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MARCH 2025

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An Extraordinary Alliance
From Y to J: Jewish Recreation in
Delaware, 1901-1970
Jewish in Bangkok

TRAVEL & RECREATION



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FEATURE

The Power and Presence of Summer Camp:

If there has been one consistent in the lives of Jewish youth in North America for the last century, it is the power and presence of summer camps. Whether day camps like our Siegel JCC's, or overnight camps like Pinemere, Harlam, Ramah, and others, camp—as a concept, as an incubator of ideas and leadership, and as a force multiplier for Jewish life—has been profoundly formative in ways the originators could not have imagined.

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FEATURE:

From Y to J: Jewish Recreation in Delaware, 1901–1970:

Co-Chair of the Jewish Historical Society of Delaware Diane Wolf outlines the history of recreation in Jewish Delaware through the 20th century. This article is written in conjunction with the display in the Siegel JCC ArtSpace about Jewish recreation in Delaware. A second article covering the years 1970 to the present will appear later in 2025.



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FEATURE

Jewish in Bangkok:

"To get from Wilmington to Bangkok, it was a grueling red-eye flight over a handful of oceans, always with a stopover in some country or other where Jews were not particularly welcome. . . . We may be a minority in America, but in Thailand, we are a microminority." Read on for Anna Moss' experience living in Thailand.



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FEATURE

An Extraordinary Alliance:

Among the women who serve as an inspiration and role model for generations to come, Shirley Chisholm stands out as a trailblazer; a powerhouse whose courage and spirit has been undervalued for the last 56 years. Read on to learn about her incredible work and an upcoming performance honoring her impact.



Columns

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NEXT GEN: Camp and Learning Experiences:



Elishai Robinson shares his experiences attending URJ Camp Harlam and the personal journey he has undertaken over the years.

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COVER IMAGE

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Jewish Camp:

Building a Foundation for Jewish Life

BY **SETH J. KATZEN**, *President and CEO of Jewish Federation of Delaware*

Welcome to the March issue—our Travel & Recreation feature and Summer Camp Guide. Have you visited [JewishLivingDelaware.org](https://www.jewishlivingdelaware.org), our online companion piece to the printed edition? We've developed a robust website that expands the magazine with additional content, as well as having the capability to provide timely updates in real-time that a monthly magazine simply cannot. . . .

Conducting a quick Google search on the importance of summer camp, I found that . . .

Summer camp can provide children with many benefits, including:

- **Independence:** Children can learn to make decisions for themselves and think independently.
- **Friendships:** Children can make new friends and form strong bonds.
- **Confidence:** Children can learn about themselves, try new things, and build self-esteem.
- **Teamwork:** Children can learn to work together on projects and shared goals.
- **Developed skills:** Children can focus on a skill they are passionate about and grow their abilities.
- **New interests:** Children can explore new interests and hobbies.
- **Social skills:** Children can learn to interact with peers from diverse backgrounds.
- **Resilience:** Children can learn to face struggles and become more resilient.
- **Leadership skills:** Children can learn to shine as leaders.
- **Creativity:** Children can unleash their creativity through enrichment activities.
- **Role models:** Children can interact with mentors and find good role models.
- **Outdoor exploration:** Children can visit and see the natural world outdoors.
- **Uninterrupted play time:** Children can enjoy more time to play.
- **Fond memories:** Children can form unforgettable moments with their new friends and mentors.

Included in this edition you will find a pull-out Summer Camp Guide with a number of local and regional options including Camp JCC (<https://www.siegeljcc.org/camp>), which highlights four Jewish values—*kehillah* (*community*), *kavod* (*respect*), *chesed* (*kindness*), and *yosher* (*honesty*).

According to the Foundation for Jewish Camp and Jim Joseph Foundation's Trends Report: State of Jewish Camp 2023, nearly 181,000 campers, teens, and college-aged staff participate in Jewish camp across—166 day camps and 158 overnight camps.

Let us celebrate the resiliency and innovation of the field of Jewish camp as they continue to sustain and nurture multi-generational, joyful Jewish communities.



SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION FROM :

DELAWARE GRATZ ENDOWMENT FUND

The mission of Delaware Gratz has always been and will continue to be the education of Jewish teens. Although we are no longer offering traditional classes, we are continuing to offer Jewish teens the opportunity to continue their Jewish education.

Delaware Gratz Endowment Fund will now be offering grants and scholarships to Delaware teens (currently in 9th grade) to attend educational opportunities.



Research has shown that the best way to not only give teens a Jewish education but also encourage them to become active and engaged Jewish adults is through experiential learning. These studies have shown that experiences in Jewish camps, youth groups, spending a semester in a school in Israel and trips to Israel have a much greater impact on these teens than actually attending traditional classrooms.

These opportunities can include:

- Trips to Israel
- Semesters abroad in Israel
- Gap year educational programs
- Attending Jewish summer camps
- Attending special programs in Israel or in the United States
- ... as well as many other educational opportunities.

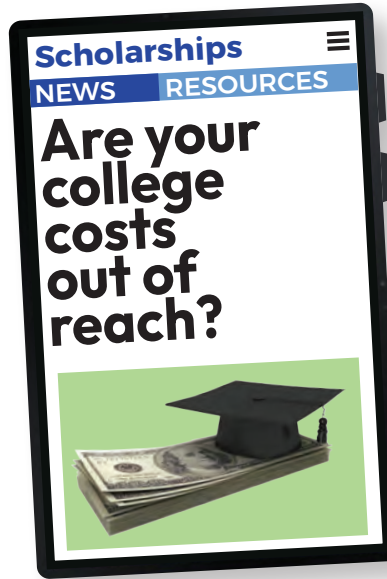
The Delaware Gratz Board is committed to continuing to enrich the lives of our Jewish teens by supporting their continued Jewish education.



If your teen is interested in applying for a scholarship, download Gratz application at:
ShalomDelaware.org/scholarships

Questions may be directed to Scholarships@ShalomDel.org or the Federation office at 302/427-2100.

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The Siegel JCC's Big Day In 2025

The Siegel JCC welcomed the community on January 12 with fitness challenges, lively dance demos, and opportunities for new members to meet our staff and partners!
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Recreation at Kutz Senior Living Campus: Enriching Lives Through Jewish Values

BY **DOMINIQUE RADCLIFFE**, Director of Development and Philanthropy at Kutz Senior Living Campus

Aging doesn't mean slowing down—on the contrary, it's an opportunity to embrace activities that enhance well-being, foster connections, and bring joy. At Kutz Senior Living Campus, recreation is thoughtfully designed to align with Jewish values, offering residents a vibrant, engaging environment where they can thrive physically, mentally, and spiritually.

The Role of Recreation in Senior Living

Recreational activities are central to life at Kutz Senior Living Campus. More than just a way to pass the time, these activities promote holistic well-being, address the challenges of aging, and nurture the Jewish values of community, learning, and gratitude.

Participation in regular activities can significantly improve quality of life. Physical activities like walking groups and yoga promote health and reduce the risk of falls, while mental exercises such as puzzles and educational discussions enhance cognitive function. Most importantly, recreation fosters social connections, creating a sense of belonging and support that aligns with the Jewish concept of *kehillah* (community).

Activities That Reflect Jewish Values

At Kutz Senior Living Campus, activities are curated to resonate with the rich traditions and principles of Judaism, offering both enrichment and enjoyment:

- **Challah Baking Classes:** Residents gather weekly to prepare challah, blending tradition with creativity. This activity not only celebrates Shabbat but also fosters a sense of community and accomplishment.
- **Torah Study Groups:** Engaging discussions about Jewish teachings provide mental stimulation and a spiritual connection to heritage.
- **Gardening with a Purpose:** Reflecting the Jewish principle of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), residents grow herbs and vegetables used in campus meals, emphasizing sustainability and contribution.
- **Art and Creativity Workshops:** From creating Jewish-themed art to crafting mezuzahs, residents find self-expression while exploring cultural symbols.
- **Holiday Celebrations and Cultural Events:** Whether it's celebrating Hanukkah with candle lighting or Purim with festive music and storytelling, these holiday celebrations bring the community together in joyous observance.

- **Music Therapy:** Inspired by the importance of song in Jewish tradition, residents enjoy sing-alongs, concerts, and drumming circles that uplift spirits and foster connection.

Adapting to Individual Needs

Kutz Senior Living Campus recognizes that every resident is unique. Activities are tailored to varying abilities and preferences, ensuring inclusivity and engagement. Programs emphasize safety and accessibility, with staff providing guidance and support.

1. **Low-Impact Exercise Classes:** Yoga and Tai Chi classes help residents maintain mobility and balance while embracing mindfulness.
2. **Mind-Stimulating Games:** Word games, trivia sessions, and memory challenges are designed to keep cognitive functions sharp.
3. **Nature Walks and Bird Watching:** Opportunities to explore the outdoors reflect the Jewish value of *hakarat hatov* (gratitude) for the beauty of creation.

Building Community Through Recreation

Social connections are vital to emotional and spiritual well-being. Kutz Senior Living Campus fosters relationships through activities that encourage teamwork, sharing, and mutual support. Residents form lasting bonds while participating in communal projects like creating a campus mural or volunteering for charitable initiatives.

Living with Joy and Purpose

Rooted in Jewish values, Kutz Senior Living Campus offers a vibrant recreational program that transforms senior living into a time of growth, connection, and celebration. By embracing activities that honor tradition and nurture the body, mind, and spirit, residents find a profound sense of joy and purpose in their daily lives.

