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NOTE TO THE READER

This issue of Mazel Tov! was reported and written before the full implications of the COVID-19 crisis were clear. As we go to press, it seems that it will be at least one week, and most likely more, before people are gathering to celebrate life-cycle events again. Still, we present this content as a fond look back at better times -- and as hopeful inspiration for more such joyous occasions in the future.



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Adventures in Lesser-Known Milestones: *The Upsherin*

JESSE BERNSTEIN | JE STAFF



Zalmy Sputz, son of Rabbi Hirshi Sputz and Shevy Sputz, just as his upsherin begins
Courtesy of Rabbi Hirshi Sputz

If you're keeping score on your Jewish milestone celebrations bingo card at home, there are a few squares you've probably filled a few times over.

Weddings! Bar and bat mitzvot! Funerals! *Brit milot! Brit milot* might even count as the free square in the center for men, though that will have to be adjudicated another time.

There are a few squares off in those far-flung corners that are a little harder to come by. Been to a *pidyon haben* recently? Hmm? Anyone's second bar or bat mitzvah, celebrated at the age of 83? No?

What about an *upsherin*?

"It's a great custom, it's very exciting for the kids, for the family," said Rabbi Hirshi Spitz, who runs Chabad of Fairmount with his wife, Shevy Spitz.

An *upsherin* (alternately spelled *upsheren*, *opsherin* or *upshernish*) is a ritual first haircut for boys upon the occasion of their third birthday. The word itself, according to Chabad.org, is a conglomerate of the German word "*sheren*," which means shear, and "*Auf*," which means off. This practice is traditionally undertaken within certain Orthodox Ashkenazi communities, though some Orthodox Sephardi communities celebrate a very similar ceremony called *chalachah* (sometimes spelled *halaqa*).

Though there are many individual community variants — some Ashkenazi communities perform the *upsherin* at age 2, and some Sephardi communities wait until 5 — the fundamentals are basically the same.

In honor of a male child's graduation from infancy to childhood and their newfound intellectual abilities, Rabbi Mendy Cohen of Chabad of the Main Line explained, friends, family and community members come and snip off most of the boy's hair, until all that remain are the *peyot*. The boy will say a few words of Torah, deposit some coins into a *tzedakah* box and be treated to a celebration after the haircut. He'll also wear *tzitzit* and a kippah for the first time.

Though the boy's induction into wearing the "uniform," so to speak, is part of the reason for ceremony, it's also meant to symbolize the beginning of their genuine education in the faith: the age of *chinuch* (literally, education). Now that they're able to grasp full sentences and simple ideas, it's time to look the part of a Jewish male undertaking his education, too.

(As a quick aside: though there is not a similar ceremony for girls at the age of 3, they, too, mark their entrance into the age of *chinuch*, Spitz said. This will often consist of their beginning to bless the Shabbat candles on Friday night.)

After those basic mechanics, many of the practices related to *upsherin* will change from community to community, even family to family.

"That's part of the beauty of customs," said Rabbi Yehoshua Yeamans of B'nai Israel Ohev Zedek. In Yeamans' wife's family, for example, it has become tradition to donate the hair to various wig-making entities, a wide-spread practice.

For some families, the cutting of the first lock of hair is an

See [Upsherin](#), Page 8

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Upsherin

Continued from Page 7

honor reserved for a rabbi or a Kohen on hand. Whether the hair is saved as some sort of testimonial changes from family to family, too.

There's also the question of when exactly the ceremony should take place. For some families, according to Cohen, having the *upsherin* on the exact date of the third birthday (on the Hebrew calendar, of course) is an important factor; for others, it just needs to be in the general vicinity of the date itself.

If you're a close reader of the Jewish holiday calendar, you already know where that leads. What if a boy's third birthday falls during the counting of the Omer, when haircuts are forbidden?

Like any Jewish person, they have to wait until Lag B'Omer to get their haircut. For Jewish boys celebrating their *upsherin* in Israel, however, families will endeavor to perform the ceremony at the graveside of a *tzaddik*, a holy person; in particular, the grave of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, also



▲ Elya Cohen, son of Rabbi Mendy Cohen and Temma Cohen, just before his *upsherin*
Photo by Sarah R. Bloom

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known as Rashbi, is a popular site.

