A couple of weeks before Hanukkah, Helen Cher-
vitz sent an email blast from her home in central Kyiv to
about 30 American synagogues.
She’d found their names on Google. “I’m a Jewish
Ukrainian-born American,” she wrote to the rabbis, not
knowing whether the letters would even be read. “Today was another
explosion which hit the power station on the left bank of Kyiv city.”
“Electricity breakages last up to eight hours every day. Apartments are
cold. Cooking is challenging. Children can’t do
their homework, or they do them with candles.
Elderly people sit alone in their apartments in
the dark and cold.
“We haven’t had hot water for 10 days and
consequently no heating,” she wrote. “And win-
ter has arrived – the streets and trees are covered
with snow and it’s cold!”
Chervitz grew up in Kyiv but lived in
Swampscott for 35 years, and worked as the
aquatics director of the Jewish Community
Center of the North Shore. She and her hus-
band moved back to Ukraine a decade ago
because of her husband’s business. A fashion
continued on page 8

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As Boston dedicates a massive monument to Martin Luther King, local Jews march in solidarity

By PENNY SCHWARTZ

BOSTON (JTA) – A month after Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel stood on the front line of the 1965 march from Selma, Alabama, to demand voting rights for African Americans, another march unfolded in Boston.

There, on April 23, 1965, King led more than 20,000 people on a march from Roxbury, the city’s historic Black neighborhood, to the Boston Common. They stretched for nearly a mile, in a historic moment for Boston and its Black community.

Now, in honor of both King’s birthday and the 50th anniversary of Heschel’s death, Boston Common is home to marchers again. On Friday, Jewish Bostonians and allies walked in a procession from the nearby Central Reform Temple to the park for the city’s dedication of a new monument of King and his wife and civil rights partner, Coretta Scott King.

“We thought this would be a wonderful moment to rekindle the alliance between the African American Civil Rights community and the Jewish community,” Rabbi Michael Shire, the synagogue’s rabbi and a faculty member at Hebrew College said a few days before the event.

King had professional and personal ties to the city—he came to his second home. He had earned his PhD in theology at Boston University. It was also the place where King first met and courted Coretta Scott, who was earning her master’s degree at the New England Conservatory of Music.

“The Embrace: a massive sculpture and public memorial designed by renowned artist Hank Willis Thomas, honors the couple’s legacy and the role this city played in their lives. Unveiled Friday, the 20-foot-high bronze sculpture evokes the Kings in a hug that was inspired by a photograph taken in 1964, soon after the announcement that King had been chosen for the Nobel Peace Prize. ‘The Embrace’ is the largest American-made bronze sculpture in the country, according to Timars K. Paris Jefferies, executive director of Embrace Boston, the nonprofit leading the effort to create the memorial. ‘It is Boston’s Statue of Liberty,’ he told WBUR.

The procession, which drew about 100 people, was meant to evoke the bond between the two giants of faith and the ties between the Black and Jewish communities represented by the Selma march, when Heschel famously carried a Torah scroll.

Rain cleared enough for the Boston Jews to carry a Torah of their own, which was rolled to last week’s portion, the beginning of the Book of Exodus. “It is a story of freedom and liberation,” Shire said before the procession.

“This is a moment of challenge. Anti-Semitic incidents and sentiments are on the rise, according to watchdog groups; Boston has been home to several in recent years, including the stabbing of a rabbi in 2021 that ignited shows of solidarity within the Jewish community. What’s more, several recent episodes have challenged Black-Jewish relations, including an extended antisemitic outburst by rapper Kanye West and the promotion of an antisemitic film by NBA star Kyrie Irving.

Emmanuel Church, an Episcopal congregation where the synagogue is located, and Congregation Mishkan Tefillah, a Conservative synagogue in Brookline, were early partners for the event that the two synagogues intend as the first step to deepen their work with Black churches on pressing issues of racial and economic justice.

“In this atmosphere of antisemitism and racism, Blacks and Jews need to speak loudly in support of each other and against hatred and prejudice,” said Rabbi Marcia Plumb of Mishkan Tefillah in an email.

Among others who marched was Rabbi Jim Morgan, who leads congregations at both Harvard Hillel and for residents of Hebrew Senior Life communities, which sent a handful of residents to the event.

“There are people in my community who had taken part in the civil rights movement in the 1960s,” Morgan said.

Other cosponsors include the American Jewish Committee New England; the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston; Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action; the Miller Center at Hebrew College and Center Communities of Brookline, residences of Hebrew Senior Life.

Over Shabbat, Reverend Liz Walker, co-chair of the Embrace Boston committee and the pastor of Roxbury Presbyterian Church, spoke at Central Reform’s Friday night Shabbat service.

“The moment is almost beyond words … because of what the Kings meant here in Boston,” Walker said. “Those relationships [between faith leaders and the community] are more vital than ever and have to be lifted up because they are going to guide the world through this kind of minefield of negativity and animosity.”

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LANE TURNER/BOSTON GLOBE VIA GETTY IMAGES

Rabbi Michael Shire of Central Reform Temple holds the congregation’s Torah scroll before a march to “The Embrace.”

PENNY SCHWARTZ

At left: “The Embrace,” the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. memorial sculpture at Boston Common.

PENNY SCHWARTZ

Philadelphia-based Kyrie Irving.

JEWISH JOURNAL.ORG

JANUARY 19, 2023
Swastika painted near Swampscott school; community holds vigil

By STEVEN A. ROSENBERG
JOURNAL STAFF

SWAMPSCOTT – More than 100 residents, Jew and gentile, stood side by side in the freezing rain last Thursday at a vigil to protest the painting of a swastika on a sidewalk – the second antisemitic incident to rock this seaside town since November.

On Jan. 6, police reported that a swastika had been painted on the sidewalk in the area of Redington Street and Forest Avenue, which is close to the Hadley Elementary School. “The swastika was spray painted with white paint on the sidewalk, along with a vehicle in the immediate area which had a white line painted down the side of it,” police said in a statement.

Police have asked neighborhood residents with home video cameras to review their footage between the hours of 2 and 6 p.m. on Jan 6.

In early November, police were called to Swampscott High School after a swastika was tested to a large group of students. To date, there have been no arrests in that case.

According to police, evidence was recovered near where the swastika was painted this month that could help identify the person or persons involved.

“As we actively investigate this incident, we will continue to focus on the safety and the security of all in Swampscott. We join with the community to unequivocally condemn this act of antisemitism,” Swampscott Police Chief Ruben Quesada said in a statement.

On social media, the Anti-Defamation League said, “No community is immune from this insidious form of hate. We call on the community to join us in condemning this hate and antisemitism has no home in Swampscott.”