At Kutz, aging is not about slowing down—it's about thriving, discovering new passions, and embracing the richness of life with the warmth and support of a compassionate community.



Kutz Senior Living Campus is a Beneficiary Agency of Jewish Federation of Delaware.

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MERCAZ USA Encourages Jewish Community to Vote for a Pluralistic Future

BY **SHARI DYM**,
Executive Director of Congregation Beth Shalom

At a time when the country's unity is more important than ever, Rabbi Arie Hasit has a track record of bridging divides between different communities in Israel. What will it take to unite the Jewish state in the face of its immense challenges, and what important role can American Jews play here and now in making sure Israel is a pluralistic, open, and democratic society? Join us at Congregation Beth Shalom on Thursday, April 3 at 7:00 PM to hear Rabbi Arie Hasit speak on the steps that you can make to affect building a platform that upholds inclusive, pluralistic values.

Rabbi Arie Hasit serves as Associate Dean of the Schechter Rabbinical Seminary, where he trains the next generation of Rabbis and lay leaders for Jewish communities in Israel and around the world.

As the World Zionist Congress elections approach, MERCAZ USA is rallying the Jewish community to make their voices heard by voting for a representative platform that upholds inclusive, pluralistic values. The election will take place from March 10 to May 4, 2025, primarily online at zionistelection.org.

Key messages from MERCAZ USA highlight the importance of voting as a means of investing in the next generation of Jewish leaders who embody shared values. "Each vote for MERCAZ USA strengthens our platform to support young American Jews through programs such as Ramah, YALA, and USY," the organization stated. Furthermore, they emphasized that institutions like Ramah camps rely on backing from entities such as the Jewish Agency for Israel, which is partially funded through the World Zionist Congress budget.

"Every Jewish adult over 18 living in the U.S., who did not vote in the last Knesset election, has the opportunity to influence the future of our community," MERCAZ USA noted. Voters do not need to belong to a synagogue or preregister to cast their ballots.

The organization made a call to action, urging members of the Jewish community to ensure their seat at the table in order to counter extremist perspectives that threaten the fabric of non-Orthodox Judaism. "Extremists who seek to delegitimize non-Orthodox Judaism are running slates in this election. If we don't secure our seat, we risk significant funding losses for critical programs that support our communities," they warned.

MERCAZ USA's campaign is particularly focused on countering extremist narratives that have begun to dominate discourse within some sectors of the Jewish community. They pointed to notable figures, including Itamar Ben Gvir, whose agendas they believe threaten Israeli democracy and the inclusive Jewish identity of diaspora communities.

"The connection to Israel is vital to our Jewish identity," MERCAZ USA emphasized, highlighting concerns that extremist slates may impede the ability of Conservative and Reform Jews to fully engage in Jewish life in Israel, including the process of *aliyah*. "Voting for MERCAZ USA is a powerful way to defend our Jewish way of life and ensure that our values are represented."

The voting process includes a \$5 administrative fee aimed at supporting the American Zionist Movement, which is in line with the spirit of Herzl's vision for a united and invested Zionist community. This fee is not intended for profit but rather to facilitate the electoral process.

In closing, MERCAZ USA is encouraging all eligible voters to take action and fill out the voting form available at mercazusa.org/votemercaz2025/. They are also urging community members to spread the word among friends and family to increase participation. "Every vote counts. Our collective voice is necessary to shape a Jewish future that reflects our diverse and pluralistic values," MERCAZ USA stated.

For further information about the elections and to take part in this critical opportunity, visit the MERCAZ USA website, mercazusa.org/votemercaz2025/.



Rabbi Arie Hasit

Photo provided by Congregation Beth Shalom



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"What is your view on the world-to-come and resurrection?"



RABBI MICHAEL L. KRAMER,
Temple Beth El

Irving was in hospice surrounded by his friends and family. As he was lying there, he noticed that his wife had baked his favorite apple cake sitting on the table. He called over his daughter to his side and asked her, "Honey, could you please get me a slice of that delicious cake that I love." The daughter went to the table, came back, and said to Irving, "I'm sorry. Mommy says it's for the funeral."

Olam ha-ba (i.e., the world-to-come). I don't know, and I hope I don't find out for a while. In their book, *What Happens After I Die?*, Rifat Sonsino and Danny Syme offer many different concepts of life after death from both traditional and contemporary points of view.

There is a great range of Jewish thoughts and theories. There are those who believe that life ends after we die. Freud believed that a future life was an "illusion." Freud viewed belief in an afterlife as childish and, according to the two authors, "a way of retreating from this world into a world of myth and fantasy."

The Torah, while not definitive in its views, talks about *Sheol*, a place where the dead reside, but it is not dogmatic about it. The prophet Ezekiel in his chapter about the Valley of the Dry Bones draws a powerful picture of the Jewish community resurrected, and there are a few brief

references about resurrection, including in Daniel, that hint at a later view into a future life.

This belief in resurrection made its way into early rabbinic view of the *olam ha-ba*. Good people, when they died, would enter *Gan Eden* (heaven) and those who transgressed would go to *Gehinna* (hell). We find the concept of resurrection entering into modern times. There are references to resurrection in our prayers (*m'hayei meitim*), though it was largely rejected by early Reform Jewish thinkers.

Today, a common view of life after death is that we live through the deeds we have done through our lives. Quoting Rabbi Bernard Raskas, Sonsino and Syme write, "I believe that a person lives on in his or her family . . . I believe there is a form of immortality in the institutions we build and the causes we espouse . . . I believe in the immortality of friendship and helpfulness."

My father, a rabbi and my mentor, told a story about a man who had died and was taken to the afterlife where there were two rooms. In both rooms people were sitting at giant tables where they were served a feast. In one room each person had a giant spoon. They struggled to feed themselves and were extremely frustrated because they weren't able to reach their mouths. In the other room they also were given enormous spoons. However, in this room they were satisfied because each person was able to feed

the person across the table. My father taught that one was a picture of heaven, and one was a picture of hell. Our heaven and hell on earth are determined by how thoughtless and selfish we are or how caring and helpful we can be to others. Heaven and hell are in this life, and it is our responsibility to do good.

Whether or not it agrees with my view that heaven and hell are in this life, I believe it is my responsibility as a rabbi to give comfort and support to those in mourning, whatever their beliefs in afterlife, and that is what I try to achieve.

RABBI PETER H. GRUMBACHER,
Rabbi Emeritus,
Congregation Beth Emeth

I'm asked this question from time to time; actually, in both Introduction to Judaism classes and when I speak to church groups it happens to be one of the questions most asked. And it should be since just about every religion—indeed every religion—has a point of view on the topic of life after death, and sometimes resurrection.

When I'm in a smart-alecky mood I'll say, "Don't know, never been there," but since it is important for some in their personal lives, presenting our view(s) should be a serious endeavor.

The Reform movement had an issue with the subject of the Divine Power in the traditional *Gevurot* section of the *Amidah*. There God is praised for

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m'chayeh meitim, "reviving the dead," that is, resurrection. In all the various versions of our Reform prayerbooks, both *siddurim* and *machzorim*, we find *m'chayeh hakol*, "who gives life to all." Pretty innocuous, eh? And of course that was purposeful; while there were some Reform Jews (joining others) who believed in resurrection, most adhered to our 19th century theology that rejected the idea.

Come the Gates of Repentance *machzor*, we find in the afternoon/*mincha* section *m'chayeh meitim*. It appears once, and that was that . . . until our latest *siddur*, *Mishkan Tefillah*, and for the Days of Awe *Mishkan HaNefesh*. "Who revives the dead," *m'chayeh meitim*, now in parentheses, makes it an option for the rabbi and congregation.

There are Reform congregations that opt for that reading. There are reasons for the change, but not for me. The liberal theology that eliminated it from worship allows everyone, myself included, to use our imagination. Giving life to all can mean the rebirth of Spring, for example, without getting into resurrection as usually defined.

Now what about the *olam ha-bah*, the world to come. Boy, if you talk about 10 Jews, 11 opinions, that concept fits the bill. In a nutshell, I view the meaning as whatever your reputation happens to be, that is how you shall be remembered. Your reward or punishment is not in a netherworld, rather by those who live on remembering you positively or negatively.

This surely is not a complete answer to the question. Perhaps in the future I alone, or along with my colleagues, will pursue it further. But for now, "Don't know, never been there."

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The Power and Presence of

SUMMER CAMPS

BY RABBI YAIR ROBINSON,
Congregation Beth Emeth

**We went away when we were very young,
To find the person that we would become,
To find the person who was hidden somewhere inside**

“Stars In the Sky,” Rabbi Larry Milder

If there has been one consistent in the lives of Jewish youth in North America for the last century, it is the power and presence of summer camps. Whether day camps like our Siegel JCC’s, or overnight camps like Pinemere, Harlam, Ramah, and others, camp—as a concept, as an incubator of ideas and leadership, and as a force multiplier for Jewish life—has been profoundly formative in ways the originators could not have imagined.

Started in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to get Jewish children out of the inner cities and into the countryside, summer camp agendas and programming changed over time. Originally designed to facilitate immigrant children’s assimilation and acclimation to American life, soon they became ways of preserving either Hebrew or Yiddish language and culture, or encouraging engagement in Zionism, or deepening children’s connection to Jewish religious and spiritual practice—or sometimes all three. As Sandra Fox writes in her book *The Jews of Summer: Summer Camp and Jewish Culture in Postwar America*, these efforts took on a greater urgency in the years after war and the Holocaust.

