Project—can help. But we can't do it without parents.

Here are my top ten ways to raise Israel connected kids:

**10. If you can pull it off financially, take the whole family on an extended—and fun—trip to Israel.**

According to the 2001 National Jewish Population Survey, children who have been to Israel are three times more likely to feel “very attached” than those who have not. My family had a great time in Israel this summer and my Bar Mitzvah-aged son left deeply moved by the experience.

**9. Send your teenager on a six-week summer program in Israel or your college student on a Birthright trip.**

According to a 2009 Brandeis study on the impact of Birthright, 73 percent of participants felt the trip was “very much” or “somewhat” a life-changing experience. Participants were 23 percent more likely than non-participants to report feeling “very much” connected to Israel.

**8. Encourage your college student to stay involved in Jewish life on campus.**

With more than 300,000 Jews attending college in North America, it's important that college students connect to Hillel and other Jewish campus experiences. In addition to staying connected to Jewish life more generally, they can gain access to heavily-subsidized Israel trips and educational experiences.

**7. Make sure your middle-schooler or high-schooler takes an Israel education course as part of his or her Jewish education.**

If the school doesn't offer it, encourage them to do so. Most Jewish day schools and supplemental schools spend very little time teaching about Israel. Some are afraid of controversy and are loath to alienate parents on either side of the ideological spectrum.



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But we've paid a price for such fecklessness. Parents can play a role in ensuring that Israel is central to Jewish education.

**6. Host an Israeli exchange student or guest in your home.**

Having a young Israeli stay in your home for an extended period will expose the whole family to Israeli culture and will give you someone to visit when you go to Israel. Twenty-five years later, I'm still close friends with the Israeli scout (now business mogul) who spent the summer in my home.

**5. Participate in Israeli cultural activities, such as Israeli dancing, a concert with an Israeli performer or an arts festival.**

Israel is home to a vibrant arts scene. Take advantage of opportunities in your community.

**4. Learn Hebrew.**

Speaking Hebrew makes Israel and Israeli culture far more accessible. Writer Leon Wieseltier stated his “fondest wish for the American Jewish community is that it...realizes that it cannot have a living relationship with Israel and that it cannot take its place among the great Diaspora Jewish communities in our history without learning Hebrew.”

**3. Encourage your college student to spend a year or semester in Israel on one of 160 programs.**

This experience, alone, may create a life-long supporter of Israel. Check out Masalsrael.org.

**2. Send your child to a Jewish sleep-away camp with an emphasis on Israel.**

Camping makes Jewish life fun. Bringing Israel into the equation makes Israel fun, too. Young Judea, among others, does a terrific job. According to the same national survey cited above, 41 percent of those who have participated in Jewish camping feel “very attached to Israel” compared to 14 percent of those who have not.

**1. Read books and articles about, or take a course on, Israel.**

The crisis in Jewish identity today is one of vocabulary. We lack the basic knowledge to express why being Jewish and connected to Israel are important. If you can't make the case for caring about Israel, it is unlikely your kids will either. For reading suggestions, check out [www.thedavidproject.org/reading](http://www.thedavidproject.org/reading).

Remember: it all starts with the parents!  
*David Bernstein, Executive Director for The David Project*  
*David Bernstein became Executive Director in August 2010, overseeing The David Project's growth in its educational mission and institutional development.*

## Happy Hanukkah!

from The David Project



*The David Project is a non-profit organization dedicated to educating and inspiring strong voices for Israel through dynamic educational seminars, workshops, and curricula.*



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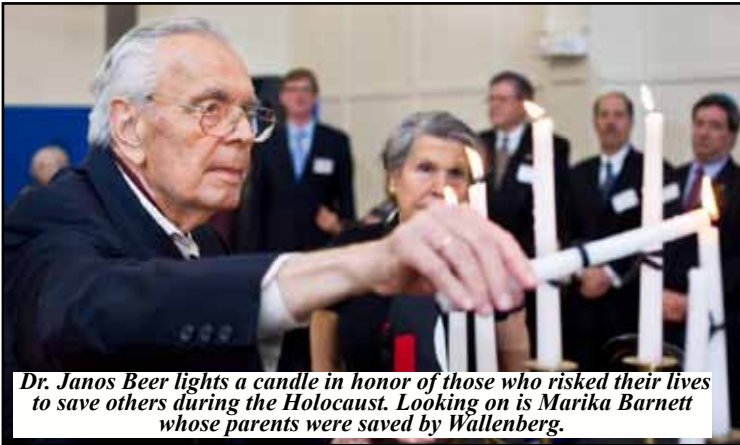




# 300 Honor Valor of Raoul Wallenberg at SASSDS

**Dershowitz Says "This is the time for righteousness"**

All photos by: J. D. Levine



Dr. Janos Beer lights a candle in honor of those who risked their lives to save others during the Holocaust. Looking on is Marika Barnett whose parents were saved by Wallenberg.

By Stanley Hurwitz

Some 300 people attended the second annual 'Righteous Among Nations Award' event November 16 on the campus of the South Area Solomon Schechter School in Norwood, sponsored by the Israel Arbeiter Gallery of Understanding.

The audience became emotional when Jewish and German students joined together in Hebrew song. They were deeply touched when a Jewish and German student together lit a candle to honor Raoul Wallenberg's work and memory, and when several Holocaust survivors and children of survivors lit a candle in memory of the millions who died and in honor of those who survived.

A student from Boston's German International School cried as Marika Barnett described how her parents were saved from the Nazis in 1944 Budapest by Wallenberg.

Guest speaker Alan Dershowitz, Harvard law professor, author and jurist, said, "Every person must stand up for righteousness, even when it's politically incorrect. And that takes more courage today than ever before," he said. "Each of us has our hour," he said, referring to a quote from Pirkei Avot, a program theme.

Dr. Janos Beer, now 87, who was a Wallenberg aide in Budapest, noted that "He didn't save people because of their religions, but because they were human beings."

Gallery Co-Chair Irv Kempner said, "This program fulfilled our vision to honor the memory of Shoah victims, Holocaust survivors and the righteous citizens who took great personal risk to try and save them. Co-Chair Dr. Gila Kriegel said she hoped that partnerships started through initiatives such as this event "will continue to keep Wallenberg's message alive and make our world one of tolerance and understanding."

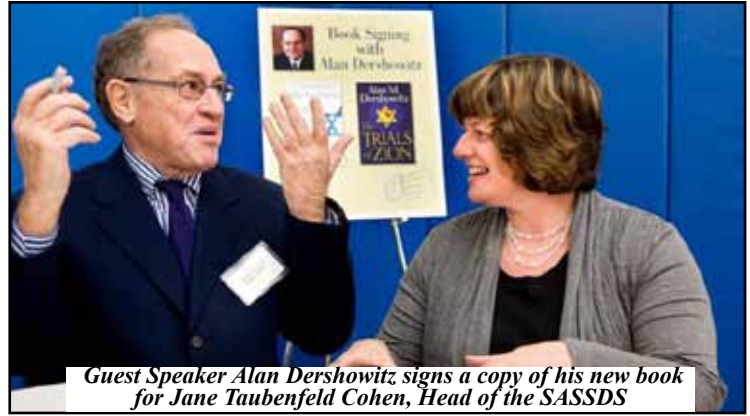
Head of School Jane Taubenfeld Cohen referred to Wallenberg's "selfless humanitarianism, a true model of tikkun olam (Hebrew for 'making the world a better place') for our children."

Another highlight was performance of a specially-written musical cantata with the SASSDS Barbara F. Guzovsky Choir (Makhela) and the choir of the German International School of Boston who performed in English and Hebrew. Co-Directors were Sandi Morgan Dunn, who created the Cantata, and Lisa Yves Winner.

Co-sponsors were the American Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League, Jewish Community Relations Council, and the Friends of the New England Holocaust Memorial.

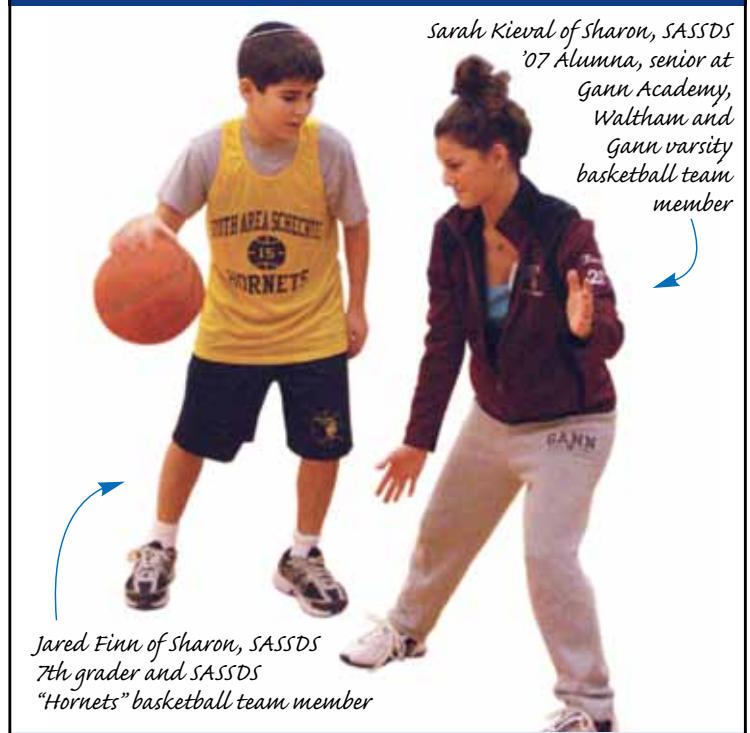


Chanuka/Winter 2010



Guest Speaker Alan Dershowitz signs a copy of his new book for Jane Taubenfeld Cohen, Head of the SASSDS

## At South Area Solomon Schechter Day School we meet students and families one-on-one



Sarah Kieval of Sharon, SASSDS '07 Alumna, senior at Gann Academy, Waltham and Gann varsity basketball team member

Jared Finn of Sharon, SASSDS 7th grader and SASSDS "Hornets" basketball team member

**"The incredible K-8 education I received at SASSDS prepared me for high school 'on and off the court!' I know that I will continue to carry these academic and athletic skills, as well as my strong Jewish values, with me throughout my life."** —SARAH KIEVAL, SASSDS CLASS OF '07

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# Boston's Birthright Reunion



The event took place at the Sheraton Boston Hotel on October 17th and was sponsored by: CJP, CG of Israel, Hagshama, Israel Campus Roundtable, MASA and Hillel



Neil Lazarus

All photos by: Nir Landau



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# Getting Chai Together

**Brookline-based Chai Center gives every Jew a reason to celebrate**

**By Matt Robinson**

It's a Tuesday night in Boston's Theater District and the line into Club Rumor wraps around the block!