The reason for such a specific site goes back to the oldest known example of the *upsherin*, a practice that has no real basis in the Torah. A student of Rabbi Isaac Luria, the 16th century mystic who is often considered the father of contemporary Kabbalah, wrote that he witnessed his teacher perform his son's first haircut at the age of 3 at the gravesite. Even then, the student referred to what he saw, and what would come to be known as the *upsherin*, as a well-known tradition. The true source of the practice remains lost to history.

The Jewish Exponent does not have any breaking news about the origins of the *upsherin*, unfortunately (send tips to jbernstein@jewishexponent.com). But the joy of the ceremony (and the ever-increasing scale of the accompanying party, according to the rabbis interviewed) isn't to be missed. Bingo! ♥

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The Ring's the Thing: Do's and Don'ts of Engagement Rings

ERIC SCHUCHT | JE STAFF

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John Anthony Jr. sees it happen all the time: Someone walks into his shop asking to see Gemological Institute of America-appraised diamond engagement rings.

Small problem — that's not a thing.

"What they do is gem reports," which Anthony said grades a diamond on clarity, color, cut, carat weight, proportions and finish. It does not assess monetary value and, if a store claims otherwise, "turn around, get out of there, because these people have no idea what they're doing."

For many young couples, an engagement ring is the most expensive purchase they'll make up to that point in their lives. As such, it's important not to make a mistake. Diamonds are forever, but trends are not, and neither are bank loan extensions.

So here's what a few Philadelphia area jewelers had to say in regards to engagement ring shopping.

Anthony, owner of John Anthony Jewelers in Bala Cynwyd and president of GIA's Pennsylvania-Delaware Valley chapter, advised people to buy from a jeweler who is an accredited member of the GIA, the American Gem Society or the National Association of Jewelry Appraisers.

If a shopper isn't an expert on diamonds, it's important to buy from someone who is.

Or as David Rotenberg, owner and operator of David Craig Jewelers in Langhorne, put it, "If you don't know jewelry, then know your jeweler. Diamond shopping is not a one-two-three. They need someone who's going to hold their hand and take them through the process. Then they can make an intelligent decision."

Rotenberg told shoppers to "buy the best you can, the best you can afford." While cheaper options may be available online, it's important to keep in mind exactly what you're paying for. Lower

prices can be an indicator of lower quality or unpopular designs. An engagement ring is something a person, presumably, will wear every day for the rest of their lives. Something to consider is getting a ring that's durable and won't need constant repairs. The extra money can be worth it in the long run.

On the other hand, Eric Sack, owner of the former Sack's Jewelers in Jenkintown, advised customers to not go over budget.

"Never ever spend more than you can afford," Sack said. "Especially for younger couples, don't spend more than you can write the check for at that moment. Never extend yourself. There's always going to be a future. There's always going to be another opportunity to express your love in gems and precious metal. Don't start out in debt."

For whatever amount people do plan to spend, Sack suggested to put as much of the budget into the gemstone as possible as opposed to the rest of the ring. The engagement ring, according to Sack, is symbolic of a lifelong commitment. As such, he encourages people to get one that is timeless as opposed to trendy.

"If the wearer chooses to change the setting — and that's not unusual — maybe five, 10, 15, 20 years down the line, they're sometimes surprised at how little value that mounting had," Sack said. "That gem is always, basically, going to retain its

See Rings, Page 12



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Rings

Continued from Page 11

value and basically going to be the centerpiece of whatever piece of jewelry evolves from it, be it another engaging style, or pendant or something else."

There are a variety of gem cuts available, but the round cut is by far the most popular, with the marquise and pear cuts greatly diminishing in popularity over the years. Emerald-like cuts such as the asscher have made a resurgence, according to Anthony.

Regardless of cut, white diamond is still the king of gemstones. However, those looking for an alternative may consider sapphires due to their vibrant colors and cheaper price.

Yet there are some drawbacks to softer gems.

