

JEWISH LIFETM

ARIZONA

THE JEWISH LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE FOR ARIZONA

DECEMBER 2014

SPECIAL ISSUE:

HANUKKAH

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ISRAEL:

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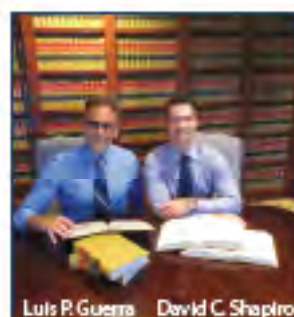


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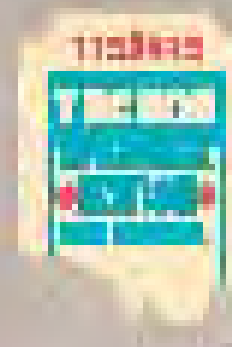


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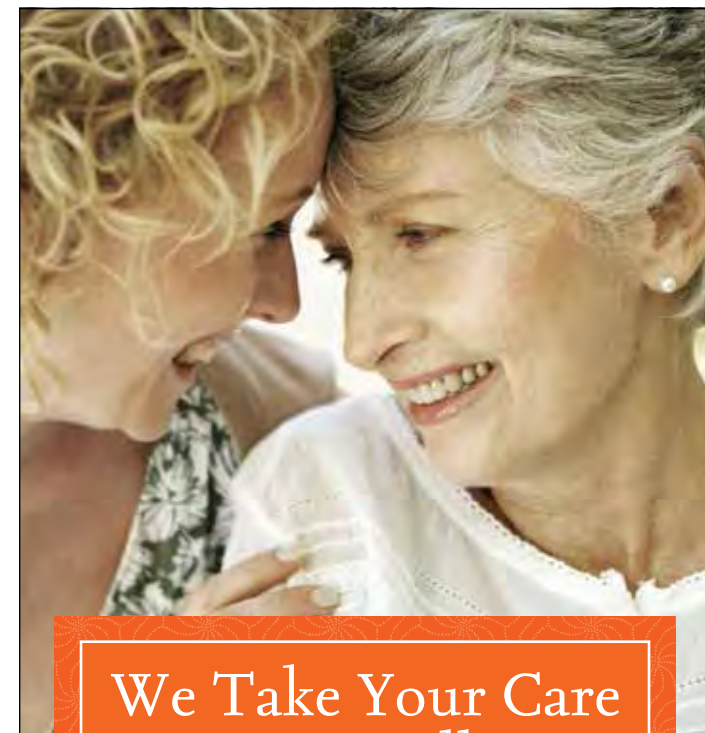
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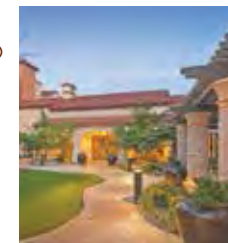
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SUN, JUL 12: Gourmet Sandwiches American Style

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SUN, AUG 02: Make Tasty Tacos

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Resolve to GET FIT early this New Year

By Debra Rich Gettleman



Chad Robins on Surfset.

Chad Robins started weight training at age 13. That's about the same time he began to explore his love of cooking. He was always into eating healthy, participating in sports and being active. So it's no wonder that he's found a way to channel all of his interests and talents into his newest business venture: Underground Fitness, a private fitness training company that caters to individualized training programs, nutritional counseling and overall health and wellness.

Born and raised in Bexley, Ohio, Chad credits his mom for his culinary passion. "When I was young, I loved learning and observing my mom's talent in the kitchen," Chad says. "As I got older, I learned that if you want to eat healthy, you have to cook your own food most of the time." He was on a path toward culinary school when he lucked into an apprenticeship with a well-respected Phoenician chef. He worked two years under the tutelage of Chef Peter Nunez at Marcella's Kitchen. "The only thing I disliked about the culinary profession was the late night hours," he says.

Chad loved being a chef and remains connected to the food industry through his partnership with a local chef to develop a line of healthy gourmet granola that should hit the market in late 2015.

But Chad also has been training clients for 23 years. He's a third-degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do and enjoys introducing elements of martial arts training into his sessions with clients. "Martial arts training has centered me and brought great joy and discipline to my life. It's great being able to pass that on to my students," he explains. In addition to the tried and true

types of training, Robins has also incorporated an unusual form of training into his client sessions known as "Surfset Fitness." Surfset is a popular new exercise format that uses a mounted surfboard, the RipsurferX, to simulate surf-style training. It engages the core and stabilizer muscles to help create that lean, long athletic surfer physique.

After my own attempt at Surfset, I can attest to the fact that it engages the body and mind and challenges one's strength, focus and balance. Chad uses the surf-style workout as a part of many clients' workout routines.

He says he focuses on proper technique and functional and primal movement patterns. In conjunction with proper stretching protocols, he also uses myofascial compression and myofascial release to help relieve or prevent pain.

If you train with Chad, you'll be stretching, rolling, surfing and using a variety of cutting-edge tools and training equipment. You'll also be working with a hand-picked, elite staff of highly qualified personal trainers. Chad and his trainers carefully design unique plans that work specifically for

your body, goals, lifestyle and mental well-being.

"We focus on each and every individual," says Chad. "Our motto alone says it for us: 'Be known by your name, not your membership number!'"

Chad and his staff of trainers also provide individualized, complimentary nutritional counseling to all of their clients. Whether it's creating an eating plan for weight loss, designing daily meals, meal prep, shopping or recipe design, Chad and his staff are always actively attempting to promote a more organic, sustainable and chemical-free healthy lifestyle.

"A quality healthy lifestyle can completely change your outlook on life," he says. If you want to make changes, Chad advises, "The best way to get fit for the New Year is to mentally

take the time to relax and decide what you want out of your life."

It's easy to get out of step over the holidays. Chad says, "During the holidays, keep up with your current training regimen and eat small meals throughout the day. This is the time of year you may eat some items that are not typical for your nutritional program, that's OK. Don't beat yourself up over it. Just keep the portion sizes small and eat everything in moderation." Chad likes to eat "natural goodies" in place of traditional holiday sweets that aren't loaded with preservatives, chemicals, GMOs and refined sugars.

Underground Fitness has four locations, one each in Grayhawk, Desert Ridge, Arrowhead and North Phoenix, and Chad has plans to launch another five to seven locations in Phoenix and the surrounding areas within the next four years.

I've been training with Chad at the North Scottsdale location for the past few months and can tell you that his blend of strength training, myofascial release and stretching, combined with my regular cardio workouts, is strengthening my mind, body and spirit. Some of the movements Chad chooses for me challenge my equilibrium significantly and are reminiscent of yoga and Pilates. It's like an all-around workout that builds strength and coordination while improving balance, focus and flexibility. It's truly everything you want in a workout.

"I'm working hard," Chad confesses. "Some days I see up to 12 clients. That's a long day." But he's rewarded with going home

to his inspiring, creative artist wife, Paola, his 12-year-old son, Noah, and his 8-year-old daughter, Isabella.

"I do it all for them ..." says Chad. "I want them to see that hard work pays off when you can live a full life and help others along the way."

Chad and his family belong to Temple Chai and are starting to plan Noah's bar mitzvah.

Raised a Conservative Jew, Chad says, "I became a bar mitzvah in Columbus and Israel. It's exciting to see your kids grow up with a love of Judaism and a sense of tradition."

While Noah loves Jewish learning and is excited to become a bar mitzvah, Chad jokes that he'll probably need to spend even more long days in the gym to cover the bar mitzvah costs. "We're not gonna get crazy with it. But by the time you invite all the family and a few friends, you're already looking at a pretty big event."

I remind Chad that we hired a fabulous personal chef for our son's, Levi's, big bar mitzvah celebration last year. "He was outstanding," I declare. "The food was healthy and delicious. Nice

Jewish guy too. You might want to think about hiring him."

Chad smiles with a bit of embarrassment. "I'm glad you liked him. Unfortunately he'll be too busy playing host at Noah's bar mitzvah celebration to be using his culinary talents in the kitchen."

"Too bad," I lament. "It's a curse being good at everything."



Isabella Robins tries out Surfset.



Paola, Chad, Isabella and Noah Robins

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Carlos A. Hernández named president and CEO of JFCS of Southern Arizona

Carlos A. Hernández has been named president and CEO of Jewish Family & Children's Services of Southern Arizona.

"We welcome Mr. Hernández and the leadership he will provide to our 73-year-old social and human service organization," said JFCS Board Chair Jill Rosenzweig in

announcing the appointment after a national search. "His experience covers the gamut from services for children, adolescents and families, to community collaborations that bring psychotherapeutic counseling to children and caregivers – all with sensitivity to the needs of our multicultural community." Carlos was director of Family and Community Partnerships at Child-Parent Centers. Carlos earned a bachelor's in sociology and social work from the University of Wisconsin and a master's from the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago. A former member of the Pima Council on Aging Board of Directors, he serves as adjunct faculty at Arizona State University's School of Social Work in Tucson and with the Pima Community College Social Services Department. jfcstucson.org

Jewish Community Foundation selected for Life & Legacy Program

The Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Phoenix has been selected by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation as one of eight new partners in its Life & Legacy program. Initially launched in 12 communities in 2012, Life & Legacy has secured an estimated \$70 million in legacy commitments to 183 Jewish organizations.

"The Harold Grinspoon Foundation is very excited to be partnering with the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Phoenix to establish a culture of legacy giving in Greater Phoenix," said Arlene D. Schiff, national director of the Life & Legacy program.

The foundation will partner with local synagogues, camps, day schools and other Jewish social service agencies and community organizations in a two-year program promoting end-of-life giving. Participating organizations will receive training, support and cash incentives to secure legacy gifts, steward donors and integrate legacy giving into the culture of the local Jewish community.

Local Jewish organizations interested in participating in the program are invited to a kick-off event 6-8 pm, Feb. 5, at the Ina Levine Jewish Community Campus.

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NCJW recognized for leading social change

The National Council of Jewish Women has been named to Slingshot's annual list of the most innovative organizations. NCJW was among 19 Jewish organizations highlighted in the 2014-15 Slingshot Guide's women's and girls' supplement.

The guide says of NCJW: "NCJW's advocacy work sets it apart from other Jewish women's organizations by empowering its members to become advocates and change makers within their own communities."

"NCJW has been at the forefront of social change for over a century," says Arizona Section President Debby Finkel. "Our national network of volunteers takes on issues like child welfare, women's rights and reproductive freedom at all levels – local, state and federal."

This year NCJW's Arizona Section is partnering with the City of Phoenix Human Trafficking Task Force in the fight against human trafficking in our community. "Sex trafficking is a reality in Arizona," Finkel says. "It is

happening here, hidden in plain view. And sections around the country are taking action as part of Exodus: NCJW's Anti-Sex Trafficking Initiative." ncjwaz.org



Richard Agins opens law firm in Chandler

Attorney Richard H. Agins has launched the Agins Law Firm, PLC, in Chandler. The firm's practice will focus on elder law, including Medicare and Medicaid, wills, trusts, advance health-care directives and asset/wealth management; business-based immigration, concentrating on EB-5 investor visas and developer documents; and

bankruptcy/debt relief.

Agins moved to Arizona last year from the East Coast.

Born and raised in New York City, Agins became a CPA in 1976 and worked as a chief financial officer, management consultant and co-owner of a fashion accessories business before becoming a lawyer. He has a son, 37, who lives in Florida and a daughter, 22, who lives in Connecticut.

"I am passionately interested in chamber music and jazz and loved to go kayaking and hiking back East," says Agins. "I hope to resume those outdoor activities here in Arizona. Regrettably, I haven't formed any Jewish affiliations since moving to the Phoenix area. I would love to do so soon."

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Chompie's helps Playworks fight bullying

Chompie's, Arizona's NY Deli, presented a check to Playworks Arizona for \$13,677 in October to help keep Phoenix playgrounds bully-free zones. Playworks Arizona is a nonprofit organization that transforms recess by placing full-time coaches at schools to teach the kids how to play together, be inclusive and resolve conflicts through rock-paper-scissors.

In 2013, Chompie's and Playworks collaborated to create a new kids menu for Chompie's that includes games to help teach kids how to solve conflicts and promote inclusion within schools and on the recess yard. For every meal purchased from the new kids menu, as well as for every Chompie's brand water bottle sold at the restaurant and deli, Chompie's makes a donation to Playworks to help schools run much-needed programs that teach kids understanding and acceptance while boosting self-confidence. This year's donation surpassed last year's by over \$1,500.

In Arizona, Playworks serves 21 low-income Title 1 elementary schools, positively impacting 15,500 students every day through direct service and training programs.

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Chandler's Temple Beth Sholom wins energy efficiency award

Temple Beth Sholom of the East Valley was honored by the Salt River Project for their energy-efficiency efforts and savings at the inaugural Champions of Energy Efficiency Awards event on Nov. 5.

The awards, given to seven innovative businesses and organizations, are part of SRP's efforts to encourage commercial customers to take advantage of the SRP Business Solutions programs to reduce energy use and save money. Through its Business Solutions programs, SRP partners with commercial customers to help them decrease their energy use, which defers the need for future energy generation, reduces emissions and helps control costs.

Temple Beth Sholom in Candler was recognized in the Small Business category for its lighting-retrofit project that reduced annual energy use by 47,000 kWh resulting in an overall annual savings of 50%.

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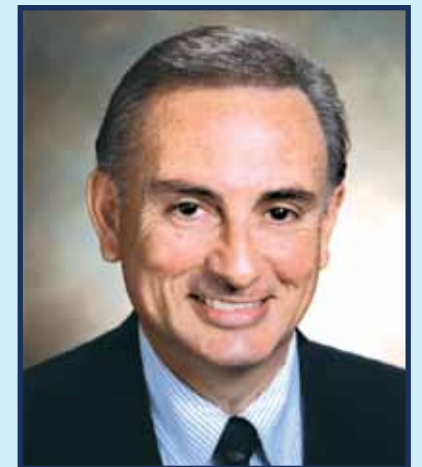
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Tips for effective philanthropy and year-end giving

By Sheryl Quen & Richard Kasper

Year-end is a great time for giving. Roughly 25% of charitable giving happens between Thanksgiving and New Year's Eve, according to US News & World Report. When you donate to the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Phoenix, you aren't just giving money – you're perpetuating your values and maintaining and enhancing the quality of life for future generations of our Jewish community. Consider the following tips to make your philanthropy more effective and to maximize the value of your year-end giving.

Give early and complete your gift by Dec. 31: Contributions are deductible in the year made, so be sure to get those gifts in by Dec. 31. A gift by check is complete when postmarked, even if not cashed until the following year. Credit card gifts are complete when your account is charged, even if the bill is not paid until 2015. Gifts of stocks, bonds, mutual funds, real estate or privately held business interests require more attention, so contact the foundation as soon as possible to ensure your gift is received by Dec. 31.

Determine what matters to you: When you consider where to donate, consider your priorities. Are you passionate about Jewish summer camp or educational programs? Environmental issues or promoting healthy lifestyles? Has a particular issue touched you or your family? Would you like to pay it forward for a scholarship or other assistance you received? Would you rather act locally, or give to organizations with global reach?

Determine the type of impact you want to make. Understand your own values, what you want to accomplish and whether you want to support many organizations or just a few. A few larger donations to select organizations can make a greater impact than many small donations to numerous causes. Consider whether you want to give to a big organization or a small one. At a large charity your individual gift will be one of many, but the combined impact can be great. Conversely, a small organization may not make as broad an impact, but your gift could make a bigger difference in the life of one person.

Give now and decide later. With a donor-advised fund at the Jewish Community Foundation you can claim a deduction for the contribution to your fund now, even though you are undecided about which causes you wish to support. Make your gift now and recommend grants to organizations – Jewish and secular – whenever you like. Instead of tracking all your charitable receipts throughout the year, you get a single receipt from the foundation. Plus, your donor-advised fund is invested by the foundation, so the impact of your giving grows as your fund grows.

Employer matching gifts program: Some companies will match the charitable donations of their employees and the employees' spouses. Some match dollar-for-dollar, and some will match gifts for volunteer efforts. When you donate, find out whether your employer or your spouse's employer has a matching gifts program, which can double your gift and impact.

Donate appreciated assets: Gifts of appreciated stocks, bonds

and mutual funds owned more than a year are easy to donate and may entitle you to a tax deduction for their full value, regardless of the price you paid. By donating these assets, you can also avoid capital gains. Real estate donations and privately held business interests can also be attractive vehicles for charitable giving. If you are looking to maximize the tax benefit, donations of appreciated assets can go much farther than a simple cash donation.

Keep an eye open for the return of the charitable IRA rollover: Most experts predict that Congress will reauthorize the Charitable IRA Rollover before the end of 2014. Previous versions of the law allowed donors age 70½ or older to donate up to \$100,000 without being taxed on the IRA distributions, and to satisfy their required minimum distributions at the same time. This is an especially attractive option for anyone contemplating substantial year-end giving, including the creation of a permanent endowment.

Start a Permanent Endowment Fund: When you create a permanent endowment with the Jewish Community Foundation, you help secure the financial future of the organizations that matter most to you. You can start a named endowment fund for as little as \$10,000, building it over time or through your estate. The foundation invests the funds with its other assets, so your endowment grows. Every year, 5% of your fund is distributed to support the organizations and causes you choose.

Remember Arizona's charitable tax credits: Arizona taxpayers can receive a dollar-for-dollar tax credit for donations supporting public school extracurricular activities, private school tuition organizations, qualifying charitable organizations (formerly the "working poor" tax credit), qualifying foster care organizations and the Arizona Military Family Relief Fund. Different amounts can be claimed as credits for each of the donations, so contact your tax advisor or the Arizona Department of Revenue for details.

For a confidential meeting or more information, call the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Phoenix at 480-699-1717.



Sheryl Quen is the Jewish Community Foundation's director of grants and communications. She is responsible for the administration and oversight of the organization's competitive grant making program as well as the distribution of grants from donor-directed field of interest and designated endowment funds.



Richard Kasper brings more than 20 years of experience in law, nonprofit governance, community building and philanthropy to his role as president and CEO of the foundation. Professionally, he has had a successful law career, most recently as a partner with Ryan Rapp & Underwood PLC, where he provided legal counsel to numerous secular and Jewish nonprofit organizations, to individuals and to publicly traded and closely held companies.

Embrace six key concepts when buying commercial real estate

By Stephen A. Cross, CCIM

Leasing space affords business owners the opportunity to quickly establish a professional presence and focus their capital on growing the enterprise, while also providing flexibility. However, there comes a time when the business or practice is established and space needs are known; the owner has accumulated cash reserves and has come to the realization that he or she has nothing tangible to show for years of increasing rent payments.

When this "aha" moment occurs, it's time to consider buying an office building or business condo.