Is it a top DJ? A famous comedian? A great local band on the rise? No, it's the Chai Center's annual Purim party!

In just over five years, the Chai Center of Brookline ([www.getchai.org](http://www.getchai.org)) has become one of the most popular and productive members of the Greater Boston Jewish community. With weekly services and study groups and annual events that bring thousands of Jews together from all over the area and from all walks of life, Though the Center has already spawned more than a few shidduchs, it is also a great place for any Jew- whether married, single, or even unaffiliated (or, as their unofficial motto says, "any Jew that moves").

The force behind this amazing center is the team of Rabbi Mayshe Schwarz and his wife and energetic right-hand Shifra who came from Los Angeles in 2005.

"Friends of ours from Los Angeles moved up here and realized how much Jewish Boston would benefit from the welcoming digestive approach that has made the Chai Center in LA so popular," Schwarz explains. "It was through their encouragement... that we decided to give it a go."

Far from the palm trees and plasticity of "La-La Land," the die-hard Lakers fan had to adjust quickly to his new environs. Once he had gotten accustomed to the weather and driving patterns (or

So how did this young rabbi (and his family) from LA make his mark in Beantown?

"By listening to the needs of the people," Schwarz replies. "They wanted more Jewish connectivity in an unconventional setting, so we did workshops and lectures and parties and classes- all in a non-synagogue setting."

Among the most popular events the Center hosts are their singles Shabbat dinners and programs for new parents and seniors, the Sushi in the Sukkah event and monthly challah baking classes called "Loaves of Love," as well as the outrageous Purim parties that literally have Jews lining up to shake their graggers. The Schwartzes also send out regular emails that also combine learning (e.g., the weekly "E-Torah" parsha mailings) and fun (e.g., great Jewish jokes). Shifra's affiliation with the Friendship Circle of Boston ([www.friendshipcircleboston.org](http://www.friendshipcircleboston.org)) allows and encourages Chai friends to reach even further out to support fellow Jews with special needs.

As they offer so many diverse and creative programs, it is easy to see how the Center has grown from that first Shabbat dinner gathering of five to an organization that serves over 1,500 annually on Shabbat alone. Though there may be a few out there who have not yet participated in a Chai Center event, Schwarz says that over 50 percent of his guests are "repeat offenders," many of whom rarely miss a Shabbat or a party.

Among these are Josh Konoff, local entrepreneur and founder of



Chai Center Gala Event



Rabbi Schwartz and friends



Chai Center Gala Event

lack thereof), however, Schwarz began to make his own observations about the relative observancy of many of the Jews in his new neighborhood. Though he was impressed by the many "large and beautiful temples" in the area, Schwarz was also disappointed by the lack of people in them.

"More than half of the Jewish population was and is not connecting," he says.

With this in mind, Schwarz's Chabad mandate became as clear as the fact that the Celtics are the best team ever.

"My goal was to connect with the unaffiliated market," Schwarz recalls, "and to provide an avenue where they can enter without the feeling of having to be overly committed."

By minimizing what he calls the "barriers of entry" (the same barriers that he saw preventing many area Jews from connecting with their community and with their spiritual selves), Schwarz opened the doors of his home (which also served as the first home of the Chai Center) to whomever would wish to enter.

"My original plan was one at a time," he recalls. "If you want to share a message that is true and relevant that will resonate, it will be shared from one person to the next."

By way of introduction, the Schwartzes began hosting simple Shabbat dinners at which mostly younger community members could come for great food and maybe a bit of learning, all washed down with a few l'chaims. Though the first few were admittedly intimate ("The first night, we had about five people," Schwarz recalls), word quickly spread and the dinners were soon becoming "sold out" events. As the popularity of the Center's offerings grew, so too did the calendar. Shabbat was soon followed by Passover and Purim and eventually by High Holiday services that took over the ballroom at the Longwood Towers.

the Boston Volunteer Meetup.

"When I was moving to Boston I wanted to meet new people," explains Konoff, who says that, before he discovered the Chai Center from the Geshet City website, he had "one Jewish friend" in the area. The first time he went to share Shabbat with the Schwartzes, he was also joined by over 80 young Jews from all over the world! "Now, I now have 20 to thirty 30 friends- all inspired by the charismatic Rabbi Mayshe and the altruistic Shifra Shwartz."

Businessman and author Dean Gould also remembers his first encounter with the Center and its founders.

"I first met Mayshe 15 years ago in Los Angeles," Gould recalls, noting that, to that point, he had been "worlds away" from meeting any observant Jews. When he "stumbled into" a High Holiday service that was being hosted by Mayshe and his father (who is the head rabbi at UCLA and a spiritual confidant to the likes of Bob Dylan), Gould admits that he "didn't know what to think or expect." Even so, he now says that it was "one of the best Jewish experiences in my [life]."

Gould admits, however, that he was at first a bit skeptical and suspected that the Schwartzes had plans for him. Fortunately, a friend of the family assured him that there was no "ulterior motive" and no reason to be reticent or defensive. "They merely work to introduce others like myself to the beautiful side of Judaism," Gould says, adding that, if Mayshe does have any "ulterior motive," it is to get Jews together, socially and otherwise.

To date, Mayshe has overseen the meeting and marrying of dozens of couples and many of his visitors go in single and leave with a partner. And even for those who do not find love at the Center, they are sure to find a friend.

"After the service," Gould recalls, "Mayshe was thanking people

# Getting Chai Together

## Brookline-based Chai Center gives every Jew a reason to celebrate

for coming and answering questions for clueless people like me and we immediately struck up a friendship and bond.” Though Schwartz wears the traditional black coat and hat and is undeniably observant, Gould found that the conversation turned from matters of religious faith to other things in which some put faith.

“We spent a half hour talking about the Dodgers, Lakers, [and] Judaism,” Gould recalls. “I felt like I was talking to one of my life-long buddies.”

Though he grew up in Sharon with a more traditional Jewish upbringing, early childhood teacher Dan Sigel has also gained a great deal through his involvement with the Chai Center.

“About three years ago I went to the big Channukah event that takes place at Jillian’s in Boston,” Sigel recalls. Though he admits that “the event was great,” other commitments kept him away from the Center for most of the following year, despite repeated prodding from friends (many female) who went on and on about the “great Shabbat dinners” the Center hosted.

“I finally went to one of the dinners and had the most amazing experience,” Sigel says. “There were so many people there...and everyone was there for one reason- it was Shabbat and they were Jewish.”

At that first Shabbat dinner, Sigel encountered an even gender mix and a range of observancy that ran from orthodox to unaffiliated. Since then, he has made a point to retrace at least once a month for

lar opinion, the Center receives no financial support from CJP or Chabad (though, he says, they are “open to that”) and raises all of their funds “directly from the people that benefit from or appreciate what we have been accomplishing in the community.... To them, we are most grateful!”

While raising money may be a great challenge, Schwartz says that the Center also faces other obstacles, many of which have to do with public perception.

“People think that we are only for Orthodox,” Schwartz suggests, “when in fact that is by far the smallest segment of our constituency.”

In fact, Schwartz says, he has prided himself on being open to all Jews (and even some non-Jews) and to welcoming anyone who crosses his threshold.

“Every one is welcomed and everyone feels comfortable,” he says. “We always advertise no prior background is necessary.”

As the Center is so open (and pretty much always open), Schwartz is constantly making friends and giving Jews a place to make their own connections, both to other Jews and to themselves. No matter how many come by, however, he says that there is always room for one more.

“When people come back and bring their friends,” he says, “there is no greater validation than that!”



Dreidels and Dice Kosher casino night



Mayshe and Shifrale Schwartz



Purim Party

more from food and friendship.

“If it weren’t for Mayshe and Shifra and their unique take on Jewish life,” he says, citing the couple’s “no pressure, laid-back attitude”, “I don’t think any of this would have been possible.”

Looking back at the last decade of his life, Sigel suggests that there was a “gap” in programming for Jewish young adults in Boston. Even events like the infamous Matzah Ball and CJP events were not attracting a sufficient critical mass.

“Mayshe was at the right place, at the right time, with the right message,” Sigel says. “He put the spiritual vibe out there, and I have since found my own way toward a Jewish life that is comfortable for me.”

And while Schwartz himself is thankful to Hashem for the growth of his group and for the many friends like Josh and Dean and Dan who have come through his door, he never seems comfortable resting on his laurels or settling for his current level of success. As long as there is another Jew to reach, he seems dedicated to taking on the challenge. In fact, the Chai Center recently expanded into the world of social networking with a popular facebook profile and also into the world of Jewish education with their own school called The Hebrew School of the Arts.

“We have 15 kids already,” Schwartz says proudly, noting that the new program is intended primarily for “couples with kids that want some level of entry into Jewish life but [who are] just not ready to make that synagogue commitment”

Among the Center’s other plans are a Jewish Ronald McDonald House for families who come to Boston for medical care and a Chai Center trip to Israel. Unfortunately, as with so many worthy programs, the Center is facing financial challenges.

“I see daily how much more we could provide if we only had the means,” Schwartz says somewhat sadly, noting that, despite popu-

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# Striar Hebrew Academy 25th Anniversary

By **Susie Berg**

1986 goes down in history as the year of the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster, the year William Rehnquist became chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, Oprah began her national TV show, Fox became the fourth TV network, and “We Are the World” won a Grammy for record of the year. Closer to home, 1986 also marked an important milestone: the birth of Striar Hebrew Academy of Sharon (SHAS), thus fulfilling the need for an Orthodox day school in South-area Boston. Philanthropists R. William and Daniel Striar, zt”l, donated land and money, while Rabbi Meir Sendor, of Young Israel of Sharon, and a group of dedicated parents shaped the educational philosophy and curriculum of the new school.

Twenty-five years later, SHAS has grown to a full early childhood and elementary school, toddlers through sixth grade. Now on two campuses—the original Ashcroft building and elementary grades at 100 Ames Street—Striar Hebrew Academy takes pride in its intimate atmosphere and strong sense of community, in which students thrive socially, emotionally and academically. Its guiding principle—Torah u’Mada (combining a Judaic and general education)—was the vision behind the school’s founding and, today, remains at the core of its educational philosophy.