"The bottom line is diamond is the hardest mineral," Rotenberg said. "So, if you look at a diamond that's worn for 30 or 40 years, chances are it still looks like the day it was bought. Or as you look at a sapphire or an emerald or something like that, it has scuff marks and wear on it because it's not as hard, tough and so forth."

For metals, white platinum is big, but Anthony said yellow gold has risen in popularity in recent years. For gem settings, the halo is quite popular, which consists of a large gemstone in the ring's center surrounded by smaller gemstones.

A recent trend Sack noted is the increased prevalence of the custom ring. Not to be confused with a customized ring, which describes a finished ring that's later altered to the customer's specifications, a custom ring is built from the ground up to the customer's specifics.

Computer-generated designs allow jewelers to create a ring that's one of a kind. This can allow people to have a more involved experience, feeling like they've contributed to the ring's creation or at having put more energy into the overall ring selection process.

However, a custom ring is more expensive than a standard one, and Sack said that most custom rings tend to either look identical to dozens of other rings already on store shelves or look unappealing.

"I have seen some engagement ring designs on fingers, presented to me proudly, that I really have to bite my tongue because I can't imagine that the wearer is going to feel good about this style even a year or two or three down the line," Sack said. "I just can't say it. The idea is supposed to be timeless. So to come up with something so far out, to me, defeats the purpose, that defeats the meaning, the symbolism of this specific piece of jewelry." ♥

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Torah and TikTok: Not Your Dad's Bar Mitzvah

SOPHIE PANZER | JE STAFF



While their parents may have relied on tape recorders and CDs for their own b'nei mitzvah preparations, students today learning to chant Torah can turn to YouTube.

"There are lots of cantors who have produced high-quality recordings on YouTube," said Ben Rotenberg, education director at Germantown Jewish Centre. "It's easy to find a voice that you can match and feel comfortable with."

The video sharing website is just one of many technologies being incorporated into b'nei mitzvah preparations.

For Gen Z kids in the tween and teenage brackets, technology plays a key role in entertainment, education and socializing. They communicate on platforms like Instagram and Snapchat and have never known a world without internet access. Naturally, they also rely on apps and websites as they prepare for their coming-of-age ceremonies.

Parents, educators and event planners are also using these resources to make preparations go smoothly. Rotenberg has incorporated technology into his own tutoring work.

"I've done some b'nei mitzvah tutoring long distance for students using Skype and FaceTime, and I would send them feedback through Google Docs," he said.

See Technology, Page 14



▲ A student uses the online library Sefaria to read Torah.

Courtesy of Sefaria

Technology

Continued from Page 11



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His students have also used Trope Trainer, software that offers full Torah portion readings users can access on their phones and other devices. It offers the full text of the Torah, along with Haftarah and audio recordings for blessings.

While comprehensive, TropeTrainer doesn't come cheap — the mobile app alone costs \$24.99, and the entire software package can cost more than \$100. For students and parents seeking a less expensive option, Rotenberg recommends Sefaria, a free open-source online library of Jewish texts.

"We want to help younger people overcome the sense of distance they may feel toward the text," said Sara Wolkenfeld, director of education at Sefaria. "For the teen and tween age, when there's a lot of pressure about the b'nei mitzvah, it makes it less intimidating to know this information is just a click away."

According to Wolkenfeld, the first results for internet searches for English translations of the Talmud used to be anti-Semitic websites. Sefaria's co-founders, Google alum Brett Lockspeiser and bestselling author Joshua Foer, set out to change that. Now, anyone with an internet connection can access their library of texts and commentary.

This includes students preparing for their b'nei mitzvah. Sefaria users can use the site or app to find their assigned Torah portions in Hebrew and in English, choose their favorite layouts, add and remove

vowels, create lists of helpful sources, consult a visual map of connections between texts, and research commentary for inspiration for their D'var Torah speeches.

"Text provides a starting point for a lot of people. They want to know, 'Does Judaism have anything to teach me about gun violence? Food justice? Homelessness?' They can use Sefaria to search for these themes and be connected with relevant texts and commentaries," Wolkenfeld said. "People should be connected to the richness of literary tradition, and Sefaria is designed to show users that all of these texts are in conversation with each other."