This article will explore some of the key concepts business owners, healthcare professionals and corporate executives should consider as they transition from leasing to ownership status and provide insights into the process of buying commercial real estate.

The Basics

Several characteristics make real estate a unique investment. First, real property is a tangible asset that can be acquired for a fraction of its market value. To clarify: a 5% to 20% down payment is all that is required to obtain a loan for the balance of the purchase price. Second, loan payments serve to increase the borrower's equity position in the property. Third, there is a strong likelihood that real property will, over time, increase in value. Additionally, the property can become an income-producing asset.

Understanding these key concepts is essential to making fully informed, fact-based buying decisions: 1) caveat emptor, 2) due diligence, 3) arm's length transaction,

4) advisors, 5) the difference between clients and customers, and 6) dual agency.

Key Concept 1: "Caveat emptor" is a Latin phrase for "let the buyer beware" and essentially proclaims that buyers need to be vigilant in performing due diligence.

Key Concept 2: "Due diligence" is the process a reasonable and prudent person uses to acquire knowledge of facts that, if known, would materially influence the purchasing decision.

Key Concept 3: The modern real estate industry is founded on the concept of the "arm's length transaction" in which parties deal from equal bargaining positions. Parties are said to deal "at arm's length" when each conducts business in a formal manner *without trusting the other's fairness or integrity* and *without being subject to the other's control or influence*. It also assumes that each party is willing, but not compelled, to buy or sell.

The definition above comes from *The Language of Real Estate* by John Reilly and demonstrates how real estate negotiations should theoretically be conducted. In reality, owners of commercial property surround themselves with experienced advisors that have specialized legal, financial and industry knowledge, while buyers typically do not ... and that results in very unequal bargaining positions. *TIP: Take a page from the property owner's playbook and select a team of*

seasoned professionals to advise you.

Key Concept 4: Your acquisition team should be dedicated to protecting your interests, have no conflicts of interest, be independent of each other and include an experienced real estate advisor, a real estate attorney, a commercial lender and an accountant.

The real estate advisor should be charged with overseeing the time-intensive due diligence process, including reviewing your existing lease (to confirm the termination date, whether there is an automatic extension and the holdover provisions), conducting the research for suitable properties, compiling information on comparable sales, negotiating the purchase terms and conditions, verifying the representations of listing agents and property owners, and interfacing with your other advisors through the close of escrow.

Desirable qualities in a real estate advisor/agent include: credentials (look for a CCIM); verifiable experience in solving your real estate problems; accountability (insist on an exclusive fiduciary relationship); and ownership (seek an advisor that owns commercial real estate).

Key Concept 5: Legally speaking, clients are owed a fiduciary duty by their agent or advisor. That is to say the agent/advisor must protect the client's interests at all times. Customers are owed a much lower legal duty.

Regardless of their titles, listing agents are salespeople who work for the property owner (their client). To listing agents, buyers are viewed as customers or prospects. *TIP: Refrain from dealing directly with an agent/advisor that lists properties. Instead, establish a client relationship with an advisor/agent who does not list properties.*

Key Concept 6: When one agent, or multiple agents within the same company, represents both buyer and seller in the same transaction a "dual agency" exists, which always favors the seller and the self-serving agent, who stands to collect the entire commission. *TIP: Be skeptical of agents/brokers/advisors that try to persuade you that they can fairly represent both your interests and those of the seller, and who soft-peddle or blur the distinction between client and customer.*

Summary

Once you can clearly anticipate your space requirements for the next 3 to 5 years, it's time to consider owning the building that houses your business or medical practice. Doing so will help create wealth for your family instead of for your landlords.



Stephen A. Cross, CCIM, owns CROSS Commercial Realty Advisors and represents business owners, healthcare professionals and corporate decision-makers in matters involving the lease and purchase of commercial real estate. Contact him at 480-998-7998 or steve@crossrealty.com.

Hanukkah Gifts The Perfect Gift

By Debra Rich Gittleman

I got these pink boxing gloves for Hanukkah last year. They were the only gift that really spoke to me. Well, along with the complete set of Dick Van Dyke DVDs. (That's funny. If you abbreviate Dick Van Dyke, it's the same as DVD. Hmmm.) Anyway, both gifts were from the same person, a newish friend who seemed to know me better than anyone who had shared my life for decades.

My sister gave me a plastic water bottle and pink paisley bandana from what I'm sure was the clearance bin at Old Navy. My husband gave me a "lovely" outfit from Tommy Bahama and a Dyson vacuum cleaner, which, in his defense, was a very expensive gift that I had asked, no, begged to receive for months. But, between you and me, it was one of the greatest gift letdowns of all time. "Oh ... a vacuum. I love it." Note to men: No matter how desperately a woman professes to pine for a household appliance, do not believe her. She is living in a complete state of denial.

My mom gave me ... well, what my mom always gives me. Money. So I can buy something "special" for myself. Even my aunt, who prides herself in gift-giving creativity, sent a clunker last Hanukkah. It was a hand-painted, Israeli folk art tambourine. Do I sound like a woman who's into folk art ... or tambourines?

But this friend, who knew me only superficially I thought, had listened when I said that I wanted to teach my boys about comedy and that, in my opinion, any comedic education should start with a review of the greatest television show of all time, "The Dick Van Dyke Show." She also heard me confess that I'd always secretly wished to be the kind of person who could step into a boxing ring and knock off someone's block. You see, she got my sincere aspiration to overcome my perpetual pleasing affliction and become somebody who no longer felt pushed around by the world.

This friend saw me for who I wanted to be, not for the over-tired, over-worked, over-burdened super mom who never had time to watch a favorite TV show with her kids or the stamina to get to a gym after a day of professional appointments, household errands and maternal duties. And it worked. Those gifts reminded me of who I truly was inside, not who the world, or circumstance, or responsibility dictated I should be. She gave my soul permission to emerge, to exist, to expand.

I watched every episode of Dick Van Dyke ever created with my kids. It was a process that lasted nearly six months. When chores and homework were finished, we'd snuggle into the sofa and giggle as Rob and Laura mistakenly suspected Jerry of cheating on Millie or Ritchie got his head pecked by a giant bird trying to feather her nest. My boys adored those shows, and I felt like somehow they knew me better by watching the reruns that I'd religiously enjoyed for at least a decade of my youth.

Most importantly, I started boxing. I proudly punched, jabbed and uppercut my way out of everything that felt expected, mechanical, ordinary.

It's funny how someone new can look at you and see you for who you wish yourself to be rather than who you were 10 years or 20 pounds ago. A new friend is like an artist seeing a model for the first time. Sometimes it takes someone outside our dutiful reality to remind us that it's not too late to be someone different, that we can still become that person we always meant to become, that there's still time to ... "float like a butterfly and sting like a bee." Anyone who thinks otherwise can meet me in the ring.



SOUND BITES

What is the best (material) gift you ever received?



Arlen Savitt
Or Tzion congregation
Scottsdale

Best gift: a framed picture from my two daughters of the three of us on my birthday with the inscription "the best of the best."



Hershl Webberman
Chabad
Phoenix

For my bar mitzvah I had the choice of a big party or a trip to Israel the following summer. I chose Israel and it was the best gift ever.



Ilene Lashinsky
Temple Kol Ami
Phoenix

For my 21st birthday I was taken to dinner at Etienne's. It was the finest restaurant in town at the time. I'll never forget it.



Carol Abrams
Congregation Or Tzion
Scottsdale

My husband "double-surprised" me for my 35th birthday with a wonderful butter suede fur-trimmed parka, which I had been coveting... and he gave it to me at a surprise birthday party he had planned.

NEXT

JANUARY ISSUE:

If you could be a member of the opposite sex for a day, who would you be and why? To share your reply, please send your short answer, name, congregation or organization (optional), city and photo to editor1@azjewishlife.com by Dec. 8.

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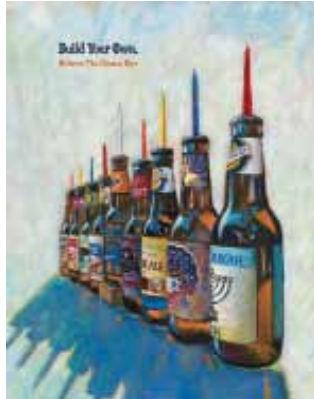
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Hanukkah Gift Guide



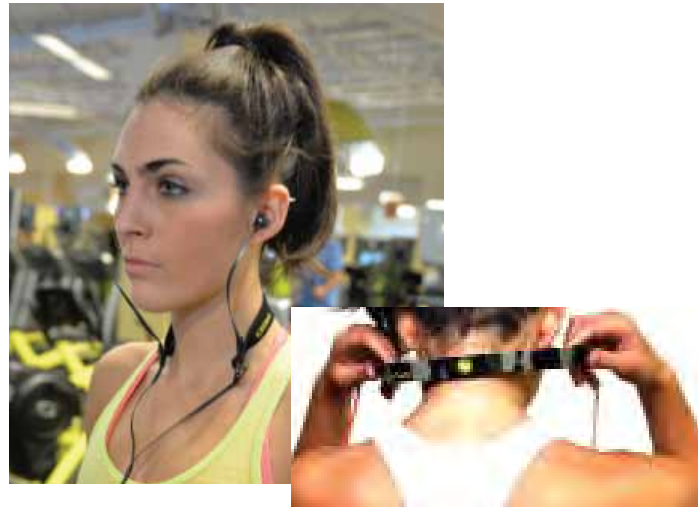
HE'BREW

HANUKKAH: Break out the latkes, gelt, Hanukkah candles and He'brew Beer, it's holiday time! Shmaltz Brewing Company rolls out three limited-edition releases straight from their newly expanded brewery in Clifton Park, NY. First up is the debut of Shmaltz's long awaited homage to the eight crazy nights: Hanukkah, Chanukah: Pass The Beer, a dark ale brewed with eight malts,

eight hops, and 8% ABV. Next in line is the anniversary beer, Jewbelation 18 (18 malts, 18 hops, and 12.4% ABV). Last, but certainly not least, the 5th Annual He'brew Gift Pack featuring eight special release Shmaltz beers plus a custom glass, Hanukkah candles and instructions on how to build your own beer menorah. shmaltzbrewing.com



"CHARLIE" LONG SLEEVED T: Lake Oswego resident Rachel Zimmerman, and her business partner, Molly Shaheen, both 28, are featured on Oprah's coveted Favorite Things List for their naked undies "Charlie" long sleeve T. Oprah calls it her "go-to long sleeve tee." A portion of all naked undies sales goes to the Banfield Charitable Trust's "Pet Peace of Mind," providing pet care for those in hospice care. The naked undies line is made in the USA and is eco-friendly. nakedundies.com



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A kickstarter campaign, which runs through Dec. 18, will purchase an injection mold for the BudStraps clips and to help design a lighter sweat-resistant neck band. Those who help back BudStraps will get the product before anyone else at a special price. budstraps.com/kickstarter

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Comedy, & Crohn's Clubs

Rick Bronson's stand-up career has morphed into string of comedy clubs

By Janet Arnold

The problem with trying to interview Rick Bronson is that you'll be laughing so hard, you won't be able to write anything down.

Believe me – I know! I sat down to interview Rick at his newest comedy club, House of Comedy, in north Phoenix last month. I'm old fashioned enough to still simply take notes, rather than bring out a tape recorder, which could make some folks a bit self-conscious about what they're saying.

Oy! It was like trying to keep up with a whirling dervish – OK, maybe a spinning dreidel, but you get the idea. Rick was so funny and personable, it didn't take long for us to feel like old friends.

Workmen were busy tending to details inside the club, located at High Street (the former City North), just north of Desert Ridge Mall in northeast Phoenix. The club seats 320 and offers full dinners as well as drinks and snacks. There's also a trendy bar in the lobby. This is Rick's third club, and he says this venue is his favorite size. "This mid-size club allows us to really work the magic," he comments.



Rick has had a family home in Scottsdale for more than five years, but Canada is where he was born and raised. Originally from Montreal, his Canadian home is now in Edmonton; his first club, The Comic Strip, billed as Canada's Premier Comedy Theatre, was opened in the West Edmonton Mall in 2004. He moved to Edmonton when he married his wife, Tammy, whom he had met when she was a comedy booking agent; she had booked him as a comedian to play the local college circuit. Tammy converted to Judaism, and they were married in 1994. She and their two sons, Noah, 18, and Tanner, 8, spend the school year in Edmonton but love to be in Arizona as often as they can.

Rick admits to being an absolute golf addict. "I built a putting and chipping green in my back yard," he says with a grin. "Golf was a big factor in our buying a home in the Valley. I hadn't planned to have a comedy club here, but things just worked out!"

In 2013 ScanlanKemperBard Cos., a real-estate private-equity firm based in Portland, OR, and Minnesota-based Wayzata Investment Partners purchased the area known as High Street, north of the 101 off Tatum. The new owners have added 18 occupants, including office tenants, restaurants and retail stores, and recently announced that Sprouts will be coming in as well. They sought out Rick to help make the area a destination location.

“Jewish sons have three choices for occupations. Doctor, lawyer or major disappointment. I chose the third option.”

In addition to his successful club in Edmonton, Rick added a House of Comedy in the famous Mall of America in Bloomington, MN, in 2009 and is building a fourth club in the upcoming \$1.8-billion megamall, American Dream Meadowlands in East Rutherford, NJ. “The whole development

is going to be amazing,” Rick says. “It’s got everything. There’s even a Ferris wheel that is so large and high you can see the New York City skyline from the top!” Developers plan to include an indoor ski slope, the world’s largest wave pool and even Cirque de Soleil performances. The mall is expected to open in 2016.

So, just how did this all come to be? How did a chubby little Jewish kid from Montreal become a highly respected comedy impresario?

Let’s go back to the beginning. Rick was born into a middle-class Jewish family, a fact for which he is very grateful. “My mother was a teacher, my father was a broker. If we hadn’t been middle class, I

don’t think I would have developed my work ethic the way I did. I must admit my own boys are a bit more spoiled,” he says before adding with a twinkle, “My wife’s fault, of course.”

Rick sidetracks for a moment to mention that his Hebrew name is Pesach Simchah. “What kind of a name is that? Pesach Simchah. When you have to spit on someone to say your name,

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you know you're in trouble. Pesach Simchah roughly translates to Happy Passover; it's like naming your kid Merry Christmas!"

Rick's grandfather was president of the Orthodox shul where Rick became a bar mitzvah. "Man, I did every single word of that service," he recalls with mock amazement. He also mentions how lucky he felt to have all four of his great-grandmothers in attendance at that milestone event.

"As a 12/13-year-old, I was a fat Jewish kid who played piano and sax as well as several sports. But I didn't always fit in. One day, I saw a friend perform a magic trick; when he wouldn't tell me how he did it, I started doing research. In no time, I had my own magic show and started doing up to eight parties a weekend. I was able to buy myself some great stereo and ski equipment!"

He kept developing his magic act and added comedy. It was clear he had found his calling.

When it came time for college though, Rick simply couldn't find a good fit. "Jewish sons have three choices for occupations," he confides. "Doctor, lawyer or major disappointment. I chose the third option." His parents, with whom Rick is very close, are now enormously proud of him.



Rick Bronson and former Dodgers manager Tommy Lasorda, center, with "Rat Pack" impersonators

Favorite Funnies From Rick

I don't think my mother liked me very much growing up. ... When she was teaching me how to cross the street corner she told me that the flashing hand meant, "Come on, you can make it ... go for it."

I played in an all Jewish recreational softball league. There were no umpires - lawyers on every base shouted, "You're out!... but we can probably work a deal."

George Bush is off to Israel to help negotiate peace talks in the Middle East. I don't think this is a smart idea. The last time a Bush spoke to Israel my people wandered around the desert for 40 &%^&# years.

"I think they swallowed their disappointment when they saw the great guest house I have here for them," he quips.

And so he began his stand-up comedy career, traveling around making people laugh. He was especially popular on the college circuit and was named Comedian of the Year by the Canadian Organization of Campus Activities eight times between 1997 and 2005. He also won an AMPIA (Alberta Media Production Industries Association) Award for Best TV Host for his work in his Canadian travel series, "The Tourist." And his one-hour special for the Comedy Network and CTV was the highest rated in the network's history.

But things started changing in 2001. Rick had been diagnosed with Crohn's disease as a teenager, and it was starting to flare up aggressively. Crohn's disease is a chronic inflammatory condition of the gastrointestinal tract. It has a very high percentage of Jewish patients. "You know how everyone knows where they were during 9/11?" he asks. "I'll certainly always remember. I was in the hospital, near death, having just had my fifth surgery in four

days. It was part of a two-month-long hospital stay."

As the disease continued to wreak its havoc, Rick knew he couldn't continue the pace and stress of being a stand-up. Before long things fell into place, and he was able to open The Comic Strip in Edmonton in 2004. "How great is that?" he exclaims. "As an owner, I can have a little stage time whenever I want it!"

Though not officially diagnosed, Rick believes he also has adult ADHD. His eyes dart around the room as he talks, taking in everything that is going on. He moves and squirms in the comfortable booth seating. He has an enormous amount of energy, particularly for someone with a disease like Crohn's. "I really believe my ADHD gives me a number of creative

"I truly believe in the power of humor to heal. I know that's a big part of how I handle my Crohn's, for example."

advantages. I tend to see things with a little different perspective than others; it helps to keep up my energy and add to unique, creative ideas."

Rick is known as a "comic who owns a club." In that vein, he is viewed as a club owner who treats his acts well. After all, he knows what it's like to be on the other side of things. With a reputation like this, he's able to book the best talent available. The comics at his clubs have been seen on shows and networks such as "Letterman," "The Daily Show," The Comedy Network,

Comedy Central, "Last Comic Standing" and more.

Early on Rick realized he needed to know more than comedy to make the clubs successful. He's enjoyed getting to learn the business side of the hospitality industry. In addition to having to learn how to be a restaurateur and bar owner, he needs to stay plugged in to the latest comedy trends. "Clubs need to keep reinventing themselves," he says proudly. "We have new shows each week!"

Thanks to Humira, a new drug on the market for those with Crohn's disease, Rick is managing his disease. But there is currently no cure, so he has to be vigilant. "I truly believe in the power of humor to heal. I know that's a big part of how I handle my Crohn's, for example." Ever the optimist, Rick even finds a positive element to having Crohn's Disease. "Because of my belief in the power of humor to help in the healing process, I was hired on to a team of motivational speakers who tour the country with seminars called 'Unleash the Power Within.' I emceed many of the events to help add levity to the program. Some of the presenters were great people who had wonderful messages, but they were not exactly exciting speakers. I was able to interject some humor and in a way, my dealing with Crohn's gave me that much more credibility."

He speaks with great pride of his time on this circuit and the hope that he was able to humbly act as an inspiration to others.