To celebrate the school’s 25th anniversary, several special events are planned. Renowned historian, author and Holocaust scholar Dr. Deborah Lipstadt will deliver the Striar Memorial Lecture on Sunday, December 12, 7 pm, at the SHAS Elementary building. Currently the Doro Professor of Modern Jewish and Holocaust Studies at Emory University, Lipstadt’s topic will be “The New Anti-Semitism: How New? How Bad? How Real?” Lipstadt’s book, *History on Trial: My Day in Court with David Irving*, is the story of her libel trial in London against David Irving, who sued her for calling him a Holocaust denier and right wing extremist. The book won the National Jewish Book Award and was ranked by the editors at Amazon.com as number-four on its list of top ten history books of 2005.

Striar Hebrew Academy’s annual celebration, which will be held on Saturday evening, January 22, will commemorate the school’s rich history and the individuals who helped the school achieve successes from 1986 through today. Distinguished honorees include Rabbi Sendor, the Striar/Tribuna family, and the 300-plus students who began their education at SHAS. The event will offer the opportunity to celebrate SHAS’s humble beginning and its continual development over 25 years, and to look ahead to its bright future.

Professor Deborah Lipstadt will deliver the Striar Memorial Lecture on December 12.



**Professor Deborah Lipstadt**



**Rabbi Meir Sendor**



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# New Jewish Fiction has Boston Roots

By Leah Larson

A fictional Boston suburb is the setting for Evelyn Krieger's debut children's novel, *One Is Not A Lonely Number* (YM Books). The story features a thirteen-year-old orthodox girl, Talia Schumacher, as its narrator. Talia is the only child of an affluent Jewish couple known for their Jewish hospitality. As Talia hits her teen years, her parents' open-door guest policy starts to irritate her. When Gabrielle Markus, an eccentric twenty-three-year old, ballet dancer shows up one day, Talia's life is turned upside down. Convinced that Gabrielle is harboring a secret, Talia and her friends set out to uncover it. Along the way, Talia must deal with the loneliness she feels as an only child living in a religious community that celebrates large families.

"I was the eldest of six kids, and I often wondered what it would be like to be an only child," Krieger says. "Growing up in Detroit, I had several orthodox friends who came from families of seven, eight and more." In crafting her story, Evelyn interviewed only children to learn more about their feelings and experiences. Krieger was moved by the common wish for a sibling and decided that this longing would be a central part of her book.

The book's narrator also has a gift for math, and her unusual way of thinking about numbers, (they have colors and personalities), is woven into the story along with themes of friendship, individuality, and acceptance.

While Judaism plays a central role in the characters' lives, Krieger wanted to portray them with conflicts and emotions that all kids experience. "It was important to make Talia a regular modern teen who happens to be orthodox. I didn't want to limit her Judaism to matzah balls and Hebrew school angst, nor did I want to have a character suffering from Christmas envy. I wanted all girls, including non-Jews, to be able to relate to her on some level, as well as to gain knowledge about Jewish practice."

Krieger has received positive feedback from parents and teachers looking for "kosher" books for girls. The young rea-



ders have been equally enthusiastic. "This book was absolutely amazing!" writes a kid reviewer on Amazon. "The reality of growing up, problems and happiness, were combined in a fun, great read. I absolutely could not put it down." Readers have also appreciated that the characters reflect diverse Jewish backgrounds, something Krieger felt was lacking in books aimed solely for the religious market.

Krieger, a resident of Sharon, holds a master's degree in education from Harvard, and has taught in Solomon Schechter of Greater Boston, Maimonides School, and the Newton Public Schools. Currently, she is a part-time learning specialist for the Newton-based, Jewish organization, Gateways: Access to Special Education. While enjoying a successful teaching career and raising kids, Krieger continued to earn numerous publishing credits and writing awards. Still, she couldn't let go of her lifelong goal of publishing a novel. "I have three unfinished attempts on my computer." Working on it whenever she could snatch an hour or two, Krieger completed the first draft in a year-and-a-half. "I looked forward to my Sunday afternoons at Starbucks," she says.

*One Is Not A Lonely Number* is her first publication for children. The book, geared for girls ages 10-14, is available from the publisher's website: [www.oneisnotaloney-number.com](http://www.oneisnotaloney-number.com), and Amazon.com.

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# Visiting physician gives affecting, instructive presentation on vital Israeli pediatric hospital



By Susie Davidson

Special to Shalom Magazine

At a recent fundraiser for the Rambam Health Care Campus of Haifa, Professor Miriam Ben-Arush put a human face on her important work. A small, but an unforgettable, human face.

Dr. Myriam Ben-Arush, Director of Pediatric Oncology and Associate Director of the Children's Hospital on the RHCC site, visited the Brookline home of Linda and Shimon Amir on Oct. 21 to discuss "Cancer in Children, New Advances." The talk was organized by the American friends of the Rambam Medical Center, which is based in New York. Dr. Myriam Ben-Arush was in Boston for four days, attending the International Society of Pediatric Oncology and of the Children's Oncology Group meeting at the Hynes Convention Center. Dr. Ben-Arush is also working on the second edition of a book on psychosocial aspects of pediatric oncology.

The recipient of the Ministry of Health's prize for outstanding work as well as a 2005 designation as one of the most caring physicians in the world by the World Medical Association, Dr. Ben-Arush conducted a slide presentation on the hospital, and on advances and challenges in pediatric oncology. Although the slides were often stark and necessarily graphic, Dr. Ben-Arush spoke with hope, devotion and promise, highlighting cases where remission and other successes had been achieved that have enabled patients to live full, productive and normal lives. The presentation conveyed the essential depth of the hospital's mission, just as the stricken faces of men and women gathered around the Amir's table likewise conveyed their devotion to this cause.

With 1,000 beds, RHCC is Northern Israel's largest medical facility. A full-service teaching hospital and referral center for 11 district hospitals, it serves over two million residents, which constitutes a third of Israel's population, stretching south from Hadera to the Syrian and Lebanese borders in the north. Patients include victims of accidents during peacetime as well as injured soldiers and civilians in wartime, and casualties of terrorist attacks.

The hospital's focus upon human touch and compassion is in line with its namesake, Rabbi Moses Maimonides, the renowned philosopher and teacher of the 12th century. The Rambam, as he is called, served as court physician in the palace of Sultan Salah-a-Din of Egypt. By night, he cared for Jewish and Arab -patients from all social and economic backgrounds. According to the site, the designation "signals our hospital's aim to always be guided by the Rambam's practice of superlative devotion to patients and to the art of healing."



"I was born in a small town called Gray," she told Shalom Magazine. "There were only five Jewish families, and my grandfather was the mayor of the town." Her family moved to Dijon when she was 16, and she studied at the University of Dijon before relocating to Montreal for a fellowship in pediatric oncology. She moved to Israel in 1985. She and her husband, a bookbinder who works at the Museum of Lohamei HaGeta'ot (Ghetto Fighters), have two daughters and a granddaughter. "My older daughter is a horse veterinarian, and the other is studying biology," she said, kvelling a bit.

Part of her duties, she said, was to raise funds for the Children's Hospital. She showed slides of the facility, which includes a legacy research tower where scientists from all over the world conduct their work.

In October of this year, the hospital broke ground for the world's largest emergency underground hospital and an underground parking lot. Concrete was also poured for the beginning of construction of the new Ruth Rappaport Children's Medical Center.

All patients are admitted and treated with loving care. "We are welcoming one to two Palestinian children per week, mostly for bone marrow transplantation," said Dr. Ben-Arush, showing slides depicting patient distribution by origin, broken down into Jewish Sephardi, Moslem Arab, Moslem Arab Gaza, Jewish mixed, Christian, Other not specified, Beduin, and Druze.

"The Pediatric Hematology-Oncology Department of the Meyer Children's Hospital is the only pediatric hematology oncology department in Northern Israel, recruiting almost 90 percent of the children diagnosed with cancer in the country," she said. "Every week, one to two new children with cancer are hospitalized in the

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## Visiting physician cont.

department, and they range from the age of several days to 20-25 years.”

Within the past few years, she said, hospital staff can assess whether or not to treat the tumors aggressively. “Chemotherapy aims to kill the cancer cells, but it also kills normal cells, which are responsible for the growth of the child,” she said. “When we are giving chemotherapy we are causing serious complications, yet our aim is to cure the child, and so we try to not give too much chemotherapy.”

Radiotherapy in children can also cause severe growth abnormalities, and some children will then require growth hormones in order to grow. “It used to be ‘Why should we give growth hormones to children with cancer if they will die anyway,’” Dr. Ben-Arush said, “but now, we know that many children won’t die, so we give them the growth hormones early.”

Dr. Ben-Arush also outlined ethical problems that arise in conducting research on children with cancer. “First we have to try the new drugs on adults before we can try them in children,” she said, adding, “Most of the children who are getting the new drugs are getting them because they have had all the conventional treatments, and the families agreed to try the new drugs.”

She said that one concern is fertility, so when the cancer has a good prognosis, the staff try to avoid drugs that affect fertility. “One of my first patients was treated in 1985,” said Dr. Ben-Arush. “She was cured, married and was pregnant, and had a baby, with one ovary.”

Natural and holistic treatment is also part of the plan at Rambam. Dr. Myriam Ben-Arush discussed the use of fish oil with omega-3, special diets, tai chi, reflexology, touch therapy, and traditional Arab treatments like olive oil. In a short film she played about the hospital, it was stated that “Rambam treats the person, and not the disease.” Dr. Ben-Arush said that the physician must build a relationship with the patient. Holistic approach complements medical care, she said, and she expressed hope to work with embryonic stem cells.

Tension along northern border has increased the importance of the hospital. During the second Lebanon war, amid rockets directed at the hospital itself, Rambam saved the lives of victims.

“Our hospital has achieved 70 years of excellence and achievement,” said Dr. Ben-Arush. “Together, we will fulfill the potential and realize the vision and mission.”

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# Tikkun Together

## Boston Volunteer Meetup brings Jews together in service

By Matt Robinson

Among the most important tents of Judaism is the responsibility to repair the world. Tikkun olam drives millions of Jews around the world to give what they can to their fellow ma - Jew or gentle- and to do all they can to make the world a better place.

And if you happen to meet your basherte in the process, all the better!

For the past year, local entrepreneur Josh Konoff has been facilitating such service (and such meetings) through the Boston Volunteer Meetup (<http://www.bostonvolunteer.org>), a social media-based group that allows area Jews (and others) to get together in the name of service by joining forces with local not-for-profit agencies and organizations who work toward bettering the local, national, and international community.

"Jewish people seem to love to help others," Konoff observes. While he figures that about 300-400 of his group's members are Jewish, as he does not ask people to self-identify according to faith or beliefs, he is not sure how many members are fellow Jews. says, No matter who participates, however, all members of the Meetup group enjoy the experience.