The rally, organized by Rabbi Yossi Lipsker who leads Chabad of the North Shore in Swampscott, was held in a gazebo across from Town Hall, just a short walk from where the swastika was found. It included remarks of solidarity from Rabbi Michael Ragozin of Congregation Shirat Hayam in Swampscott, Essex District Attorney Paul Tucker, Swampscott Police Detective Ted Delano, Swampscott Town Manager Sean Fitzgerald, state Representative Jenny Armini and the ADL New England Board of Regimentation.

“Thank you so much for calling out hatred by your presence here today,” Lipsker said. “In this case, it is a specific hatred directed toward Jews. It is Jewish hatred, no need to dance around what it is. I think calling it out is already something that puts us on the road to addressing it.”

He thanked the crowd for coming out on a rainy evening and for standing up for unity and against hate. He said that action and solidarity in the wake of hate reflects a strong community.

“You, my dear friends, standing here today – residents of Swampscott, Jews, members of the Christian and the Catholic faith, and the clergy that I know are nestled here today, you are the answer. You are the rule,” said Lipsker. “Swastika on a sidewalk is the exception and the answer. You are the rule. “

Rabbi Michael Ragozin thanked residents and law enforcement for supporting the Jewish community. “This is a town that has the backs of all people, that stands up for all human beings, for human dignity, and respect. Thank you,” he said.

Swampscott Detective Ted Delano said police have made some progress in its investigation, and urged those with any information to contact law enforcement. He said police have been in touch with the Essex District Attorney’s office, the FBI and the ADL. He also said the town’s school department notified families about the swastika.

“I’m really disheartened that we’re still having this conversation. Here we are thinking that a lot of (educational) work was done after the Holocaust, and we said ‘Never Again.’ And it seems to have disappeared,” said Fine, who has lived in the town for 32 years.

“Thank you so much for calling out hatred by your presence here today,” Lipsker said. “In this case, it is a specific hatred directed toward Jews. It is Jewish hatred, no need to dance around what it is. I think calling it out is already something that puts us on the road to addressing it.”

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“Like all of you, I love the town of Swampscott. I look at Rabbi Michael [Ragozin] and Rabbi Lipsker as dear friends, and I share in their community’s hurt. When they hurt we all hurt. The police department, along with the community, will stand shoulder to shoulder with them,” Delano said.

“This is all about community,” added Essex District Attorney Paul Tucker. “It’s about standing together, and to me it’s about not being a bystander. It’s not looking at something, wishing things were different, it’s about taking action. It’s about showing up, it’s about being heard. We’re about being people that will not tolerate this.”

To report any information about this incident, residents are encouraged to call the Swampscott Police Department at 781-595-1111.

STEVEN A. ROSENBERG/JOURNAL STAFF

Rabbi Yossi Lipsker addresses the vigil against antisemitism.

Rabbi Michael Ragozin addresses the vigil against antisemitism.
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Tiferet Shalom welcomes new rabbi

By RICH TENORIO
JOurnal CORRESPONDENT

PEABODY – It has been a busy but memorable winter for Rabbi Evan Sheinhait, the new rabbi of Temple Tiferet Shalom of the North Shore. On Dec. 12, the week before Hanukkah, he and his wife Micaela welcomed a new baby boy, Reuven Lev. And at the beginning of January, the Reform rabbi started his new job in Peabody.

“It’s a lot of change all at once,” Sheinhait said.

He spoke with the Jewish Journal during the week that marked a month since his son was born. Reuven Lev weighed six pounds and nine ounces when he was born. “I really love fatherhood,” Sheinhait said, adding that he and his wife “love having the new baby around.”

As he and his wife were getting ready for the new arrival, the rabbi was also getting to know Tiferet Shalom, which had been looking for a new spiritual leader since the departure of Rabbi David Kudan.

“I have some family here on the North Shore,” Sheinhait said. “I knew the area a little bit.”

Originally from Framingham, he has family connections to Peabody through family members who grew up close to the temple. “It’s how fate works,” Sheinhait said.

He also has family ties to his alma mater, the University of Massachusetts Amherst. His parents both went there, and he met his wife there. He graduated in 2014 with a degree in Judaic studies.

Though he provided our families was exactly what our community needed in that difficult time. We will ship during the [COVID-19] pandemic, and care and coordinate with our Music Director and choir, work with our IT experts, and familiarize himself with our congregation’s High Holiday minhag — all on fairly short notice. Rabbi Evan’s leadership at High Holiday services was so highly received by our community that we were enthusiastic to offer him the position.”

Kudan had been the rabbi at Temple Tifereth Israel in Malden when it merged with Temple Beth Shalom in Peabody in 2015, and became the rabbi at the consolidated synagogue of Tiferet Shalom. He left last year to become the rabbi of Temple Ahavat Achim in Gloucester.

“Rabbi Kudan brought a warm, gentle, caring, yet intellectual approach to his role as spiritual leader of our community,” Misiura said. “His religious leadership during the [COVID-19] pandemic, and care and support he provided our families was exactly what our community needed in that difficult time. We will always look back with deep appreciation and gratitude for the time he spent with us.”

There are other changes taking place at Tiferet Shalom. It has a newly renovated building, and the new rabbi anticipates it being a new phase — sidelined during the pandemic — returning later this month.

“I’m excited to work with the board and community here at Temple Tiferet Shalom during this new phase — a new building, a new rabbi,” Sheinhait said.

“A lot of exciting change is happening here.”

Temple Sinai presents a weekend of ‘Getting Good at Getting Older’

MARBLEHEAD — “Getting Good at Getting Older” is a comprehensive guide on how to age intelligently, written with wit and wisdom. Wisdom itself is acquired merely through aging but is cultivated through an ongoing process of experience, learning, reflection and self-discovery, aided by humility.

Rabbi Laura Geller, a Nest Avenue Influencer in Aging, co-authored the book with her late husband, Richard Siegel in 2019. Richard co-authored the book, “The First Jewish Catalog: A Do-It-Yourself Kit.” Rabbi Geller will be at Temple Sinai the weekend of Jan. 20-22 to share their insights and recommendations on lifelong learning, relationships and community, healthy aging and the importance of purpose.

Rabbi Geller will lead discussions at five sessions at Temple Sinai. The topics will be “Getting Good at Getting Older – an Introduction” on Friday evening, 8:00 p.m., “The Power of Understanding Mortality” on Saturday at noon, “Repairing the World/Findings Meaning and Purpose” and “What Brings you Joy” on Saturday evening, at 5:45 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., and “You Get By With A Little Help from Your Friends.”

The book provides a tour of the essential resources and skills needed to navigate the years between maturity and old age, bringing humor, warmth, and more than 40 centuries of Jewish experience to the question of how to shape this stage of life. All programs are free and open to the public.