I think that pretty much wraps up most of Rick's story. I have lots more notes, but few make sense any more. It's hard to write legibly when your whole body is shaking with laughter. Next time remind me to take a tape recorder.



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Looking for Love

Are you a people pleaser?

By Ellen Gerst

Are you afflicted with the dreaded People Pleaser Syndrome? Before the loss of my first husband, I know I exhibited the major symptom inherent in a people pleaser, which is putting the desires and needs of everyone else before your own. While I'm somewhat recovered, remnants of my former self do linger, for, at my essence, I simply like to help others.

There is a subtle difference now, though. Previously, I would give and give, only to eventually feel depleted with nothing left to sustain myself. Today, I have stronger boundaries and, while I still try to please, I complete this action in a healthier manner. What it comes down to is that I allow myself to say "No!" and not feel guilty when I do so.

Learning to temper my enthusiasm for only pleasing others, at times to my own detriment, has allowed me to actually become better at helping others. When I feel balanced and replenished, it's much easier to extend a hand outward.

As you move into the dating world, you will be encountering all different types of people. Some are givers and some are takers. Unfortunately, this trait is not always evident at a first glance (or even after many glances). That's why it's always a good idea to take your time getting to know someone.

You might think that a people pleaser is a seemingly innocuous type or even consider this person a great find, because it's nice to be on the receiving end of pleasing. Here's the other side of the coin to consider. People pleasers can use their skills to control their environment and the people who reside in it. Therefore, if everyone around a people pleaser is kept happy because she has fulfilled all their wants and desires, all should remain copacetic in her world. This particular type of people pleaser is one that never wants to rock the boat, so she sublimates her own needs and makes sure there are never any arguments or even minor disagreements. Regrettably, emotions that are continually pushed below the surface usually erupt, and when they do – watch out! Often, it's like a dormant volcano spewing out for the first time. Both parties are surprised by its virulence, for there's no warning signal in the calm life that was being led.

Recognizing your inherent traits, and then modifying any unhealthy ones, is part of the readiness process to complete before dating with intention. Of course, practice is always encouraged, for it's in these practice sessions that you can learn a lot about yourself.

As for people pleasing, there are ways to mitigate this tendency. First, acknowledge that a fear of rejection can reside underneath the desire to continually please. For example, the pleaser may believe if she stops catering to others, she will lose their love and affection. If this were true, then true love was never established.

Since all actions stem from two emotions, love or fear, it's up to the pleasers to change their motivating factor to love. This includes learning to love and respect themselves; placing a high value on their own time; and, most importantly, realizing and accepting that it's possible to be a caring, loving (and even

pleasing) person while at the same time caring, loving and pleasing oneself.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Q: I'm a private person and would rather not post a picture on a dating site. Is one necessary for a successful outcome?

A: Although no one likes to believe he/she is being judged on outward appearances, nor do you want to think you judge others on theirs, it's just a fact of nature that humans are a visual species and many decisions are based on what is observed – if not consciously, then at least subconsciously.

That said, dating site statistics show that profiles with a picture receive a lot more interaction than those without one. But don't post just any picture! Be very careful in choosing one that is representative of who you are, and realize a picture really can be worth a thousand words because it can telegraph nonverbal clues that might influence who contacts you or not.

Here are some of the elements to be aware of and their possible meanings.

1. Smile vs. Neutral Expression (no teeth). A smiley picture projects an extroverted, warm and open nature vs. a neutral expression, which telegraphs aloofness.

2. Stance: Stiff vs. Relaxed. Stiffness can indicate that you're uncomfortable in your own skin, stubborn, can't go with the flow or be agile, while a relaxed stance can indicate an easygoing nature or that you're fun-loving or energetic.

3. Jewelry. Are you wearing a religious icon, a peace symbol, or tons of gold chains displayed on a hairy chest? You might be making a fashion statement, be dressed for a costume party or telegraphing your belief system. But at first glance, the viewer won't be privy to this info.

4. Clothing/Grooming Habits. Are you dressed neatly or haphazardly? For the guys, are you clean shaven, sporting the GQ look or just unkempt looking? Are you in athletic wear or more formal wear? Are your clothes drab, threadbare or ripped? If it's even too much trouble to post a picture in which you're cleaned up, this doesn't bode well for future encounters.

5. Background of Picture. Are you standing in front of a house? If so, what type is it (mansion vs. average, apartment vs. an RV, in the country vs. the city)? If you're posing by a car, is it luxurious or a junker? Does the picture include family members or a friend of the opposite sex? With only the pictorial information, viewers will assume it's your house, your car, an old girlfriend, etc.

Here's the bottom line. View your potential picture with objectivity and remember that it tells a story about you. You get to decide which one it will be.

Ellen Gerst is a relationship coach, author and workshop leader. Visit LNGerst.com. To ask Ellen a question to be answered in a future column, email her at LNGerst@LNGerst.com.



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PRESCHOOL DRIVERS

Valley Metro brought a city bus to the Chabad Center in Chandler and let the preschoolers (including Imogen VanHorn, pictured below) take turns playing driver. Morah (teacher) Tara Leafman sits on the back bench of the bus with Bayla Deitsch as the preschoolers get ready for a drive around Chandler. Dovid Kopin and Max Charlie Saltzman enjoy the ride.

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Hanukkah Highlights

Hanukkah, or dedication in Hebrew, commemorates the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem following the triumph of the Maccabees over the Syrians (who had outlawed Judaism) in the second century BCE. The miracle of the Temple's meager one-day supply of oil lasting for eight until a new supply could be procured is remembered not only by the lighting of the candles but by the consumption of foods that have been cooked in oil. Like so many Jewish holidays, the accompanying rituals and traditions have become both a living memorial to our resolute ancestors and an inspiration for the present and future.

A century ago Hanukkah was in danger of being eclipsed by old Saint Nick. Many American Jews had stopped lighting the menorah in favor of exchanging Christmas gifts. Concerned Jewish clergy feared the Hanukkah lights might be extinguished forever in the New World given the rapid pace of cultural assimilation. However, after the doughboys of World War

I came home, Hanukkah experienced a dramatic revival. Its proximity to Christmas inspired an expanded celebration. Simple exchanges of gelt led to more elaborate gifts, cards, decorations and festive parties. Hanukkah was transformed into an eight-day celebration of Jewish culture that highlighted our capacity for perseverance in the face of adversity.

The beauty of Hanukkah today is that it can be whatever you want it to be. Once you fulfill the basic mitzvot of lighting the candles and saying the blessing, the sky's the limit. Your Hanukkah celebration can be a modest low-key affair, or you can party like a Maccabee.

Hanukkah celebrations are taking place in a variety of sizes, shapes and locations in December.

Check our print calendar as well as our online calendar at azjewishlife.com to find the perfect community celebration for you and your family.

Build Your Own Menorah

On Dec. 11 Chabad of East Valley is hosting a "Build Your Own Menorah" workshop at 4:30 pm at Home Depot at 2530 E Germann Road in Chandler. Home Depot supplies all the materials and the experts to oversee the wood construction and painting. Chabad provides the treats! Plus Rabbi Mendy Deitsch will demonstrate firsthand how to make olive oil from olives. Free and open to all! Sarah Saltzman, an administrative assistant at the Chabad, says that last year's event drew about 150 attendees, 75 of whom were youngsters; each went home smiling with a new, personally made menorah.

Then on Dec. 17 Chabad of the East Valley will have its Grand Menorah Lighting at 5 pm at Phoenix Premium Outlets, 4976 Premium Outlets Way in Chandler. Last year's theme was "Glow in the Dark" with fire-jugglers performing and glow sticks for all. For more information on either Chabad Hanukkah event, call 480-855-4333 or visit chabadcenter.com.



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The winning couple will appear on the cover of Arizona Jewish Life and will receive a free night's stay at an Arizona resort or hotel.

**Entries must be received by Dec. 15.
Send to editor1@azjewishlife.com.**



The Dreidel Shark



Congregation Merkaz Ha'Iyr, a progressive Jewish community that meets in North Central Phoenix, has created a Hanukkah music video entitled "The Dreidel Shark," which was released at Shabbat services on Nov. 14, before being put on YouTube and the congregation's website (congregationmerkaz.org). Member Randy Warner wrote the song about a boy who hustles other children with dreidel games. The song features Asher Kaye as the Dreidel Shark, who seems to know just where the dreidel will land each time, and Sarah Warner as lead vocalist. It includes about a dozen young members of the congregation. The video was written, directed and produced by member Stan Burech. Check it out. As the song says, "No one spins a dreidel like the Dreidel Shark!"



Pardes Jewish Day School

Pardes Jewish Day School (pardesschool.org) in Scottsdale performed its first original musical play for Hanukkah last year (pictured above). The play was entitled "Maccabia" and included the retelling of the Hanukkah story through the music of ABBA, with each class singing a song.

This year on Dec. 16, the school is performing MaccaBeatle Mania's "Magical Hanukkah Tour," with all classes singing to Beatle's tunes. Sherry Saper, one of the fifth-grade teachers, wrote the script and lyrics. Sherry and the other fifth-grade teacher, Steven Campanelli, are directing the show. Tiffany Weiss, the school's music teacher, is the music director and choreographer. Due to space limitations, seating is limited to families of students.



Lego Menorah Build

Tucson's Congregation Anshei Israel's preschool/ kindergarten (caiaz.org) hosted a special event co-sponsored with the Jewish Federation of Southern Arizona's PJ Library on Nov. 16. Kids had fun "pinning" the head on the Lego Man, Lego Bean Bag Toss, guessing how many Legos/Duplo in a jar, and building with Duplo. Rabbi Robert Eisen and the kids crowded on stage as he told them a PJ Library Hanukkah story. Congregation Anshei Israel USY kids served 300 latkes to this very hungry group.



Prior to the main event, the Jr. USY members got together to build the base for a large Lego menorah to be on display. Then the USY teens continued the Lego menorah build started by the junior group the previous evening. The senior group added unique, abstract "candleholders" to the Hanukkah. Seen here (from left) are Tyler Weinstein, Adina Karp, advisor Jesse Muller (rear), Remi Kauffman, Quinn Marell and Leah Tolby.



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Building for the future

By Deborah Moon

Participants in the only domestic Jewish gap year program for recent high school graduates are working to alleviate homelessness while they gain social and hands-on skills that will benefit them in college and beyond.

The eight teens in the first cohort of Tivnu: Building Justice gap year spend four days a week on a Habitat for Humanity building project and one day a week interning with a service or advocacy group. Recognizing not all Jewish teens seeking a gap year program want to go abroad, Tivnu founder and Executive Director Steve Eisenbach-Budner created this gap year program to give teens the opportunity to work, study and live together as they explore the connections between Judaism and social justice.

The teens are helping build two duplexes and one three-plex in Portland, OR, as they learn construction skills from Tivnu construction trainer John Kott. The finished homes will allow seven families to become Habitat homeowners as “partner families.” Partner families are selected based on their level of need, ability to pay and willingness to partner.

“I felt burned out around junior year,” says Judah Drelich, from Washington, D.C., who will attend Case Western Reserve

next fall. “I felt if I went straight to college, it would be wasted. A gap year is an opportunity to get skills. I wanted to learn construction.” That plus a program that follows the Jewish calendar and offers kosher food made Tivnu a good fit for Judah, who attended Jewish day school through 12th grade.

“I knew I didn’t want to go to college right away,” says Shoshana Sefia from Las Vegas, where she attended an Orthodox Jewish day school through eighth grade. Having helped build sets for theater in high school, she says the construction aspect of Tivnu appealed to her. “Working with my hands and learning new skills – I really like that.”

Nomi Small, from Boston, attended Jewish day school from kindergarten through 12th grade. Next year she plans to attend Dickenson College, but she wanted an alternative gap year first. She has enjoyed past volunteer work on community farms, so she was attracted to the hands-on aspect of Tivnu.

“Every day you see progress; it’s very rewarding,” says Nomi of the construction work.

Nomi also enjoys her internship at a homeless shelter for families. “I talk with the parents about trying to get into a home. These are good people, who I would never have interacted with in Boston,” she says. “Meanwhile I’m here helping build a



house. ... I see their needs, and I help people with similar needs.”

While the needs are similar, the internships and construction project work within a full spectrum of needs.

Richard Patrych, from New York City, interacts with the homeless clients at JOIN, but he notes, “We are building houses for people with more stable lives. But at any point if something goes wrong, they could become homeless. If they get a Habitat home, they will be more stable.”

Another NYC participant, Reuben Dreiblat, adds, “Many of the homeless have countless other issues before they can get to housing. But I enjoy working with different levels of need.” Baye Miller gets to work with people in the middle of the journey out of homelessness. At her internship with REACH, she plans activities for previously homeless residents who now live in the affordable housing project, but who are not yet ready to buy a Habitat home.

“From being homeless to living with a roof over your head is a big transition, and some stability is important,” says Baye, who attended a Solomon Schechter day school and a small Jewish high school in Chicago.

“I like the idea of seeing my potential to make change and see tangible proof of the change – of making a physical impact,” she says, adding she also likes to make non-tangible change.

“I wanted to do a gap year, but a lot are very expensive,” says Baye, who plans to attend the University of Vermont next fall.

Learning to use tools is a skill that several of the students say will benefit them throughout life. Baye says the skills she has learned will help her be self-sufficient in making repairs when she has a home someday.

Richard, who plans to attend Boston University in the fall, says that it has also been nice to live with a group of young people from different backgrounds. “In our household, we are two modern Orthodox, four Conservative and the rest Reform. That’s really helpful. It lets you learn about what other have to say.”

Social skills gained living with a group of people the same age are another benefit of the program.

“Group living is definitely an experience; we’ll all grow and mature, and it will be good for all of us,” says Baye. “Going to college I will already have a grasp on issues and situations that will come up.”

Even working outside on rainy Pacific Northwest days, Baye says it’s all worthwhile. “My feet may be wet. But I know I’m doing something that will help me grow and that will benefit the people who will be living in these homes.”

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Tivnu Gap Year

Tuition (Price varies by date paid): • Dec. 15: \$24,870 • Feb. 15: \$26,870 • April 15: \$28,870

Financial aid is available. • Options for 2015-2016:

Building Track: Learning and applying construction skills by building affordable housing projects with Habitat for Humanity. Participants also intern one day a week with local service and advocacy groups.

The new **Direct Service and Organizing Track:** Participants work four days a week with local social justice organizations that align with their particular interests, including affordable housing/homelessness, food security and environmental justice.

They will spend one day a week on a construction project.

Tivnu: Building Justice: tivnu.org | 503-232-1864

The media sends us into PANIC over wrong disease

By Debra Rich Gettleman

Don't you just love the media? If it's not an impending hurricane in Florida, it's Ebola coming across our shores, the next great economic depression, gangs, guns, rampant terrorists, etc. ... There is always something perilous on our horizon, and the media seems to take great glee in over-reporting every potential threat, no matter how unrealistic it may be.

Case in point is the new deadly respiratory virus: enterovirus D68 (EV-D68). We've been hearing about this for months, tracking its dangerous course from California to now 32 states including Arizona. It's big! It's scary! There is no cure! Kids are dropping like flies!

OK, can we please add a smidgeon of reason to this hysteria? Yes, there is a virus called enterovirus D68. But it's not new. It was first reported in 1962 in California. But since viruses usually don't get recorded, we really don't know how many cases of it have occurred over the years.

Yes, it can cause severe respiratory distress. Yes, it can put kids in the hospital, but that is mostly for asthmatics. Basically, EV-D68 looks and acts like a normal cold with runny nose, fever, cough and body aches. When kids contract this virus, especially if they have asthma or other compromising respiratory disorders, they can have serious breathing problems requiring hospitalization. Since it's a virus, there is no known cure. Hospitalized kids need attention and breathing assistance until their bodies can fight off the invading infection. Most kids recover and are out on the soccer field a few weeks later. But that's not terribly interesting to the general public.

In our "if it bleeds it leads" society, we'll report one death from EV-D68 as an epidemic threatening each and every child in the state. It's excessive and it isn't true. The last thing we as a society should be doing is trying to freak out parents about a new virus when they're already freaked out about norovirus, Ebola and antibiotic-resistant bacteria. I mean please, can we add a little sanity to this situation?

Every year about 20,000 kids are hospitalized for influenza. Over the past decade, the CDC reports between 35 and 348 annual pediatric influenza deaths across the nation. In their most recent report, which covers the 2012-2013 season, there were 105 pediatric deaths and 90% of those children had not received a flu vaccination for the season. Maybe we need some perspective here. Did you give your child Flumist or a good old-fashioned flu vaccine? If not, what are you waiting for?

EV-D68 has no cure and no vaccine to prevent it. Since it's a virus, antibiotics won't help. You can catch it the way you catch any cold, from contact with other sick people. The virus lives in saliva, nasal mucus and sputum. Talk to your kids about coughing into their elbows and protecting themselves from all sources of illness by avoiding touching sick people or their belongings and good hand washing with soap and water for more than 20 seconds.

If your child has a history of asthma or other respiratory ailments and contracts a virus that makes breathing labored and difficult, see a doctor immediately. If your child is breathing rapidly, or you see nasal flaring or retractions (where the skin between the ribs or over the collar bone is sucking in), don't meander, go directly to the doctor or nearest emergency room. Do not pass Go. Do not collect \$200.

The myth that EV-D68 can kill without any symptoms is just that – a myth. If your child appears healthy with no sign of illness, you need not worry about sudden onset of respiratory failure. But be smart. If your child has a cold and is having severe trouble breathing, don't wait it out. Get to a healthcare facility where your child can be cared for appropriately. That's not over-reacting. That's being a good parent.



Debra Rich Gettleman is a mother and blogger based in the Phoenix area. For more of her work, visit unmotherlyinsights.com.