"What's better than meeting new people who commit their lives to helping people," asks BVM member Susan Davis, who calls Konoff, "a very altruistic, intelligent and passionate leader."

When he is not building houses or fixing playgrounds, Konoff is involved in the community in other ways. In addition to his "main" jobs as a real estate agent and entrepreneur, he also dances regularly and plays on an adult soccer team. As a member of Español en El Parque, the Rhode Island native is able to practice language skills that help him communicate with many of the people he serves as a realtor and a volunteer. In his "spare time," Konoff is also training for a triathlon!

Despite all of this, Konoff still finds and makes time to do for others. "It complements the rest of my life," Konoff suggests, "because helping people is one of my strongest values."

So strong, in fact, that, despite his obscenely hectic schedule, Konoff took the time to provide the community with something he saw to be lacking.

"When I was moving to Boston, I didn't know where to volunteer," Konoff recalls. Explaining that many volunteer organizations demand a regular time each week that may not be convenient all the time, "so I decided to initiate my own group."

Unlike other groups that do what BVM does, Konoff's group does not make any demands at all.

"I differentiated the group by leading volunteer opportunities which are personalized, no-hassle and no commitment," he says, calling his group's events "celebrations."

"We celebrate 19 to 24 events every month," he says, noting that the Meetup group has offered over 250 "celebrations" so far. And while running the group is a "huge time commitment for Konoff," he is proud of the level of convenience he is able to offer others.

"You come when it is best for you," he says.

Not only is the group convenient, it is also very personal. As it is based on a social networking platform, members can suggest events, so they can be sure that they will enjoy and benefit from them.

"With the click of your mouse you can suggest new events, vote [on] other people's events, lead your own events, or promote your cause," he says. "It's very personalized [ad] very democratic."

Among the most popular recent events have been a gardening day at Franklin Park Zoo and a Charles River cleanup project that was done by canoe.

"It was a beautiful day," Konoff recalls, "and we had over 50 people canoeing!"

While the main purpose of the group is to serve the community, Konoff also says that it is intended to help people integrate into the community and maybe to build communities of their own.

"The goal of the group is helping people and meeting new people," he says. "Those are my two of my favorite things to do!"

And Konoff is not alone in his love of volunteering.

"Getting involved with the Boston Volunteer Meetup has been a great experience," says Jillian Diauto, who also appreciates the convenience and ease of scheduling that BVM offers. "Like a lot of people, I lead a pretty busy life juggling work, friends and family. It can be tough to research an organization and then reach out to set up an event. With the Boston Volunteer Meetup you get an email letting you know about upcoming opportunities and if you know you'll be around and you're interested you sign up."

Like Konoff, Diauto is also a fan of service. As the economy has worsened, she has become even more dedicated to helping others.

"Over the past few years," she recalls, "I have watched friends and family be affected negatively by the economy. The tougher it got, the more I volunteered."

Such is the way with BVM. From soup kitchens to Shabbat meals, the group supports people who are having trouble supporting themselves, taking the teachings of our Sages and making them real.

"It's been very rewarding," Diauto says, "and I've made some good friends along the way."

"As their events are so diverse, so convenient, and so participant-driven, BVM has grown quickly. In just over a year, the group has brought together over 2,600 people from every age group and background.

"Volunteering is a very Bostonian thing to do," Konoff observes. "That is why we are growing so fast."

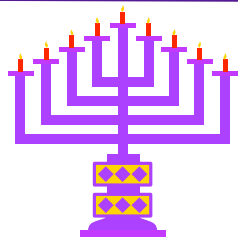
And for BVM's many current and soon-to-be-current members, the growth of the group is a very good thing.

"I am very grateful that Josh initiated The Boston Volunteer Meetup," Davis says, "and I am very happy to discover how fast the [group] is growing and growing and growing... It has significantly bettered my life!"



Josh Konoff

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# No Coincidences

By Dr. Rebecca Housel

Elie Wiesel once said, "In Jewish history, there are no coincidences." I would have to agree. As a child, my parents lived in Brockton in a subsidized housing development. We had one car. Money was not plentiful. My mother, a real-life Ruth, converted to Judaism from Catholicism. She was ironically a better Jew than those born into Judaism, and still is. I grew up in a kosher home, separate dishes and all. But because my mother had converted, we were not easily accepted into other Jewish communities outside of the Conservatives. This was in the early 1970's when the Reform movement hadn't yet gained the same popular momentum in the Northeast that it enjoys today—thanks in part to people like my mother. My father was raised in a traditional Jewish home; both of his parents were first generation Americans. His mother, my grandmother, lit the Shabbat candles until her death at age 93. There was a strong sense of Jewish values passed through my paternal grandmother. And it was at her request that, instead of attending public school, I was sent to yeshiva.

Though my father grew up in a home where Yiddish was a primary language, Hebrew was not. I'll never forget the pride in my grandmother's eyes when she gave me my first siddur and I read prayer after prayer to her in perfect Hebrew. I still have that siddur in my nightstand, some 34 years later. In its margins, notes in a child's hand can be seen asking Hashem to help my younger brother get well. My brother and I are more than seven years apart; when he was born, about a year after my grandmother gave me the siddur, there was a problem. He needed major surgery. My yeshiva training was still new, but it gave me a kind of faith in the healing of the Tehilim, and that's where I wrote in my own plea for my brother's life and continued health. I still turn to that section and read the words, just to remember. My brother is now in his 30's and a successful computer engineer for a Boston-based company. He's never had another health problem...and God willing, he never will again.

My neighborhood friends who attended public school had shorter commutes to school and shorter school days; the girls could wear whatever they wanted. On hot September mornings or June afternoons, I'd wish I could wear shorts to school like my other friends instead of the below-knee length skirts, elbow-length sleeves and knee-high socks. Those types of differences continued through middle school, where high-heels and make-up were prohibited for me but not my non-school friends.

By seventh grade, we had moved to a small house in Randolph. Some of the friends I'd started yeshiva with had moved on to public school; like me, their parents were not orthodox. But I had lots of friends at yeshiva, too—it's just that, none of them lived on the South Shore. And none of them could ever come to my house. Though we were kosher, being outside of the Orthodox community did not bode well for reciprocal friendship. I would spend most weekends sleeping over a different friend's house for Shabbat—going to their home after school on a Friday and staying through Monday, when I'd simply go home as usual after school. Negotiating two worlds wasn't hard for me; I'd been doing it my whole life.

My mother's family was a large, Irish Catholic family. She had three

brothers, all of whom were married and all of whom had multiple children. When our families would gather in one place, there were often upwards of thirty people. This was a big difference from my father's family. He had one sister and she had only one son. There were other differences, too—like Christmas. We'd often spend Christmas day at my Uncle Walter's (a Deacon) and I'd sleep at my maternal grandmother's on Christmas Eve. A favorite (and well-meaning) aunt had secretly baptized me as a baby—something she only recently revealed—and I had attended my share of Latin Masses. Ironically, my yeshiva training was integral to such negotiations.

The reason why I stayed at yeshiva through ninth grade was because I loved the learning. It was global. It was interpretive. It allowed for independent thought. These were all traits I'd developed living in an interfaith family but it was my years at the yeshiva that helped strengthen my fortitude—because no matter where I existed, I was different from everyone else. Embracing that difference is what led me to many things, not the least of which is a successful career in teaching and writing, but also in life choices, like my Catholic husband.

My husband, like my mother, is a better Jew than most Jews and probably knows more Hebrew, too. Our son is dedicated to Judaism beyond his years and has served as a kind of ambassador to others. We now live in western New York in a town with more than fifteen churches. The Jewish population in our county is the second largest in New York State at approximately 25,000. Regardless of things like Jewish population, our family is rooted in philosophies learned during my years at the yeshiva. We've survived three cancer diagnoses together, disability, loss of friends and family, even my bear of a Ph. D. dissertation—and the reasons have everything to do with the strong foundation yeshiva learning provided from which I built my own unshakable foundation.

So you tell me, is it a coincidence that my life, founded on yeshiva learning, has been so full, so successful, despite remarkable hardships like cancer and disability? Or is Elie Wiesel correct—when it comes to Jewish history, there are no coincidences....

*Dr. Rebecca Housel is an author, freelance writer and editor in the Philosophy & Pop Culture Series with Wiley and is listed in the Directory of American Poets and Writers and the National Association of Science Writers for her work in nonfiction.*





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# Community News

## Israel's youngest cardiac surgeon trained in Boston

Dr. Yan Katsnelson is a world renowned cardiovascular surgeon, who was trained at the Brigham and Woman's Hospital, Boston, MA, Harvard Medical School. Dr. Katsnelson was born and raised in a Russian-Jewish family and was the youngest cardiac surgeon in Israel. He is the founder of Chicago Heart Institute and USA Vein Clinics with offices in Boston, Chicago, New York and Los Angeles.



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Jewish Women's Career Network Advisory Committee

Eighty-three women participated in the Annual JVS/CJP Jewish Women's Career Network event in November. Professor Deborah Kolb, was the featured speaker. Kolb is an authority on gender issues in negotiation and leadership. Her talk was entitled: Women and Everyday Negotiation: Creating the Conditions for Your Own Success. For more information on the program or want to get involved with the Jewish Women's Career Network, please contact Julie Unger, junger@jvs-boston.org or 617-399-3117.

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# TMF Gala Concert



**Leon Fleisher with his daughter Leah Fleisher and Edgar Krasa, survivor and TMF board member and educator**

The Terezin Music Foundation 2010 Gala Concert at Symphony Hall, Boston, last September 26 brought the Foundation to an exciting new level, with celebrated musicians- featuring legendary pianist Leon Fleisher- donating their time and talent in extraordinary performances. Highlights were a violin sonata composed by Terezin artist Erwin Shulhoff and performed exquisitely by virtuoso violinist Michael Ludwig; the world premiere of a new TMF Commission by Czech composer Miroslav Srnka; BSO cellist Jules Eskin performing Mendelssohn and Dvorak; and the left-handed magic of Mr. Fleisher, whose right hand remains, as he said, "not ready for professional use." A reception and Benefactors' Dinner, served in the magnificent Hall itself, followed. The event launches a promising year for TMF, a non-profit whose mission is to fulfill the musical and mentoring role of the murdered Terezin composers by sponsoring commissions by emerging artists. For information on forthcoming concerts write [info@terezinmusic.org](mailto:info@terezinmusic.org).



