

Simchas



JEWISH CELEBRATIONS IN GREATER PHILADELPHIA



A SUPPLEMENT TO THE **JEWISH EXPONENT** | OCTOBER 26, 2017



Experience Luxury in the Newly Refined Hilton Philadelphia



After a \$15 million dollar complete hotel renovation...

Experience Philadelphia's most breathtaking Ballrooms, Grand Lobby and Guest Rooms.

Let our event specialists create an experience that you and your guests will remember forever.

Glatt Kosher available on premises.

267.969.3001 Catering Sales

HiltonPhiladelphiaCityAve.com



Hilton
Philadelphia City Avenue
4200 City Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19131



Exquisite Venue
Extraordinary Service
Timeless Tradition



*Discover the region's most spectacular
venue for all occasions.*

**American Culinary Federation:
Achievement of Excellence Award Winner**

Call us today to create the experience of a lifetime.

484.238.1800 | sales@sheratonvalleyforge.com

SheratonValleyForge.com | 480 North Gulph Road | King of Prussia, PA 19406



Sheraton®
Valley Forge
HOTEL



EAT. DRINK. PLAY. WATCH.®

10% OFF YOUR SPECIAL EVENT

PHILADELPHIA MILLS • 215.632.0333

Promotional. EXPIRES: 4/30/2018. Blackout dates may apply. Offer Valid ONLY with Special Event bookings. Buffet must be included in event package. Revenue minimum required. Minimum of 20 guests. Offer must be referenced at the time of booking and coupon must be surrendered at time of redemption and may not be photocopied or duplicated. Minor policies vary by location – please check www.daveandbusters.com/locations for details. Not valid with any other offers. Offer may not be used for credit or refunds for past or future events. Not valid with any other offer. NOT FOR RESALE.



dnparty.com

FREE \$20 GAME PLAY WITH PURCHASE OF \$20 GAME PLAY

PHILADELPHIA MILLS • 215.632.0333

Promotional. EXPIRES: 4/30/2018. Present this coupon at Front Desk to redeem. Limit one coupon per customer. Barcode valid for one use only. Minor policies vary by location – please check www.daveandbusters.com/locations for details. Not valid with any other offers, including Eat & Play or Eat, Play, Win Combos, Half Price Games Wednesdays or any Half Price Game promotion. Not valid with Special Events Packages. Coupon must be surrendered at time of redemption and may not be photocopied or duplicated. Once game play is loaded to Power Card®, the game play does not expire. Non-negotiable. Power Card activation fee is \$2. (\$3 Times Square). NOT FOR RESALE.



103002065 E10012017



8 Feline Infatuation



12 Something Borrowed — Literally

14 Bar and Bat Mitzvah Projects Teach Giving Back

17 Reunions Celebrate Then — And Now

22 Planning a Milestone Celebration

26 Destination Weddings in a Unique Locale



30 Unusual Bar and Bat Mitzvah Party Venues



32 DIY Weddings



HOTEL DU PONT



Bar & Bat Mitzvahs | Weddings | Special Occasions



42 West 11th Street | Wilmington, DE 19801 | 302-594-3122 | www.hoteldupont.com

Surviving Cancer in Style



Jude Plum with Kristin D., shown wearing her wig

Jude Plum Co.
www.JudePlumSalon.com

Natural European hair wigs and hairpieces
for men, women, and children
with all types of hair loss

"The anxiety surrounding losing my hair was put to rest when I saw what a natural look and feel the wigs at Jude Plum have. The staff helped me feel extremely reassured and comfortable during this difficult period. I would recommend Jude Plum to anyone in need of an understanding, experienced, and compassionate environment!"