Kids & Teen EVENTS DECEMBER

Kids/Teen/Family Happenings in December

Club J at the Valley of the Sun JCC
Provides afterschool programming ranging from sports to cooking and crafts to Israeli culture and more for those in K-8. Transportation from nearby schools available. 12701 N Scottsdale Road. 480-483-7121 ext. 1275, vosjcc.org or youth@vosjcc.org

J-Care After School Program at the Tucson JCC

Includes activities, help with homework or teens can hang in the Youth lounge. Bus transportation from schools available for K-12. 3800 E River Road. 520-299-3000, tucsonjcc.org

Dec. 12

Hanukkah Factory & Potluck: Spend the Friday before Hanukkah at the Tucson JCC and make a Hanukkah to take home and use for the holiday. Our Hanukkah Factory will include all of the materials needed to make your own special creation. There will be Shabbat and Hanukkah singing with Scott and Julie as well as Shabbat blessings. Bring a vegetarian/dairy dish for 10 to share. 6-7:30 pm, 3800 E River Road in Tucson. \$3/person prepaid or \$5 at the door. 520-299-3000 ext. 236 or jjorn@tucsonjcc.org

Hanukkah Story and Craft Time at Bookman's at 1930 E Grant Road in Tucson at 10 am. Sponsored by PJ Library Southern Arizona. Free. More info at pjlibrary@jfsa.org

Dec. 13

Parents' Night Out Party (PNOP) at the Tucson JCC: Winter Candyland. Parents can enjoy a night to themselves while the J-Care staff provides a fun-filled evening for their children. PNOPs include dinner, snack, games, dessert, field trip for ages 8+ and a movie with popcorn. 3800 E River Road in Tucson. Members: \$20 for first child, siblings \$15; nonmembers add \$5. Contact Aimee Gillard: 520-299-3000 ext. 256 or agillard@tucsonjcc.org

Tweens on The Town for grades 5-9. Spend Saturday night (6-10 pm) hanging with new and old friends! Includes dinner and a trip to a fun location around Tucson. \$25/\$20 member. Meet in the Youth Lounge of the Tucson JCC, 3800 E River Road. Contact Lindsay Migdal: 520-299-3000 ext. 175 or lmigdal@tucsonjcc.org

Dec. 14

PJ Library (Southern Arizona) and Whole Foods in Tucson present a Hanukkah Celebration at 12:30 pm at 5555 E River Dr. Lots of latkes to eat, Hanukkah crafts for all ages and PJ Hanukkah books to read. Free. More info at pjlibrary@jfsa.org

Dec. 17-24

Hanukkah in the Hallway: arts and crafts, music and dancing, latke making will delight children of all ages during Hanukkah. Free. Contact youth@vosjcc.org. Everyone is welcome at the Valley of the Sun JCC, 12701 N Scottsdale Road. Visit vosjcc.org for daily details and activities.

Dec. 23

Donuts and Dancing: 5-7 pm for ages PreK-3rd grade and 7-10 pm for grades 4-9. Celebrate the final days of Hanukkah with the First Annual Donuts and Dancing. Dance to the latest American and Hebrew Pop and holiday music while enjoying festive donuts and holiday crafts. All are welcome. Free. At the Valley of the Sun JCC, 12701 N Scottsdale Road. vosjcc.org

WINTER BREAK DAY CAMPS

Tucson JCC: 3800 E River Road, Tucson | 520-299-3000 | tucsonjcc.org

Dec. 22-Jan. 2, closed Dec. 25 and Jan. 1: 9 am-4 pm, with pre-care 7-9 am and aftercare 4-6 pm. It's all the fun of camp squeezed into eight days! Come join us this winter for lots of exciting projects, trips and of course, fun! Programs for ages 5-7, 8-10 and 11-14.

East Valley JCC: 908 N Alma School Road, Chandler | 480-897-0588 | evjcc.org

Preschool Winter Camp: Ages: 2-Pre-K. Dec. 22-26 (closed Dec. 25). Hours: Half day (9am-1pm), full day (9 am-3:30 pm); early care 7-9 am, late care 3:30-6 pm.

School Age Winter Camp: Kindergarten through 6th grade. Dec. 19, 22-24, 26; Dec. 29-31, Jan. 2 and 5. Hours: 9 am-3:30 pm, early care 7-9 am, late care 3:30-6 pm.

Shemesh Winter Camp: Valley of the Sun JCC, 12701 N Scottsdale Road | 480-483-7121, ext. 1275 | youth@vosjcc.org

Dec. 22-Jan. 3 (closed Dec. 25 & Jan. 1). 9 am-4 pm, with early and late care from 7:30 am to 6 pm. Grades K-5 –Sports or Arts & Crafts emphasis. Includes winter activities – sledding and snow!

The Solel Preschool: 6805 E McDonald in Paradise Valley | 480-991-4545 | solelpreschool.org

Ages: 6 weeks thru 5 years. Dec. 22-26 (closed Dec. 25) and Dec. 29-Jan. 2 (closed Jan. 1). Times: 7:30 am-5:30 pm.

Camp Gan Israel of the East Valley: 875 N McClintock Dr., Chandler | 480-855-4333 | youth@chabadcenter.com For ages 4-12. Dec. 22 and 23.

Holiday Sports Camps at BEST: Beginners Edge Sports Training, 7000 E Shea Blvd., Suites 1830-1840, Scottsdale | 623-748-9453 | thebestinaz.com

Full, half and single days available Dec. 22, 23 & 26; and Dec. 29, 30 & Jan. 2. 8:45 am-5:15 pm.

Playwright Mark Medoff reflects on life as play opens in Phoenix

By Janet Arnold

Of the 12 guys on Mark Medoff's championship high school basketball team, one became a grocery store manager, Mark himself became a writer/producer/director/actor/professor and the rest became doctors or lawyers. Perhaps that's because he grew up in the largely Jewish community of Miami Beach, FL.

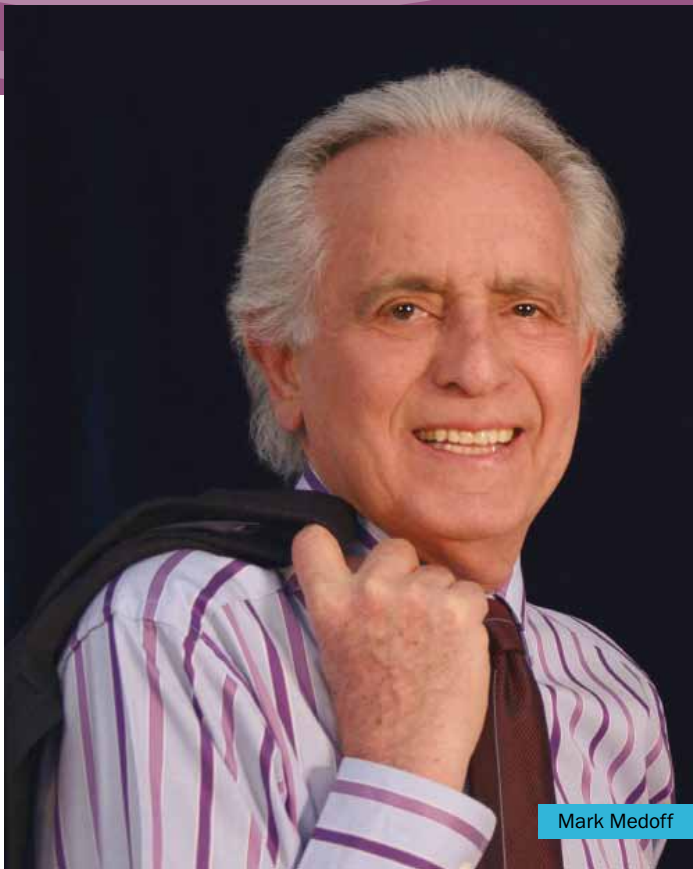
"Most people think there are only hotels in Miami Beach, but there was my high school and a couple of private ones as well. Everything closed down for the High Holidays," says Mark.

Mark played basketball for the Miami Beach Hi-Tides. "Our team wasn't short, though," he insists. "In fact, one of the stars from my high school was 6' 10" Neal Walk, who went on to be a member of the Phoenix Suns." Both Mark and Neal were inducted into the Miami Beach High School Hall of Fame several years ago.

Set on the trajectory to become a doctor like so many of his friends, Mark was sidetracked by a comment from a high school teacher that he had writing talent. That praise was just the impetus he needed to turn in a new direction. "Fortunately, to their credit, my parents were wonderful about my wanting to pursue writing. They supported me both financially and emotionally."

After attaining his bachelor's degree from University of Miami and his master's from Stanford, Mark began teaching at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces to subsidize his writing. He soon fell in love with the profession and is still an active professor at NMSU. "The students really keep me engaged. I love going into the classroom, and the university has given me the freedom to teach whatever I want."

Mark's life changed dramatically in 1979 when he wrote the play "Children of a Lesser God." After opening at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles, the play, about the relationship between a woman who is deaf and her teacher, ran for 887 performances on Broadway and earned Mark a Tony Award for best play. In 1986 he adapted the play for the movie, starring Marlee Matlin and William Hurt, and received an



Mark Medoff

Academy Award nomination.

Mark was recently honored by NMSU as a professor of English literature, theater and film. The star-studded gala was called "Far From Finished" and featured actor Jeffrey Tambor as emcee, as well as a video greeting from Neil Patrick Harris, whom Mark discovered as a young teenager.

The event raised funds for a new endowment at the college to establish the Mark Medoff Visiting Lecture Endowment. First up on the lecture circuit next spring will be Aaron Sorkin, the famed Academy and Emmy Award-winning screenwriter, producer and playwright.

Mark and his wife, Stephanie, are generous donors to NMSU through the Mark and Stephanie Medoff Endowment and several other endowments they have established. Mark also supports the work of his students, often acting as producer or director for them. Whenever he can, he makes sure the students are an integral part of whatever project he undertakes.

Mark and Stephanie have three daughters; the two older live in Las Cruces. They have seven grandchildren there. His youngest daughter, Jessica, is an opera singer who lives in New York, though she is currently acting in a film project with her father in New Mexico. Jessica is expecting the Medoff's eighth grandchild this winter. "We're



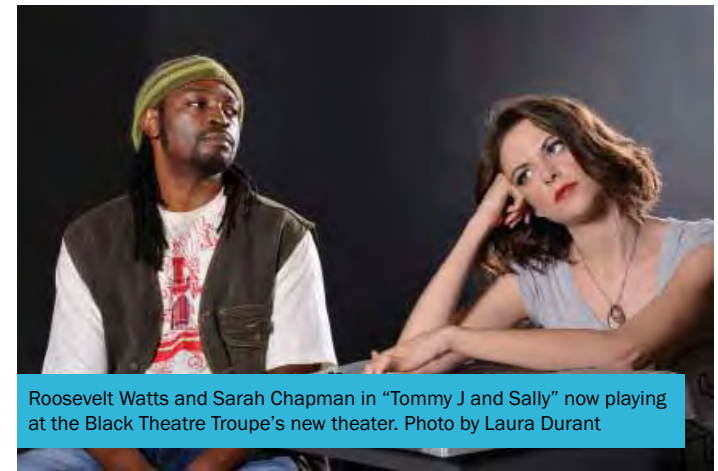
From left Jeffrey Tambor ("Arrested Development," "Transparent"); Mark Medoff; and former student Don Foster, who is one of the producers of "Two and a Half Men" and "Big Bang Theory," at the Sept. 6 gala honoring Mark for his body of work during his tenure at New Mexico State University. Photo by Mike Groves Photography

a very close family," Mark says. "We think of ourselves as an extremely functional family in a rather dysfunctional world."

Mark hopes to be able to come to Phoenix in December to see the production of "Tommy J and Sally," now at the Black Theatre Troupe. In 2000 he wrote the play, which was commissioned by the Kennedy Center.

"The original stirrings of the play came to me when there had been a shooting at my daughter's junior high school," says Mark. "All the parents got together, but no one knew what to do. A few of us started an integrated writing after-school program called Another Planet. We included both at-risk kids as well as those who were more traditionally middle class. They acted as conduits for the information and took it back to their schools. Then we started collecting the writings they created; we took them all the way to our state legislature.

"Several years later, one of the African-American young men who had been in the program came walking up our driveway. I was out of town at the time, but had been thinking about him. He told Stephanie his family had moved to Riverside, CA, and



Roosevelt Watts and Sarah Chapman in "Tommy J and Sally" now playing at the Black Theatre Troupe's new theater. Photo by Laura Durant

that life was very difficult for him there. Stephanie and I talked it over and offered to take him into our home to live with us and finish high school in New Mexico. We helped him through college and he is now in graduate school. In fact, he came by just the other day and dazzled my students with his intelligence and articulateness. He's like our adopted son."

The play takes various turns through artistic license that did not occur in reality, but the idea was incubated in the Medoff home. "Tommy J and Sally" involves two characters, a young African-American man and a famous white pop singer, who is presumably Jewish. Over the course of one evening, their confrontations and conversations take them to many places, including the impact of the Jewish culture on race relations.

The play continues through Dec. 14.

"Tommy J and Sally"

WHAT: Play by Mark Medoff, directed by Arizona Jewish Life's Associate Editor Janet Arnold

WHEN: Continues through Dec. 14; Performance times vary
Post-show discussions after the matinees on Dec. 6 and 14

WHERE: Black Theatre Troupe's new theater, 1333 E Washington, Phoenix

TICKETS (prices vary): 602-258-8129, blacktheatretroupe.org

BLACK THEATRE TROUPE presents Tommy J & Sally By Mark Medoff Directed by Janet Arnold

An African-American man, Tommy J, suddenly appears at the Manhattan loft of Sally Hemmings, a famous white pop singer insisting that her real name is Madeline Rosenberg, a girl shaped by her Jewish culture, who's since reinvented herself. *Tommy J & Sally* looks at race relations from both sides of the color line.

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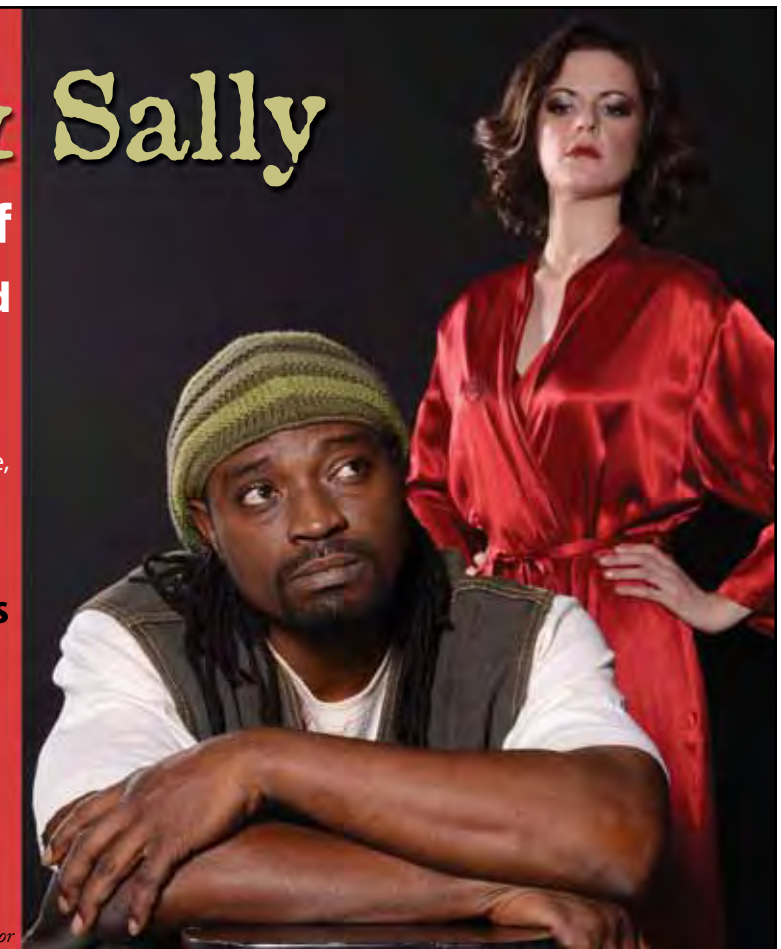
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Homes with heart are fashionable

By Kira Brown

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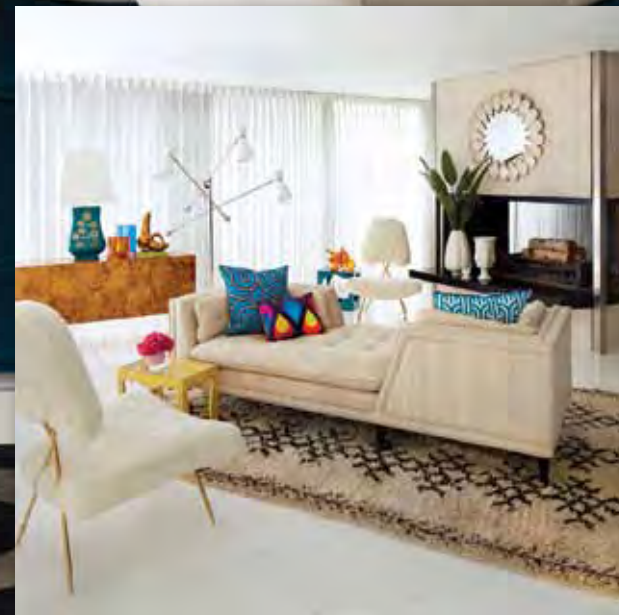
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Seniors

Sid Brodtkin, 89, still living the American dream

By Sarah Chen

At age 89, Arizona author Sheldon Sid Brodtkin has achieved longevity threefold: in marriage, in health and in business. Equally sharp and optimistic when envisioning the future as when recalling the past, Brodtkin personifies the spirit that has propelled him through his World War II Navy service, his 60-year career in business sales and his 61-year marriage to his wife, Sally, his "bella sposa" (beautiful bride). He is friendly, sharp as a tack and doesn't linger in the past. He and Sally have a daughter, Gwen, who lives in Connecticut.

"Each day should be a new life for a wise person," Brodtkin says, referencing a fellow author he admires, Dale Carnegie, of *How to Win Friends and Influence People* fame. "You have to keep moving forward."

Growing up impoverished in the Borough Park area of Brooklyn, NY, in the 1940s was wrenching for Brodtkin. "The impact is still with me," he explains. "I knew one thing I wanted out of life: I didn't want to be poor."

Childhood dreams of playing baseball for the Brooklyn Dodgers were delayed by schooling and a part-time job delivering telegrams for Western Union, an experience he credits with giving him a strong work ethic. He graduated in 1943 and, after passing a civil service exam, began working as an assistant storekeeper for the 3rd Naval District and preparing to go to war against Japan.

"Most Americans still don't understand the significance of Aug. 6, 1945," Brodtkin says. "But that was the day our entire barracks erupted into cheers of joy at the news of the Hiroshima bombings. We were working with the Marines, training to invade Japan as ground fodder." Victory for the United States meant a new chance for Brodtkin to work on his boxing, a sport he always loved and wanted to train formally for.



Sheldon Sid and Sally Brodtkin at a 2011 book signing at Mostly Books in Tucson.

But his mother was hard-set against his prospects in baseball or boxing, so he placed a free advertisement for returning veterans for employment and was hired by Rudin and Roth, a hosiery partnership. "I loved the business, it was challenging and exciting," he recalls. "(The partners) were like big brothers to me."

Eventually the partners offered him a share of ownership, and he advanced quickly through the ranks of salesman, mill agent and manager. Brodtkin left the firm as president in 1972 after watching the business evolve from a simple operation to a national enterprise with seven U.S. factories, including one in Puerto Rico.

Seeking a fresh start, he and Sally relocated to Tucson at the encouragement of their friend "Big Sam" Valler, who extolled his childhood home in Nogales to the couple. They've owned their Catalina Foothills home for more than 40 years. Not content to retire into boredom, the couple plunged into Tucson life. Sally became involved in Hadassah, Sid continued to work as a regional sales broker for the hosiery industry.