Programs are free and open to the public; all will be associated with separate from Jewish prayer services. Meals at all events are available for a $72 admission fee, and a la carte pricing exists as well. Interested individuals are urged to visit Temple Sinai’s Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/templesiniamarblehead for complete details, and/or contact the Temple Sinai office at 781-631-2763.

Neither the rabbi’s arrival nor his name made it into the congregation’s Yom Kippur services on Friday evening. “Rabbi Evan’s leadership at High Holiday services was so highly received by our community that we were enthusiastic to offer him the position.”

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Temple Sinai is located at One Community Road, Marblehead, MA. This program is cosponsored by the JCC.

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This is Yachad.
Holocaust Remembrance Day

JANUARY 27 IS Holocaust Remembrance Day. The date was chosen because it marked the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp in 1945. The horrors that took place there reflect how tenous life can become in a world gripped by evil and fascism.

There, and in the dozens of other Nazi killing centers, soldiers and civilians wilfully executed 6 million Jews. Along the way, the Nazis and their compliant accomplices also killed millions of non-Jews.

How does a nation convince itself that nationalism, hatred, ethnic purity and genocide are the keys to a better society? In Germany, it didn’t happen overnight; over a period of several years, millions came to embrace fascism. Some took a direct role in the mass murder; others shrugged and just stood by as their fellow citizens massacred, tortured, conducted "medical experiments" and led millions into the gas chambers.

Lies and propaganda were central to Hitler’s vision of genocide. In the 1920s, he and his allies blamed Germany's defeat in World War I on a secret coalition of Jews and socialists. In “Mein Kampf”, Hitler asserted that propaganda “must confine itself to a few points and repeat them over and over”. He blamed Jews for capitalism and also for the rise of communism. By the late twenties, Hitler and the Nazis had created a slogan they used often to denounce journalists: Lügenpresse. In English, it translates to "Fake News.”

In 2020, the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany commissioned a survey that found that 63 percent of U.S. Millennials and Gen Z were unaware that six million Jews were murdered. To better explain the origins of the Holocaust, the group launched an educational campaign in 2021 called “It started with words.”

"Hateful words that were yelled in the park, spat on the street, and roared in the classroom. These words alienated, belittled, and shocked; but worse, these words gave birth to the horrific massacre of six million Jews,” said Gideon Taylor, president of the Claims Conference.

Words are powerful, and are central to genocide. But fascists cannot reach power without the consent of the public. With hate and antisemitism threatening democracies, we must stand in opposition each time the innocent and marginalized are targeted. For authoritarians to seize power they require silence among the masses. We can honor the victims of genocide when we raise our voices against hatred. We cannot afford to be silent.

S

A hard rain falls in Tel Aviv

By MORAN SHARIR

SATURDAY NIGHT, A swarm of protesters swept down Rothschild Avenue towards Habima Theater Square. Light rain dropped and the pavement was wet. The word “protestors” brings to mind angry men and women chanting. People lifting their fists in rage, but no fists were raised and no slogan was chant ed. The people walking in the drizzle didn’t look angry or even frustrated.

They seemed devastated. The men and women were marching to protest the newly formed government’s plan to reform the Israeli justice system. The comprehensive plan would change the judge-nomination process and deny the Israeli Supreme Court of any judicial supervision over the government. The reform would allow a majority coalition in the Knesset to dismiss Supreme Court rulings. In other words, it would place the Executive Branch on top of the Judicial Branch, practically above the law.

Everyone there knew the math. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s extreme-right Orthodox coalition had enough votes and more important – the determination to transform the judicial system for their own benefit.

This protest was not about to alter destiny. The marchers knew they were just playing part in a one act tragedy, but they couldn’t stay home, either. They were panicked and depressed and needed comfort. They left their warm apartments in order to meet their com panions, to share their anxiety, to make sure not everyone had gone mad.

It was a demonstration as much as it was a massive shivu. People were generally quiet, collected, wrapped in their black or gray Uniqlo raincoats and under large black umbrellas.

The weekly demonstrations outside Netanyahu’s residence in Jerusalem’s Balfour Street two years ago felt like a horse of a different color. With wild costumes, creative slogans and artistic installations, the young activists turned political protest into a festival of Woodstockian dimensions. It was filled with jest, love and lust for life.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18
Opinion

T HE COMMEMORATION OF MARTIN Luther King's life and legacy – and of the alliances he forged – need not to have been confined to Monday's holiday, and an unpublished set of remarks about the civil rights leader underlines not only his great impact but also the role that one of his greatest allies played in America's mid-20th century racial reckoning.

The words are the words of Abra- ham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972), but the subject of his remarks are the works of Dr. King. Rabbi Heschel, remembered as a vital ally of the civil rights leader, is one of the principal figures in American Jewish history, a Pol- ish-born theologian and thinker whose analysis of the historical and spiritual dimensions of what he called “progressive piety,” explaining that his legacy “came to symbolize a seamless con- nection that some believed existed between the Jewish tradition and social activism.” Indeed, Rabbi Heschel is best known for joining the 1965 civil rights march in Selma, Alabama, beside Dr. King himself, a moment that he described in especially evocative terms: “When I marched in Selma, he said: ‘I felt my legs to be an American Negro, and fail to be about what happens to them happen- ing to all people. I cannot stand idly by, even though I live in the United States, and even though I happen to live in the United States, and even though I happen to be an American Negro, and fail to be concerned about what happens to my brothers and sisters who happen to be Jews in Soviet Russia, for what happens to them happens to me and to you, and we must be concerned.”

After he quoted those remarks, Rabbi Heschel addressed Dr. King directly, saying: “May the glory of God be concealed, yet there are moments in which it is revealed. We sense a glimpse of the glory in the life of Martin Luther King, and we honor him because his deeds and his words are a marvelous glorification of God, who is merciful and gracious. Sacred and magnifi- cent is the work he does for all of us in America. At the same time the scope of God’s glory is the whole world, all of humanity.”

It is significant that Rabbi Heschel’s original typewritten text speaks of the work Dr. King does “for our Negro brothers.” He crossed out that broadened the tribute, saying that the work of Dr. King was “for all of us.”

The two often appeared together at conferences, and in Rabbi Heschel’s opening address at the National Conference on Religion and Race in Chicago in January 1963, he argued that the fight for racial justice in the United States was a chance for Americans to find redemption. “In the light of our religious tradition,” he said, with Dr. King present, “the Negro prob- lem is God’s gift to America, the test of our integrity, a magnificent spiritual opportunity.”

Several months later, after Governor George Wallace blocked two Black students from enrolling at the University of Alabama, Rabbi Heschel demanded that President John F. Kennedy declare “a state of moral emergency.” The rabbi’s daughter, a distin- guished scholar on Jewish and Protestant thought during the 19th and 20th centuries and a popular teacher in the classroom, shared her father’s later remarks – the date of delivery unknown – as a poignant example of the importance of alliances.