The Baby Boom, the move to the suburbs, and assimilationism all led rabbis, educators, and community leaders to create institutions to convey Jewish culture, religion, and traditions, but also inspire Jewish kids to create new rituals and connections, an authentic Jewish experience.

And as anyone who has been to Jewish sleepaway camp will attest, these micro-communities—often led by teens and young adults not much older than the children attending—did exactly that, inspiring kids to deepen their connection to Judaism even as they immersed themselves in the culture of that camp. I had firsthand experience of how transformative camp can be. As a high schooler, I attended the Kutz Leadership Academy (yes, named for our own Milton and Hattie Kutz, z”l) which served Jewish teens interested in being youth group leaders—be they songleaders, social activists, or just teens eager to engage in social programming. There, we interfaced with rabbis and educators, as well as one another, and learned different leadership skill sets. More than that, Kutz, like many camps, became a place where new music and liturgies were

created that influenced the rest of the movement. For example, Debbie Friedman z"l (of “*Mi Shebeirach*” fame, among many other pieces), emerged first as a camper and songleader at various URJ camps. Likewise, the inclusion of the *imahot*—or names of the matriarchs—in the *Amidah* prayer, and the popular use of *tikkun olam* to mean social action and social justice, all first emerged from camp worship practice. Today, camps like Ramah Poconos lead the way on inclusion of developmentally delayed children, while other camps like Moshava are leading efforts to create non-gendered Hebrew terminology for nonbinary participants. Camp becomes a leadership incubator—to be sure, for rabbis and cantors and Jewish educators—but also for lay leaders in our congregations, for entertainers and musicians, as well as non-profit heads and political leaders like our own Melanie Ross-Levin (another Kutz alum).

As a faculty member at URJ’s Camp Harlam for 14 years and a Harlam parent for 10, I have watched how our kids are shaped, and how they shape modern Judaism. Seeing Jewish children and teenagers celebrate Shabbat and celebrate each other through traditional prayers, experience modern takes on the tradition set to



guitar and drum, and often writing their own creative prayers about different Jewish values, is profoundly inspirational. Hearing kids use Hebrew expressions like *cheder ochel* (dining hall) and *nikkayon* (cleanup) and recite prayers such as *hamotzi* and *birkat hamazon* as casually as they would use English and living on Jewish time almost as they might in Israel, is remarkable. Of course, Camp Hebrew isn’t going to get you far at the Coffix in Afula (asking for the “*Mir*,” short for *mirpa’ah*, or health center, will get mostly confused looks), and not everything is about Judaism: there’s plenty of hiking and rock climbing, mountain biking and soccer playing, boating and swimming, arts and crafts, music, photography, and video design

(I frequently get asked as a rabbi by congregants whether camp is “too Jewish”). But all of this is enhanced with song sessions after meals; spending time with young Israeli men and women from the *mishlachot* and speaking with them about the Land and People of Israel; and gathering for Shabbat, dressed all in white, on a hill overlooking the green mountains of the Poconos, celebrating under a canopy of leafy trees and blue sky; as well as engaging in the camp’s own songs, alma maters, traditions, and competitions.



Photos provided by Rabbi Yair Robinson

And more than that, camp becomes a way for our kids to develop a kind of confidence, self-assurance, and skill set they might not be able to at home. In his book *Homesick and Happy: How Time Away From Parents Can Help A Child Grow*, child psychologist Michael Thompson makes a strong argument that time away at camp—free of technology, surrounded by peers as well as older kids, engaging in daily rituals as a group, and meeting challenges without teachers or parents swooping in to assist or smooth over difficulties—allow kids to grow emotionally and developmentally, learn to solve problems for themselves, gain greater independence, and return home each summer with greater resilience. The kid who is shy at home becomes the star of the camp play, the one who struggles expressing her feelings is the first to hug a crying bunkmate, and the one afraid of taking risks and making friends is the one laughing and crying with their friends after their turn on the rope swing.

All of these experiences at camp—and I would argue that they are all *Jewish* experiences—deliver a kind of authenticity one cannot capture easily at home or in synagogue. Their experience is unique and special, and one I would encourage you to consider for your own children or grandchildren this year. Talk to anyone who has sent their kids to camp, and they will wax rhapsodic about what a positive experience they had; how fun it was, the friends they made, each one ready to change the world for the better. And as Rabbi Larry Milder wrote for a camp alma mater, find the person hidden deep inside. ■

FROM Y TO J:

JEWISH RECREATION IN DELAWARE

1901-1970

BY DIANE WOLF

Photos provided by the Jewish Historical Society of Delaware

Dan Ehrenfeld

Harry "Reds" Jacobs

Sid Steelman

Alec Freeman

Sid Polish

Norman Berman

Mort
Freedman

Morris
"Skyball"
Schultz

Sam
Spiller

Lou
Brown

Lester "Pip" Jacobs



THE Y—BEGINNINGS

For almost 70 years, the Young Men's Hebrew Association of Wilmington (YMHA or Y) provided a place for Jews in Wilmington to gather for social, educational, and communal purposes. The Y was an essential part of the cohesion of the Wilmington Jewish community, as well as playing an important role in the Jewish community's relations with the larger community.

Begun as a social club, the Y was incorporated in 1902. At first it offered social, literary, and educational programs for its members, including YMHA Juniors, all 18 or under. Sports were added in 1913, when the Y moved into floors above the Greenbaum's store, which had a gym. Responding to concern about assimilation, after WWI the Y dedicated itself to be a center for all Jewish young people. Significantly, it was open to all Jews and not limited to level of observance or class. To help fulfill projected growth, the Topkis family led fundraising efforts for a new building in 1919.

Soon, however, Adas Kodesch Congregation (before the merger that made it Adas Kodesch Shel Emeth) announced construction of its new facilities at 6th and French Streets. Louis Topkis and others envisioned the Adas Kodesch Center, adjacent to the Adas Kodesch building, which could be a home for the Y. The Center, which opened in 1927, included a gym, pool, handball court, and auditorium. There was space, as well, for educational and arts programming, including drama, movies, and concerts.

Despite this growth, factors beyond the Y's control—the Great Depression and shifts in Jewish neighborhoods—led to its closure in 1932. However, advocates reestablished the Y, now called the Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association (YM-YWHA) only two years later. A new governing board leased the Center building and hired the first professional director, Isidore Sollod.

PROGRAMMING EXPANSION

The revitalized organization expanded programs beyond the Jewish community. The Y's athletic department joined the Catholic Youth Organization's program, and Y teams competed in city-wide events. Organizations like the American Red Cross and the Wilmington Board of Education



Adas Kodesch Center's Basketball team

offered programs at the Y. These programs strengthened relationships with the non-Jewish community.

During World War II, the Y became the organization hub for the Jewish community's efforts to support the war and service men and women. Outreach efforts brought services and materials to Jews at Fort Delaware and Dover Air Force base and to Jews passing through Delaware.

Both during and after WW II, the Y continued as the Jewish center for recreation, the arts, and education. Examples include Boy Scouts, choirs, drama productions, lectures and programs supporting Israel, dances for both teens and adults, and art shows, including one featuring Black Americans.

The sports expanded. The 10th anniversary of the Y in 1944 featured boxing matches. The basketball team played to full houses at home and regionally. A golf team competed, and an indoor golf practice court was created. Other teams were bowling and swimming.

CAMP

Isidore Sollod established a Jewish summer camp in the 1930s. The earliest programs sent the children to Brandywine Park for morning outdoor activities and back to the Y for the afternoons. According to the June 23, 1952 News Journal, these included overnight hikes and out-of-town trips to destinations like Hershey Park and Valley Forge. In the immediate post-war years, camp registration grew from 28 to 200 in 1953. The success of the camp required additional resources. A campsite was established from a parcel of the Sellers Estate purchased by John Kane.

According to Harry Bluestone, the "acquisition of the Campsite revolutionized the Y." In addition to housing

Continued on next page.



YMHA 1920-21
Basketball



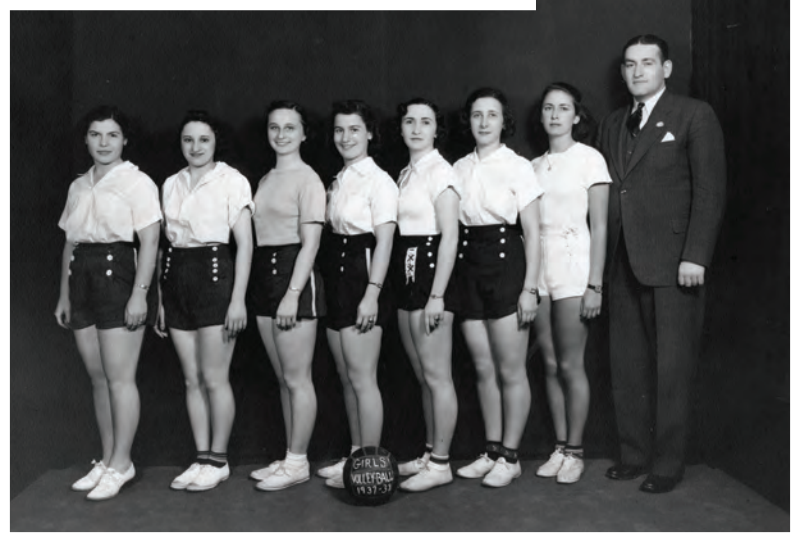
YM-YWHA kids
gathered on a car

the camp, the site became a place for family recreation. Bluestone called it a quasi-country club where families would spend summer days swimming, playing sports, and picnicking.