During his sales work, he developed a unique product, Bubby Hosiery, a one-size cotton and stretch fabric blend of stocking well-suited to female seniors. After local testing and a trial at Good Housekeeping magazine, the product sold well. When Brodtkin reached what he termed "the point of diminishing returns" with his stockings, he sold the business.

He reflected with great affection on the kind letters he received from women he'd helped over the years. "I truly felt I had done a mitzvah for these ladies," he says of their messages, "and I carry that good feeling with me today."

At his retirement, he was presented with a plaque that credits him with selling one billion pairs of socks in 25 years, "unquestionably the number one hosiery salesman of all times."

Ever the sportsman, Brodtkin turned to golf. "I love golf!" Brodtkin says gleefully. "Although it took me years to realize I wasn't swinging a bat!" Despite two knee replacements, two hip replacements and one shoulder replacement surgery, Brodtkin claims he's still going strong. "You have to keep up with your exercise in your life ... it's all connected."

One of Brodtkin's favorite hobbies is gaming. He recalls evolving from shooting craps in a cellar in Brooklyn to playing



Sally and Sheldon Sid Brodtkin married June 14, 1953, in Brooklyn, NY.

cards in the Navy to his first trip to Las Vegas in 1958 with a dear friend to the grand opening of the Tropicana Hotel. His favorite game is craps, a game about which he claims, "most don't understand the game and are too intimidated." His friendships with Las Vegas gamers and hoteliers during the early construction boom served as inspiration for the two books he's written.

The first book, *Boro Park, Vegas, and All the In-Betweens*, published in 2009, is a fictional narrative loosely based on his friendship with Ash Resnick, a childhood sports hero of Brodtkin's who later became a casino executive, sports promoter and a close friend. The second book, *A Las Vegas Memoir: Ash Resnick and Me*, published last spring, details their actual friendship as adults. Brodtkin is planning a third book, *The Maker*, a tale exploring the intersection of Hollywood movie optioning and the gaming industry.

Asked where he gets his inspiration, Brodtkin taps his head, winks and says with a smile, "I've lived a long time, I've seen a lot." He and Sally have put off moving into a retirement home, laughing at their decision. "Every three years we shrug and say, 'Ack! Let's wait another three.'"

Sarah Chen is a freelance writer in Tucson.



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Seniors



■ Phyllis Novy ■ inspires senior improv troupe

By Janet Arnold

The ImproVables perform throughout the Valley, bringing laughter with them.

Phyllis Novy has a long career of teaching and theater. She taught English to teenagers for 15 years at South Mountain High School in Phoenix and was also education director for Phoenix Children's Theatre, which provided theater opportunities for young people for more than 50 years in the Valley. With her master's in theater from Arizona State University, she taught acting, theater history and creative drama at ASU as well.

So she wasn't far outside her comfort zone when she joined Sun Lakes Community Theatre after moving to that area of the Valley about eight years ago. But "being just a member" is not the way Phyllis does things. She soon proposed to her fellow thespians that she would like to start an improvisational troupe for seniors. Improv is generally considered an aggressive form of humor; you can't sit passively by, you have to keep things going, jumping in when needed and keeping the material moving along. It's not for the faint of heart!

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Short-form improv probably came into the general national consciousness through the TV show “Whose Line Is It Anyway?” Long-form improv has a different format; as the name implies it deals more with developing scenes and stories from audience suggestions. “We perform short form because it’s fun,” says Phyllis. “It’s on-your-feet thinking, working together cooperatively, helping each other.” The audience throws out ideas, and the troupe incorporates those into the framework of various types of improv games.

Phyllis now runs The ImproVables, a troupe of 15 active adults ages 50-80 in Sun Lakes, along with her co-leader Howard Hummel. “Starting something from scratch and directing were new to me. Fortunately, Howard and his wife, Andrea, were former drama teachers with just those skill sets! Everyone is very involved. We take turns with lesson plans and leading sessions and make sure that everyone rotates in and out of the games,” Phyllis explains.

The troupe includes folks of all skills levels who come from all walks of life. There are former lawyers and teachers, some with theater backgrounds, and even a former dentist who was also a stand-up comedian. Not one except Phyllis had ever performed improv prior to joining the troupe.

Seven of the troupe members including Phyllis happen to be



Sun Lakes Community Theatre has about 150 members and produces three or four mainstage shows a year, performed at three country clubs in the area: Cottonwood, Oakwood and Sun Lakes. Phyllis Novy recently appeared as a gangster’s moll in “Trouble at the Tropic Cabana.”

Jewish. When asked if she thought having “Jewish moxie” was helpful in improv, Phyllis said instead she believes that the Jewish concept of “acceptance” is key. “In improv, you always say ‘yes’ or else a scene just ends! There is a great cooperative feeling among the members.”

Phyllis is a member of Sun Lakes Jewish Congregation as well as a Life Member of Hadassah. In October 2012 she celebrated her adult bat mitzvah through the congregation along with 14 other congregants.

The ImproVables felt honored to be invited to perform at the national conference of The Association for Theatre in Higher Education, held this summer in Scottsdale. The troupe performs regularly throughout the Valley. They charge a minimal amount for performances and then donate the proceeds to the theater departments at the nearby Chandler high schools. They’re willing to perform just about anywhere: meetings, social events, bar/bat mitzvahs. To arrange a performance, just contact Phyllis at improv@slctinfo.com.

“It’s such a great group,” Phyllis says with a smile. “We’re like a support group for each other. We’re friends who love each other – and love to perform and bring laughter to folks.”

All the members are proud to be, as their tagline proclaims, The Laughing Stock of Sun Lakes!

Travel



Dan Fellner (center) poses with his students at the 2014 Fulbright International Summer Institute in Bulgaria.

Dan Fellner bit by travel bug on Israel trip

By Deborah Moon

Dan Fellner’s first extensive overseas trip was a 1987 visit to Israel. He says the trip “got me hooked on international travel ... and fueled my desire to learn about Jewish communities in foreign countries.”

Since then Fellner has visited about 115 countries (including a return to Israel in 1997) and has received multiple grants from the prestigious Fulbright program. Now the Arizona State University faculty member is headed for Bulgaria on his third Fulbright Scholar Grant to Eastern Europe. He’s also received two Fulbright Senior Specialist Grants and has gone to Bulgaria four times to teach a one-week intensive course in communications at the Fulbright International Summer Institute.

His specialist grants took him to teach at universities in Lithuania and Latvia. His previous scholar grants took him to Latvia and Moldova. With this third scholar grant, he will spend the spring semester teaching journalism and communications at the American University in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria.

The benefits of his fellowships are not limited to his overseas students. He has been able to share his experiences in Eastern Europe with his students at ASU, where he teaches courses in communications and English and is a faculty affiliate with ASU’s Melikian Center for Russian, Eurasian and East European Studies.

“I usually make an effort to connect with the Jewish community when I travel,” says Fellner. “No matter how many miles I am from home, meeting and praying with other Jews – even if we don’t speak the same language – helps alleviate the culture shock and makes me feel less homesick.”

“I usually make an effort to connect with the Jewish community when I travel,” says Fellner. “No matter how many miles I am from home, meeting and praying with other Jews – even if we don’t speak the same language – helps alleviate the culture shock and makes me feel less homesick.”

A highlight of his previous Fulbright Scholar Grants was having his parents, Irv and Eileen Fellner, visit him in Latvia and Moldova for a month in each country.

“In both countries, we went to community Passover seders together, which were two of the most meaningful and interesting seders I’ve ever attended,” says Fellner. “My dad passed away in 2007, one year after the Moldova visit.”

His father’s job as a social worker for

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the federal government brought the family to Tempe from New York when Fellner was 12. Just a few months later, he became a bar mitzvah at Temple Beth Sholom – then located in downtown Mesa, now in Chandler. He has five siblings, three of whom still live in the Phoenix area. Fellner earned two journalism degrees – a bachelor’s from ASU and a master’s from Ohio State University. Following graduation he worked in public relations for 10 years and worked in television news in four cities. Then in 1998 he joined ASU as a faculty associate. “I did some teaching in graduate school and found it fulfilling and challenging,” says Fellner, discussing his career shift. “I’ve always been comfortable in academic settings and working with young people. Also, teaching affords me a lot of time – between semesters and during the summer – to write and travel.”

In addition to his teaching, Fellner is a freelance travel writer and photographer (including his piece in this month’s Arizona Jewish Life about Jewish life in Fairbanks, Alaska; see page 50). He has written magazine and newspaper articles about Jewish life in South Africa, Japan, Ecuador, Thailand, Ukraine, Latvia, Serbia, Hong Kong, Mexico, Malta, Vietnam and Barbados. His published travel writing and photography can be viewed at Global-Travel-Info.com.

Frozen Chosen

Jewish community small, but enduring

By Dan Fellner

They proudly call themselves “the frozen chosen.” It’s a clever moniker, and one that fits. Located less than 150 miles south of the Arctic Circle, the small and tight-knit Jewish community of Fairbanks, Alaska, must endure long, dark and brutally cold winters in a remote place where being an observant Jew can be as taxing as the Iditarod dog race.

Yet Congregation Or HaTzaon (Light of the North) has remained intact for more than 30 years. And despite a membership of only about 50 families, it has even managed to acquire and maintain its own house of worship. At a latitude of 65 degrees north, this gives it the distinction of being the northernmost synagogue in the entire world. (Trondheim, Norway, is a close second. There is a Jewish congregation in Murmansk, Russia, that is farther north than Fairbanks, but it does not have a permanent synagogue).

I recently had the opportunity to visit Or HaTzaon and meet with four of the congregation’s leaders during a visit to Alaska’s interior on a Holland America land tour following a cruise on the 1,450-passenger Volendam from Vancouver, Canada,

Fellner, who first visited Eastern Europe in 1991, says he has enjoyed watching the dramatic transformation of the area since the fall of Communism in the region. Over that time he has seen some Jewish communities decline in size as older Jews pass away and younger Jews emigrate to Israel, Western Europe and the United States.

“But in other places, I’ve seen a rebirth of Jewish life,” says Fellner. “I recently visited Ljubljana, Slovenia, and went to the small synagogue there. Until the synagogue opened just a few years ago, Ljubljana had been the only European capital city without a Jewish house of worship. The fact that every single capital city in Europe now has at least one Jewish house of worship is amazing and heartwarming to me, considering the near extinction of Jewish life in Eastern Europe during the Holocaust.”

As a member of the Speaker’s Bureau of the Arizona Humanities Council, he gives talks to organizations about Jewish life in Eastern Europe.

“Ever since I was a child, I’ve been interested in studying geography and learning about different cultures,” he says. “I’m blessed to have jobs – teaching and travel writing – that give me the opportunity to travel to so many fascinating places.”



to Skagway, Alaska. When I found out I would have a free afternoon in Fairbanks, I sent an email to the temple. Within minutes, I received a response inviting me for a visit.

Before my arrival in Alaska, I wanted to learn more about the Jewish presence in the country’s 49th state. I discovered that Jews have played a surprisingly prominent role in Alaska’s history ever since it was purchased from Russia in 1867. Initially, Jews were heavily involved in the fur trade. At the end of the 19th century, Lewis Gerstle, a Jewish steamboat operator, provided transportation to the Yukon during the famous Klondike Gold Rush. An Alaskan river now bears Gerstle’s name.

In 1920, a Jew named David Leopold was elected mayor of Anchorage. Ernest Gruening, a doctor and journalist originally from New York, served as governor of the Alaska Territory from 1939-1953 and was elected one of Alaska’s first two U.S. senators when it achieved statehood in 1959. During the cruise, I visited the state capitol building in Juneau and found a bust of Gruening on the second floor. An inscription beneath the statue calls Gruening “the father of Alaskan statehood.”

Fairbanks was established in 1902, and just two years later its Jewish community was founded with the arrival of Robert Bloom. Originally from Lithuania, Bloom ran a general store in Fairbanks until 1941. He was one of the founders of the University of Alaska and led the city’s Jewish community for nearly a half-century. In the Clay Street Cemetery, just a block from my downtown hotel, I was able to see the Hebrew headstones of some of Fairbanks’ first Jewish residents.

Today, there are an estimated 6,000 Jews living in Alaska. Of those, some 40% belong to the state’s three synagogues – two in Anchorage (a Reform temple and a Chabad congregation) and Or HaTzaon in Fairbanks. Only about 6% of Alaskan Jews were actually born in the state.

Interestingly, a study in the 1990s by a professor at Brandeis University found that Alaskan Jews are actually more observant than those in the lower 48 states. “Rather than this move to Alaska being an expression of assimilation, the first things that they do is try to connect up with other Jews,” wrote Professor Bernard Reisman, who added that contrary to public opinion, Alaska “is not a Jewish wasteland.”

Fairbanks has a large U.S. military presence, and Jewish chaplains brought in by the military to meet the needs of GIs sustained the city’s Jewish community from the early 1940s until the 1980s. But by then, military numbers had dwindled and the Jewish chaplaincy ended, leaving the civilian community on its own.

In 1980, the Jewish Congregation of Fairbanks was incorporated. During its early years, the congregation used facilities at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks and Fort Wainwright to hold religious services and Sunday school classes.

I walked three miles from my hotel to Or HaTzaon, which is located in a quiet residential area near the University of Alaska-Fairbanks. On the way, I passed several nondescript strip malls, a migratory waterfowl refuge and a store selling gear to gold prospectors.

Or HaTzaon, a Reform congregation, may not be a visually aesthetic temple, but its mere presence is – in some ways – as inspiring as some of the most architecturally splendid synagogues I’ve visited in Europe. Built in the 1970s as a residential duplex, the building was later converted into a day-care center. It was purchased in 1992 by the congregation for \$80,000, with another \$50,000 needed for renovations.

“We had two or three sugar daddies,” recalls Brenda Baxter, a member of the congregation since 1986 who now winters in Tucson. “Within a year, we paid off the mortgage.”

The temple can’t afford a full-time rabbi, but each summer brings in a student chaplain to conduct services. For the past two summers, Kenneth Feibush, a 26-year-old cantorial student

at the Hebrew-Union College in New York, has completed internships at the temple. He likes the informality of the congregation, which allows him to try some things that might not fly in a more traditional East Coast synagogue.

“Everyone here is open to new ideas,” says Feibush, who lives at the synagogue when in Fairbanks. “I’m glad to be a part of that and to help shape the community.”

For the High Holy Days, the congregation brings in a retired rabbi from Juneau. For the rest of the year, services are led by members of the temple. Thad Keener, a fifth-grade teacher in Fairbanks and past president of the congregation, says not having a full-time rabbinical presence suits the personality of the congregation just fine.

“We’re a diverse community and we come from so many different parts of the country with our own different upbringings,” he says. “So we come here with an Alaskan, individualistic kind of thinking. We don’t want just one show in town. So the lay leadership allows for this kind of variety.”

The congregation enjoys solid relationships with various churches in Fairbanks, and for the past 17 years has even staged an annual Jewish film festival during the winter. Last year, about 300 people – most of them non-Jews – attended six different movies related to Jewish topics.

Feibush says that during his two summers here, he has been impressed by the closeness of the Jewish community, noting an

extremely high turnout for bar mitzvahs and other family events.

“Here, we are each other’s family,” he says. “There’s a mutual love for each other that’s really something special.”

Like many small congregations, Or HaTzaon has financial challenges. Heating costs alone are about \$7,000 a year. The congregation has come up with a creative way to raise money – selling “Frozen Chosen” T-shirts in its gift shop. The shirts, which cost \$22, feature icicles hanging from the upper bar of a Star of David.

To inquire about purchasing a shirt, visiting the temple or making a donation, contact the temple at orhatzaon@mosquiconet.com.

Some other northerly synagogues have filched Or HaTzaon’s “frozen chosen” slogan. But the congregation’s leaders say that no other temple can use the phrase with as much conviction.

“As the farthest north, we’re a little more frozen,” says Feibush with a smile.

Dan Fellner is an adjunct professor at Arizona State University and freelance travel writer. His website is Global-Travel-Info.com.



CHEF'S CORNER



HANUKKAH GELT GONE WILD

By Lucia Schnitzer

Photos by Matthew Strauss

I recently looked inside my pantry and discovered bags of silver and gold chocolate gelt left over from last Hanukkah. So what to do with all those mesh bags of chocolate coins?

- A) Reuse them as gifts for the kids this Hanukkah.
- B) Save them for the next birthday party's piñata.
- C) Get wild with chocolate gelt in delectable recipes.

"C" is the answer I chose, and boy did my family go crazy with every bite. Get creative and come up with your own concoction using your gelt or other chocolate that's been hiding out for a rainy day. Remember the gelt in gold foil is milk chocolate, and the silver foil is dark chocolate. Enjoy and Happy Hanukkah!

Peanut Butter Chocolate Parfaits

Chocolate layer:

2 Taza Dominican 70% dark stone ground chocolate bars, chopped
½ cup cream
Combine chocolate and cream in a small saucepan and place over low heat, stirring often until melted. Keep warm until ready to use.

Peanut butter layer:

½ cup peanut butter
2 ounces cream cheese
¼ cup sugar (NO sugar if using sweet chocolate)
2 tablespoons milk
Pinch of salt
In a bowl mix together peanut butter, cream cheese, sugar, milk and salt until smooth.

To assemble:

4 six-ounce jars
2 small peanut bars
2 cups crushed oatmeal cookies
Chocolate covered cocoa nibs, for garnish
Divide half the crushed cookies among the jars; top with half of the peanut butter mixture and half of the chocolate. Repeat with remaining ingredients and top with chocolate covered nibs.
Note: These parfaits can be assembled a day (or even two days) in advance.

Lucia Schnitzer and her husband, Ken, own Luci's Healthy Marketplace in Phoenix. The local coffee shop and marketplace opened in

Chocolate and Cheese Panini

(makes one sandwich)

Ingredients

2 slices challah or other bread
3-4 ounces of Brie (or ricotta or mascarpone)
3-4 pieces of Hanukkah gelt (dark, milk or semi-sweet)
Strawberries (or favorite fruit or preserves)
Butter

Instructions

Butter one side of each slice of bread. Lay on cutting board, buttered side down.
Layer slices of brie, chocolate and strawberries on the non-buttered side of the bread and close the sandwich, buttered sides out.
Place sandwich onto a pan over medium low heat. Flip over when one side is toasted and repeat with the other side.
Cook until cheese and chocolate are melted and then serve immediately.

2009 in Lucia's honor after her successful battle with breast cancer. She successfully manages her career, her growing family (four children), her personal well-being and the countless demands of the day.



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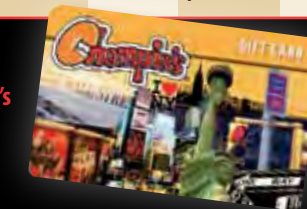
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Where do JEWISH PEOPLE EAT?