“One of the things that is going on right now is a lot of rejection of alliances,” she said in an interview. “Students say ‘you’ll never know what it’s like to be me.’ When I think about Dr. King and my father, what was extraordinary was the alliance – the friendship – that they established almost instantly. It wasn’t only that my father marched at Selma. It was also that he was able to forge a friendship of two souls and that that friendship was an expression of the kind of empathy and religiosity they shared.” That empathy – that religiosity is contained in Dr. King’s remarks that Rabbi Heschel referenced in his tribute to his friend. For it was at the Golden Jubilee Convention of the United Synagogue of America, in November 1963, that Dr. King described the plight of Soviet Jews as “spiritual annihilation” and said: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. Injustice to any people is a threat to justice to all people. I cannot stand idly by, even though I live in the United States, and even though I happen to be an American Negro, and fail to be concerned about what happens to my brothers and sisters who happen to be Jews in Soviet Russia, for what happens to them happens to me and to you, and we must be concerned.”

Rabbi Heschel’s edited speech he gave about his close friend, MLK.
writer by profession, she has pivoted to writing about life in wartime Kyiv for several Jewish publications. She misses Massachusetts deeply, but life, for now, remains in Ukraine.

She still feels connected to the U.S., so she turned to the synagogues for help, in the form of gadgets and appliances to bring light and heat to Jewish families. Could they possibly raise funds to purchase solar lamps, power banks, and space heaters?

She included an Amazon shopping list of “things for heating and charging” – LED waterproof camping lanterns, rechargeable flashlights, and other products that are in short supply – or no supply – in Ukraine, or available only on a black market at skyrocketing prices.

“1’m writing this letter on my own initiative because I truly want to help Jewish families in the Ukrainian capital,” Chervitz wrote. She calls her fundraising campaign an “alternative power source mitzvah project.”

Her fundraising campaign is working, albeit slowly, as it faces numerous logistical challenges, including getting the items to Ukraine. So far, three synagogues have responded to her email and follow-up calls, “I hope more will answer,” she said.

One of the first people to get involved was Paulette Black, on behalf of an enthusiastic sisterhood of Beth El Temple Center in Belmont. At Huniukkakh time, the sisterhood, together with other congregants, raised over $900 to provide solar lamps and heating packs for Ukraine. They were able to transfer the money to Chervitz, who ordered the items on Amazon.

“She is such a horrible situation, I was moved to reach out to my community to help provide lighting and heating equipment to support the Kyiv Jewish community,” said Black, whose family is close to Chervitz’s daughter. “The theme of light and heat fit in so well with Hanukkah.”

Black is also working to spread the word more broadly through the organization called Women of Reform Judaism. Synagogues in Manhattan, Brook-lyn and White Plains, N.Y., also initiated fundraising campaigns. Congregations Beth Elohim in Brooklyn formed a committee and collected $7,000, and began sending goods. Chervitz’s daughter, Olga Ryrakhovsky, who lives in the Boston area, collected about $3,000 through her network of friends.

“She really is a direct way to help,” Ryrakhovsky said. “If you donate to an organization, you don’t necessarily know how your money is being used. But in this case, you know a solar lamp costs, say, $70, and how much shipping is, and in a month you’ll get a photo of a family with it.”

“There are so many things I’m concerned about, but heat and power definitely are at the top of the list,” she said.

As the war in Ukraine grinds on, it seems to capture fewer front page headlines in the U.S., and inspire fewer fundraisers and sermons. But the brutal reality continues, exacerbated by damage to Ukraine’s Zapor-izhia nuclear power plant – the largest in Europe – which is under Russian control.

Authorities have been forced to introduce planned power outages to prevent the country’s remaining infrastructure from being overload-ed, according to Amnesty Interna-tional. In December, more than 50 percent of energy users had seen
their electricity supply cut off. “The situation is challenging and difficult and depressing,” said Rabbi Reuven Stamov, a Conservative rabbi who is leading Jewish communities across Ukraine, interviewed on Zoom.

He said no one seems to fully understand why the power outages are so staggered. “I have an engineer’s degree, but it’s not up to that level,” Stamov said. “But it is huge damage, so the government shares whatever ability the non-damaged stations have throughout the country. It’s not enough for all the regions.”

What is clear is that it has triggered a cascade of new challenges for people in Ukraine. When the outages are scheduled, people set their alarm clocks to do laundry and cook, even if it’s 2 a.m. “For two or three days we had no water, and I was collecting ice and snow outside,” said Chervitz. “I think I deserve a Boy Scout badge.”

Residents, by now deeply resourceful, are developing work-arounds. The Mayor of Kyiv arranged for USB charging stations to be installed in subway stations, so people can recharge mobile phones and other devices. Traffic is increasing on the roads because cars have become “generators on the move,” Chervitz said. “People drive around with their families because it’s warmer and they can charge their phones. Although it’s illegal, she’s heard reports of people barbecuing on their balconies, shivering in their heavy coats.

A woman she knows who lives on the 14th floor of an apartment building can’t remember the last time the elevator worked; she needs to haul her groceries up all 14 flights. There’s a small grocery store in the building but only one working cash register, so shoppers line up outside and the cashier brings them in, one by one, and guides them around the store with a flashlight. Chervitz had a hair appointment cancelled five times due to lack of power, so she brought her hairdresser to her gym, where a blow dryer worked. “She was happy to oblige, it’s so hard to make money,” she said.

Rabbi Stamov said he conducted a Shabbat service in the western part of Ukraine, when there had only been four hours of power during a 24-hour period. It was too dark to read the Torah for the mincha service. But while simple devices exist to keep darkness and cold at bay, getting them to Ukraine from the U.S. can be a challenging, circuitous process. People can buy the items on Amazon, and have them sent to a shipping company called Meest, which delivers parcels to Ukraine and has local agents in Massachusetts as well as a warehouse in New Jersey.

Chervitz can also purchase them on Amazon in Germany, though there’s much more expensive than in the U.S., and Meest will drive the appliances to Kyiv.

It’s possible to send things by sea from the U.S., but it takes too or three months, Chervitz said. It also appears that new restrictions have been imposed on directly shipping alternative power supplies by air.

Stamov is in the process of setting up a charitable fund to receive donations, along with a committee to purchase and distribute the items. In the meantime, about 60 packages have arrived in Ukraine so far, including space heaters, power banks, solar generators, rechargeable lanterns and portable power stations. Chervitz passes on what she gathers to Stamov, who distributes them to people in need, prioritizing families with children and the elderly.

Always, they are deeply grateful. “Now, having a power station, I am calm,” said Viktoria Pasichnik, an editor of a woman’s magazine, responding with thanks. “I have a ‘backup’ in case of emergency… There is a ‘magic box’ that you can count on and not be afraid to remain in complete isolation and darkness.