One person remembered the Campsite fondly; she wrote, "Those were the best Sundays ever. We had breakfast out there, Dad started the grill for the coffee pot, we swam, Mom and 'aunts' made breakfast, lunch, and dinner, going home we fell asleep so I always thought it was a long way from home!"

The enlarged camp site provided room for fishing, hikes, nature study, treasure hunts, arts, crafts, and education about Israel. There was Shabbat programming every Friday. Swimming was a large component.

The aquatics program was led by Hymie Swartz, known to campers as Uncle Hymie. He was a competitive swimmer and diver and was captain of the UD swimming team. In 1942, he joined the Army and



YWHA volleyball team

was taught to train soldiers in exercise and recreational games. Later he taught swimming in public schools and coached swim teams. Many former and campers remember learning to swim from Uncle Hymie.

Day camp enrollment almost doubled in just two years, growing to 460 in 1955. The success of the site led to the purchase of additional acres. Consistent with the growth of the camp, Y membership doubled despite a substantial dues increase.

During the 60s, each Hanukkah, there was a foot race from the campsite to the Y building followed by volleyball, basketball, and swimming at the Y.

FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES

Early in the 20th century, high school students in Wilmington—like others around the country—joined fraternities and sororities for socializing. Most did not admit Jews, so Wilmington Jewish students formed their own societies, probably in the 1920s. According to an oral history interview with Barbara Yalisove (z”l) in the 1940s there were four Jewish high school fraternities and one sorority. The groups met at the Y and planned fundraising events and dances. There were regular basketball games on Sundays. In 1960, rooms in the Sellers Estate manor house were made available to the one sorority and Sigma Alpha Rho, one of the fraternities. Although the groups had functioned without adult supervision, by the 1960s, parents wanted more structure, and a behavior code was created. Hazing was forbidden, adult supervision was required, and community service programs were established.

WHEN DID THE Y BECOME THE J?

In June 1922, the Jewish Community Center (JCC) was established as an organization and, according to Toni Young, the YMHA became extinct. Various documents and newspaper articles continued to call the organization the YMHA. With the exception of the Adas Kodesch Center years, the YM-YWHA was identified as the Y or the Center until the new building opened, even though the name was legally changed to the Jewish Community Center in 1954. As late as 1970, the News Journal referred to the old building as the YMHA.

PLANS FOR NEW FACILITIES

Not only did growth of membership and activities call for new space, but both the neighborhood and the building were deteriorating, and the Jewish population was moving to northern parts of Wilmington and the suburbs. Years of debate about optimal location and fundraising needs ensued. In 1964, Jewish Federation approved a capital campaign for the building. A Building Planning Committee was established and was guided by a 1963 population study that determined that Jews were moving to the western part of Brandywine.

While plans progressed, some programming was moved away from the Y. Beth Emeth, Adas Kodesch Shel Emeth, and some suburban schools hosted after school programming, lecture series, and the JCC annual meeting. Programmatic growth included the preschool; for adults, interior decorating, bridge, Hebrew instruction, and flower arranging classes were developed. Children’s clubs included science, woodworking, modern dance, cooking, and sports skills. Lifeguard training and karate classes were also provided. Throughout the decade, the Y hosted many concerts.

In September 1966 the *News Journal* reported that a 10-acre site on Garden of Eden Road had been selected for the new building. The Woodlawn Trustees had made the land available, and Federation purchased the land. Shortly after a design was approved that included a glassed-in courtyard, a gym, pool, auditorium, lounges and arts facilities. The preschool and offices of Federation would move into the new building. A capital campaign was initiated in November 1966 with a goal of 1.5 million dollars and, within three months, over one million dollars had been pledged. The chosen architectural firm, the Architects Collaborative, was formed by Walter Gropius with others who worked in the Bauhaus tradition.

Ground was broken on July 14, 1968. By September of 1969, the News Journal printed a photo of the facade of the new (2.5 million dollar) building. It opened with a ribbon cutting by then Governor Russell Peterson on May 3, 1970. Hanukkah was celebrated at the new JCC on December 19, 1970. ■

This article is written in conjunction with the display in the Siegel JCC ArtSpace about Jewish recreation in Delaware. A second article covering the years 1970 to the present will appear later in 2025.

About the Author:

DIANE WOLF is the Co-Chair of the Jewish Historical Society of Delaware’s (JHSD) 50th anniversary committee. She is a past-president of JHSD and the current volunteer librarian and archivist at Congregation Beth Shalom.

FOCUS ON...

TRAVEL & RECREATION

Jewish in Bangkok

BY ANNA MOSS



To get from Wilmington to Bangkok, it was a grueling red-eye flight over a handful of oceans, always with a stopover in some country or other where Jews were not particularly welcome. But in Thailand, Jews were more than welcome—that is, they would be, if anyone had ever met a Jew to welcome.

We may be a minority in America, but in Thailand, we are a microminority, a term I just made up. While there are tons of Jewish and Israeli backpackers passing through, very, very few residents of Thailand are Jewish. This wasn't something I thought about at all when I made the decision to move to Bangkok to teach in 2016, but it ended up coloring my two years in the country—and in the most vivid of ways. The teeny-tinness of the Jewish community made it warm and welcoming, and many of my best memories, and most of my best friends, came from the tiny Jewish expat community.

What follows are some moments that stand out in my memory. Please join me on this trip down memory lane. Or, as they might (but really, they don't) say in Thailand, *Soi Memory...*

High Holidays

I straddled the motorbike as it zoomed down Sukhumvit Road, my mototaxi driver expertly weaving between the gridlocked cars. The traffic-trapped cars belched out smoke and God knows what else, but we were free—full speed ahead, and diagonal, and sideways. My first few times on a mototaxi, I had gripped onto the bike—and the sympathetic driver—for dear life. But today, I watched the world blur by—a flash of the pineapple seller, a blue glimpse of the ever-present Pepsi brand shade umbrellas—and smiled up into the morning sunshine. "I'm riding on the back of a motorbike through downtown Bangkok on the way to



Yom Kippur services," I thought. "Does it get much better than that?"

I hobbled from the bustling street into the chic downtown hotel on my bad ankle and sat on the couch to catch my breath. I watched the fountain in the middle of the lobby, bubbling grandiosely. Bangkok is full of water features like that: beautiful fountains, forbidden pools and ponds—the oppressive heat always made me wonder whether I would get yelled at if I just jumped in. If only I was one of the giant monitor lizards, then I could slither into any pond I wanted.

Energy regained, I took the elevator up a few floors, as the email directions had stated. When I got off the elevator, the irreverent older guy—what was his name, Art? I begin to forget—greeted me by name.

"Nice to see you here," I said.

With a wry grin, he laughed, "They got me to stand here all day and take tickets, but they can't get me to set foot inside the service!"

Art was like that, always a rebel. He never did anything he didn't believe in 100% in his life. He had been in Thailand

for nearly 50 years because he had dodged the draft for the Vietnam War. Uncle Sam called him up to go off to Vietnam, but Art took the initiative to beat him to the punch, only he ended up just a few miles too far east. Did he know that he would be an exile for his whole life? Did he know he would never again set foot in the United States? He doesn't seem to mind, at any rate. He's always got a wry smile, and he wears his iconoclastic ideals well as a key and active member of the Thailand Progressive Jewish Community—on his own terms.

As I walked to my seat, I nodded and smiled at everyone I knew, which was nearly everyone. The rabbi stood at the front, leading everyone in a reflection. She had been flown in from Israel for the high holidays, which was the main reason we had a ticket price. Since the ten Days of Awe come between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, it didn't make sense for her to fly all the way back to Israel and then all the way back to Thailand again, so we all paid for her to stay over at a hotel and do some tourist stuff.

I'm normally pretty salty about paying for a ticket to attend a religious

Continued on next page

service, but in this case it made sense; the rabbi was really amazing. It turns out that she was one of the OG women rabbis who wrote the progressive prayerbook! She taught us new songs and explained the history of how she got these 1970s-era feminist prayers into the book.

After services, we all broke the fast at the Greek restaurant on the ground floor of the hotel. Convenient!

Shabbat Potlucks

I could smell the robust aroma of my husband's Famous Vegan Chili Stew the moment I stepped out of the elevator. The smell always hit me all at once: the lentils, the fresh herbs from the old guy who sold potatoes and a few fresh, green things at a folding table outside the 7–11. As I turned the corner and approached our apartment door, I wondered if anyone had beaten me to it. I'm usually late to my own parties, and Shabbat potlucks are no different.

The Shabbat potluck crew could always be counted on to get together if you didn't have anything to do on a Friday. We were:

- Me, a mid-20s, nihilistic test prep tutor, punk rocker, and train aficionado.
- Blair, the always-optimistic serial entrepreneur in her late 20s. After leaving Bangkok, she spent the next few years traveling around Asia; she is now settled in Belgrade, Serbia with her own boutique relocation business. (See: www.blairinbelgrade.com).
- Simon, the charming, 40-something hotel website somethingorother, who was always up for a potluck when he wasn't visiting his husband in Singapore. Simon and his husband were finally able to move to Taiwan together a couple of years ago; Thailand only began to legally recognize gay marriage years later.
- Alec, a much spicier, bit older, and equally nihilistic test prep tutor. Even though he and his husband lived way out in the suburbs, Alec always made an effort to come to potlucks, which I appreciated given the distance.
- Bev, the Matriarch. Bev had been in Bangkok since the '70s, and she told us about how she remembered when they first put telephone lines into her neighborhood.