By A. Noshman

As a native, I love all things Arizona – except for the politics. Newly opened Southern Rail Restaurant is steeped in Arizona history, as it takes over the former location of Jay Newton's Beef Eaters restaurant. Built in 1961, Beef Eaters was a sprawling English-themed celebration of steak and prime rib. This special occasion restaurant and Sunday brunch mecca hosted Hollywood stars, political heavyweights and adoring beef lovers celebrating birthdays and anniversaries.

What a pleasure it was to discover pieces of the old restaurant intact in the stunning makeover by the people of Beckett's Table (reviewed in AZJL March 2014). The grand foyer still stands and the Beef Eaters logo is still etched into the concrete near the entrance; best of all, there is a row of original leather booths under the giant chandeliers from the old restaurant. You will also find the grand fire place intact if you explore a bit. It's a perfect marriage of the old and the new, making the place quite stylish. There is a ton of outdoor seating that Beef Eaters never had, a Changing Hands bookstore (also Phoenix based by the Shanks family) and a rentable venue as part of the renovation. All of this is under one roof called The Newton Phoenix. All great stuff, but my friend and I are focused on one thing because neither of us has eaten all day.

Southern Rail boasts "flavors of the American south," but I've never experienced twists on the classics like they have accomplished. Over the course of a couple of visits, here's what we had:

Mama's Ruin, \$9

(Aviation and Half Moon Orchard apple gin, apple juice lime juice, housemade honey syrup, Arizona Bitter Lab orange sunshine bitters)

Served chilled in a martini glass, this refreshing drink was deemed "dangerous" on the first sip. There was definitely alcohol in there, but it was undetectable. Instead, it seemed like biting into a juicy apple with hints of citrus. Look out!

Pull-Apart Brioche Rolls with Apple Butter, \$6

Again with the apples, but it seemed an appropriate follow-up to soak up the cocktail. The buns come cutely delivered in their baking dish with a side of decidedly homemade apple butter. "Just like my grandma made," my friend said of the apple butter. No higher praise than that. The rolls were golden brown, slightly salty and firm. I would have liked them a little softer, but we ate every single one.

Southern Rail \$\$\$

300 W. Camelback Rd
Phoenix, AZ 85013
602-200-0085
southernrailaz.com



House-Smoked Trout, \$12

(sweet pea cake, spiced tomato jam)

A beautifully presented small plate arrived, and I tried to dig in before it had been set down. My friend had to stop me to remind me to "take a picture first." Let's face it, I'm a sucker for anything smoked, and I love trout. I will save you time by telling you upfront that I never put my fork down. The trout fillet was served cold over a warm bed of sweet pea cake with a dollop of tomato jam. The fish was wonderfully smoky, delicate and flavorful. The real surprise was the sweet pea cake, a mixture of cornmeal and mashed peas, formed and sautéed to a crisp on the outside and a delightful mush on the inside. The spiced tomato jam was a sweet, almost candy-like condiment that complemented the explosion of flavor and textures on the plate. This is a must have.



Chicken and Biscuit Dumplings, \$18

Another wonderfully presented dish arrives, and I am again reminded to take a picture first. I promise to describe this in full detail because it deserves to be, but I can sum it up pretty quickly. It's like all the flavors of thanksgiving packed into one bite. Yes, it's that good. I know Thanksgiving is about turkey, but the biscuits are seasoned like stuffing, and it's all swimming in gravy with generous portions of tender poultry. The tongue tricks the mind and "Voila!" – all the comfort of a thanksgiving meal sits in the bowl in front of you.

It's like a stew with all of the flavors melding together over chunks of seasoned biscuits that retain some crispness. There are heirloom vegetables and you have to make a decision whether to eat this with a fork or a spoon. I used both.

Two Beignets with Powdered Sugar, \$6

Our plate came with three on it, how smart was that? Our server knew one wasn't enough and playfully left us one to split. What is there to say about fried cake covered in powdered sugar except "Yum!" They were hot and made fresh, but I had one regret. Our server offered us coffee of course, but it was late in the evening and I turned it down. The first bite of beignet made me want coffee. As we were leaving, I gave the menu one last glance and noticed they serve chicory coffee. "Oy!" I would have loved that. Now for sure I'm going back.

Southern Rail is a refreshing take on both classic southern cooking and classic Phoenix. It's a successful marriage of food, architecture, business partners and those of us fond of both the past and what the future will bring. There's a nod in the name to the light rail running by the restaurant. This place is just as smart as it is delicious. I will see you there.



Contact A. Noshman at a.noshman@azjewishlife.com

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Israeli Arab unrest parallels violence surrounding Temple Mount

By Mylan Tanzer

Whether we like it or not, every now and then we get a serious reminder of where we live and how our very normal daily routine of work, school, family, stating our opinion and going wherever we want whenever we want is anything but normal in this neighborhood. Israelis' normalcy is actually an astonishing accomplishment that requires supreme effort to maintain. But just as flooding occasionally hits low regions protected by dikes, even with Israelis' robust democratic, Western lifestyle, the forces that try to savagely disrupt this routine do occasionally succeed. When this happens, we are reminded of the high price in human suffering that we pay to live in what is termed "the villa in the jungle."

We had hoped that our "where we live reminder" had reached its quota during Operation Protective Edge. After the 50 days of incoming missiles and the deaths of civilians and so many soldiers, we hoped to get back to normalcy for a few years – at least, until the need again arose to take up arms to protect ourselves.

Complete normalcy in Israel is relative, because the daily threats against Israeli security forces and civilians in Israel and abroad are always present. These dangers are mostly thwarted, but just like the dikes that allow daily life to continue in low-lying areas, some storms inevitably cause damage.

The new murderous Palestinian fad of running over Israelis at bus and light-rail stops in Jerusalem (with one incident in Tel Aviv) and stabbing those who avoid the oncoming vehicle of death has brought us back to our siege mentality of the second intifada over a decade ago. The recent violent unrest amongst Israeli Arabs, triggered by the police shooting in the village of Kafr Kana of a resident who attacked a police car with a knife, and the Jerusalem violence caused by incitement surrounding the Temple Mount are two ugly and frightening conflagrations running on parallel but separate tracks. The two seem to morph into one immense wave of hatred, giving us once again the feeling of living under siege.

Are we seeing the beginning of another intifada? Most believe it is still too early to tell, but there is an eerie déjà vu in the air, and I have begun to think twice about doing some things and going to some places and where my kids are. Alex Fishman recently wrote in Yediot: "This is the sad soundtrack of the intifada. You had just barely digested the first terrorist attack and you are already hearing about the next one and your heart misses a beat because you know another one is on its way. ... The despair for you and your family's personal security takes hold and without waiting for instructions, you already consider whether or not to go to Jerusalem, whether or not to get on the bus, wait for a train or go through the nearest Arab town. If this insanity is not stopped now, we will find ourselves in the same dark days of the second intifada."

The recent round of violence and mayhem began in East Jerusalem (even though its Palestinian population are Israeli citizens, they do not view themselves as Israeli Arabs). The capital has borne the brunt so far of this new Palestinian

aggression of striking out at Israelis with a car, van or bulldozer. Similar to the suicide bomber, the driver in a vehicular attack has prepared to die in the act of murdering as many Jews as possible, revealing yet again the death-worshiping aspect of militant Islam.

Protecting the honor of "Al-Quds" (Jerusalem in Arabic) in the face of "Zionist desecration" is the rallying cry of the drivers with a death wish. A Jerusalem Post editorial wrote that the Facebook activity of one of these Hamas-affiliated terrorists revealed "a religious zealot consumed with a faith-based anxiety disorder concerning Haram al Sharif, which Jews and Christians call the Temple Mount." That same day, Jordan recalled its ambassador in protest of Israel's purported desecration of the Aksa Mosque. The Wakf Islamic trust overseeing the Temple Mount accused the Israeli police of going deep into the mosque. It apparently was irrelevant that this "intrusion" was part of an attempt to keep order and track down rioters who regularly hide in the mosque. A large cache of stones, bottles and Molotov cocktails was found in the Aksa Mosque, a stark example of how the borders between worship and faith-inspired violence are blurred in radical Islam.

Insisting on being offended, Jordanian Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh said, "These violations are infuriating the emotions and the sensitivity of 1.5 billion Muslims around the world." Amman said it was reassessing its 20-year-old peace treaty with Israel. Not surprisingly, Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu chimed in and called on "the world and the Muslim community to protect al-Aksa Mosque" and termed any Israeli presence on the Mount as "utter cruelty."

Those who perpetrated the violence on the streets of Jerusalem and made threats in diplomatic channels pretended to be oblivious to the clear messages issued by Prime Minister Netanyahu on nearly a daily basis that the government has no intention of changing the "status quo." Since the Six Day War, Israel policy prohibits Jews from praying on the Temple Mount and gives Muslim authorities full custodian rights, while Israel retains security control.

Even Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman tried to help calm the Muslim world by lashing out at right-wing Knesset members whom he claims have contributed to escalating tension in and around Jerusalem by visiting the Temple Mount recently. As I write this in mid-November, Netanyahu and PA President Abbas flew to Amman to meet Jordan's King Abdullah and John Kerry and jointly call for an end to the violence and incitement around the Temple Mount issue.

Netanyahu again assured the leaders that Israel did not intend to change the status quo on the Mount. He also told the King that Israel respected the Jordanian monarchy's role as custodian of the Muslim holy places in Jerusalem, including the Aksa compound. It should be pointed out that Abbas refused to participate in the meeting with Netanyahu.

The Post editorial concluded: "None of these welcome gestures should be confused with a justification of murderous vehicular attacks on innocent civilians. By no stretch of the imagination can the desire of a few Jews to pray at what they believe to

be the holiest site in the world be construed as justification for violence, for scrapping a mutually beneficial peace treaty, for downgrading diplomatic ties, for rioting. If anything, the senseless and murderous violence directed at random pedestrians reveals a depraved religious mentality; the hypersensitivity to real or perceived insult belies a supreme insecurity and a proclivity for playing the victim."

Israel's 1967 decision to forbid Jews from praying on the Temple Mount in order to keep the peace has, ironically, made the issue a lightning rod that right-wing politicians and activists take advantage of by using their right to visit. As Liberman requested, they should agree to temporarily forgo this right to visit the Temple Mount, and hopefully they will refrain from statements and actions that might escalate tensions.

But make no mistake, ultimately it is the religious and ideological fanaticism of a large swath of the Muslim world that is fueling the unrest and the violence. No amount of explaining and reassuring will change this sad fact.

And here lies the link to the rioting amongst Israeli Arabs. In the weeks preceding the Kafr Kana police shooting, with the Jerusalem violence in full swing, there was no unrest in the Arab towns and villages of Israel. Only after the incident in Kafr Kana did all hell break loose in Arab areas at what was perceived as the unjustified murder of an Israeli Arab at the hands of Jewish policeman, although video from the incident clearly shows the victim attacking the police vehicle and threatening the policemen.

While Israeli Arabs are full citizens and enjoy a standard of living and freedom almost completely unheard of in the Arab world, more can be done to reduce the discrepancy in resources and infrastructure between the Jewish and Arab sectors and to fight discrimination. Therefore, while the Kafr Kana incident might be a kind of Israeli "Ferguson, Missouri" issue, it quickly became something much less justified and far more sinister.

As in Ferguson, the spark that lit the rioting was the claim of discrimination and that the police are trigger happy. But very quickly, the demonstrations turned violent with rocks and Molotov cocktails, and attacking security personnel and civilians. Demonstrators were not calling for social and economic equality, but egged on by Israeli Arab MKs, instead called for eliminating the State of Israel and replacing it with a Palestinian state. And of course, with more than two decades of incitement by "The Northern Branch of the Islamic Movement," a popular Israeli Arab political movement with a one-issue platform, to fight Israel because it is supposedly trying to destroy the Al-Aksa Mosque, the rioting quickly took on the slogans of the Jerusalem disturbances, accusing Israel of trying to end Muslim control on the Temple Mount. The Kafr Kana incident was easily manipulated by the Northern Branch as the spark to light the fire they have been trying to kindle for years. Regarding the Temple Mount, the incitement of the Palestinian Authority is a well-documented danger. But the Israeli Arab incitement has the potential to lead to a violent revolt by Israeli citizens.

There are three reasons behind the recent violence in the Arab Israeli sector. First, a complete disrespect for the rule of law as represented by the state. Second, the incitement mentioned above and third, the newfound admiration amongst West Bank and Israeli Palestinian youth for ISIS.

Fishman said: "The fundamental resentment of Israel,

together with their feelings of discrimination, justified or not, feed the growing hostility behind the riots ... Feelings of discrimination need to be dealt with but cannot be solved overnight. But the feeling of lawlessness must be resolved immediately and forcefully. This includes jail sentences for the perpetrators and those who are responsible for inciting the violence. Terrorists who kill innocent victims must have their homes blown up (a measure used only against West Bank terrorists until now). ... This is no routine police operation. This needs to be the defining mission of the police, in tandem with the Shin Bet (State Security Service) with one goal in mind: a return to law and order in those areas within the Green Line that think they can cut themselves off from the state and that spawn potential terrorist murderers." He concluded, "These are all short-term measures to stop the anarchy in its infancy. The long-term solution lies only in dialogue between equal citizens with the aim of resolving perceived discrimination between sectors."

So once again, our daily civilian life is on the verge of having to deal with the violent abnormality that has become a fundamental part of today's Middle East. With virtually every Arab country in some sort of upheaval, and ISIS continuing to build its caliphate of death and destruction, this is bound to impact Israeli Arabs as well as Jerusalem. I guess it's not too surprising that these periods of abnormality are liable to occur more often. None of us want to go through this again, and most of us are willing to make sacrifices to achieve a two-state solution that will not gravely threaten our existence; but with the madness currently running rampant in our region, we cannot put our security in anyone's hands but our own. There is no room for error. If the price of not risking our existence is that we have to go through siege periods, then it is unfortunate but so be it. This is the price of being a Zionist in the Middle East

It is difficult not to be enraged as more violence results in the death of innocent Israelis going about their daily business. No matter what we do or say, how much land we withdraw from or how many settlements we dismantle, many feel the fundamental problem in our region is the continued refusal of the Palestinians to accept the existence of Israel. Recent behavior by Israeli Palestinians strengthens this sentiment. For many of us, it is getting increasingly hard to advocate pragmatism. It seems clear that a solution to the conflict will not be reached only by resolving borders or water rights, or by redressing social and economic grievances.

I am cautiously optimistic that this current round of violence will not spiral out of control, because if it does, both sides lose. But the world needs to stop reinforcing Palestinians' incessant claims that they are the constantly insulted victims who do not need to stop incitement. If this doesn't happen soon, then the abnormality of living our daily life under siege will sadly become the norm, and then today's violence will be almost a fond memory.

Mylan Tanzer is an American native who moved to Israel in 1981. He was the founding CEO of the first Israeli cable and satellite sports channel. Since 2005, he has launched, managed and consulted for channels and companies in Israel and Europe. Tanzer lives in Tel Aviv with his wife and five children. He can be reached at mylantanz@gmail.com.



Israel

Sisterly Love

Good faith inspires prayers for Israel

By Leni Reiss

Forty years after the Children of Israel left Egypt, God led them out of the desert into the Promised Land, redeeming them from slavery.

In 1967, years after the horrors of the Holocaust, the Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary came into the desert. They established a home here in Phoenix, dedicating their existence to seeking redemption for the anti-Semitism in their German homeland that resulted in the murder of 6 million Jews.

The movement began in 1947 when a group of young girls, inspired by Mother Basilea Schlink and founded within the framework of the German Evangelical (Protestant) Church, bonded during the wartime bombing in their hometown of Darmstadt. In the forward to her book, *Israel, My Chosen People*, Schlink notes that Shabbat candles are lit every Friday evening in the chapel in Darmstadt, the location of the movement's Mother House, "as a constant reminder of the guilt of the Third Reich and as a summons to pray for Israel."

Mother Basilea, an educator and psychologist, refused to comply with Nazi policies and even taught the Old Testament to her young students.

The sisterhood, from its small beginnings, has grown throughout the years into an international organization representing all Protestant denominations. There now are approximately 200 sisters worldwide.

On 10 lush and lovingly cultivated acres in the heart of north Phoenix, nine Sisters of Mary presently live at Canaan in the Desert, a compound of eight buildings built over a period of 40-plus years. The complex incorporates offices, a workshop, guest houses for singles and couples, a computer room, kitchen, laundry and a chapel.

At one point there were 14 sisters on site. Those remaining explain that the others either "graduated to heaven or went back to the Mother House where they are well cared for."

"The sisters are wonderful neighbors," says Mort Dubnow. He and his wife, Paula, are among several Jewish families living in the area. "We have been guests at their home. We chat when we meet on walks, and we look forward to their handcrafted greeting cards on Jewish holidays. What we feel and appreciate so much is their pure love for the Jewish people."

The sisters invited our small group to tour the grounds and visit with them on a sunny Arizona afternoon. The following is excerpted from our conversation with Sisters Mary Anne and Pinea (both American-born) and Daniela (native of Germany):

Sister Pinea: "We are similar to nuns. We live in a convent here and we feel called by God, but we aren't under the jurisdiction of the Pope or a particular church. Sisters represent various Protestant denominations."

Sister Mary Anne: "There is no formal training for us. We



From left: Sisters Daniela, Mary Anne and Pinea.

become a part of our spiritual family in Germany with a shared love for the Lord Jesus. But there is no formal preparation. It is on-the-job training. Most of us became sisters because God called us to dedicate our life to Him. Whoever stands for Israel has our support. Israel's God is the God of the Ten Commandments. Israel is the apple of His eye. Any chance we have to support the local Jewish community we do so. We attend rallies, events for the Israeli Scouts and Tu B'Shevat celebrations. We have been invited to private homes for Passover seders and also to bar and bat mitzvahs." She adds that while the sisters' long habits might appear to be unwieldy, especially during summers here in the desert, "in fact they are mostly cotton and quite comfortable."

Sister Daniela: "Our love for Israel is born out of repentance for the guilt of the German nation against the Jewish people, and also the guilt of Christianity for its history of persecution of the Jewish people. This is our mission. We humble ourselves before the Jewish people and ask for forgiveness. Bringing this attitude into the churches is a huge challenge for us. Christians typically aren't taught in their churches about the history of anti-Semitism."

Printed material, brochures and tapes, created by the sisters and widely circulated, include a video entitled "Repentance: Changing the Future by Confronting the Past." In it, Nobel Laureate and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel lauds the efforts of those "good Christians who realize that the past of Christianity for us Jews is a source of anguish." Sister Mary Anne concurs that some Christians indeed "have taken this message into their hearts."