Wolkenfeld's son, Noam, is a proficient Sefaria user who recently celebrated his own bar mitzvah.

"He has very strong interests, so Sefaria was useful for clicking through text and searching across themes," Wolkenfeld explained. "We also had a student whose whole family used Sefaria so everyone could speak on texts during the Bat Mitzvah ceremony."

Of course, the party following the ceremony also takes a lot of preparation. Stephanie Fitzpatrick, talent director and emcee at the event planning company EBE Talent, uses Google Drive and Skype to communicate with clients.

"A lot of families are opting for meeting via FaceTime and Skype — people have busy schedules, and that's been very popular," she said. "And Google Drive has been a great way to update people in real time and keep them in the loop."

Fitzpatrick has worked at EBE Talent for 10 years and observed the rise of technology in the party planning process. In addition to organizational tools like FaceTime and Google Drive, the company uses various apps and software for guests' entertainment.

According to Fitzpatrick, gone are the days of being confined to a photo booth for party snapshots. PartyPrint is a software and

app that allows people to take pictures with their phones and send it to a printer so they can pick them up and take them home easily.

EBE Talent uses another popular photo-sharing feature, Instapic, to create unique slideshows.

"If a guest uploads a picture on Instagram or Twitter with an event hashtag, we can pull them directly from the web and create a real-time slide show of the event," Fitzpatrick explained. "This is controlled by a real person, which is useful for filtering out any inappropriate photos from kids."

Changes in technology have also had a profound impact on party music selection. People use Spotify and Apple Music to create playlists for their events, and while you might still hear some classics like "Y.M.C.A.," Fitzpatrick has noticed an increased demand for songs from TikTok stars. These internet artists are popular among kids who use the video-based social media platform regularly, but less well-known to the general public.

"DJs have to do a lot of research because these songs are not trending on charts, but all the kids know them and it's part of their social life," she said.

And don't forget about the party favors.

A quick scan of It's My Mitzvah, an online personal shopping service for b'nei mitzvah party planners, reveals the popularity of customized headphones, ear pods, selfie sticks and phone cases alongside the more traditional T-shirts, sweatpants and water bottle favors.

"Some people think this technology is great, others can be overwhelmed," Fitzpatrick said. "Everyone's different. But overall, we do see more and more families embracing it." ❤️

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Destination Pesach: There Will be Food

MATT SILVER | JE STAFF



▲ Sometimes dessert stations come with fruit sculptures. The buffet at the Aidmans' hotel included hot and cold foods, omelet stations, juice bars and caramelized banana waffles. "Much fancier than anything I would have served at home," Ayala Aidman said.

Courtesy of Ayala Aidman

Editor's note: This article was written prior to the spate of coronavirus-related travel cancellations, which have included Passover-related trips.

Passover can be an ordeal. The mandate to scrub every corner of the house clean of chametz can feel like the 11th plague, the one that's persisted unmercifully into modernity — and that's not even taking the seders themselves into account.

For some, the burden can feel so great that flies and pestilence begin to seem like a vacation by comparison.

Vacation ... now there's an idea.

What if I told you about a place where all the cooking and cleaning and top-to-bottom koshering of everything would be taken care of for you? No flies, no pestilence, no contemplating the irony of celebrating deliverance while in thrall to a different, domestic oppressor.

All that's required is casting the convention of the dining room seder aside in favor of a destination Pesach.

Combining Passover with a vacation isn't a new concept, but the concept, in the spirit of American free enterprise, has gone grander — the food, the amenities, the excursions, the entertainment and, of course, the price tag.

But while the five-star options attract the most press — and for those who indulge in them the most Jew-on-Jew scorn — the reality is that Passover resorts are not just for the rich. Like virtually every other segment of the service sector, destination Passovers present to the consumer a system of tiered luxury.

If living your best Pesach means not only eating gourmet kosher cuisine prepared by celebrity chefs but also sharing an after-seder drink and intellectual sparring session with Alan Dershowitz, then KoshERICA's programming might be for you.