Bev didn't always come to potlucks, but when she hosted, it felt like being back home, having a real Shabbat dinner at my parents' friends' house. Her apartment had real furniture, cabinets displaying all kinds of art, even a tablecloth. It was funny because no matter what any of us transients did, no matter how nice the fancy new apartment buildings were—and Bangkok is chock full of fancy new apartment buildings, which is an issue in itself—we just couldn't make them feel like home, because it wasn't really home for us. So, I always liked going around Bev's, even though I only went once or twice.

"What is 'Jewish?'"

I was out for lunch with a coworker, and I fumbled for words.

"It's sort of like Christians but . . . without . . . Jesus?" I paused. This was probably not clarifying anything.

"Jews believe in one god, but, like, I don't really believe—well, I'm sort of agnostic—but um . . . We don't celebrate Christmas. Well, I sort of do, as much as people here. You know, I love going to see all the Christmas decorations at the mall, the big sales, the gigantic polar bear outside CentralWorld . . ."

Thailand is 93% Buddhist and is a religious monarchy. The king is a religious leader and is believed to be divinely descended, and if you disagree with that, don't say it out loud or you'll end up in jail. Thailand might be the chilliest religious autocracy around, but it still is one.

That said, as long as you act with respect to the king, you can practice whatever religion you want. Thailand is 5% Muslim and 1% Christian, and there are so few Jews that I'm pretty sure I had Shabbat dinner with the entire Jewish population at some point.

What is interesting is that Israelis are pretty common, and you'll even see signs written in Hebrew in the most touristy areas. Lots of young Israelis backpack around Thailand as a gap year, so most people are familiar with Israelis and know that they are usually Jewish. This leads to the rather funny situation where many people in Bangkok think that, if you are

Jewish, then you must be from Israel. I had some confusing discussions where I tried to explain to people that I was Jewish but from America, which was sort of like telling someone you are French but really from Germany, and we all left the conversation bemused. In America, many people make the opposite mistake, assuming that everyone who lives in Israel is Jewish, so it was funny to see the opposite assumption, that anyone who is Jewish must live in Israel.

"So," I floundered, still trying to explain what it means to be Jewish, without referencing Judeo-Christian background knowledge I would normally take for granted. We have one god, and he's invisible. It's sort of the same one as the Christians, but a little different . . . I still like to go and see the Christmas lights, but like, without Jesus? Since Jews don't celebrate Christmas," I continued, surely giving the clearest explanation of all time, in a city where literally every devout Buddhist celebrates Christmas by taking selfies with a giant glowing polar bear in a Santa hat at the mall. My coworker smiled politely and nodded, thoughtfully pretending I was making sense.

"Ah, this coffee is really good, isn't it?" she said, mercifully changing the subject.

It makes me laugh now, and, looking back, I think it's a funny story. But I wonder if that near-insurmountable linguistic and cultural divide didn't reveal something deep and important, something about why synagogues are emptying, something about why more and more, we aren't raising Jewish children who raise Jewish children. At its very core, what does it mean to be Jewish? How can I reconcile Judaism as a religion with Judaism as an ethnic heritage without dressing up my confusion in highfalutin words like "reconcile" and "ethnic heritage?"

And so, I will leave you with this question: If you were somewhere far away and a colleague asked you what "Jewish" means—and what it means to you—what would you tell them? ■



Photos provided by Anna Moss



About the Author:

ANNA MOSS is a native Wilmingtonian who now runs Mind the Test: Brain-Based Tutoring out of South Jersey. When not teaching, Anna can be found reading about sociolinguistics, baking interesting desserts (her toddler loves her orange-rosemary banana bread!), and traveling with her husband, toddler, and dog.

FOCUS ON...

TRAVEL & RECREATION

An Extraordinary Alliance

BY **STEVE GONZER**,
Co-Chair/Consultant of the Halina
Wind Preston Holocaust Education
Committee



Shirley
Chisholm



Ingrid
Griffith

“If poor babies have milk and poor children have food, it’s because a Rabbi in Crown Heights had a vision.”

-Shirley Chisholm

March is designated as Women's History Month. It is an opportunity to celebrate and honor the unsung heroines who have made vast and enduring contributions to the world, throughout history. This year's theme is "Moving Forward Together."

Among the women who serve as an inspiration and role model for generations to come, Shirley Chisholm stands out as a trailblazer; a powerhouse whose courage and spirit has been undervalued for the last 56 years. Shirley was the first African woman to be elected to the United States Congress, in 1968. In 1972 she was the first African American to campaign for President of the United State and first woman to participate in a presidential debate. She set the stage for the first African American to be elected President and the 31 women who serve as Congresspeople today.

Born and raised in Newark, New Jersey, I witnessed, first-hand, the consequences of indifference, discrimination, hatred, and unintended ignorance. In 1964–1965, racial violence in Newark was simmering and came to a boil in July 1967, when full-fledged riots erupted. During this period of what was known as "White Flight," My family moved to Delaware.

In 1972, I was living in a melting pot of anti-Jewish sentiment, in Greenville, Delaware. It was the year that I reached the age to be a first-time voter. I heard of Shirley Chisholm from a friend of mine, who was instrumental in organizing the Feminist movement in the 1960s. During the summer, I was invited to a rally, in Harlem, for Shirley Chisholm, who was running for President. Of course, I eagerly accepted the invitation.

Among the large crowd, I noticed several men dressed in ankle length black coats, with yarmulkes atop their heads and long white beards suspended from their chins. They were Lubavitchers, staunch supporters of Shirley Chisholm, a resident of the Flatbush section of Brooklyn.

By the end of World War II, Lubavitchers, other Orthodox Jews, and Caribbean West Indian refugees lived

side by side in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn and for the most part, were ignored by the rest of New York City. It just happened that Shirley Chisholm resided a few blocks from Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, the Grand Rebbe of the Lubavitch community. They quickly developed a long-lasting friendship. The Rabbi was impressed by Chisholm's chutzpah.

In 1968, Shirley was elected to Congress. One day, after she returned to Brooklyn from Washington, DC, she met Rabbi Schneerson walking down the street. He asked her why she looked so



Rabbi Schnerson

distraught? She told him that she was frustrated and disappointed. Shirley told the rabbi she had been shambled off to the Agricultural Committee, she complained that the committee was trying to prevent her from serving her Brooklyn constituents and was ignored.

Upon hearing this, the Rabbi responded, "I know you are upset, but this country has so much surplus food, you could use this gift G-d has given you to feed hungry people." Shirley took the Rabbi's advice. She befriended Robert Dole and collaborating with him, expanded the food stamp program and established the WIC program—food for women, infants, and children. Shirley always credited Rabbi Schneerson for the fact that babies and children would now be eligible for supplemental food.

By 1972, Shirley Chisolm was one of the most visible and powerful members of Congress. She was one of the founding

members of the Black Caucus in 1971 and, that same year, was one of the founding members of the National Women's Political Caucus. She shocked constituents and Congresspeople alike when she visited Governor George Wallace in the hospital after he had been shot. He later helped her get Southern support and votes on a bill that gave domestic workers the right to receive a minimum wage for the first time.

The Halina Wind Preston Holocaust Education Committee, the Jewish Federation of Delaware, and the University of Delaware's Jewish Studies Program are sponsoring a performance of *Shirley Chisholm: Unbossed & Unbowed*, a play written and performed by Ingrid Griffith. The performance will take place on March 16 at the Wilmington Drama League, in Wilmington. ■

INGRID GRIFFITH is a member of SAG/AFTRA, Dramatics Guild. Griffith has been in off-Broadway theatrical productions in and around New York City. Some of her favorite roles are Lady Reveller in the 18th century play, *The Basset Table*, by Susanna Centlivre; Mrs. Muller in John Patrick's *Shanley's Doubt*; Hedda Gabler in Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*; Various characters in Eve Ensler's *Vagina Monologues*.

Shirley Chisholm: Unbossed & Unbowed

SUNDAY, MARCH 16, 2025
at 2 PM

Wilmington Drama League
10 West Lea Boulevard,
Wilmington, DE 19

Adult Camp Experience

BY MEIR HOBERMAN

I wasn't sure what to expect from my first summer at URJ 6Points Creative Arts Academy. In my own childhood, I wasn't the kind of kid who thrived at summer camp. I was a quiet, noncompetitive, artsy kid, still years away from discovering the language to articulate the complex intersections of Jewish, trans, and neurodivergent identities.

Within my first days at CAA, I knew this was going to be a different experience. CAA describes itself as "Jewish. Arts. Camp." The idea is to keep each element in balance. Campers at CAA choose an arts major, one of a list of arts ranging from theater, dance, and multiple music disciplines—the "loud arts"—to the "quiet arts" such as creative writing, photography, and visual art. As the creative writing mentor, I would be helping campers who chose to major in writing to develop their voices, expand their repertoires, and produce a final, polished piece to print in each session's chapbook and to read on the night of Showcase—the last night of each session when campers from every major display a taste of the skills they've been developing over the two week session.

In the leadup to Shabbat, though, the arts mentors guide the campers to create "offerings," interpretive reimagining of Friday night prayers, and the campers are free to experiment with other

majors, whether they have any skill or experience in that art form or not. It was the perfect antidote to color war, to being chosen last for kickball. The atmosphere was supportive and celebratory.

This isn't by accident. The environment at CAA is carefully curated to support the campers who might feel the way I did at other camps. Quiet areas and regulating tools are available outside every activity. Camper care staff distribute earplugs at song sessions so that sound-sensitive campers can participate. Campers express relief at testing their first coming-out experiences in supportive, celebratory spaces. Even the necessary athletic activities are "kinesthetic arts" like yoga and dance games, not team-based projectile sports. Over and over, fellow staff and clergy faculty members said the same thing: "If only this kind of camp had been an option when I was younger."