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# Jewish Film Festival

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This year's Boston Jewish Film Festival was a highlight of the fall arts season. The Festival's fundraising kick-off on October 23 was billed as a "Friendsational Celebration," honoring Kevin Bright, "Friends" executive producer and director of more than 50 episodes of this long-running hit TV comedy series. Currently Executive Artist-in-Residence at Emerson College, Bright is also a volunteer filmmaking teacher to students at the Perkins School for the Blind. In addition, he has donated a 175-seat film and video-screening room at Emerson's newly opened Paramount Theatre on Washington Street in downtown Boston.

At the fundraiser, Bright, introduced by Emerson College President Jacqueline Liebergott, showed clips representing career highlights. In addition, he showed a short film he'd co-directed, called *Who Ordered Tax?*, the signature line of his late father, vaudevillian comedian Jackie Bright.

In addition, Kevin Bright donated an Al Hirschfeld limited edition lithograph of "Friends" cast and executives, plus a signed "Friends" script, to the Festival's live auction. Other items auctioned off included sitting in on a half-day's editing session with legendary documentarian Fred Wiseman; and dinners cooked by Jim Solomon, owner of The Fireplace in Brookline.


The Festival, itself, running November 3-14, offered a wide variety of films and accompanying events, beginning with Opening Night's *Maya*, in the presence of legendary Israeli director Michal Bat-Adam and producer and Academy-Award winner Moshe Mizrahi present. The Festival's Mid-Fest Event featured the U.S. Premiere of a documentary, *Tango, A Story with Jews*, by Gabriel Pomeranic, preceded by live music by Berklee College musicians and dancing by tango professionals Pracha Eamranond and Martha Castano. Closing Night featured screenwriter Maciej Karpinski, her from Poland with dramatic feature *Little Rose (Rozycka)*, directed by Jan Kidawa-Blonski and co-scripted by Karpinski and the director. The Festival's screening of German director Dirk Regel's romantic comedy about intermarriage in today's Berlin, *Oh, What a Mess! (So Ein Schlamassel)* drew strong crowds not only to the film but also to an overflow special reception at *Finale Desserterie and Bakery* in Coolidge Corner targeted to those in their 20s and 30s.

Two bargain matinees at the Coolidge also proved noteworthy: one, *VIDAL SASSOON THE MOVIE*, a documentary about the famous hairdresser (whose daughter-in-law Adriana Sassoon and grandchildren attended) by Craig Teper, with a fashion show organized by Marilyn Riseman (fashions by David Chum for *Selah d'Or*); the other, a reprise of the *Tango* film with Carolina Winograd, an Argentinean singer who has just moved to Boston, performing before the film.

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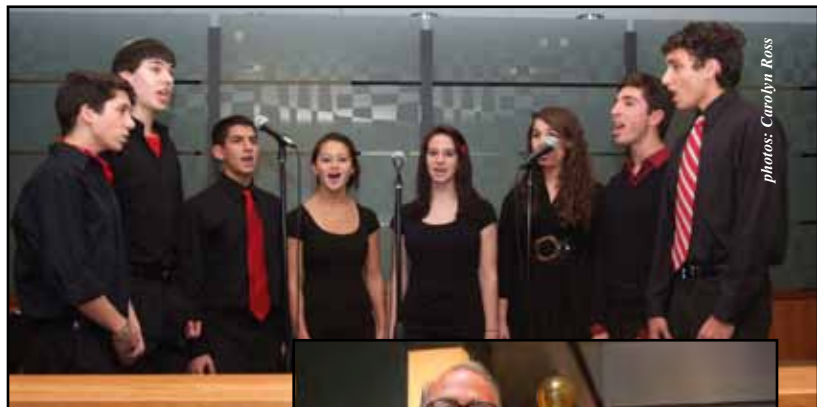
photos: Carolyn Ross



Auction co-chairs Denise Widman (left) and Joyce Pastor (right) with honoree Kevin Bright

The Boston Jewish Film Festival  
www.bjff.org

# Jewish Film Festival



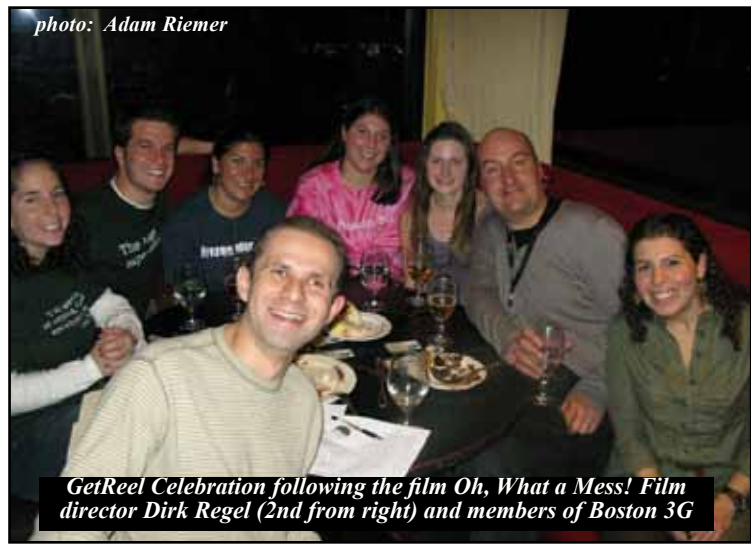
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Gann Academy's ShennaniGanns performed at the "Friendsational Celebration" on October 23 at the Joseph B. Martin Conference Center in Boston



"Friendsational Celebration" Event co-chairs Jeffrey Queen (left) and Jim Gould

photo: Adam Riemer



GetReel Celebration following the film Oh, What a Mess! Film director Dirk Regel (2nd from right) and members of Boston 3G

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**ANSWER:** Thank you for asking for gogol mogol; this drink brought back memories for me. It is an old time remedy also for laryngitis, handed down from generation to generation. It is especially given to children, and is good-tasting. In fact, my mother used to make it for my sisters and me when we were children.

You don't have to be sick to enjoy it. It consists of 1 egg yolk, 2 tsp. sugar or honey, 1 cup milk, and a few drops of vanilla extract. First separate the egg, keeping only the egg yolk. Place the yolk in a coffee mug with the sugar or honey, and beat with a teaspoon. In a small saucepan, heat the milk on medium until hot, being careful not to burn the milk. Slowly pour the hot milk into the coffee mug, continuously stirring with the spoon. Stir in vanilla. Excellent for a morning breakfast drink. Makes 1 serving.

## High School Reunion Miracle

Zadie enjoyed going to his high school reunions and being able to see his classmates. It was an important way to catch up with friends and classmates that were out of town and stay in touch. Over the years it eventually became very hard to have reunions. This was because the school had closed in the 1960s, and with not many people left from each class, there needed to be either a way to continue the tradition, or admit to the fact that the school's history would be lost. Instead of giving up, within the last 10 years, they have decided to combine all of the years together, and meet yearly. Zadie, along with other fellow alumni, took on the responsibility to keep the tradition alive. In fact, there was an alumnus there who graduated in 1933, who received recognition for being the oldest member of the high school to attend. It was quite the honor, and it got everyone talking about the history of the high school.

Perhaps we can consider Zadie's high school's 70th reunion last month with many alumni friends and classmates attending - which is no less than a small miracle. I feel it is similar to the celebration of Chanukah in remembering the miracle of oil lasting for eight days. Nobody expected that the reunions would last after a certain time, but a miracle happened and the reunions have been thriving ever since.

Hope that you have the opportunity to be with family and friends to enjoy eating potato latkes and sufganiyot together. In celebration of the holiday, I wanted to remind you of the latke recipe that I provided in Shalom Magazine edition #4 on page 28 in December 2009 (there is a free download over at <http://www.shalomma.com>). In fact, if you want to see a video of how I make the latkes, then you can visit my website <http://www.feedmebubbe.com> and look at episode #13.

And while we're on the subject of miracles, it has surely been a miracle for me to think about everything that I have accomplished, and what I hope to accomplish in the coming years.

Take a moment to recognize the miracles in your own life. Happy Chanukah,

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## Jelly Jammies (Pareve) My signature dish

### Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 pound (1 stick) pareve margarine
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3/4 cup strawberry jam
- 1 medium apple, peeled and grated (coarse)
- 4 teaspoons lemon juice
- 4 teaspoons of chopped walnuts
- 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons golden raisins (or dark)
- 1/2 lemon zest, grated fine

### Procedure:

Turn a 9x9 pan over. Take non-stick aluminum foil, place it over the pan, and fold in the corners to make a liner. Flip the pan over, and place the liner into the pan. This helps make it easy to place and throw away.

Preheat your oven to 400 degrees.

Take walnuts and place them in a sandwich bag. Crush with a can. Mix strawberry jam, apple, lemon juice, walnuts, cinnamon, raisins and lemon zest for filling in bowl, and set aside.

Sift together, flour, salt, and baking powder.

Beat margarine, sugar, egg, and vanilla together until creamy. Add flour mixture until blended. Don't overbeat.

Press 2/3 of the dough evenly in bottom of greased baking pan. Spread filling over dough. By hand, flatten pieces of remaining dough and place pieces over the filling (it does not have to be completely covered). Bake at 400 degrees for 25 minutes. Cut into squares when slightly warm. Serve squares in paper cupcake liners.

The recipe should make about 16 squares, and freezes well.

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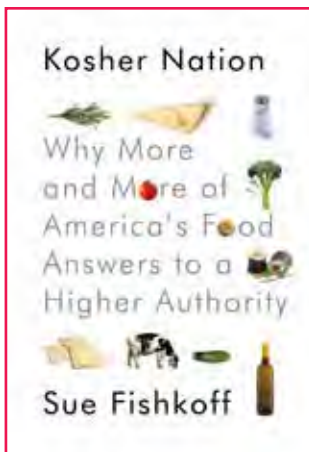
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# Kosher Nation:

## Why More and More of America's Food Answers to a Higher Authority

By Sue Fishkoff (Schocken/Random House)



By Matt Robinson

Remember that old TV commercial where Uncle Sam eats the hot dog? You know the one- Where he is told by some unseen, somewhat spiritual voice that even though he (or at least his cronies in the FDA) approve of foods that have by-products and fillers, the company that ran the ad did not because they were Kosher and therefore "answer to a higher authority"? At the end of the spot, Sam puts down his hot dog as the camera pans up to the clouds to reveal the company's Chief of Research and Development.

Well, apparently, Uncle Sam is not alone anymore.

With new food-related health concerns appearing every day and more and more attention being paid to obesity and other eating disorders and health problems, many people - Jews and non-Jews alike - are turning away from the latest fad diet books and back to the original Diet Book.