Even the most pared-down of KoshERICA's offerings for Passover 2020, at the Hyatt Regency Grand Reserve, a five-star resort on Coco Beach in Puerto Rico, includes constantly available kosher barbecue and Chinese food and as much golf as any one human could dream of



▲ From left: Yoni and Shoshanna Aidman. The Aidmans spent Passover 2017 at a hotel in Lancaster as part of a program operated by the Jewish Heritage Center of New York and Greenwald Caterers of Lakewood, New Jersey.

Courtesy Ayala Aidman

playing, on not one but two championship golf courses designed by PGA legend Tom Kite.

The only thing better would be to see the look on the Pharoahs' faces.

This, by the way, is Kosherica's Passover package that, according to its marketing materials, dispenses of all the unnecessary fluff.

If you opt for the fluff, expect all of the above, plus a full roster of rabbis and public intellectuals with whom to ponder the unknowable and a week's slate of entertainers including but not limited to: magicians, musicians, comedians and hypnotists, as well as the once-famous, the almost-famous and the Instagram-famous.

"I remember there was a terrible comedian that we walked out of," said Jamie Barron, whose family spent Passover 2018 in Palm Springs, California, with Kosherica. "Which was awkward because it was in a room with lights on and there wasn't a huge crowd.... It was rough."

Okay, so the entertainment on these things might be a little hit-or-miss; anyone who's been on a cruise, no matter how opulent, knows this to be a hazard of vacationing.

Entertainment notwithstanding, Barron said that the experience was a big hit with her family and that it provided a much-needed reprieve, especially for her mother.

Barron's mother, Jackie, Passover-proofs their suburban Chicago home in an ultra-fastidious manner that's in keeping with

See [Destination](#), Page 18

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Destination

Continued from Page 17

Orthodox tradition, even though, while traditional, the Barrons would not classify themselves as Orthodox, illustrating that the burdens of Pesach preparation need not be denominational.

"My mom had always wanted to do something like this because she does the whole extreme cleaning-out of the whole kitchen, switching out all the silverware and plates — like we have all new utensils and cooking stuff," Barron said. "So it's a ton of work, plus she does the most cooking during Passover because we can't eat out. But all of her cooking utensils are so sh---y because she says, 'Well, I only use them a week out of the year, so I don't get nice ones,' and we're like, 'But you do the most cooking this week!' It's frustrating."

For reasons to which many can probably relate, the Barrons had been wanting to treat themselves to a destination Passover for some time, but with two daughters as public school teachers, the timing never seemed to work out perfectly ... until one year when it did.

They chose to go to Palm Springs with Kosherica after gaming several similarly upmarket options because it was close enough to their suburban Chicago home and also because Palm Springs is known the world over as a spa and golf destination, not as a foodie's paradise — they wouldn't be missing out on world-famous local cuisine while keeping kosher for Passover.

"There were a lot of places where we were like, 'We don't want to go there and not be able to eat the local food.' There was one program in Spain, and I was like, 'No, if I go to Spain, I'm eating ham,'" Barron said, laughing. "And we also wanted somewhere

warm, where there'd be some stuff to do aside from just laying around, which is mostly what we did anyway."

The Barrons did partially sit through the aforementioned underwhelming comedy show, saw some acrobats "just walking around," and they even hit the resort's casino night. But for all the extras these programs provide, at the end of the day, it all comes down to the food, which at nearly every tier of luxury seems to be of high quality and even higher quantity.

"I will say I was pretty impressed by a lot of it, mostly by just how much of it there was. It was just a ton of food, really," Barron said, clarifying that the kosher for Passover dessert table was far more extensive than the candy fruit slices and assorted Manischewitz macaroons that many of us associate with nostalgic feelings instead of things that actually taste good.

And breakfast — well, breakfast was simply a whole different ballgame.