The Sisters of Mary, who "operate on donations and our Father in heaven who arranges for gifts from foodstuff to shovels to computers to furniture," surely are among Wiesel's "good Christians" who pray and toil tirelessly on behalf of the Jewish people and the Jewish state.

Visitors to their compound are encouraged to enjoy the tranquility and beauty of the gardens, but perhaps most importantly to spend time in the room devoted to Israel. There, with appropriately somber music in the background, one can be immersed in the impressive collection of scholarly books and Judaica. There also is a display of post-Holocaust photographs of victims of terrorism.

For more information about the Sisters of Mary and Canaan in the Desert, call 602-996-4040 or go to kanaan.org.

Hanukkah in Israel

By Teddy Weinberger

After 17 Hanukkahs here, one thing about the way the Festival of Lights is celebrated in Israel never ceases to amaze me: the total absence of Christmas. In the States, Hanukkah's relation to Christmas is of crucial concern. The more the two holidays overlap, the more that Jews will be celebrating their winter holiday at the same time that the majority of Americans are celebrating theirs. In Israel, Christmas is simply not on the radar screen for most Israelis, and so Hanukkah goes it alone.

Since I grew up in the States and only moved here at the age of 36, I cannot help but think of Hanukkah in relation to Christmas. And so I know that this year Hanukkah is just a little too "early" (beginning on Tuesday night, Dec. 16, and ending on Wednesday, Dec. 24) – and I also know what this means in America. An early Hanukkah is disconcerting to many American Jews. It's sort of like a secret Converso holiday: the Jews are celebrating in their homes while the outside world is filled with anticipation of Christmas. You are wished "Merry Christmas" all throughout your holiday. There are print and broadcast media pieces on Hanukkah, and schools and offices sprout paper menorahs, but these cannot put a dent in the general feeling of Christmas that pervades the outside world.

As is the case every year, Hanukkah in Israel is always on time. It is never early or late. And while Israeli life is geared toward the Gregorian calendar (so that, unlike Christmas, even knowledgeable Israelis have to do some figuring in order to calculate the first night of Hanukkah), one can gage the date of Hanukkah by the availability and variety of sufganiot (donuts). Sufganiot start making their appearance in October, shortly after the

conclusion of Judaism's fall holidays. As Hanukkah nears, donut makers get more ambitious in terms of both quantity and quality – augmenting the traditional strawberry jelly filling with butterscotch, chocolate, halva, and even guava and passion fruit, as well as experimenting with more sophisticated donut coatings (like carob powder or ground brown sugar) rather than the usual powdered sugar.

I have to admit that left to its lonesome, there's some drama missing in a Hanukkah without Christmas. After all, as our prayers remind us, Hanukkah celebrates a Jewish victory of the weak and the few over the strong and the many. The spirit of Hanukkah comes to life more in a country where you have to fight for it, where you have to insist on its legitimate place within the cultural spectrum. This is not to say that life here in the Jewish state is without drama. A number of our Arab neighbors help make life in Israel exciting in a Maccabean way throughout the year. But the Jewish state rather than the Jewish individual is the primary setting for this drama. And the stakes are much, much higher than whether or not to get offended if someone wishes you a Merry Christmas. For my part, I wish you all a Happy Hanukkah.



Teddy Weinberger, Ph.D., writes from Givat Ze'ev, a suburb of Jerusalem just over the Green Line. He and his wife, Sarah Jane Ross, made aliyah in 1997 with their five children. Teddy is director

of development for Meaningful, a company that works with Israeli non-profit organizations. His in-laws live in Scottsdale for most of the year.



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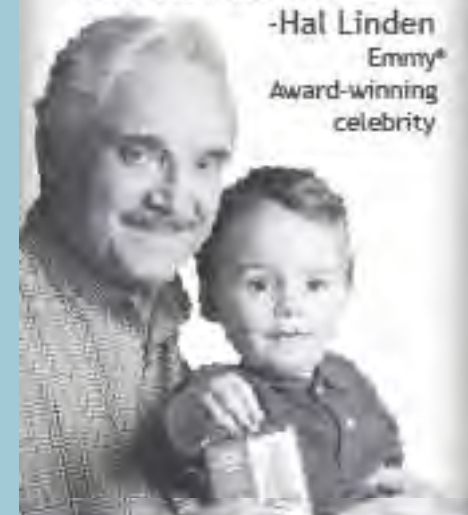
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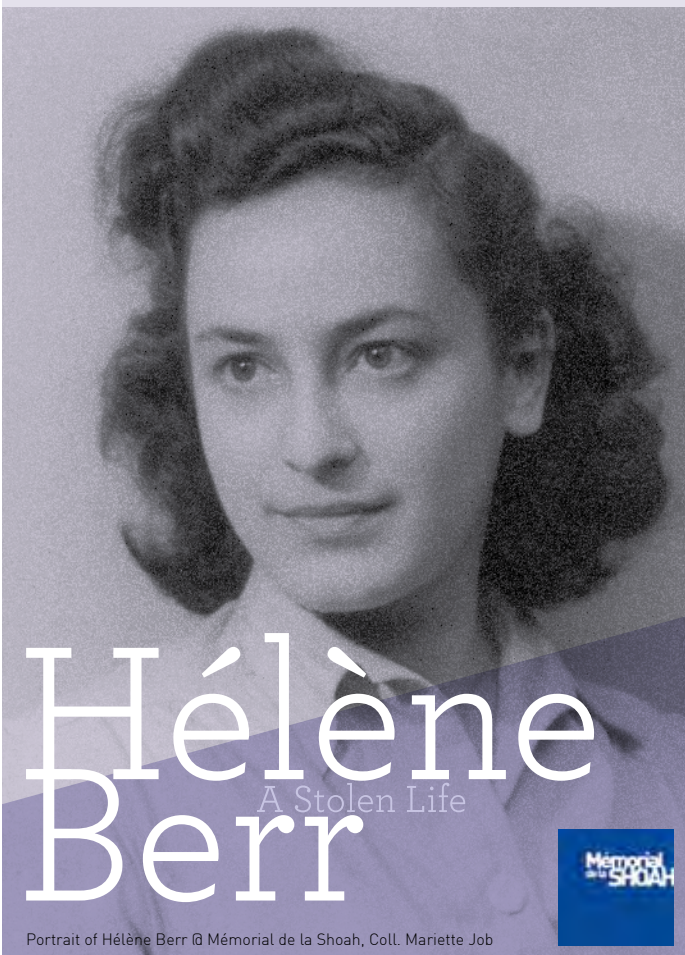
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Jewish History Museum

Celebrating the Jewish History of Southern Arizona



Portrait of Hélène Berr © Mémorial de la Shoah, Coll. Mariette Job

Designed, created, and distributed by the
Mémorial de la Shoah, Paris, France

Reception and visit of the exhibition on
Sunday, November 9, 3–5pm

**This exhibition will be on view
November 9, 2014–February 1, 2015**

RSVP by November 6 to
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This exhibition was designed, created, and distributed by the Mémorial de la Shoah in Paris, France (curators Karen Taieb and Sophie Nagiscarde), with the guidance of Mariette Job (niece of Hélène Berr), and made possible through the generous support of SNCF.

Jewish History Museum
564 South Stone Avenue Tucson, Arizona 85701
520-670-9073
www.jewishhistorymuseum.org

Sarah Schnitzer meets a life saver in Israel



Danny Gold and Sarah Schnitzer

Meeting someone who saved many lives during Operation Protective Edge isn't part of the curriculum at the yeshiva where Sarah Schnitzer is studying in Jerusalem this year. Instead Sarah owes the opportunity to meet Danny Gold, creator of the Iron Dome missile defense system, to connections she made in Phoenix.

Gold and Israeli politician Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Efraim "Effi" Eitam spoke at a Sukkot party Sarah attended with friends from Phoenix. Gold and Eitam both spoke at the party and welcomed conversation and questions.

"Danny Gold told us a little about how the Iron Dome works, and how he had many sleepless nights for a number of years while it was being developed, because how could he sleep when lives were at stake," says Sarah. "He also spoke about the Iron Dome's success rate, which is very high, but said they always keep improving it. He was extremely gracious and humble and I felt honored just to have had the privilege to be in his presence."

The Schnitzer family and the Lotstein family met at Young Israel of Phoenix, where David is president of the synagogue. Debbie Lotstein, daughter of Arlene and Barnett, now lives in Israel where her parents visited her during Sukkot. Debbie invited Sarah to join her family at a Sukkot party hosted by friends from New York who have an apartment in Jerusalem. Many government officials and other important people.

Sarah, daughter of David and Linda Schnitzer of Phoenix, is in Jerusalem studying at Midreshet Tehillah, is an academically focused seminary program for recent high school graduates. Next year she will be attending Stern College for Women, Part of Yeshiva University, in New York where she plans to major in marketing, possibly with a minor in psychology.

[FACES]

1 JCA ANNUAL MEETING – At the Oct. 29 annual meeting of the Jewish Community Association, Shari Kanefsky, (pictured with Steven Schwarz), received the Medal of Honor, the association's highest award of distinction; Steven Schwartz was installed as incoming board chair. Alison Betts was the recipient of the Lee Amada Young Leadership Award and the Belle Latchman Community Service Award went to the JCC Ometz Program. Guests at the event at the VOSJCC included, from left, Thelma Gross, Sue Kurn and Phyllis Miller. Photos by Leni Reiss



2 THEATER AWARD – The Valley theater community celebrated its annual AriZoni Awards of Excellence on Sept. 15 at Tempe Center for the Arts. Among those receiving awards was Deborah Ostreicher, seen here with her husband, Jeffrey. Deborah, whose "day job" is as deputy aviation director for public relations for Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, finds time to perform in one or two community plays each season. She won this award for Best Actress in a Major Role for her portrayal of Suzette in the comedy "Don't Dress for Dinner" produced by Desert Foothills Theatre (dftheater.org) in north Scottsdale. Desert Foothills, celebrating its 40th year, produces both adult and youth plays. Deborah was profiled in the June 2014 issue of Arizona Jewish Life. Read more at azjewishlife.com/2014/jun/features



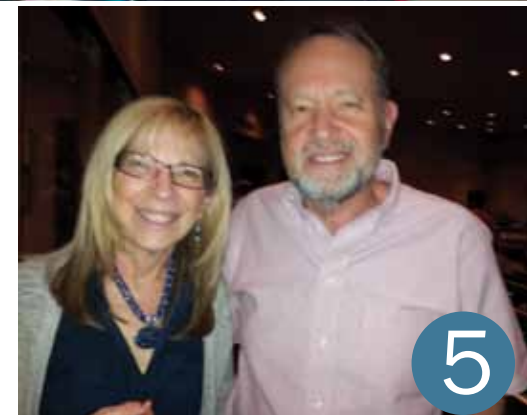
3 MEL WEISER READS FROM HIS NEW BOOK ON 174TH STREET at the Jewish Family & Children's Services Senior Center reading Nov. 7. "The seniors were buzzing about your program the whole day," said JFCS Program Manager Tami Simmons. "Wonderful . . . inspiring . . . delightful . . . fabulous . . . moving . . . were some of the words that were used to describe what they felt after spending the hour with you. You lit up the room with energy and enthusiasm and to say that you engaged the audience would be an understatement. When you read from your book, the room was silent and captivated. Everyone wanted to hear more. Being able to listen to you read your own words was a gift."



4 SUSHI NIGHT WITH THE PHOENIX COMMUNITY KOLLEL'S TLC PROGRAM (TORAH LEARNING AND CREATIVITY). 30 women got together to learn to make kosher sushi from scratch on November 9. Nechama Fialkoff gave the sushi demonstration and taught everyone about making sushi. Lolly Moskowitz shared insights on Gratitude and Attitude, bringing appreciation into our lives. The guests also participated in a raffle for a sushi knife! Many of the sushi supplies were supplied by the nearby new LaBella Restaurant.



5 UGANDAN RABBI – Helen and Marty Locke were among audience members at Congregation Or Tzion on Nov. 5 to hear Gershom Sizomu, spiritual leader of the Abayudaya Jews of Uganda. After studying for the rabbinate in the United States, Sizomu returned to his home among "the people of Yudah" to serve as the rabbi to his flock, "a community of substance farmers." Photo by Leni Reiss



6 AJHS SCREENING – New York transplants to Scottsdale, Herman and Myra Treitel, were among audience members at Arizona Jewish Historical Society on Nov. 11 for a screening of “The Ritchie Boys.” The documentary highlighted the experiences of German-speaking American soldiers who interrogated German prisoners of war. Photo by Leni Reiss



6

7 MIMFEST – After months of preparation, the Musical Instrument Museum held its first global music festival, MIMFest, on Oct. 18 and 19. More than 3,000 people attended MIMFest over two days. The outdoor event featured more than 20 performances on three stages including Sergio Mendoza y La Orkestra performing classic mambo and cumbia songs. A variety of local, street-style performances included Jennifer Coughlan and Ruben Palma, roving stilt walkers, who performed under the name “Global Stilt Congress Ambassadors,” which was a collaboration between the Carpetbag Brigade and Flam Chen. Other features were delicious, globally inspired cuisine from 13 Valley food trucks; and fun, family-friendly activities in the Kids’ Zone. Due to the success of the inaugural event, MIM is moving forward with plans for next year’s MIMFest. Mark your calendars for Nov. 7 and 8, 2015. Tickets are expected to go on sale in late August.



7



8 A HISTORICAL EVENING – Channel 12 news anchor Mark Curtis, flanked by Arizona Jewish Life editors Janet Arnold, left, and Leni Reiss, was this year’s recipient of the Arizona Jewish Historical Society’s Heritage Award. Mark’s Channel 12 colleague Bruce Cooper served as emcee. The venue for the gala was the Phoenix Art Museum and the evening included silent and live auctions, hors d’oeuvres, dinner and a special performance by Phoenix native and two-time Tony Award winner Judy Kaye (pictured), currently appearing on Broadway as the fairy godmother in Cinderella. Among the 200-plus AJHS supporters were Nancy and Larry Moffit.



8



9 CASINO ROYALE – During Casino Night at the J on Oct. 25, the prestigious Irv Shuman Award “for exemplifying the spirit of tzedakah” was presented to Allan Flader (pictured from left Katherine and Allan Flader with Lisa and Rob Speck). The VOSJCC gymnasium was elegantly transformed into a red, white, black and multi-feathered fantasy by décor chair Laurie Schwartz (pictured with Janie Kuznitsky and Lynn Kahn, who were part of her creative committee). Event highlights for the 300-plus guests included a moonlit cocktail hour and live auction followed by dinner and gaming. Susan Silver co-chaired the event with Cyndi Rosenthal. Photos by Leni Reiss



9

10 ISRAELI-AMERICAN CONFERENCE – Shahar Edry, director of the Valley’s Israel Center, joined 800 people from across the county at the first Israeli-American Conference, held in Washington, D.C., Nov. 7-9. Joining Shahar at the conference were Stuart Wachs, CEO of the Jewish Community Association, and Mickey Landkof, who volunteers for the Israel Center. Shahar, center, participated in one of the panel discussions. “We were honored to listen to incredible speakers and panels,” Shahar says. Among the speakers were Israeli representatives to the U.S., political figures such as Mitt Romney and Joe Lieberman, as well as Israeli politicians, celebrities and philanthropists. “The conference was inspiring on all levels,” Shahar continues. “I plan to redouble my efforts to integrate the Israeli community with our amazing Valley Jewish community.”



11 STATE OF JEWISH THEATER – Beth Ami Temple members Jerry Mittelman (left) and Arnie Schwartz welcome Janet Arnold as a speaker for the congregation’s Nov. 7 Shabbat services. More than 100 attendees came out to hear Janet speak about the state of Jewish theater around the world. Janet was the producing director of the Arizona Jewish Theatre Company for 24 years as well as a past-president of the international network The Association for Jewish Theatre. She is currently associate editor of Arizona Jewish Life magazine. Beth Ami Temple meets at Palo Cristi Presbyterian Church in Paradise Valley and often welcomes guest speakers to its semi-monthly Shabbat services led by Rabbi Art Abrams and cantorial soloist Pam Beitman.



10

12 PIPER HONOREE – Benevilla Executive Director Michelle Dionisio, left, accepts the \$5,000 Piper Trust Encore Prize and the \$50,000 Encore Enhancement Prize from Piper Trust President and CEO Dr. Sue Pepin. Benevilla’s primary mission is to enhance the quality of life for people of all ages. The West Valley nonprofit offers life-enrichment programs for older adults, socialization and work education opportunities for intellectually disabled adults, in-home help for homebound adults, and child care and education programs through Wirtzie’s Preschool. Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust supports organizations that enrich health, well-being and opportunity for the people of Maricopa County.



11

13 CHALLAH WORKSHOP – Cindy Landesman and Dina Bacharach of the Phoenix Community Kollel lead a challah workshop in November. The Kollel does monthly/bimonthly challah workshops open to all women as well as challah workshops for private parties, bat mitzvah and get-togethers at the hostess home. From left are Dina Bacharach, Nettie Nabadrick, Carol Naishtut, Meagon Barlow, Danielle Bloch, Eliyahu Bacharach, Cindy Landesman, Susan Good, Diane Vogt, Rachel Richmond, Jenn Sokolsky, Beth Goldstein and Yvonne Rothblum. For more information or to join the next workshop contact Dina Bacharach at tlc@aztorah.com.



12



13

Take a Detour Jan. 2-4 to see Fiddler Jr.

Detour Company Theatre is presenting Fiddler on the Roof Jr. at Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts Jan. 2-4. Detour's mission is "to provide quality and authentic arts education and performance opportunities for adults with developmental and other challenges, including deafness, blindness and autism, through the magic and miracle of theater."

Sam, the multi-talented woman who uses just one name, is the artistic director and driving force behind the company. She says she chose Fiddler for the group because, "The story of the traditions we carry and the traditions we bring along is as relevant today as it was to the turn of the century people it portrays. While we are performing a shorter junior version, we are still packing in every element we can in our 90 minutes. In Detour I try to help the actors become aware of the 'canon' of musical theater. This year is the 50th anniversary of Fiddler on the Roof; it has been called one of the 200 most significant pieces of American theater and is one I wanted to add to their base of knowledge."

"Plus I believe strongly that as well as entertaining, theater should teach. This show brings up many subjects we can teach to – cultural, religious and political. We have a wonderful costumer who every week writes up some aspect of cultural information."

Sam's passion for her work shines through the actors' devotion to the productions. The Detour family includes a number of members

of the Jewish community as actors, coaches (both on and off stage) and active board members. Performances are 7 pm, Friday; 3 and 7 pm, Saturday; and 3 pm on Sunday. There is no charge, but donations are greatly appreciated. Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts is located at 7380 E Second St., in Scottsdale. detourcompanytheatre.org



Winter Chamber Music Institute Jan. 3-10

The Red Rocks Music Festival will present a Winter Chamber Music Institute Jan. 3-10 at Glendale Community College. The five-member faculty includes three Israelis: violinists Shmuel Ashkenasi, David Ehrlich and Sergiu Schwartz.