In her new book, *Kosher Nation*, JTA News Agency correspondent Sue Fishkoff reveals what she discovered during years of research in the world of kashrut. From the Biblical basis to the billion-dollar business, Fishkoff examines the topic as careful as a shochet checks out the lungs of a felled cow. Along the way, she finds that, though kosher means "clean," the cleanliness of the world itself may be caught up in the very "web of laws, traditions and practices" upon which it is based.

"It's the world's oldest system of mindful eating," Fishkoff suggests. But there is a significant distinction at its base. "Observing kashrut is a blessing. Certifying kosher food is a business."

As she has been writing about the Jewish world for over 20 years, Fishkoff knew the basics of what she was investigating and was also privy to many trends in the Jewish world that others may not see.

"I've noticed a growing interest in the spiritual potential of Jewish dietary practice among...Jews," she says. "Jews are becoming involved...as a way of merging their interest in local, organic, ethical food production with Jewish values."

While Fishkoff notes that the growth of interest in what she calls the "new Jewish food movement" is most noticeable among more liberal communities (many members of which are becoming "more religious" and "seeking spiritual nourishment" by "mining the spiritual potential of all ritual practices"), she also observed a "growing strictness of practice" among the more observant Jews with whom she spoke. "All along the Jewish spectrum," she says, "it became obvious to me that something was going on, that deep conversations about kashrut were taking place."

These "convictions" may even spill over into the non-Jewish world, as even many non-Jews are embracing kosher food. However, Fishkoff says, they are not doing it for the same reasons.

"Non-Jews are not observing kashrut when they buy or eat kosher foods," she says. "They are buying those foods for other reasons. Many believe kosher food is safer, or healthier, or of better quality. But they're not doing it to observe kosher laws."

Even so, the growth of and changes in the world of kosher food has attracted a great deal of attention. A 2007 survey suggested that kosher food was the fastest-growing segment of the domestic food market. When she learned that nearly 40 percent of products sold in the United States were kosher certified, Fishkoff decided to put her journalistic skills to work and check it out. "[It] was astounding," she said.

The result of her year-and-a-half of research was this new book, which is already causing a buzz in Jewish and non-Jewish circles. From the OU and OK to the corner store and local deli, Fishkoff went down every possible avenue and market aisle in her search for the true modern meaning of "kosher."

"I interviewed many of the senior kosher supervisors and coordinators," she recalls, "and...made my way to mashgiachs on the ground." After overseeing the overseers for a while, Fishkoff became impressed with their work.

"The sheer effort they put into checking vegetables and making rounds in the middle of the night and hauling plates of silverware in and out of vats of boiling water," she says, recalling watching grape harvests and the koshering of orange juice for Passover and touring the giant kosher food plants in China. "It was an incredible adventure!"

Despite her efforts, however, Fishkoff still admits to finding the world of kosher confusing.

"Slowly I picked my way through it," she says, noting the myriad organizations who are involved. "I focused my attention on the 'Big Four' national agencies, since they certify most of the country's kosher foods, and that way it was easier to keep things straight in my head, and on the page."

When asked if she herself kept kosher, Fishkoff replied, "If I wrote a book about Chabad, would you ask whether I was a Lubavitcher?"

Fair enough but after all this work, you might think that Fishkoff had changed a little.

Well, maybe not.

"I was not raised in a kosher home," she says. "The extent of my Jewish upbringing was Passover at my grandparents' home. I learned about Judaism, and kashrut, much later."

As far as how she defines "kosher," Fishkoff says, "I believe that Jewish dietary practice is an expression of Jewish identity, a declaration of who we are and what is important to us."

However, she cautions, the shochet's knife can be two-edged.

"It can give beauty and meaning to life," she suggests, "or it can stifle us, if we do it unthinkingly."

Therefore, Fishkoff advises, perhaps the best way to interpret "kosher" is literally.

"I take the word...to mean food that is fit, or proper, to eat," she says. "For me, that means more than the strict laws of traditional kashrut."

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# Growing Up Jewish in Brazil

By Shirley Nigri Farber

When I tell my American Jewish friends that I am from Brazil, they look surprised. I often hear: "you mean you were born in Brazil? I did not know that there were that many Jews in Brazil!"

When I tell my Brazilian friends that live here Massachusetts that I'm Jewish, some of them ask: "what is a Jew - you mean you are from Israel?" or "you converted because your American husband is Jewish?"

Growing up Jewish in Brazil seems very natural to me, but it seems to me that not even Brazilian people know of Brazilian Jews. In actuality, there are indeed not many. There are an estimated 150,000 in the entire country. The largest communities are in São Paulo and in Rio de Janeiro, where I came from.

The title of this article was the theme of my lecture at LimmudBoston last October. There, I was able to respond to peoples' questions about Jews in Brazil and also about Sephardic culture. During the lecture, I spoke about the Brazilian Jewish community, and how my parents emigrated from Lebanon with their whole family. The interesting part of being a journalist and also a teacher is that I can ascertain what people know about the subject, and then design my "lesson plan-article."

The best way to explain the Brazilian Jewish community is to compare it with what people in American know. First of all, we do not have Hebrew schools. The reason for this is because the community is small, and although the Jewish school is very expensive, it is estimated that 90 percent of Jewish children attend Jewish Day school at least until they are 14 years old. We do not have a good public school system in Brazil, so if a Jewish parent is going to pay for school, the best choice is a Jewish Day school. The result is that most my Jewish school friends ended up marrying Jews, or had their

significant other convert.

One person asked me during my lecture why Jews outside America have a better knowledge of Hebrew and a stronger connection with Israel than do American Jews. My answer to that was that I always had this perception as well, but had never heard it expressed by an American. The knowledge of Hebrew comes from the good base at Jewish schools, but also, at least in my case, the fact that all of my Hebrew and Torah teachers lived some years in Israel, or were Israelis. That also explains why I grew up with a love for Israel. Even the names of our schools are named after famous Zionists: Max Nordau (mine), Eliezer Steinberg, Herzelia, A. Liessin.

Aside from it being a major part of our school life, Zionism was also a large part of our youth movement. Every Saturday afternoon there were meetings where we could get together with kids from other Jewish schools. Some of the movements were Hashomer, Hazit and Bnei Akiva (religious). It is the equivalent of Boys and Girls scouts, but with Zionist themes. Our counselors would dress up in kibbutz uniforms. The same group offered overnight camps, with the final goal a trip to Israel upon graduation.

Today, the 10-day trip called Birthright is very popular. But when I grew up there was a two-month trip called Tapuz (which means "orange" in Hebrew). After High school and before entering college, the student would stay in a kibbutz with young adults from other countries, and with them, they would work, learn, and also tour the land.

I did not get to go on the Tapuz program because I did not belong to any youth movement, although I attended once in a while. I ended up going, however, on another program called Ulpan Kibbutz where I had a half-day of Hebrew learning and a half-day of work. I stayed there for over six months. The best part is that it included tours of Israel with very skilled guides that explained to me all the places that I learned about in the Bible during my school years.

I'm thinking now that most of my school friends who have a deeper connection with Israel are the ones that participated in youth movements and went on the program Tapuz, rather than those who merely attended Jewish school. The interesting part about going on this program is that you meet people from other places, but you go as a group, so when you return to your town, you can interact with people who have had similar experiences.

Jewish people like to connect with other Jewish people - they just need to find one thing in common in order to spark a lasting relationship. Today, I keep up with many of my school friends on Facebook, yet only one friend from college.

I would like to hear some of your questions about Brazilian Jews so that I can prepare another article on this topic.

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# Revamp Your Lifestyle to Counteract Holiday Burnout

By Susie Davidson

If you're finding yourself in a holiday burnout cycle, feeling drabby and drained, trying to keep everything going while planning for seasonal events, please read on. Stress may indeed be universal, and it certainly may be heightened in these busy times, but it's not inevitable. By fortifying our mental and physical constitutions, we can build our resistance to personal frustration as we establish greater control over our own well being. Individual health and wellness, a key factor in managing tensions and anxieties, is our responsibility, and our right. It is only through a sound foundation that we can begin to take charge of our own lives and counteract our reactions to the adversities and stressors that we encounter. The holidays are no different. A strong constitution is our strongest coping base.

No time for the gym? Get out, or find an indoor hallway, and simply walk a minimum of an hour a day if you can. Or get a treadmill and read the paper on it (you don't have to run). Stretch and do leg and calf lifts under the desk to keep flexible. Separate yourself from regulatory agencies that attempt to run, indeed ruin, our personal health. These include commercial food and household product manufacturers. By falling prey to chemical-laden foods, household cleaners, paper goods and body care items, we sustain these conglomerates as we muck up the health care system with often largely preventable health and psychological costs, both financial and personal. Getting enough exercise is our own choice, and so is choosing not to listen to these profit-driven manufacturers.

Up water (8 glasses a day) and water-based fruits and vegetables (e.g. the American Cancer Society and American Dietetic Association's 5 A Day) and reduce the dense carbs. Instead of consuming those Betty Crocker Fruit Flings or the latest chewy candy substitute for apples and oranges, which contain at most a teaspoon of fruit and the rest forms of sugar, artificial flavors and chemicals, eat the real thing. Ditch the sugary, caffeine and preservative-filled soda and the java concoctions and go back to good old Poland Springs, or seltzer water if you must have flavored fizz.

Go for whole grains and pass on the pillow breads. Be a smart consumer and make individual decisions. Allow yourself some sweets, but give up the chemical-infused main brands and find one-bowl cookie/cake recipes, or get them from a bakery or health food store. There is no need to keep feeding the troughs of these food giants, who aim to hook every one of us on expensive, overpackaged food that was never intended for us to eat. Opt for naturally raised and fed poultry and meat instead of filling your bodies with hormones and antibiotics. Consider organic eating to ensure that pesticides and genetically modified foods don't enter the internal picture. Pesticides are, after all, poison.

Genetically altered foods are unnatural, some say unethical, human-tampered laboratory cuisine. Say no thanks to scientists and agribusiness aggregates who take it upon themselves to push these "Frankenfoods" upon humanity instead of exploring organic farm practices such as integrated pest management.

Household chemicals such as petrochemicals (sodium laurel and laureth sulfate are common) form dioxins and nitrosamines in the body. These carcinogens cause subtle, silent sicknesses that we often attribute to other, or "unknown" causes. Get out the Arm and Hammer or citrus cleaners found in any supermarket and toss the Clorox and Windex. Look for natural cosmetics and body care items with minimal ingredients whose names you recognize.

Don't wait for after-the-fact news reports on withdrawn product ingredients. Err on the side of caution. The cul-

tivation of quality nutrition, lifestyle and by default energy and mood levels is paramount to improving things for ourselves and, hopefully by extension, our worlds.