Finding this space as an adult was a gift to my child self. All those same attributes that made me an awkward, uncomfortable child were the tools that made me an accessible role model as an Arts Mentor. Creating Shabbat offerings presented opportunities to model centering Disabled access to Jewish leadership. A question about b'nai mitzvah and changing pronouns prompted a lively conversation about the spaces where Jewish and queer identities



Delaware's Big Dill

come together, and one quiet evening two campers pulled me aside for a quiet conversation about grief, healing, and poetry.

Throughout all of this, campers explored new skills and reworked old ones, and produced incredible pieces of art. Campers wrote heartfelt poems about mental health recovery or recent loss, humor pieces with unexpected emotional turns, fantasy scenes populated by searing phoenixes or sentient fungi, and slice-of-life scenes of friendship between sorcerers and werewolves. I gave prompts like “What is Shabbat like on your spaceship” and “Imagine an unusual place to host a bar/bat/bet mitzvah celebration.” I introduced poetic forms ranging from villanelles and sestinas to forms found in biblical poetry or in *piyyutim* (Jewish liturgical poems) and campers took off with enthusiasm. Showcase at the end of each session couldn't have been more aptly named, as each camper showed the very different and beautiful pieces each of them had created.

About the Author:

Meir Hoberman is a writer, artist, and teacher who has been at Congregation Beth Emeth since 2020.

Jewish Living
Delaware Exclusive
Interview with
Warren Rosenfeld
of Rosenfeld's Jewish
Delicatessen



EMMA DRIBAN, EDITOR

For Delawareans across the state, the name Rosenfeld's rings out as the only Jewish-style deli to make a home in the first state. With three locations—Rehoboth, South Bethany, and Salisbury (MD)—and a fourth on the way in Ocean City, MD (opening May 2025), the kosher-style delicatessen is a favorite stop for many beach-goers, Sussex residents, and sandwich enthusiasts.

Warren Rosenfeld, Founder of Rosenfeld's Jewish Delicatessen, joined *Jewish Living Delaware* for an exclusive interview. Visit JewishLivingDelaware.org for the beloved deli's origin story, customer favorites, and—most importantly—Mr. Rosenfeld's pickle preference.

Visit JewishLivingDelaware.org for the full interview.





My Two Week “Army” Vacation Volunteering in Israel

BY DAVID ROSENGARTEN

After October 7, my relationship with Israel has changed in ways I could not have anticipated. Since that day, I feel more connected to the country than ever, and I’ve felt a need to consistently be on the ground, helping, in any way I can. In January 2024, my wife and I spent a week in Israel on a volunteer and solidarity mission. In addition to helping on farms and packing supplies, we travelled the country bearing witness to what occurred.

This January, my daughter, Janna, and I spent two weeks volunteering on military bases in Israel through an organization called Sar-El. It was the experience of a lifetime!

During our two-week volunteer experience with Sar-El, we had the unique opportunity to immerse ourselves in Israeli culture, contribute to the IDF (Israel Defense Forces), and forge connections that deepened our understanding of the country and its people. Sar-El offers an incredible chance for people of different religions and backgrounds from all over the world to volunteer on military bases, providing support and gaining insights into Israel’s security and daily life. Between 20–30% of the volunteers were not Jewish, and we met volunteers from Australia, England, France, Ireland, Argentina, the US, and several other countries. You live and eat on the base Sunday through Thursday, wear the military uniform during working hours, and work alongside active duty soldiers as well as reservists.

We arrived in Israel excited and a bit apprehensive, unsure of what to expect. Sar-El’s program welcomed us with open arms, briefing us on the rules, expectations, and the importance of our role. Volunteers from different parts of the world—each with their own motivations—gathered at Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv on Sunday morning before being assigned to various military bases throughout the country. It was amazing to meet such a diverse group of people, all united by a desire to support Israel in a meaningful way.

After being assigned to an Airforce base in Southern Israel for our first week, we were introduced to the daily rhythm of life on an IDF base. Each day began early with a military-style meal and flag-raising, and we were then given tasks that supported the IDF in areas such as logistics, supply management, and administrative assistance. On this particular base, we were packing meals for front-line soldiers in Gaza, Syria, and Lebanon. By the end of the

week, our group had packed 4,446 boxes with over 17,000 meals. Whether it was packaging the meals, working the assembly line, or assisting in other behind-the-scenes operations, it was clear that every role—no matter how small—was crucial in supporting the IDF’s mission.

For week two, we were assigned to an army combat training base in the Negev. This base was used to train combat soldiers and also housed the trucks used to carry tanks into Gaza. We spent the week making sure each truck had all the proper equipment,



David and Janna taking a break from packing meal supplies

making sure the equipment was in working order, and making sure the chains used to secure the tanks onto the trucks were properly affixed. As meaningful as the work was, eating meals with the

soldiers and commanders was equally rewarding. Some of these soldiers had recently returned from combat and were so grateful that we would volunteer on their base. They told us about life in Israel, life in the IDF, and how they were each affected by October 7. We of course told them how grateful we are for all of them. Hearing the combat planes taking off, making sure we were aware of all the bomb shelters in the case of a siren, as well as hearing and feeling the bombs dropping in Gaza gave us a real feeling of what they go through on a regular basis.

The work was often physically demanding, and living in army barracks is not what we were used to, but there was a sense of purpose and camaraderie that made it all worthwhile. Working alongside soldiers, many of whom were young and eager to fight to defend Israel, made me realize how dedicated and disciplined they are. Despite their serious roles, they always greeted us with kindness and appreciation, making us feel like a valuable part of their team.

One of the highlights of volunteering with Sar-El was the opportunity to truly immerse ourselves in Israeli culture. While



Janna hard at work loading the chains on the trucks

working on base, we had the chance to interact with people from all walks of life—soldiers, fellow volunteers, and locals. Many of the soldiers had fascinating personal stories to share, giving us a glimpse into the diverse backgrounds and experiences that make up Israeli society. We ate dinner with Bedouin and Druze soldiers, we spoke with orthodox and secular Jewish soldiers, and we were able to speak with combat soldiers as well as the cooks and those

whose service does not include combat. We learned about their challenges, their joys, and their pride in serving their country.

In the evenings, when the workday was done, we had the chance to speak to our *madrichot* (active duty leaders) where they told various stories about the IDF, or their personal stories including how October 7 impacted them. On the weekends, we had the chance to explore nearby cities and towns. We attended a glassblowing workshop in Caesarea, went on a tour of the Gaza envelope, walked the beaches of Tel Aviv, and of course did plenty of shopping. While the food on each base was surprisingly good, we enjoyed delicious meals of falafel, shawarma, and even sushi on our days off. These experiences allowed us to not only enjoy being in Israel but also to connect with the people on a deeper level.

By the end of our two weeks, we were filled with a deep sense of gratitude. The experience was much more than just volunteering; it was a chance to embrace the importance of community and the strength of shared purpose and to feel good about the hard work we were putting in. Despite being of different

religions and coming from different parts of the world, we were all united in our goal to support Israel, and we both felt a deep sense of connection to both the people we worked alongside and the land itself.

Volunteering with Sar-El was an enriching experience that allowed us to make a tangible impact while gaining a better understanding of Israel’s complex political, social, and cultural landscape. It reminded me of the power of service and the importance of stepping outside of one’s comfort zone to experience the world in a new way.



David and the Madricha on the base

Photos provided by David Rosengarten

Whether you’re looking to volunteer, travel, or simply learn more about Israel, I highly recommend participating in the Sar-El program. It’s an opportunity to contribute, learn, and grow in ways you never imagined.

We both can’t wait to go back for another “Army” vacation as soon as we can.

DAVID ROSENGARTEN grew up in Central NJ and moved to DE in 2010. He worked in banking at JPMorgan for many years and is currently a State Farm Agent/Owner. He is active in the DE Jewish community and is looking forward to his next volunteer opportunity.

Camp and Learning Experiences

BY ELISHAI ROBINSON



Elishai and another CIT celebrating a goal with a camper

When I was eight, I went to a Jewish sleepaway camp in the Poconos, URJ Camp Harlam. It was horrible. I hated my time there, but made a few friends, so I came back the next year. The second summer, I had a bad time again, losing some friends and acting out, mostly due to homesickness, with one memorable incident ending with me being chased across camp by the staff on multiple golf carts when I ran off. After they finally retrieved me from the poison ivy I had run into, I had a long talk with camper care, camp's therapeutic team, about my behavior. But, even after that, I came back the next year, and the year after that, returning for nine years as a camper, even going to Israel for a month last year on a camp-run trip, accumulating a group of my closest friends along the way. Now, as I write this essay, I am back at Camp Harlam as a part of the Geshet or Counselor-In-Training (CIT) program.

At camp, there was no single event that sparked a change, because going away every summer to camp was that event. For example, this summer, as part of the CIT program leadership training, my ability to work in teams—both as a leader and collaboratively—has grown, which is a skill I have struggled with in the past. I was what some describe as a control freak and would blame other people for all problems in group work, even if I was clearly also in the wrong. I have also learned how to work as a mentor and role model while in *loco parentis* for younger campers, both having fun with them and enforcing or reinforcing rules when necessary. Combined with my previous experience teaching kids around the same age at my synagogue, where I teach Wednesday afternoon Hebrew School, I have refined my leadership skills and expanded them through multiple workshops and sheer hands-on experience. I also learned the most valuable

Photos provided by Elishai Robinson



Elishai and two other CITs leading prayers on CIT shabbat

skill for anyone: knowing your limits. I learned how to tell my coworkers and bosses when I'm feeling sick, or need a break, while knowing that my breaks have to actually be focused on self-recovery, not just scrolling through the internet or chilling with my friends.