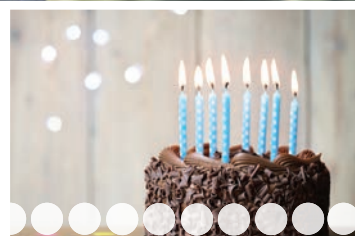
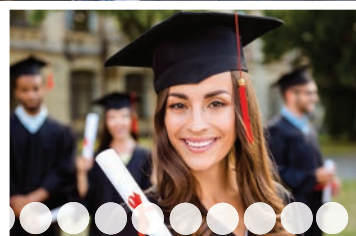
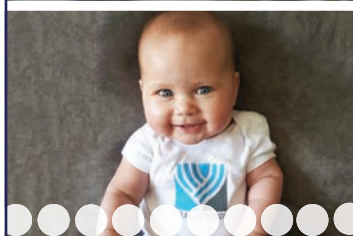
"Breakfast was awesome because they always had guys making omelets. And they had pancake and waffle stations — somehow Passover pancakes and waffles are actually good; they've figured that out. And for dinner, they had these stations outside where they'd have Chinese food and they'd somehow make kosher-for-Passover fried orange chicken."

Strange as it may sound, though, the Passover resort experience can be about more than just stuffing your face — even though each and every program will offer you the opportunity to do that to an obscene degree.

Take Ayala Aidman's experience. Aidman, a mother of four living in Bala Cynwyd, has a 5-year-old daughter Shoshanna who was born with Down syndrome. The holidays, as Aidman explained, can be a particularly arduous, and often isolating, time for children with special needs and their parents, who face

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challenges above and beyond the normal burdens of koshering a house for Passover.

For families like the Aidmans, Passover resorts offer not just a reprieve but a valuable socialization opportunity for both the kids and the adults.

“For families with a child who has a disability, if we’re home on a normal Shabbos or a normal yontif, it’s very difficult to get out, and we don’t get to have the kind of social interaction that other families do,” said Aidman, who, along with her family, opted for fully catered hotel Passovers in 2017 and 2018 operated by the

Jewish Heritage Center, a nonprofit run out of Queens and Long Island, New York, in conjunction with Lakewood, New Jersey’s Greenwald Caterers.

“Families with children with disabilities often feel very isolated, so when you’re in a hotel setting like this, it becomes very freeing. You’re really able to go and participate in all of the community activities.”

In 2017, their Pesach hotel was in Lancaster; in 2018, it was in Stamford, Connecticut. Not quite Palm Springs or beachside in



▲ The Barron family spent Passover 2018 at a Palm Springs resort operated by Koshherica, one of the big names in luxury Passover travel.

Courtesy of Jamie Barron

impairments, the Pesach hotel provided a safe and friendly atmosphere where they could interact and socialize. It might not have been the most luxurious, but it was accessible, and that’s how communities really should be. Maybe that’s what the real ‘luxury’ of an all-inclusive Pesach experience is all about.”

“And, of course, the food,” she added with a laugh. “It was like going to a bar mitzvah every day.” ♥

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Barbara and Bruce Zeiger have been married for 46 years.
Courtesy of Barbara and Bruce Zeiger

Longtime Couples Share Secrets of Sustaining Love

SOPHIE PANZER | JE STAFF

Don't go to bed angry. Be good friends. Have a sense of humor. Remember you're on the same team.

We've all heard this classic relationship advice before — or at least seen the movie “When Harry Met Sally” — but can it really make a marriage last a lifetime?

Four couples who have been married for more than 40 years were interviewed to find an answer. These love experts weighed in on navigating the joys and challenges of marriage, avoiding or coping with regrets, and cultivating love that lasts.

THE ZEIGERS

Barbara and Bruce Zeiger of Broomall recently celebrated their 46th anniversary. They were high school sweethearts and sat next to each other in homeroom. On her 14th birthday, he gave her a check with instructions to cash it in for a date.

They married in November 1973. Bruce Zeiger, who owned a bridal shop, got held up at work and came late to the wedding.

“They wouldn't start without me anyway,” he joked.

The early years of their marriage were not without their challenges.

“We didn't always agree on discipline for the kids,” Barbara Zeiger said. “When we had children, he worked and I stayed home and I didn't want him giving me his 2 cents all the time. But the best part about our marriage is neither of us are drama queens. We just get things done.”

So what's the secret to staying together for 46 years?

“Lots of humor, lots of intimacy,” she said. “We're best buds. We gross out our kids constantly. My husband doesn't want a big 70th birthday, he wants a 69th.”