610.527.1770

821 W. Lancaster Avenue • Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania 19010

130TH ANNIVERSARY JEWISH EXPONENT

2100 ARCH STREET | PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103
MAIN PHONE NUMBER: 215-832-0700

PUBLISHER'S REPRESENTATIVE/
GENERAL MANAGER
STEVEN ROSENBERG

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
JOSHUA RUNYAN

MANAGING EDITOR
ANDY GOTLIEB

SENIOR STAFF WRITERS
JON MARKS
LIZ SPIKOL

STAFF WRITERS
RACHEL KURLAND
MARISSA STERN

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR
JENI MANN

ART/PRODUCTION COORDINATOR
JOE MACLEOD

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
STEVE BURKE

DIRECTOR OF SALES
SHARON SCHMUCKLER

SENIOR SALES REPRESENTATIVE
BRUCE WARTELL

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES
SUSAN BARON
WILLIAM JOHNSON
TAYLOR ORLIN

CLASSIFIED SALES
NICOLE MCNALLY
JILL RAFF

DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS OPERATIONS
CHERYL LUTTS

FINANCE ASSISTANT
MARIE MALVOSO

SUBSCRIPTIONS
JUNE HAMILTON



IT'S ALL ABOUT
YOU



*Where mothers, daughters, sisters, & girlfriends
get dressed up. Check out our upcoming
2017-2018 trunk shows.*



610.668.2801
gabriellebala.com

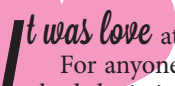
200 Monument Rd
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004

Tues- Sat 10am-5pm
Sun 12pm-4pm

Couple of 25 Years Made Love Connection over Feline Infatuation in Exponent Purr-sonal Ad

RACHEL KURLAND | JE STAFF




It was love at first — meow? For anyone else, a personal ad depicting himself as a cat rather than a human being would *probably* be a turnoff, but it was meant to be for Mike and Anne Ginsberg.

Mike placed a personal dating ad in the *Jewish Exponent's* classifieds section in 1990 — from the perspective of his cat, Otis.

He was seeing someone at the time — who was not Jewish — but knew it was going nowhere, so he thought, “Well, I can put it in the *Exponent* and she’ll never see it.”

The \$87 ad led with “SNC: Single Neutered Cat.”

In the past, he dated someone who did not like animals, a big dealbreaker for Mike.

“She was afraid of my parents’ miniature poodle,” he recalled. So when it came between choosing her or Otis, it was an easy decision.

The ad was a hit.

“I just thought it was a creative way to stand out,” he said.

Anne’s ex hated her cat, too, so Mike seemed like a *claw-some* catch.

“I thought, ‘OK, I *have* to meet the guy that wrote this,’” she said. She responded to the ad on theme: “I’m a single female cat and I’m sick of having my person come home after yet another blind date from hell and tell me that there are no nice Jewish guys out there, so prove her wrong!”

Mike felt indifferent about most of the inquiries he received, but decided to give it one last shot. On the final day he could check his voicemail responses, there was a message left only 10 minutes prior. It was Anne.

Their first date was the following day, Dec. 29, where he took Anne to see a movie at the Ritz on Walnut Street.

In his signature mullet and two earrings — the look has since faded, fortunately — Mike drove up with his flesh-toned Ford Escort, decorated with Grateful Dead stickers. He didn’t think



Mike and Anne Ginsberg

he stood a chance; he thought Anne was too sophisticated for him.

“His hair was longer than mine at the time,” she laughed, “wearing more earrings than I was.”

With nothing to lose in Mike’s mind, all the anxiety of dating went out the window.

They held hands on the walk from a bar to the Ritz, and when Mike later met Anne’s cat, grinning down at it, Anne checked out his “cute” smile.

“I was shocked that we were connecting,” Mike said. A couple weeks later, he threw away a box of roughly 115 letter responses to the ad (unknown to Anne until 25 years later).

But their connection shouldn’t come as too much of a surprise, since the two had actually met three years prior at a Halloween party.

A few beers in waiting for his friends to show up, Mike chatted with Anne, cloaked in a witch’s hat, but just didn’t seem to “click.”

When his co-worker asked Mike where he wanted to sit at the party, he said, “As far away from that witch as possible.” It didn’t help that she happened to also have a cackling laugh.