You owe it to yourself and to those around you to begin to improve your personal wellness. Where to start? Check out balanced, accredited authors such as Andrew Weil, Dean Ornish and Herbert Benson, The Center for Science in the Public Interest's Nutrition News, General Nutrition Center's Let's Live, and even surf for articles from The Boston Globe on healthier environmental and nutritional choices including Linda Weltner's back columns. These sources will help to inform you and get you going on this crucial quest.

Armed with acquired knowledge and sound lifestyle practices, you can emerge stronger and calmer, with a dynamic, individually achieved personal base that will hold up to both the superbusy, the distressing, the mundane, and don't forget, the happy times of the year!



Lines were out the door at the V.I.P. launch party of the first Boston location of Pinkberry frozen yogurt. The store, which opened at 286 Newbury St., is the second Pinkberry in New England (a Hingham locale opened this summer). The brand, known for its tart, fat-free, gluten-free yogurt flavors and healthful add-ons, debuted in 2005 in West L.A. and quickly became a favorite. According to Newbury Street employee Zach Morrell, the store uses Garelick milk and Stonyfield yogurt, both of which are Kosher and no gelatin is used.

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# One Fer Der Kinder

**Award-winning author Brad Meltzer offers a book for children...of ALL ages**

**By Matt Robinson**

Though he has experience writing comic books, attorney Brad Meltzer is best known for his even more adult (and sometimes more graphic) novels, such as the best-selling *Book of Fate*.

With the birth of his son a few years ago, however, Meltzer has been looking back to his own youth and to the type of heroes children and adults need today.

The result is *Heroes for My Son* (HarperStudio), a collection of 52 profiles of men and women that any man or woman can and should look up to. From Albert Einstein, Miep Gies, and Harry Houdini to Jonas Salk and Steven Spielberg to Meltzer's own *ema and zayde*, the collection crosses lines of gender, race, politics, and field of endeavor, but consistently offers examples of people who matter and the reasons why. Though you may not agree with all of the choices (the book includes both President George H. W. Bush and Obama), Meltzer even leaves a space for readers to enter their own entries and invited them to contact him with suggestions. It is truly a perfect family book for the family of mankind.

When asked what prompted him to step away from his legal thrillers and superheroes to write about real-life heroes, this super man who once wrote for Superman explained that it all began the night his third child was born.

"I was stuck at a red light," Meltzer recalls, "and I remember looking up at the black sky and thinking of this baby boy we were just blessed with. That's when I asked myself the question for the very first time: What kind of man did I want my son to be?"

At that very moment, Meltzer says, he decided to write a book that would educate his son (and hopefully others) as he grew into that man. "I decided that I wanted to write a book over the course of my son's life," he says, "and then when I eventually gave it to him, he'd realize what a brilliant father I was!"

Though the first drafts were a bit too busy with platitudes, Meltzer kept at it and eventually emerged with what is sure to be another hit. Interestingly, the change came most profoundly when Meltzer heard the story of another set of dedicated creative types.

"A friend of mine told me this story about the Wright Brothers," Meltzer explains. "Every day Orville and Wilbur Wright went out to fly their plane, they would bring enough materials for multiple crashes. That way, when they crashed, they could rebuild the plane and try again."

Inspired by such preparation for persistence, Meltzer put it to use in his own life, crashing and rebuilding, he says, until his idea "took off."

"That's the kind of story I wanted my son to hear," Meltzer says, "a story that wouldn't lecture to him, but would show him that if he was determined...if he wasn't afraid to fail...if he had persistence (and a side order of stubbornness), the impossible becomes possible." Such are the type of stories upon which heroes is built.

Separating famous from noteworthy, Meltzer collected stories from friends, colleagues and social networking contacts and also from his own gallery of inspirations until he had enough for a first draft (or enough for one chapter per week for a year, which is a convenient and sensible way to read the book). While such a project could have gone on and on (and still may as readers continue to send in new ideas to Meltzer's website), Meltzer decided that eight years was enough time to work on the project. Remembering how his parents

had bought a bottle of champagne the night he was born that they intended to give him to drink when he got married, Meltzer said that this book started when his son was born and is now being released as a birthday present for him and for all children.

"When my son was born, this became my process," he explains. "I just communicated in the way I know how: by telling stories."


As he looks forward to his next project (another novel), Meltzer says that this project taught him a great deal, not only about heroism and inspiration, but also about how to be a person and hopefully a mensch.

"Every day," he says, "the only question is, do you pay attention...do you put in the hard work...do you hear that calling?...That's how the very best historic changes take place. And over and over again, that message just kept coming out, moving me forward."

Despite his years of collecting and considering, Meltzer still thinks that the best story is always the next one and is very interested in seeing what his readers have to say about his choices and their own.

"When you take that final page at the end of the book," he suggests, "and you insert a photo of your hero...I promise, that'll be the most beautiful page in the entire book!"





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# Sabra with a Horn

*Sagit Zilberman brings Israeli soul to Boston*

**By Matt Robinson**

Combining the graceful determination of her native Israel with the style and sophistication of her adopted home, saxophonist Sagit Zilberman has been gaining fans from Beer Sheva to Boston.

Born in Israel to a Dutch mother and an Israeli father, Zilberman began her musical career at age six when she picked up both the recorder and piano.



“My parents and my mom’s parents have a strong European heritage of Classical music which was going around the house all the time,” Zilberman explains, noting that her mother is also a professional singer. “To study an instrument and to sing was a must!”

Influenced by Western Classical music and native Israeli sounds, Zilberman sang in school choirs and was finally given a saxophone at age 16.

“I wanted to play clarinet,” the Maccabim native recalls, “but I lived in a small village and the so-called ‘clarinet teacher’ didn’t play clarinet so he showed me the saxophone.”

Though 16 is relatively late for a virtuoso-to-be, Zilberman practiced diligently and was soon performing far and wide. Zilberman studied at both the Jerusalem Academy of Music and the Rimon School of Jazz and Contemporary Music. She also performed in many of Israeli’s most popular venues, as well as on the radio and television. In 2007, Zilberman was spotted at an Israeli street fair by a representative of the First CDs record label and was signed immediately. Her first album, “Simply Love” helped her land a scholarship to continue her studies at Berklee, where she was recently awarded the prestigious Sadao Watanabe Award for outstanding musicianship.

“The program in Israel is four years,” Zilberman says, “but after two I felt I had to move on outside of Israel because I felt like I needed more American influence on my playing, I felt like in the US there is information that I need to get in order to develop to a higher ground and have more American influence, and I was right!”

Inspired by American sax masters Joe Lovano and Greg Osby (with whom she has studied) and also by the Israeli trio she calls “the three Cohens” (i.e., bassist Avishai, trumpeter Avishai and fellow sax/clarinet player Anat), Zilberman has already begun staking her claim on the international scene. Having toured and recorded in Brazil, she more recently performed a string of gigs in Poland and has also played at the famous Blue Note Jazz club in New York.

“I hope there will be many more in many countries,” she says. “I would like to collaborate with as many artists as possible to learn more and to expand my relationships and musical abilities.”

In Boston, Zilberman can be heard regularly at Café 47 on Massachusetts Avenue, just down the street from her school. When not practicing or performing, Zilberman also teaches yoga and can be found leading an musically and spiritually-infused practice on Sunday afternoons in one of the Berklee buildings. No matter where she goes, however, Zilberman’s native influences are always close at hand.

“My Jewishness and Israeli nature have shaped my career and my personality in many ways,” she says, crediting her upbringing and IDF training with instilling in her a great drive and sense of determination.

She also cites many musical influences as well.

“The traditional songs are buried deep down in my subconscious,” she admits. “I am living my dream!”

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# Celebrating Chanukah Through the Ages



*By Rabbi Sam Seicol*

Chanukah always begins on the evening beginning the 25th day of the Hebrew month Kislev. This year that is Wednesday night December 1. The moon is always in the final quarter and continues to wane. The nights become progressively darker and longer until the new moon arrives. When this happens Chanukah is almost done for another year.

We, thus, kindle the lights of Chanukah during the darkest and longest nights of the year. When we light the candles of the Chanukiah (Chanukah Menorah), we not only recite the blessings but we also

traditionally retell the story of a great miracle of the past.

But what was that great miracle? The earliest answer can be found in the Books of the Maccabees in the Apocrypha. There we read of the time 137 to 145 years after the Alexander (the Great). One Antiochus Epiphanes conquered Israel and, on the 25th day of Kislev, desecrated the Temple with idol worship. Mattathias, a priest living in Modin, and his sons began a rebellion which continued to be led by his son Judah (called Maccabee). The story of this and the battles leading to a recapturing of the Temple on the same day (Kislev 25) three years later can be found in the book of I Maccabees Chapters 1 – 4. They built, we are told, new fixtures and offered sacrifices on the new altar for eight days and declared this to be observed every year from then on. (I Maccabees 4:52-59)

52 Now on the five and twentieth day of the ninth month, which is called the month Kisle, in the hundred forty and eighth year, they rose up betimes in the morning,

53 And offered sacrifice according to the law upon the new altar of burnt offerings, which they had made.

54 Look, at what time and what day the heathen had profaned it, even in that was it dedicated with songs, and citherns, and harps, and cymbals.

55 Then all the people fell upon their faces, worshipping and praising the God of heaven, who had given them good success.

56 And so they kept the dedication of the altar eight days and offered burnt offerings with gladness, and sacrificed the sacrifice of deliverance and praise.

57 They decked also the forefront of the temple with crowns of gold, and with shields; and the gates and the chambers they renewed, and hanged doors upon them.

58 Thus was there very great gladness among the people, for that the reproach of the heathen was put away.

59 Moreover Judas and his brethren with the whole congregation of Israel ordained, that the days of the dedication of the altar should be kept in their season from year to year by the space of eight days, from the five and twentieth day of the month Casleu, with mirth and gladness.

II Maccabees, written a generation later, reviewed the events of the wars and exhorted the people to maintain their observance of this Kislev 25 eight day remembrance celebration. This was to be done as a second Succot with the waving of lulavim (a blend of three types of branches) and the singing of Psalms. (II Maccabees 10:5-8)

5 Now upon the same day that the strangers profaned the temple, on the very same day it was cleansed again, even the five and twentieth day of the same month, which is Casleu.

6 And they kept the eight days with gladness, as in the feast of the tabernacles, remembering that not long afore they had held the feast of the tabernacles, when as they wandered in the mountains and dens like beasts.