In addition to such a purely psychological and emotional factor, I want to thank you for its technical characteristics. More precisely, for its simplicity. I am not friends with technology, and was afraid that I would not be able to manage. But! Oh, a miracle! The power station is very convenient and simple to use… In addition to connectors for charging the phone, laptop, and power banks at home, the station itself can be recharged in the car. There is even a flashlight in case everything goes really ‘downhill’

She concluded: “It’s not only the power station that warms me, but the fact that we Jews can live in different countries, hold different views, and argue about culture politics and history, but we are always in solidarity when in trouble. Thank you.”

Helen Chervitz of Kyiv, formerly of Swampscott, is asking U.S. synagogues to send lighting and heating appliances to Ukrainian Jews.

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To contribute to the campaign to send heating and power supplies to Ukraine, contact Helen Chervitz at heleni@madamedemode.com

Linda Matchan can be reached at matchan@jewishjournal.org

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‘We wanted a wedding that was going to be meaningful’

Mike Sidman and Raffi Petrosian got married on Sept. 17, they decided to make their parents part of the ceremony.

Mike's parents – Alan and Barbara Sidman – and Raffi's parents – Sevak and Annette Petrosian – all spoke at the ceremony at Chandler Hovey Park in Marblehead, with Barbara officiating. The reception took place at Congregation Shirat Hayam of the North Shore in Swampscott, in a tent in the courtyard.

"Who knows us better than our parents?" Mike Sidman said. "Who can speak about us better than our parents? Who means more to us than our parents?"

He reflected, "It was exactly what we wanted, more than we could ever have imagined. People were so moved by the idea. It was such a moving ceremony."

Sidman has strong North Shore roots. He was born and raised in Swampscott, going to the former Cohen Hillel Academy from kindergarten to eighth grade, and then to Swampscott High School. He was bar mitzvahed at the former Temple Israel in Swampscott.

However, after high school, Sidman began living in other places, going to college at McGill University in Montreal and graduate school at St. George’s University in Grenada, doing the hospital portion of the curriculum at the former NYU Lutheran Medical Center in Brooklyn.

Persistence worked in their favor that Labor Day weekend. "We tried to set up a few dates," Petrosian said. "We both kept on canceling. We lost touch for a few months. We ended up somehow crossing paths again and saying, 'hey, we never did that first date'. We set something up."

They met at a bar called the Sea Witch. "It was supposed to be a drink," Petrosian said. "As soon as we started talking, there was just something really special about Mike. It's really hard to explain. I felt I knew him forever. I didn't want it to end."

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“We had dinner afterward. The next day, we had another date. The next day, another date. I don’t think the feeling has ever gone away.”

“Raffi is just the most caring person I ever met,” Sidman said. “He puts my happiness at the forefront.”

Less than six months after their first weekend together, Petrosian got his top choice for a residency—in his hometown of Glendale, CA at the Glendale Adventist Medical Center. Sidman made a decision.

“I decided to go with him,” Sidman said. “It’s been wonderful ever since. We’ve been together over six years already.”

When Petrosian decided to propose to Sidman in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic complicated things.

“I was planning on proposing to him in 2020, because his family had planned a big family trip to Mexico at a resort, but they had to cancel because of the pandemic,” Petrosian said. “I had already told his parents my intentions.”

Then he got an idea: “We’d been going on all these hikes during the pandemic. Mike had never been to Yosemite.”

At the national park, they climbed to the top of a mountain, where Petrosian dropped to one knee and proposed.

“It was just really romantic and stunning,” Sidman said, “with the most incredible view of Yosemite around us. It couldn’t have been more surprising. I was so happy. We were both happy.”

Due to the pandemic, it took some time between the engagement and the wedding. Sidman explained: “It wasn’t until things got a little easier to have a wedding.”

During that time, the couple established a presence in LA. Sidman is the director of communications for Jewish Family Service of LA, an organization dating back to 1854, while Petrosian practices family medicine at UCLA Health. However, the couple wanted to have their wedding across the country, on the North Shore.

“We wanted a wedding that was going to be very meaningful to us,” Sidman said, “and really feel close to home, intimate and special.”

Mike was also grateful to Bruce Silverlieb, a family friend who also planned and catered the wedding. “He was a major part of our decision to get married back in the North Shore,” he said.

It was an interfaith celebration: Sidman comes from a Jewish background and Petrosian has a background that he describes as Christian and agnostic. Petrosian was born in Armenia, in a city called Abovyan that is an hour north of the capital of Yerevan. His family moved to the US when he was four years old.

“My dad actually bought the Armenian cognac he brought to the wedding in an Armenian market he found near Boston,” Petrosian said. “It has been a busy year that has included buying and renovating a house, and a honeymoon in Kauai, Hawaii.

“It was just so relaxing,” Petrosian said of the honeymoon, “to reflect on how wonderful the year was.”

Sidman thinks back on his decision to follow Petrosian westward when Petrosian got his residency.

“By then, we were already so close that we were going to do it together, whatever was going to happen,” Sidman said. “Everyone, I think, was really surprised … I knew in my heart it was meant to be. He and I were going to be together. It really turned out that way.”

The couple celebrates on the rocks by the Atlantic.

Raffi and Mike at the ceremony.

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RAVIV AHAD
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I was born in Israel and moved to the United States when I was a young teenager. I graduated the University of Rhode Island with a bachelor's degree and received a master's degree from Rhode Island College. I earned a certificate in thanatology from Bristol Community College and a certificate in gerontology from Rhode Island College.

In the past I served as the teacher and education director in various Hebrew schools and synagogues in the Rhode Island and Massachusetts areas. I also served as summer chaplain at Camp Yawgoog for Scouts. In addition to my temple responsibilities, I teach a variety of social science courses at the University of Rhode Island and Bristol Community College in Massachusetts.