She also emphasized the importance of couples finding an individual approach that works for them.

“We are very traditional. His work took priority and I was the go-to kid person,” she said. “But don't look at other people's marriages and compare yourself. We would never do some of the

things our kids do in their marriages, but it works for them.”

Neither Zeiger expressed regrets about their relationship, but Barbara Zeiger did note the limited career options available for women who wanted to work and raise families.

“I went to Temple, and it never occurred to me that I could be anything other than a nurse or a teacher because I knew I was on the housewife and mother track,” she explained. “My only regret was that I didn’t pursue my other interests more.”

THE BRAVERMANS

Roberta and Bruce Braverman of Cherry Hill, New Jersey, also met in high school and recently celebrated their 46th anniversary.

“I was not looking for a husband when we met,” Roberta Braverman said. “I just wanted a date to senior prom.”

When college admissions season rolled around, the couple had a choice to make.

“Bruce had his heart set on the West Coast and got accepted at the University of San Diego. For me, it was either Glassboro (now Rowan University) or Temple,” she said. “Bruce gave up his dream to commute to Temple with me.”

He has no regrets.

They dated through college and got married instead of attending graduation in May 1973. Their first child was born in 1978, and two more followed in 1980 and 1983.

Bruce Braverman held various careers in finance and Roberta Braverman was a teacher for 35 years. “My mother gave me two options — teacher or nurse. That was the way of that day. You could have a family and a career if you picked one of those options,” she said.

They jointly advise couples to have a sense of humor in order to laugh through difficult moments.

“Ride the wave,” Roberta Braverman suggested. “There are highs and lows. If you see beyond the urgency of the moment, you realize everything is going to be ok.”

Her husband had a simpler suggestion.

“I live by two rules. Number one: My wife is always right. Number two: If she’s wrong, go back to rule number one.”

THE GABLES

Shelley and Bruce Gable of Warwick met at a party in Atlantic City. Their first date was at a neighborhood pizzeria in West Philadelphia, and they married five years later.

“My parents, especially my father, were very excited,” Shelley Gable said. She feels her parents and grandparents influenced her approach to marriage. “I had an old-fashioned marriage. I got married when I was younger, so I was always thinking about the way my grandparents and parents acted toward each other.”

Before the couple retired, Shelley Gable was a teacher for 30 years and Bruce Gable was a businessman. They will celebrate their 43rd anniversary in July.

Their advice? Have a good sense of humor, never go to bed angry and don’t try to change each other.

“Our marriage is a team,” Shelley Gable said. “If I couldn’t be there for something, he would. There was never any question over whose job something was. We didn’t keep score, we never tallied points, we just got things done.”

“She’s very unselfish, and is always looking to do things for other people. She’s very kind and considerate,” Bruce Gable said. “I’m the luckiest man on the face of the Earth.”

See **Longtime**, Page 22



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Longtime

Continued from Page 21

THE FELDMANS

Ira and Rochelle Feldman of Northeast Philadelphia met on a blind date set up by her cousin. They went out for a movie and vanilla ice cream and got married 13 months later. The couple celebrated their 60th anniversary on March 6.

"I have absolutely no regrets — I'd do it over in a heartbeat," Rochelle Feldman said.

Before retirement, she worked as a medical secretary and later as a special education teacher, and he was a manager at Roger's Men's Store.

"Rochelle is a very patient person, very caring, and a loving wife, mother and grandmother. She's my best friend and a very strong woman," he said.

"Ira has a very good sense of humor. He's very caring and family-oriented," she said.

They are now encountering the most challenging moment in their relationship — Ira Feldman's onset of Parkinson's disease.

"We're navigating very well with our children's help," Rochelle Feldman said. "It's important to be patient, loving and understanding."

The couple shared tips for those hoping to make it to their own 60th anniversaries.

"Be patient and listen to what your partner has to say. When you discuss things, come to an agreement. Work together. Be good friends. Have each other's backs," she advised.

"Don't go to bed mad," he added. ❤️

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Rochelle and Ira Feldman celebrated their 60th anniversary on March 6.
Courtesy of Amy Alters

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