Also on the staff are Paul Coletti, viola, and Thomas Landschoot, cello. Students are coming from the finest music institutions across the United States and abroad. There will be daily ensemble and individual coaching, master classes and public performances. Applications are still being accepted. The Red Rocks Music Festival offers year-round programs and educational opportunities. Israeli-born Moshe Bukshpan is the executive director of the festival and a renowned violinist himself, having begun his studies at the age of 8. Moshe, who came to the United States in 1976, is devoted to educating and inspiring others in the classical music field. He received his master's degree in violin

performance from Northern Illinois University and studied with Raphael Bronstein and Dorothy Delay as well as Shmuel Ashkenasi of the Vermeer Quartet. Moshe prides himself on presenting the best in chamber music to both the Valley and the Sedona areas throughout the year.

Glendale Community College is located at 6000 W Olive St. in Glendale. Hotel accommodations are available near the college for out-of-town students. Registration and tuition is \$375. redrocksmusicfestival.com | 877-733-7257.

Mazelpalooza returns for the good of the community

Mazelpalooza 2014 returns Dec. 24, organized by Young Jewish Phoenix, a project of the Jewish Federation of Greater Phoenix. The annual event begins at 9 pm at Livewire Entertainment Venue, 7320 E Indian Plaza, Scottsdale.

Mazelpalooza benefits the Annual Campaign for Jewish Needs. Last year attendance soared to more than 700, and organizers hope is to exceed that number this year. A special hotel rate is available at Hotel Indigo Scottsdale (\$69 + taxes) when mentioning Young Jewish Phoenix and UBER is giving \$25 off first-time riders with code MAZEL14.

Young Jewish Phoenix is co-chaired by two lay leaders and is comprised of a 10-person volunteer board. Mazelpalooza is open to those 21-40. Tickets will be available at mazelpalooza.com for \$25 until midnight on Dec. 15, \$35 until noon on Dec. 24, and then \$40 at the door. info@youngjewishphoenix.org

DECEMBER CALENDAR

Dec. 2

Dr. Robert Mullins speaks about the new excavation at Abel Beth Maacah, a major Canaanite, Aramean and Israelite site 1 mile south of the Lebanese border in Israel. Free. 4 pm at University of Arizona Hillel Foundation, 1245 E Second St. in Tucson. Part of the Sally and Ralph Duchin Campus Lecture Series. Sponsored by The Arizona Center for Judaic Studies. 520-626-5759, jwincches@email.arizona.edu

Keyboard Conversations with Jeffrey Siegel returns for its 36th season at 7:30 pm at Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts, 7380 E Second St. in Scottsdale. The pianist's opening evening is "The Miracle of Mozart." \$29-49. 480-499-8587, scottsdaleperformingarts.org

JBabies Mommy and Me is offered at Chandler Jewish Preschool for three Tuesdays at 9:30 am. A half hour of fun creative music and movement with Jewish songs and themes for ages 0-3. 875 N McClintock Dr., Chandler. Continues Dec. 9 and 16. \$8 per class. 480-855-4333, info@chabadcenter.com

Dec. 3

Jewish Bisbee Bus Tour. Spend a day in Bisbee, hearing from the Jewish residents there, shopping for Hanukkah and enjoying talks about early Jewish settlers of Arizona. Lunch at Cafe Roka included. \$40. 8:30 am-5 pm. Leave from Trader Joe's Shopping Center, at Magee and Oracle, Oro Valley. Sponsored by Jewish Federation of Southern Arizona, Northwest Division. RSVP: 520-577-9393, ext. 130 or jfsa.org

JACS: Support Group for Jewish Alcoholics, Addicts, and their Friends and Family. Also Dec. 17 at 7:30 pm at the Ina Levine Jewish Community Campus, 2nd floor Conference Room. No cost. Call the Shalom Center at 602-971-1234 or email jacsarizona@gmail.com

Dec. 4

Bureau of Jewish Education Life & Learning December Classes: Two three-week classes begin Dec. 4. North America, Europe, Israel & the Press meets 9:30-10:50 am. 100 Years of Zionism through Israeli Folks Songs meets 11 am-12:20 pm. Both continue Dec. 11 & 18. \$53 each. Sponsored by the BJE at the Ina Levine Jewish Community Campus, 12701 N Scottsdale Road. Register at 480-634-8050 or bjephoenix.org

War and Peace in the Jewish Tradition, talk by Rabbi Bill Berk, rabbi emeritus of Temple Chai. Sponsored by Valley Beit Midrash at 7 pm at Temple Chai, 4645 E Marilyn Road in Phoenix. \$18 suggested donation. Register at valleybeitmidrash.org

Dec. 6

Digital Scavenger Hunt and Havdallah services at 6:30 pm at Congregation Anshei Israel, 5550 E Fifth St. in Tucson. Families with children of all ages are invited to make friends, build community, learn about Judaism and have fun. Bring a camera! Ice Cream Bar included. RSVP required: 520-745-5550, caiaz.org

Dec. 7

Hanukkah Mall Madness at Park Place Mall on Broadway in Tucson, near the Children's Play Area and the Food Court. Games, food and crafts for Hanukkah. For children of all ages. Sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Southern Arizona and the Tucson JCC, 1-3 pm. Free. 520-577-9393, ext. 130.

Jewish Marriage University, a marriage preparation course for serious, engaged or recently married couples. 9:30 am-3:45 pm at the Ina Levine Jewish Community Campus, 12701 N Scottsdale Road. \$95 per couple, includes breakfast and lunch. Presented by Bureau of Jewish Education. Additional Session for interfaith couples 6:30-8:30 pm, Dec. 10. RSVP to Linda Feldman at 480-634-8050, ext. 1304, bjephoenix.org

Women for Israel luncheon for Jewish National Fund

Photos by Mark Gluckman Photography



Judi Gottschalk and Cantor Sharona Feller



JNF Women for Israel co-chairs: Kim Kotzin, left, and Judy Bassett



The grand lobby of the Phoenix Art Museum was aglow with over 400 women at the second annual Women for Israel luncheon for Jewish National Fund held on Nov. 4. The largest JNF women's event in Arizona history, the luncheon kicked off JNF's 2015 campaign and featured a keynote address by Florine Mark, president and CEO of the WW Group (WW as in Weight Watchers). Attendees also viewed moving videos about the work JNF is doing in Israel with special needs children and adults. The event, which was co-chaired by Judy Bassett and Kim Kotzin, raised more than \$150,000 for JNF's accessibility and therapeutic services to ensure that "no Israeli citizen is left behind."

Because of "an overwhelmingly positive response," a cocktail party was also held that evening to accommodate others who wanted to participate in the campaign. JNF is on track to become a billion dollar nonprofit within 10 years, having raised \$75 million in 2014. JNF Desert States Executive Director Deb Rochford also announced the Schwartz-Hammer Alexander Muss High School in Israel Impact Fellowship Program. "It is with great appreciation to Eli and Lesley Hammer, Frank and Jennifer Schwartz and Sheila Schwartz that JNF is now able to send 15 high school students to Alexander Muss High School in Israel for free in the summer of 2015. The JNF Schwartz-Hammer Impact Fund will give teens the extraordinary opportunity to explore and discover their connection to the land, people, history and culture of Israel." For information and to apply for the scholarship for seniors in high school, visit jnf.org/azfellowship

Bobby Sox playing in Sun Lakes. Sponsored by Temple Havurat Emet. Get out your dancing shoes, start tapping your toes and get ready to sing along with “Bobby Sox,” 3-6 pm at Sun Lakes Country Club Phase I, Arizona Room, 25601 Sun Lakes Blvd, Sun Lakes. \$15, RSVP: 480-481-0979 or 602-672-3486, templehavuratemet.org

Hadassah Southern Arizona Luncheon: Dr. Sharon Megdal will speak on “Water Management Innovations in Water-Scarce Regions: How Arizona and Israel are approaching management of their water resources” at noon at Skyline Country Club, 5200 E Saint Andrews Dr. in Tucson. \$25 members/\$27 nonmembers. RSVP to Corinne Forti at 520-505-4500 or hsa.hadassah.org

Dec. 8

From the Arab Spring to ISIS: The Upheavals in the Middle East and What They Mean for Israel, a talk by Asher Susser Ph.D. Presented through the Shaol & Louis Pozez Memorial Lectureship Series at 7 pm at the Tucson JCC, 3800 E River Road in Tucson. Sponsored by the Arizona Center for Judaic Studies at the U of A. Free. judaic.arizona.edu

Concerts and Conversations continues with a program by Phoenix Symphony’s Viviana M. Cumplido Wilson, principal flute, and Peter Wilson, percussionist. Presented by Brandeis National Committee-Phoenix Chapter at 1 pm at Palo Cristi Church, 3535 E Lincoln Dr. in Paradise Valley. \$5. 602-971-0012, brandeisphoenix.com

Dec. 9

Rabbi Irwin Kula speaks on Yearning for Love and Happiness: Embracing the Sacred Messiness of Life. Presented by Valley Beth Midrash at Congregation Beth Israel, 10460 N 56th St. in Scottsdale. \$18 suggested donation. Register at valleybeitmidrash.org

A Taste of Chanukah starring Theodore Bikel, documentary showing at 7 pm at the Cutler-Plotkin Jewish Heritage Center, 122 E Culver St. in Phoenix. Presented by the Arizona Jewish Historical Society. Free. RSVP to 602-241-7870 or lbell@azjhs.org

Dec. 11

Beth Emeth Congregation Sisterhood Luncheon/ Game Day featuring Norma’s Fabulous Homemade Lasagna and all the fixings. \$10. At 11:30 am at Beth Emeth Congregation, 13702 W Meeker Blvd., Sun City West. RSVP by Dec. 3 at 623-584-7210. Bethemethaz.org

Menachem Begin: The Battle for Israel’s Soul, by Daniel Gordis, will be the focus of a book discussion led by Steve Cooper. 7 pm at the Cutler-Plotkin Jewish Heritage Center, 122 E Culver St. in Phoenix. Free. Sponsored by the Arizona Jewish Historical Society. RSVP: 602-241-7870 or lbell@azjhs.org

Timeless Currency. Coin, currency and stamp auction by J. Levine Auction & Appraisal. 480-448-2236, jlevines.com

Dec. 14

Tell Me a Story: Contemporary Collage by Marcie Feldman-Artist’s Reception, 1-3 pm at the Tucson JCC, 3800 E River Road in Tucson. Marcie Feldman combines watercolor, monoprints and storytelling talent to create vibrant, lyrical collages. On exhibit through Jan. 9. tucsonjcc.org

The Future of our Community, panel discussion presented by Valley Beit Midrash at 7 pm at Mozart’s Café, 7116 E Mercer Lane in Scottsdale. Facilitated by Leni Reiss, panel members include Debbie Yunker Kail, Josh Wertlieb and Eddie Lange. \$18. suggested donation. Valleybeitmidrash.org

Death Café: Discuss death and dying and how to make the most of your (finite) life. At 3 pm at The Deutsch Family Shalom Center at Temple Chai, 4645 E Marilyn Road in Phoenix. No charge, refreshments will be served. Participation is limited. Co-sponsored with Mt. Sinai Cemetery. RSVP by Dec. 4 to deathcafersvp@mtsinaicemetery.com

Dec. 17-24: **Happy Hanukkah! First candle is lit on Dec. 16.**

Dec. 17

Grand Menorah Lighting sponsored by Pollack Chabad Center for Jewish Life/Chabad of the East Valley at 5 pm at Phoenix Premium Outlets, 4976 Premium Outlets Way in Chandler. No charge. Enjoy food, drink and fun festivities! More information at 480-855-4333 or info@chabadcenter.com

Dec. 18

Hanukkah Celebration sponsored by the Israel Center, at 7 pm at the Ina Levine Jewish Community Campus, 12701 N Scottsdale Road. Enjoy lighting Hanukkah candles, live Israeli music, Potluck of traditional Hanukkah goodies and a piñata game. 480-634-4900 ext. 1109 or vosjcc.org

Dec. 19

Desert Foothills Jewish Community Association services and Hanukkah Celebration. The Not Ready for Prime Time Players will perform an original Hanukkah play. Bring a menorah, candles and matches. Latkes and more. First attendance is free. Membership is \$60 per year. Call to find north Scottsdale location: Arlene, 480-585-4437

Greekfest: Congregation Beth Tefillah Style. Bring light into the world with a group Hanukkah candle lighting, short service and amazing Greek feast followed by mesmerizing stories of the Greek Jewish community. 10636 N 71 Way in Scottsdale. Members: Adult \$36.00, Child 5-12 \$18.00; Non-Members: \$50.00/\$25 RSVP to Kim at 480-747-8090, bethtefillahaz.org

Hanukkah Celebration in Prescott at Temple B’rith Shalom; dinner at 5:45 pm followed by services at 7 pm at the Temple at 2077 Brohner Way, Prescott. Bring your menorah and 5 candles, and your Hanukkah ruach to celebrate. The congregation is also collecting local store gift cards to donate to the Coalition for Compassion and Justice. RSVP required for dinner. 928-708-0018 or brith@cableone.net

Dec. 20

Camp Daisy and Harry Stein Summer 2014 Reunion- Celebrate Havdallah, reunite with Camp Stein friends and family, and reminisce on the 2014 summer! 7 pm at Congregation Beth Israel, 10460 N 56th St. in Scottsdale. Free. 480-951-0323 or campstein.org

Interfaith Havdallah Event is being held with Temple Havurat Emet and the Sun Lakes United Methodist Church. 6 pm at the Methodist Church social hall at 9428 E Riggs Road in Sun Lakes. Service followed by discussion. No cost. More info at msiegel.the@gmail.com

Dec. 23

The Klezmatics take one of the wildest approaches to klezmer, the traditional dance music of Eastern European Jews. See them in concert at 7 pm at the Musical Instrument Museum, 4725 E Mayo Blvd., Phoenix. \$34.50-\$42.50, 480-478-6000, mim.org

Dec. 24

Mazelpalooza is the annual get-together for Jewish 21- to 40-year-olds, sponsored by Young Jewish Phoenix. 9 pm at LiveWire Entertainment Venue, 7320 E Indian Plaza in Scottsdale. Tickets \$25 until midnight Dec. 15; \$35 until noon Dec. 24; \$40 at the door. sletickets.com, jewishphoenix.org

Dec. 25

Beth Emeth Men’s Club and Sisterhood Game Day. 1 pm at Beth Emeth Congregation, 13702 W Meeker Blvd., Sun City West. Free. RSVP by Dec. 18 at 623-584-7210, bethemethaz.org

Dec. 31

Beth Emeth Congregation New Year’s Eve Gala. Enjoy dinner and entertainment, coffee and dessert bar, at 7 pm at Beth Emeth Congregation, 13702 W Meeker Blvd., Sun City West. Open to all; welcoming in an East Coast New Year at 10 pm. \$36. Evening Attire. Reservations required by Dec. 26 to 623-584-7210.

The Producers, the Mel Brooks Musical, New Year’s Eve Gala. Show at 8:30 pm at Tempe Center for the Arts, 700 W Rio Salado Pkwy. in Tempe; dinner, DJ, hosted champagne, \$260 per couple (\$145 single). Show only tickets \$65. Presented by Scottsdale Musical Theater Co. Show continues Jan. 2-3. 602-909-4215, scottsdalemusicaltheatre.com

Jan. 1

New Year’s Day Auction. Million dollar estates by J. Levine Auction & Appraisal. 480-448-2236, jlevines.com

Jan. 2-4

Fiddler on the Roof Jr. produced by Detour Company Theatre at Scottsdale Center for the Arts. See story page 60

Jan. 3-10

Winter Chamber Music Institute presented by Red Rocks Music Festival. Register now. See story page 60

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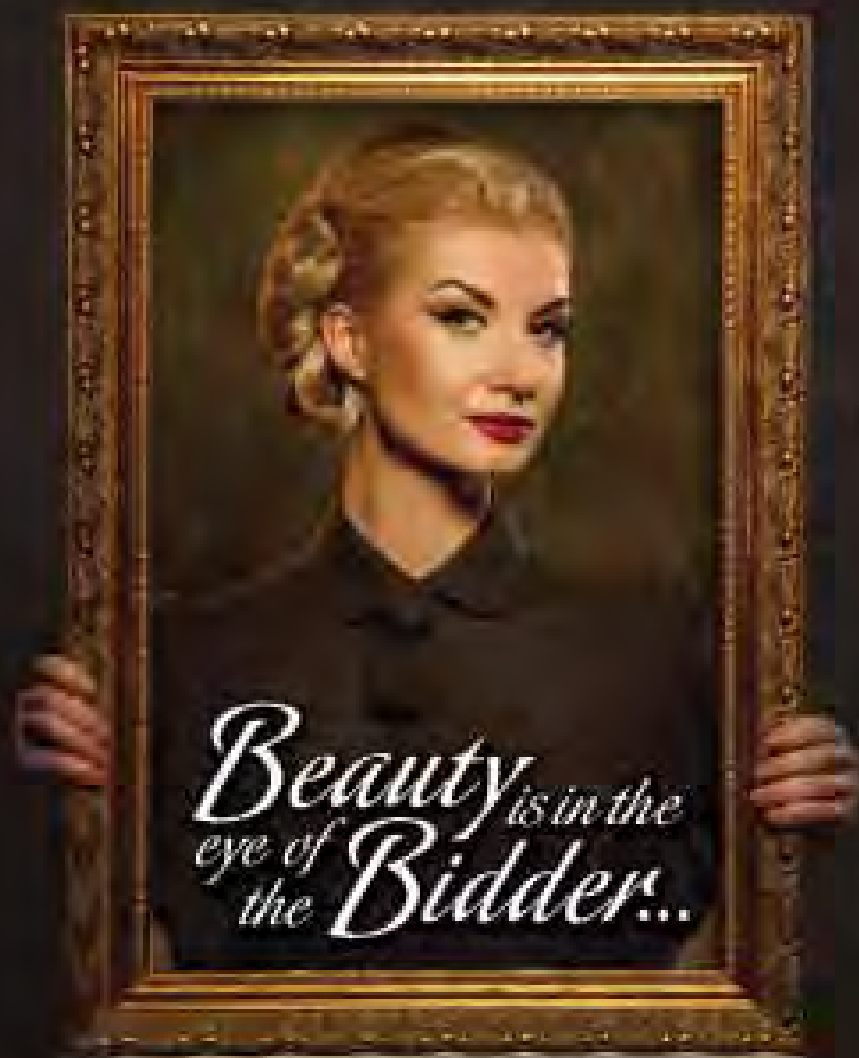
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