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 16
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International Holocaust Remembrance Day, 4 a.m. – 4 p.m. Organized by Congregation Shirat Hayam. Call 1-800 REDCROSS (1-800-733-2767) or go to www.redcrossblood.org and enter #3764 to schedule an appointment. Congregation Shirat Hayam, 55 Atlantic Ave., Swampscott.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 26
International Holocaust Remembrance Day. 7:30 p.m. Presented by Lappin Foundation. Commemoration featuring testimony by Lusia Milch, Holocaust Survivor, Lessons of the Holocaust as a Cautionary Tale for Today. The program is free, and everyone is welcome. For more information and email sfeinstein@lappinfoundation.org.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28
Pub Trivia Night, 6 p.m. Presented by the Sisterhood of Temple Emanuel of Andover. Adults only, grab a friend, come solo, or make your own team. Compete against the Temple Emanuel Community with your trivia knowledge in a pub-style atmosphere. Tickets $15. Appetizers and desserts will be served. BYOB. RSVP by Jan. 24th at https://templeemanuel.net. Temple Emanuel, 7 Haggetts Pond Road, Andover.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1
Art as Activism Film Screening. 7 p.m. Sponsored by Leading Ladies, a nonpartisan activist group. Films will be screened by the ten finalists in the second annual Art as Activism Film Contest for high school students. The shorts all concern social justice themes. Free, registration is requested: https://thecabot.org/events/category/community-conversations, more at www.leadingladiesvote.org. The Cabot Theater, 286 Cabot St., Beverly.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5
North Shore Cohort Learning Series. 2 p.m. Sponsored by CHIP Spark. Community is invited to learn in person with North Shore educational leaders Rabbi David Kudan, Rabbi Michael Ragozin, and Rabbi Michael Schwartz. Explore big questions relevant to our daily lives, with a unique curriculum created by the Shalom Hartman Institute.

JEWISH JOURNAL.ORG
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Roselyn (Berg) Stein, of Peabody, formerly of Chelsea

Roselyn (Berg) Stein, of Peabody and formerly of Chelsea, passed away on January 7, 2023 surrounded by family.

Wife of the late Leonard Stein and the late Arthur Libman. Loving grandmother of Rebecca Harrison and her fiancé Howard Harrison. Dear sister and formerly of Chelsea, passed away of the late Ray Berg and the late Irving Berg. Loving grandmother of the late Arthur (Libman) Lee. Devoted to her family. In lieu of flowers, contributions in Rosalyn’s memory may be made to the Progeria Research Foundation, P.O. Box 3453, Peabody, MA 01961; or the Peabody Council on Aging, 79 Central St., Peabody, MA 01960. For an online guestbook, visit the funeral home website; www.torfuneral.com.

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A hard rain falls in Tel Aviv

This week in Tel Aviv the mood was much somber. The “Black Flags” protest of September 2021 turned into the “Black Umbrellas” protest of January 2023.

In the days leading up to the demonstration there was talk of excessive police power to break down the protest. It was feared that Police Chief Kobi Shabtai would want to please his new master, National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, by cracking some skulls Chicago-style.

On Saturday morning, police horses were already deployed in the quiet streets surrounding the national theater and Tel Aviv Concert Hall, and large intimidat­ing water-squirting vehicles were parked nearby.

Hours later, at 8 p.m., the crowd continued down the slick pavement of Rothschild Avenue. Toward the southern end of the street it was too packed to advance. The light rain became a little less light and then at once it started to pour. “Damnit, God is with them,” cursed one stranger half jokingly. An older gentleman answered: “They can send the water squirters back to the lot, we’re already soaking. “ His wife, someone in front of him hushed: “He’s good, let us listen.” “It might be the last time they let us gather in public, at least we can enjoy nice music,” said a 20-something woman, holding a cardboard sign that said: “I have no time for a Fascist takeover.”

All this talk about “they” not letting us gather in public anymore was said as a joke but not entirely. People there were deeply distressed after pondering the state of their personal and political freedoms. Israel’s democracy is young and fragile than it may seem. The only thing that is cemented deep in Israeli tradition is fear of the Arab enemy and of a second Holocaust. Anything else is open to discussion and up for grabs.

In Israel, many democratic practices are based on very loose traditions and a lot of good will. This government appears to show no good will. It leans on anti-democratic factors such as the ultra-Orthodox and the extreme right parties that prefer the Torah law to the Israeli law book. They are teamed with a fierce prime minister who himself faces three indictments and would like to weaken the court in order to flee trial.

In this reality, legal law-abiding Israelis have good reason not to trust the government’s intentions. They fear that the reform would turn Israel into a state in which Biblical law prevail and corruption rules. If this reform passes— and right now no one stands in its way— Israel is on a clear path to becoming an autocratic pseudo-democracy in the likes of Orban’s Hungary or Erdogan’s Turkey.

Historically, demonstrations have never done much to sway Israeli governments from their course. This one probably won’t change anything in the hearts and minds of those running the show in Jerusalem. These men and women sojourned out on a rainy Saturday night to show that they care for the seemingly abstract value of “Sepa­ration of Powers.” And mainly to make sure that they are not alone— not only in their struggle but also in their fear.

Mean Sharn writes from Tel Aviv.

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A hard rain falls in Tel Aviv

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

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THEATER

‘Preludes’ ably shows Rachmaninoff’s struggle to overcome depression, critical rejection

By JULES BECKER
JULY 27, 2023

HERE SUCH a thing as composer’s block? Sergei Rachmaninoff would certainly say yes. The renowned Russian composer pianist struggled to create major new work for three years after very negative reception for his first symphony in 1897 (a work now highly regarded and frequently performed). After three years of severe depression and regular therapy in 1900 with physical-therapist-musician Nikolai Dahl, Rachmaninoff was finally able to perform his new and now seminal second piano concerto.

Dave Malloy — who demonstrated a fondness for Russian material in his grand and sweeping Tolstoy- and Chekhov-based ‘Natalia, Pierre & the Great Com- poser of 1912’ — has drawn from the composer’s struggles to craft ‘Preludes.’ While Malloy’s show needs more home run success to an already mighty repertoire, the Lyric Stage Company of Boston’s premiere makes it worth a hearing. The well-performed and affecting area premiere of Potok’s elegy for Russian material runs through Feb. 5 at the Lyric Center Stage Company production of ‘Preludes.’

Malloy may also want theatergoers to come to terms with his frustration. During therapy, Rachmaninoff’s lifelong friend and creative climb should have theatergoers asking if he works every day. All of us feel this may come across as easy counsel, but Malloy’s show needs more confidence. His musical approach — at times brute force of the opera or a suite. - with songbird-voiced Kayla Shimizu — is ably portrayed by songbird-voiced Kayla Shimizu. Shimizu brings glorious high notes to ‘Natalia,’ the first act closer. Less helpful are contacts with such Russian titans as Chekhov, Tchaikovsky and Tolstoy. Tolstoy speaks of the hook in this version, but perhaps more those very different icons come to life.

The most satisfying advice from a famed talent comes in ‘Loop,’ the standout second act opening musical number. Here Fyodor Chaliapin, Rachmaninoff’s lifelong friend and great opera singer, revolves in a kind of trance dance that calls for openness to new creativity that the composer truly needs. Anthony Pires Jr. displays a richly deep regis- ter at the renowned bar. Karen Perlman’s vivacious lighting here complements the high energy of the number. Throughout the musical, Shelley Barish’s elegant yet sparse scenic design helps keep the focus on the composer and his work. 