7 Therefore they bare branches, and fair boughs, and palms also, and sang psalms unto him that had given them good success in cleansing his place.

8 They ordained also by a common statute and decree, That every year those days should be kept of the whole nation of the Jews.

Over time, this record and practice seems to have been lost. By the time of the early Mishna Rabbis and the writings of Josephus, Chanukah had become a festival of lights. The earliest Rabbinic discussions centered on the details of the candles and lighting process. Josephus recorded a summary of the story from Maccabees and then added: "And from that time to this we celebrate this festival, and call it Lights. I suppose the reason was, because this liberty beyond our hopes appeared to us; and that thence was the name given to that festival." (Antiquities XII 7:7)

The full historical reasons for the development of Chanukah as an eight day festival of light are not fully known. An early Talmud reason (Megilat Ta'anit) claimed it took eight days to restore the Temple. A later story in Pesikta Rabbati told of eight spears that were found when the Temple was recaptured. These spears were stuck in the ground, the end of the shafts hollowed, and oil placed in to create a make-shift Menorah. Finally the story of the one day supply of oil that lasted eight days was told in a later Talmudic passage (Shabbat 21b).

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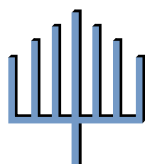
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# Celebrating Chanukah Through the Ages



Walter Perlman

May this year find a year where the lights of tolerance, understanding, and learning defeat the darkness that still fills the world.

The model for the year is built into the heart of the fall holiday season. The climax of the Elul to Shemini Atzeret holiday cycle is Yom Kippur, which is called (Leviticus 16:31) "Shabbat Shabbaton" – a Sabbath of Sabbaths. Thus, we are especially reminded that the most important holiday is Shabbat. It is the model and framework from which all other observances grow. Certainly there are special additions and changes to the worship service during the High Holy Day and fall

As for the actual process of lighting the Chanukah candles, over two thousand years ago Rabbis Hillel and Shammai debated the proper method for this. Shammai insisted that we light the shamash and eight lights the first night, seven the second, and so forth down to one on the last night. Hillel declared that we begin with one and add a light each night. Shammai, perhaps, wanted to be sure that people did not think that their lighting of the candles could "magically" bring back the moon and longer days. Hillel's purpose, on the other hand, may have been to remind us that we are required to add light (knowledge, caring, and goodness) to the world especially when we see darkness increasing. Ultimately Hillel's view became the law and the meaning still holds true for us today.

Whatever the roots of the observance of Chanukah and however its rituals evolved over time, the festival can be filled with meaning in our time. Some thoughts on meanings we may choose to attach to the lighting of the Chanukah follow: finding faith in God's power, the challenge to combat oppression and persecution, the strength of the few to improve the world, and/or standing fast as a minority in the face of overwhelming numbers. All these and more may be found in the dancing flames of the candles and in a fuller awareness of our historical roots and pathways.

festival services. The shofar, the unique melodies, the prayers and poems written in honor of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the stirring strains of Kol Nidre, and the atmosphere of anticipation of hope for a new year do bring us together in numbers well beyond the regular weekly worship. Sukkot through Simhat Torah do, indeed, offer unique settings and rituals. With the sharing in the sukkah, the waving of the lulav, and dancing with the Torah we fulfill the traditional statement that we are to be joy-filled at the times of our festivals.

But the most important habit we are challenged to create from Elul through Simhat Torah is the observance of Shabbat.

**Rabbi Seicol teaches Social Bridge professionally at the Boston Center for Adult Education and the Jewish Community Center in Newton. He also provides support to the unaffiliated Jewish population and volunteers at the Vilna Shul where he teaches classes on a non-denominational basis.**

**The art by Walter Perlman is a close up photo of a clock spring with water on a pink light box. The clock spring was photographed without any effects or use of Photoshop. More on the abstract artist and photographer at [www.barmitzvahphoto.com](http://www.barmitzvahphoto.com).**

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# The Science of Spirituality and Aging

By Yosef P. Glassman, MD

The process of aging is one fraught with mystery and the unknown. On the one hand, when we age, we are surely blessed with the perspective of years that allows us to look at our own lives and the lives of those around us with wisdom and balance; on the other, we see our physical selves gradually wearing down, facing the challenges of unavoidable entropy. In that vein, human beings, and, in particular, the Jewish people, look toward spirituality and religion for answers in how to bridge what seem to be two disparate elements: body and soul.

Science attempts to bring proofs through studies and research as to what is healthy or not healthy and, often we accept these proofs as absolute facts, adopt those 'truths' into our lives, only to find that in five years, one new overwhelmingly convincing study throws the other prior 500 studies by the wayside. In addition to this uneasy reality of medical research, quantum physics has shown that the physical world is really only composed of less than 0.001% actual matter held together by 4 unseen, theoretical forces. Einstein proposed that there is a one force holding them all together, allowing us, perhaps to 'stay together' and not fall apart entirely, if nature would brutally have its way. To sum up, biological life is tenuous at best, and scientific evidence is pushing honest scientists to understand that our successful physical health is nebulously understood at best.

Spirituality, when approached with perspective, gives hope to the unknown fate of the physical body and, as the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine at the NIH puts it, provides the individual a sense of purpose and meaning to life beyond the tenuous materiality that confronts us. And while spirituality is a less charged and less political term, religion, specifically the Torah, is what truly allows one to connect one's individual spirituality with the physical world; this is often referred to as 'ritual' though in Judaism, a ritual is more than a mere act, rather a connection (mitzvah) between the finite physical and the Infinite. In fact, science, as shown briefly above is coming to the Jewish conclusion that the only true reality is the Infinite, when we do sincere research.

Lay surveys have shown that 79% of Americans believe that spiritual factors play a role in health (McNichol T., 1996) and scientific studies are showing not only a subjective role of spirituality and health but an objective one, especially in the process of aging. A Duke study showed that of over 300 aging inpatients, nearly 90% used religion to cope with their illness at some level (Koenig HG, 1998). In addition the more one was 'spiritual' the better was one's

self reported health (Daaleman, TP, 2004). And better self reported health is a key factor in healthier and longer survival in many studies (Taphoorn, et al. 2005; Maisey NR, et. al. 2002)

This certainly is something that our sage Rabbi Nachman of Breslov was aware of when he said: "You are where are you mind is; make your mind where you want to be."

And while, Freud called religion a "childhood neurosis" he surely wasn't privy to his future colleagues' research in psychiatry showing that participation in religious activity showed faster recovery from depression, lower suicide rates, less substance abuse and greater social support (Koenig HG, et. al., 2001). But not only has scientific research shown correlations with greater psychological health when one is more involved in spiritual/religious pursuits, rather also physical.

In fact, it has been shown that having any religious affiliation whatsoever is associated with shorter hospital stays, when compared to those who record their religion as "none." (Koenig, HG et. al., 1998) While one cannot claim that religion is the cause per se, one cannot deny the correlation. Indeed Americans, in general, who simply attend religious services at least once a week are hospitalized less and recover faster from heart attacks (Remmes, MK, et. al. 2006). It might be convenient to pin a shorter hospital stay or better recoveries on the social or healthful behaviors of certain religious communities; indeed, greater social interactions and less negative health behaviors do positively correlate with better health.

Yet, simply avoiding cars at least once a week is not enough to explain the lower mortality due to coronary artery disease in Israel among the shomer Shabbat (Goldbourt, et. al. 1993). Nor, can greater social support in synagogue, as opposed to the mall, be the full reason that Torah-structured kibbutzim in Israel enjoy a lower age-adjusted total mortality than their secular counterparts, (Kark, et. al. 1996).

While we may scientifically know that exclusively walking on Shabbat might be physically beneficial, and that avoiding using money once a week might cause us less psychological stress, it is deeper than that. As Jews, whose name derives from the Hebrew word, "I'hodot," meaning to acknowledge, it is our utmost duty to acknowledge our continued health and essence of life in general to the Creator of all life, the Infinite, who gave us the Tree of Life, the Torah. Finally, science is coming around to the unchanging reality of the unseen One delayer of entropy.

For complete bibliography, please contact Dr. Glassman at hadarta613@gmail.com.

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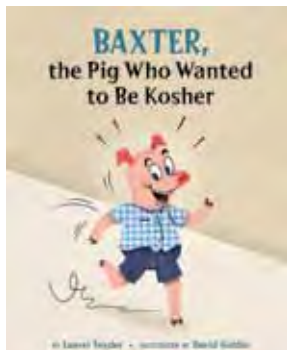
# Jaffa Mosaic Photography Exhibit in New York



In October, the Inter-Agency Task Force on Israeli Arab Issues showcased the Jaffa Mosaic Photography Exhibit in New York City. The event featured the photography of ten courageous Israeli Jewish and Arab women, who raise social consciousness and serve as a bridge between Jewish and Arab communities through their photos. The exhibit launched at the home and gallery of legendary philanthropist and art collector Henry Buhl.

"Behind the headlines and complexities of Israel, countless good people -- notably women -- are inspiring their communities. This project is meant to empower women artistically as well as exhibit the positive side of Israel as a shared society that we so rarely read about in the papers," said Jessica Balaban, Executive Director of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Israeli Arab Issues.

If you would like to bring this exhibit to your community, please contact Chris Silver, Program Specialist at the Inter-Agency Task Force on Israeli Arab Issues at [chris.silver@jdcny.org](mailto:chris.silver@jdcny.org).



## Baxter, the Pig who Wanted to be Kosher

**Baxter, the Pig who Wanted to be Kosher**  
By Laurel Snyder  
Illustrated by David Goldin

(Tricycle Press/Random House Children's Books)  
Every Jew worth his kugel knows the joys of Shabbat. Sitting around a table with family and friends while candles dance and songs are shared- It's enough to make anyone want to be part of the weekly celebration...Even a pig!

Such is the porcine premise of this adorable (and educational) new book by grown-up poet/author Laurel Snyder.

When Baxter the Pig is told about Shabbat by a friendly (and non-species-ist) Jewish neighbor (please suspend your disbelief that any Jew would be caught living anywhere near talking treyf), he is so intrigued that he goes to great lengths to try to qualify for admission to the special event. Unfortunately, he nearly becomes the meal until another friendly Jewish neighbor not only sets him straight but invites him in for Shabbat dinner. Along the way, Baxter not only learns about what Shabbat is (and, with the help of the handy glossary in the back of the book, others can learn right along with him!), he also learns about what it is not- for no matter how many pickles or loaves of challah you eat, you do not know the true meaning of Shabbat until you experience it with friends and loved ones.

So, will Baxter get his chance to say the brucha? Read and find out!

*Matt Robinson*

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