Taking a step back to my time as a camper, I learned valuable life lessons and skills that helped develop my understanding of myself and others. When I was a camper, they renamed the two living spaces from "girls' camp" and "boys' camp" to "hillside" and "woodside," in order to be more inclusive. While I was initially skeptical, I eventually understood that, while change may initially feel unnecessary, can still be positive in the end, and that you won't know the outcome of change until you try it. Additionally, I learned later that someone is always affected by change, meaning that you shouldn't assume change is pointless. When it happened,

I did not know anyone affected by this change, but I talked to, and am good friends with, someone positively affected by this now and I understand it better. In addition, Camp helped me learn to live with strangers for weeks without getting into a fight or having insurmountable disagreements with them, skills I would not have learned as an only child. Most importantly, I learned independence: everything from waking up on time and setting your own alarm, to smaller tasks like cleaning, folding your laundry, and making sure that your own mental and physical health don't deteriorate while making sure your campers, friends,

and coworkers stay healthy. With all this in mind, my time at camp was the event that caused my personal growth over the years, by giving me the opportunities to learn from my mistakes and push through challenges to find my best self.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: ELISHAI ROBINSON is a senior at Mt. Pleasant High School and waiting on college acceptances. He has participated in volunteering activities such as Joseph's Pantry and is a member of the Board of Trustees of Congregation Beth Emeth. Elishai Robinson is the son of Rabbi Yair and Dr. Marisa Robinson.

A One-Woman Show by Ingrid Griffith



**Shirley Chisholm:
Unbossed
& Unbowed**

Unbossed & Unbowed is an immersive and interactive solo show about the 1st African-American woman to run for the Presidency of the U.S. They called her the Black Joan of Arc. She called herself 'fighting' Shirley as she faced off against the political machine in the name of justice.

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Purim Foods around the World

BY DR. YVETTE ALT MILLER, *Aish.com*

Hamentashen are old hat. Try some lesser-known Purim treats.

This month, Jews around the world celebrate Purim, the festival commemorating our triumph over the wicked Haman. In much of the world, we eat the popular treat Hamentashen to symbolize our victory.

Here are some lesser-known Purim treats from around the world. Try some in your “Mishloach Manot” (the gift baskets Jews traditionally give one another on Purim), or try incorporating them in your meals this Purim for a special holiday feast!

Kulich

In Jewish communities in Russia, it was customary to bake long, sweet challah loaves that resemble ropes, to commemorate the rope on which Haman wanted to hang the Jewish leader Mordechai on (and on which Haman was hanged instead)!

Ingredients:

- ½ cups warm water
- 1 Tbsp dry yeast
- ½ cup sugar
- 3 eggs



- ½ tsp salt
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 3–4 cups flour
- Sesame seeds for sprinkling

Instructions:

1. Pour water into mixing bowl, and sprinkle with yeast and sugar. Wait 10 minutes until bubbly.
2. Add two eggs, salt, oil, and half the flour. Mix (by hand or with an electric mixer with bread hook attachment) until combined. Add more flour, a little at a time, until the dough is smooth and elastic.
3. Place in an oiled bowl, cover, and let rise one hour. Briefly knead dough, then let rise, covered, for another hour.
4. Divide the dough into six parts, and roll each into long strands. Pinch together at one end, then braid the strands. (Alternate crossing the right strand over the three to its left, then the left strand over the three to its right.) Pinch together at the bottom when done.
5. Place on a cookie sheet, cover, and let rise one more hour. Beat remaining egg, and brush it over the loaf to glaze. Sprinkle with sesame seeds.
6. Preheat oven to 350 F, and bake approximately 45 minutes, until loaf

is golden brown and sounds hollow when tapped on the bottom.

Makes one large loaf.

Recipe adapted from *Angels at the Table: A Practical Guide to Celebrating Shabbat* by Yvette Alt Miller (Continuum 2011).

Boyoja Ungola Di Purim

This is a Moroccan Purim bread. Hard boiled eggs represent Haman’s eyes.

Ingredients:

- Challah dough (use Kulich recipe, above)
- 2 Tbsp sesame seeds
- ¼ cup chopped almonds
- 4 hard-boiled eggs.

Instructions

1. Make the challah recipe as above, but add the sesame seeds and chopped nuts to the dough.
2. Instead of braiding the dough, tear off a small piece, then divide remaining dough into four. Form round challahs out of dough, and using a sharp knife, cut egg-sized slits into the side of each loaf.



3. Push one hard boiled egg into each loaf. Divide the small piece of dough into eight, and roll the pieces out to form "X" shapes, put an X over each egg, and press down to seal.

4. Glaze and bake as above.

Yields four small loaves.

Caveos di Aman

For many Jewish communities, pasta has long been considered a traditional Purim dish. Here is a traditional Bulgarian Purim meal; its name means "Haman's Hair."

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. vermicelli or spaghetti
- Salt
- 6 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- Juice of 2 lemons
- Pepper
- 30 black olives
- 3 hard-boiled eggs, cut in wedges

Instructions

1. Cook the pasta in boiling salted water until done al dente. Drain and dress with the olive oil and lemon juice beaten with salt and pepper. Mix in the olives and garnish with hard-boiled eggs cut in wedges. Serve at room temperature.

Serves 6.

Recipe from *The Book of Jewish Food* by Claudia Roden (Alfred A. Knopf 1996).

Travel the world with more international Purim recipes online!

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B'nai Mitzvah



Tori Brody

Tori Brody will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, March 1, 2025, at Congregation Beth Emeth in Wilmington. She will be reading from Exodus 25 1-11. Tori is a seventh grader at Talley Middle School in the IB program and participates in the drama club and chorus at school.

Tori's passion is being with her friends, helping/caring for others and participating in the arts. For her mitzvah project she partnered with Harper's Heart; a non-profit organization here in Wilmington, DE that provides essential baby items (0-24 months) to families. In addition to volunteering stocking shelves & hanging clothes, Tori has collected monetary donations, along with diapers and other baby items, and set up a collection at her school as well. Tori enjoys taking care of and playing with her baby cousins and family friends, which influenced her decision to partner with Harper's Heart.

Tori is the daughter of Allison and Randy Brody from the Philadelphia area, and has a sister, Samantha. Her grandparents are Helene & Jeff Herman, Terri Adlowitz, and Donna & Steve Satir.



Nora Joy Glazier

Nora Joy Glazier will be called to the Torah as a bat mitzvah on Saturday, March 29, 2025 at Congregation Beth Emeth in Wilmington. Nora is a seventh grader at the Tatnall School and spends her Summers at Camp Saginaw in Oxford, Pennsylvania. Nora's passion is playing sports. She plays field hockey, basketball, and most importantly lacrosse. She loves spending time with her friends, family, and two dogs Winnie and JoJo! For her mitzvah project, she volunteered at the Siegel JCC with her Aunt Katie in the senior center. She has helped make and serve food, as well as many other small jobs throughout the JCC. Nora is excited to continue the Glazier tradition, as her father and 2 brothers have done, of having food on the Bima instead of flowers to donate the food back to the community.



Alexa Samantha La Scala

Alexa Samantha La Scala will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, March 22, 2025 at Congregation Beth Emeth in Wilmington. She will be reading from Ezekiel. Alexa is the daughter of John and Heather La Scala and the younger sister of Danielle La Scala. She is the granddaughter of Stuart and Marlene Silverstein and Anthony and Caroline La Scala.

For her mitzvah project, Alexa helped to support families at the Ronald McDonald House by assembling snack kits. She also volunteers her time with the Delaware Humane Society taking care of cats that are waiting to be adopted.

Alexa is a seventh grade Dance Major at Cab Calloway School of the Arts. She dances at Encore Dance Academy where she studies ballet, jazz, lyrical, acro, and contemporary. She is on the competition team at Encore Dance Academy and travels to several competitions throughout the year.

An Extraordinary Accomplishment

BY **LORI BARBANEL,**

President of Congregation Beth Shalom

Did you celebrate Shabbat, on December 21, 2024, with Congregation Beth Shalom? If you did, you saw David's amazing accomplishment. Not King David, but our very own David Schutzman. On that Saturday morning, David completed his quest to *leyn* (chant) the whole Torah in its entirety. Each and every single word. In short, I am in awe of David's accomplishment.

It took David 30 years to achieve this extraordinary mitzvah for a number of reasons. Congregation Beth Shalom (CBS) reads Torah over a triennial, three-year cycle. This means we read a third of the Torah each year, or a third of one of the 54 weekly portions. And some Shabbats have b'nei mitzvah or special services when others chant Torah.

CBS has a number of skilled Torah readers who will learn and chant an aliyah, even on short notice. Most readers study and read one or two aliyot at time. David is particularly adept, as he's capable of chanting the entire parsha, *leyning* all eight aliyot on Shabbat.

And David is truly one of our own! David and his wife, Leah, both grew up in Wilmington and first met when they were five years old at CBS Sunday school. Leah's grandfather, Aaron Finger, was one of the founders of the shul, and David's dad, Norman (Sonny), was a lifelong member.