During therapy, Rachmaninoff speaks of wanting to visit Mount Kilimanjaro someday. ‘Preludes’ may not reach such heights on stage. Still, its earnest exploration of Rachmaninoff’s own personal and creative climb should have theatergoers and music lovers making an always-timely return to the great composer’s dynamic canon.

‘Preludes’ runs through Feb. 5 at the Lyric Stage Company of Boston.
On Jan. 15, 2022, a gunman held several synagogue members hostage in Texas for hours. The Colleyville hostage crisis: A year later

I T WASN’T UNTIL I heard the click of the gun that I suspected anything.

I was getting my synagogue in Colleyville, Texas, ready for Shabbat morning services. Only a few congregants were in the building since most were planning to join us via Zoom.

A man knocked on the door and asked if we had a night shelter. He looked like he was homeless and needed to warm up – it was cold that day. After talking with him when I was fixing tea, I didn’t see any red flags. He seemed calm, interested in warming up and very open to experiencing a Jewish service for the first time.

When I heard the click of the gun, I hoped I was mistaken and that it was just noise from the building. During the services, I let him know he didn’t have to stay for the whole service; that’s when he pulled the gun on me.

Over the course of that day, I talked at length with the gun-man. He had traveled from England all the way to our synagogue. He chose us since we were a Jewish congregation near the prison where a convicted terrorist that he wanted set free was being held.

He demanded to speak with Rabbi Angela Buchdahl at Central Synagogue in NYC. He thought that a prominent Rabbi could get him what he wanted because in his mind Jews control the government, Jews control the banking system, Jews control the media, Jews control everything.

It was a long, intense day. The gunman initially spoke with the 911 operator. We were able to get in touch with the FBI negotiator. He spent a lot of time calling his family. At one point, when he was on the phone with his children, he fired his weapon at the ceiling to show off for them. I thought he had a plastic cup. He had poured some soda and I realized that he was holding the cup with the hand that had been on the trigger all day long. He had one hand over the top of the gun, but he didn’t have his hand on the trigger. So I told the congregants to run and that’s when I threw the chair at the gunman and ran out the door. We all made it out without a shot being fired at us.

It was incredibly challenging. I am grateful to be alive and grateful to have had the opportunity to turn my terrifying experience into a way to help others. I’ve built on my longstanding relationship with ADL to become this organization’s special adviser on security. I was honored to participate in the United We Stand Summit at the White House and ADL’s Never is Now Summit – both were important events that brought so many people together to work towards reducing hate and violence.

One of my priorities is discussing the need to be able to pray in safety without living in fear. Being prepared can save lives. I recommend to all synagogues that they bring in law enforcement and civic leaders to support us.

It’s not just rabbis and other synagogue leaders who can play a role in this. If you aren’t sure whether your religious institution has an emergency action plan, whether leaders and congregants have been trained, and whether your building has been analyzed for threats, ask now. Every congregation needs good leaders to say that these issues are important and be willing to work on them.

Another way you can help is to participate in the United We Stand Summit and the Never is Now Summit. ADL’s National Security Community Safety (SCN) to hold active shooter training. One of the most powerful ways to offer such training is in partnership with other religious institutions and organizations in the community. When we are vulnerable together, we elevate our shared humanity.

Building those bridges is so important. During and after the hostage crisis last year, everyone in our community – Jewish, Christian, Muslim and others – came together with law enforcement and civic leaders to support us. The only way to combat hatred is together.
faith-based community centers with resources to protect themselves from extremist threats, has the funds it needs to provide everything from training to security cameras. Please [join me](https://www.templexiweb.org) in urging Congress to fully fund this vital program.

**Prayer for Peace**

**WRITTEN BY RABBI CHARLIE CYTRON-WALKER**

In a world that’s broken and shattered, Plagued by indifference, falsehood, and corruption, We feel the uncertainty. We feel the pain. And we are not helpless. God, we pray for peace: For wholeness and healing, For safety when violence touches us all. God, we pray for peace: For justice and compassion, For acceptance in the face of hatred. We will not be held hostage to hopelessness. We pray for peace: We struggle for peace. We bring peace. We will be whole. God, help us be whole as we pray for peace.

Thank you for all you do to fight hate for good. 🙏

Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker is a special advisor on security for the Anti-Defamation League.

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С наступающим Годом кролика

По восточному гороскопу год Чёрного Водяного Кролика начался 22 января 2023, а завершится 9 февраля 2024 года. Год Кролика занимает четвертое место в 12-летнем цикле китайского гороскопа, его принято считать самым счастливым в восточном календаре. Кролик — один из самых любимых знаков зодиака в китайском гороскопе. Он принятно считается самым счастливым в 12-летнем цикле китайского гороскопа, приземляться на четыре лапы после падения. Но в разных культурах отношение к ним не одинаковое. Так, национальный год для китайцев и японцев связан с Кроликом, тогда как Киты почитают таинственными и ветхими. Это связано с местными особенностями в гороскопах. Пусть эти обаятельные и трогательные фигуры кроликов и козочек, выполненные студентами младшей группы Художественной Студии Галы Соркиной, принесут здоровье и благополучие, и подарут учащемуся слушателям много радости и улыбок.

День памяти Жертв Холокоста

27 января отмечается Международный День Памяти Жертв Холокоста. В этот день в 1945 году Красная Армия освободила Освенцим — нацистский лагерь смерти, где были убиты миллионы людей. День вспоминает жертв Холокоста, тотального уничтожения евреев, которое было символом «Окончания» войны. Гала Соркина подчеркивает, что национальную культуру нельзя обособить, а нужно признать ее важность. Язык — универсальный инструмент, позволяющий проникнуть в сердца людей, независимо от их национальности или религии. Вторая мировая война, голод, уничтожение — всё это не наблюдается только в Европе. Дети поют, чтобы не забыть о страшном настоящем, и мечтать о счастливом будущем. Пусть эти отрывки, повествующие о судьбах жителей Польши, не вызывают у нас только чувство грусти, а помогут понять важность памяти о прошлом. Мы должны ценить каждую культуру, потому что это и есть наша история. Мы должны уважать каждую культуру, каждый язык, потому что это и есть демократия.

Цфата, созданный общиной североамериканских евреев, используется как центр иудаизма, введен в обычай Цфат — новый год для Рождества. Слог «Щедрик» или Carols of the Bells? Эта песня с названием в виде украинской песни, которую исполняют Яси и другие актеры, стала символом Рождества и стала основой для создания слога «Щедрик». Это одна из самых любимых песен Рождества, и наступившим Новым Годом, и напоминает, что в ее студии всегда есть место для всех. Мы должны ценить каждую культуру, потому что это и есть наша история. Мы должны уважать каждую культуру, каждый язык, потому что это и есть демократия. Мы должны ценить каждую культуру, потому что это и есть наша история. Мы должны уважать каждую культуру, каждый язык, потому что это и есть демократия.