Leah and David went to Hebrew school through Confirmation at the same time, but were never particularly friendly. During college and after they would both come back to CBS for the holidays as David's mom and dad were very active in the shul as were Leah's aunt and uncle, Louis and Dorothy Finger. When they were in their mid 20s, David's mother and Leah's aunt fixed them up on a blind date at CBS, one thing led to another, and they were married a year and a half later. The couple continued their close connection to CBS even though they were living outside Philadelphia.

David's father Sonny Schutzman was President of CBS in the mid-1970s. Both he and David's mother, Helen (nee Tomases), remained active in CBS and on the Board until they were well into their late 80s. During the 1980s, Helen managed, with Barbara Yalisove, The Gazebo, a gift shop on 9th Street in Wilmington.



David Schutzman with his grandfather, Morris Tomases, on the morning of his Bar Mitzvah; he continues to study from the same tikun in the picture

Photo provided by David Schutzman

Sonny was President of the JCC and active on the Board of Directors of the Jewish Federation of Delaware. He was chair of the Israel Bonds Drive for Delaware and was instrumental in establishing Delaware's the Jewish Fund for the Future.

After their daughter, Abby, was born, David and Leah joined the conservative shul B'Nai Aaron, which was about a mile from their home in Havertown, as it had a wonderful preschool and an active congregation. David was busy as a neonatologist. Leah was busy raising Abby and volunteering in various animal rescue activities. Unfortunately, B'Nai Aaron closed due to declining membership, and despite several shuls in the Philadelphia suburbs, it was an easy decision for them to rejoin Congregation Beth Shalom.

Currently, David works part time as a neonatologist at Einstein, Leah is still running the house and involved with animal rescue, and Abby owns her own veterinary practice, Unity Animal Hospital in Wallingford.

To me, David is an inspiration as a reader of Torah. David—*kol hakavod* (all the honor/respect)! I'm grateful that our whole community was able to share in this celebration!

Costume Crossover

BY YONI GLATT
koshercrosswords@gmail.com

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: MEDIUM
SOLUTION: PAGE 40

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12
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ACROSS

- "Seinfeld" restaurant owner from Pakistan
- He shot Hamilton
- Multi-daily tefilla (var.)
- Former Mets general manager Minaya
- Sister of (King) Charles
- Color chart choices
- Notable Gal Gadot role x notable Zoe Kravitz role?
- Zest
- Become wider, as pupils
- A, in Avignon
- Rat on
- Sub's navigational aid
- Notable Tom Hardy role x notable Billy Crystal role?
- Mayim in Mexico

DOWN

- Device for Esau
- "I love," in Spanish
- More than dented
- South Asian language spoken by 70 million
- Cashless exchange
- 7-Up's nickname, with "the"
- Messenger strands
- AARP part: Abbr.
- Writer Aleichem
- Aetna alternative
- Shochet's cleaver
- "Up" star Ed
- Nickname for a notable Jewish Queen, perhaps
- Most like Solomon
- "The Avengers" co-star Thurman
- Is a nudnik
- Dodi preceder
- Tai preceder
- 2012 NBA breakout Jeremy
- Flowery name in Hebrew, Arabic, or Spanish
- Jerusalem to Jericho dir.
- Bit of Hershey's candy
- Notable Andrew Garfield role x notable Paul Rudd role?
- "I'll take that as ___..."
- "The Blind Side" footballer Michael
- Notable Jennifer Aniston role x notable soul singer?
- "Dewy" Israeli girl's name
- Cookie with a Thins variety
- They can boost business
- Ark wood
- Gainesville footballer
- Notable M*A*S*H role (Abbr.) x notable Daniel Radcliffe role?
- "The Forgotten" novelist Wiesel
- Hybrid equine

- African country that doesn't eat in the restaurant?
- Acronym for Adobe, Dropbox, or Slack
- Prophet
- Notable Wizard

DOWN

- Device for Esau
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- Dodi preceder
- Tai preceder
- 2012 NBA breakout Jeremy
- Flowery name in Hebrew, Arabic, or Spanish
- Jerusalem to Jericho dir.
- Bit of Hershey's candy
- African land that still has a couple thousand Jews: Abbr.
- She has ___ gold (3 words)
- Can't do without
- Cedars-Sinai pros
- Cough drop brand
- Awful biblical queen
- Computer memories
- Diamond design
- Term for someone born on February 29
- Kind of guy you can count on
- Shoe attachments
- Octopus' abundance
- First name of Dr. Octopus
- Wish you hadn't
- Self concern
- Radio producer on "Frasier"



OBITUARIES

Ha'makom yena hem etkhem betokh she'ar avelei tziyon vi'Yerushalayim

May God console you among the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem

Abraham Josef Mensch

Age 76, passed away Wednesday, January 22, 2025.

Born April 22, 1948 in Heidenheim, Germany, he was the son of the late Henry and Yetta (nee Silberman) Mensch.

Abraham is survived by his wife, Sheila (nee Krautman); son, David; sister, Sharon Hart; step-children, Matthew Jabloner, Paula Jabloner, and Amy Oliver.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (www.hias.org) or the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (www.ushmm.org).

Marlene April Ornston

Age 93, died peacefully at her home in Wilmington, Delaware on January 26, 2025, surrounded by her family.

Marlene was born on June 6, 1931 in Bridgeton, NJ and grew up in the very small town of Carmel, NJ. She was the youngest of four children born to Morris and Lillian April. She moved to New York City, where she met and married the love of her life, Lawrence Ornston; they enjoyed a very happy marriage for 67 years, until his death in 2022.

Marlene was a very active and enthusiastic participant in the life of her community, volunteering in many capacities throughout her life. She was a member of the Mount Holyoke Club of Delaware, the AAUW, the League of Women Voters, and the local Garden Club, and volunteer for Green Circle. Marlene belonged to Hadassah and was a devoted member of their monthly book group for many years. She was a long-time member of Congregation Beth Shalom and enjoyed the Friday afternoon Philadelphia Orchestra concerts (she never fell asleep) and the Delaware Symphony. And she was a lifelong Phillies fan.

Marlene is survived by her daughter, Elizabeth, and her son, Lincoln; her nephews Frederick, Robert (Marilyn), Andrew (Karen), Gary (Vicki), and Richard (Clare); and her nieces Patricia (Bob), Margery, and Deedee (Chris); and her great nieces and nephews.

Marlene was predeceased by her parents; her sisters, Miriam and Josephine; her brother, Leon; and her husband, Lawrence.

In lieu of flowers the family asks that contributions be made to either the Hanover Church Food Pantry or a charity of your choice.

Jack H. Vinokur

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Jack H. Vinokur.

Jack was born in Media, PA on March 22, 1938 to Anna Levin Vinokur and Leon Vinokur. Jack's love of teaching and his connection with his students was boundless. He taught teenagers at Adas Kodesch Shel Emeth and Gratz Hebrew High School the importance of learning about the Holocaust and carried that education on to undergraduate and graduate students at Wilmington University. Jack taught a course about the Holocaust at the University of Delaware's Osher Lifelong Learning Center (OLLI) for over 10 years. Jack previously served on the Board of Adas Kodesch Shel Emeth Synagogue. Jack was a great family man and a wonderful role model for all the students who had the privilege of being in one of his classes.

Jack and Iris were married for more than 56 years. Their children and grandchildren were Jack's everything. Jack and Iris loved to travel, spend time at the beach where Jack always insisted that the whole family be there together, eat ice cream, and cheer on the Phillies and Eagles.

Jack is survived by his wife, Iris (nee Goldstein); daughter, Meredith (Daniel); son, Andrew (Erin); and son, Leon (Nisa). Jack is also survived by five grandchildren, Maxwell, Annie, Noa, Zev, and Matan; and his much-loved dog, Chase Harper. Jack was predeceased by his parents; his brothers, Isaac and Gabriel; and many aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Contributions in Jack's memory can be made to the Auxiliary of the Kutz Senior Living Campus, Congregation Beth Shalom, Delaware Institute for the Arts in Education, or The Siegel Jewish Community Center.

Kalmar Zeppelin

Age 76, passed away December 24, 2024 Denver native Kalman "Kal" Zeppelin died on January 11, 2025. He was 85.

Born on January 15, 1939, Mr. Zeppelin grew up on Denver's West Side and attended Colfax Elementary, Lake Jr. High, and North High School. He graduated from DU with a degree in accounting.

After college, Mr. Zeppelin was an entrepreneur, operating liquor stores and a restaurant, as a part-owner in Beryl's. He later became a realtor.

"He was very well read," said Mr. Zeppelin's brother, Howard. "He would send out daily emails about what he read that day. "He was also very much into his Jewish religion."

Survivors are Mr. Zeppelin's wife Liz Marin Zeppelin; children Wendy (Michael), Jodi (Bryan), and Stephen; step-daughter Jennifer (Brian); grandchildren Jason, Max (Torie), Estella, Hunter, Boden, Gabi Elizabeth, Sophia Ann, and Zach Edward; great-grandchildren Miles and Levi; and brother Howard (Sherrie).

Contributions may be made to Jewish Family Services of Delaware or Temple Emanuel Shwayder Camp.

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

Costume Crossovers

Puzzle on page 38

1	B	2	A	3	B	4	U		5	B	6	U	7	R	8	R		9	S	10	H	11	M	12	A					
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21	U	22	N	E					23	T	E	L	L					25	S	O	N	A	R							
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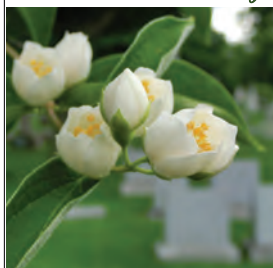
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