Сотни образов мемориальных памятников мы осуществляем дизайн и непосредственное изготовление памятников в нашей мастерской без суб-подрядчиков.

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Обслуживаем Еврейскую Общину Северного Берега с 1890 года.
Dr. Mandel named chief medical officer at Hebrew SeniorLife

Hebrew SeniorLife has appointed Ernest I. Mandel, M.D., S.M., assistant professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School, as its chief medical officer.

Dr. Mandel is a clinician at both Hebrew SeniorLife and Brigham and Women’s Hospital (BWH), with an expertise in geriatric nephrology and renal palliative care. He is deeply committed to and passionate about Hebrew SeniorLife and its mission. His clinical and research interests in serious illness communication with dialysis patients led to the creation of the KidneyPal renal palliative care service at BWH.

Dr. Ernest I. Mandel is an inclusive leader with extensive administrative experience, demonstrated clinical innovation, and a record of academic accomplishment including medical education leadership,” said Mary Moscato, president, Director of Major Gifts for the Northeast, and Women’s Hospital General Hospital. He is currently participating in the Brigham Leadership Program at Harvard Business School and is an Age-Friendly Fellow in the American Hospital Association’s Next Generation Leaders Fellowship.

Reinharz to lead American Society of the University of Haifa

Newton native Naomi Reinharz, a seasoned professional and lay leader at major global Jewish and pro-Israel organizations, has been named the new chief executive officer of American Society of the University of Haifa.

“I am humbled and gratified to have this opportunity. I have known Dr. Reinharz for many years and am thrilled to have her lead the American Society,” said Dr. Charles J. Shipley, chancellor of Haifa University.

Reinharz brings a passion for providing opportunities for individuals, families, and foundations to support projects and beneficiaries in Israel and throughout the diaspora. From 2020-2022, she served as Chief Development Officer and Executive Director of the America-Israel Friendship League. From 2012-2015, she held various roles at ORT America, including National Director of Next Generation, Director of Major Gifts for the Northeast, and National Director of Major Gifts.

An attorney, she holds a B.A. from Brown University, a J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center, and a Certificate in Jewish Philanthropy from Yeshiva University.
By STEVEN A. ROSENBERG
JOURNAL STAFF

REBECCA AND DAVID YAZEL have both been very involved in synagogue life and the consolidation of Temple Beth Shalom in Peabody and Temple Tifereth Israel of Malden into Temple Tiferet Shalom located in Peabody. The couple, who live in Lynnfield, have been married for 28 years and are the proud parents of two impressive young women. Rebecca has held leadership positions in the synagogue, and David, as Building Project Chair, has overseen building renovations. Four and a half years later and 10 months after breaking ground, the temple was able to reopen many activities in early January 2023.

Where are you both originally from and what brought you to the North Shore of Boston? David was born in San Jose, California, but was raised on a farm in West Newfield, Maine. David became a software engineer for the finance sector and has lived on the North Shore all his adult life. Rebecca hails from the Park Slope neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York. Rebecca's professional background is in marketing and software engineering manager for the finance sector and has lived in and had a phone conversation that lasted 4 hours and which led to more phone calls and eventually a first date. That was 28 years ago and clearly our mutual friend had good instincts.

How did you initially meet each other? We had a mutual friend who was fairly relentless in trying to have us meet each other. Eventually, we gave in and had a phone conversation that lasted 4 hours and which led to more phone calls and eventually a first date. That was 28 years ago and clearly our mutual friend had good instincts.

Rebecca, can you speak about your time as president of Sisterhood of Temple Tifereth Shalom? What challenges did you face in those roles? I was president of Temple Beth Shalom from 2012-2014. Every leadership cycle is unique. I had a wonderful, supportive board, and support from many immediate past presidents, who provided tremendous guidance. At the time, our daughters were 9 and 13. I had no idea how much my leadership role meant until my older daughter said in her bat mitzvah Dvar Torah that she hoped to be the president of her temple some day. Lead by example, you never know who will follow.

Rebecca was already a past president of TBS at the time when the consolidation became official, but she had worked closely with the consolidation committee, which included members of both congregations to make sure that both communities would feel represented as they joined together. At that time, David hadn't yet taken on any leadership roles. When the two congregations began to discuss consolidation, the current TBS and TTI leadership saw an opportunity to bring the two temples together and forge a strong combined future together. It has been so long since the merger that it is hard to even believe we were once two distinct temple bodies. David now chairs the Finance Committee as well as sitting on the general and executive boards, along with many former TTI and TBS members. He has become very close to many people in both former temples and counts many as mentors, colleagues and friends.

The biggest impact of the pandemic was the massive increase to the cost of materials and the supply chain issues. The pandemic ended up costing us about 15% more than it would have in any other year. We really could not have delayed the project any longer because the capital campaign had been in full swing for 18 months and we felt we owed the families who sacrificed so much to make this reality in the timelines we had presented to them.

How has your background in engineering and software management enabled you to help with the decisions alongside the temple's architect and designer? It is always hard to find the right skill sets in a volunteer organization to fit with what is needed. What usually works best is to assemble a team with complementary skill sets. I had a small group that had experience in construction, security, electrical engineering and more to help get the project done. My experience as a software engineering manager provided skills in planning, tracking and finance that translated well to the building project.

Besides all your volunteer endeavors, we'd love to know more about your family. Our older daughter went to Emerson College majoring in Theater Design Technology, with a concentration in costumes. The pandemic disrupted her college plans and she ended up taking a gap year between junior and senior year. She now works in the entertainment industry supporting TV, theater and theme parks in costume construction. She loves to work with fabrics and dyes. Our younger daughter is currently a biomedical engineering major at the University of Connecticut. She just started a semester abroad studying at The University of Edinburgh in Scotland. This summer she will be interning at Mass General Hospital in Boston helping out with a study of a portable MRI machine.

Both of our children went from preschool to religious school to bat mitzvah and confirmation at TTS. They also summers at Camp Teva, culminating in a trip to Israel through the Cohen Camps. We are proud of the young Jewish women they have become and can't wait to see their lives unfold.

In addition to your work commitments, what do you both like to do for fun? In addition to work commitments, what do you both like to do for fun? David is an avid gamer and voracious reader, but also enjoys spending time with friends watching action movies and talking about the meaning of life. Rebecca has come to love mahjong and plays regularly with her friends. David has been told he should not learn the game as it is "her thing" and he is too competitive, anyway. Rebecca is a foodie and every trip, vacation, weekend or night out will involve pre-reading menus, reading reviews and planning meal selection. She is also our family vacation planner and executive household director.

Rebecca and David Yazel ‘Lead by example, you never know who will follow’