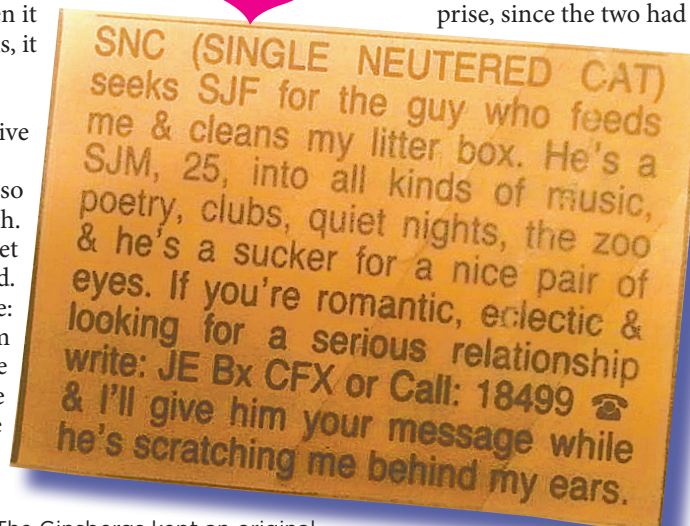
Fast forward to their second date at a Grateful Dead cover band concert.

“She doesn’t have to love them, but she can’t hate them,”

said Mike, a huge Dead fan. The couple had a good time, and have since seen the real band 12 times and danced to “If I Had the World to Give” at their wedding.

They fit into each other’s lives seamlessly, meshing with each other’s friends and families like they’ve been there all along.

They got engaged on the anniversary of that first date, and married Sept. 6, 1992 at Congregation Keshar Israel. Mike’s father



The Ginsbergs kept an original copy of the classifieds ad that Mike posted in 1990.

PHOTOS PROVIDED

See LOVE CONNECTION, page 10



ELMWOOD PARK ZOO BRINGS YOU A **NEW BREED OF EXPERIENCE**



With over 100 wild and exotic animals, and nearly a dozen beautiful outdoor and indoor spaces spread throughout 16 acres, the Elmwood Park Zoo is the most unique destination for your next event.

EVENTSATEPZ.COM • 610.277.3825 x 242 • EVENTS@ELMWOODPARKZOO.ORG



ReEvent
ReSell · RePurpose · ReInvent

Sustainable Party Planning
Invitations, Decor, Candy Buffets & More

Party with Confidence!

www.ireevent.com
610.668.1480
www.zcandybar.com
610.668.1481
306 Levering Mill Rd.
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004

Sweeten Your World!
Z
CANDYBAR
K

Love Connection

CONTINUED

blew up that *Exponent* ad where it all began as the cover for their wedding guest book.

They resided in Queen Village until 2011 with daughter Maddie, who is now settled in Nashville.

They've been together through everything: new jobs, synagogue life, travel, a lot of moves, the loss of parents, the birth of their daughter (also announced in the *Exponent*).

"It takes a close relationship," Mike said of the loss of both his parents within a short time. "You're dealing with something that you don't want to deal with, but it's a part of life. I can't imagine having that and not having your best friend, who happens to be your wife, get through that [with you]."

"You need to know that you can lean on each other," Anne added.

After 25 years of marriage, the jubilant and ever-laughing couple said a lot of love,



tolerance and humor has kept them going.

It also helps that they're not joined at the hip (though it may sound like they are). They enjoy separate activities with friends, but come back and share it with each other.

"We don't have to be with each other 24/7," Mike said, which adds to a healthy relationship.

"I've known some couples that say, 'Oh, we never fight. We do everything together. We like all the same things.' And I think to myself, 'How boring is that!'" Anne exclaimed.

The family continued to grow with each new pet, too, with subtle persuasion by Mike and Maddie. They wore down Anne with Oliver the pug, one of six in a litter.

"The only thing cuter than one pug



DST
Special Occasion Planning
& Concierge Services

Stress-Free Wedding Planning

- Full Wedding Packages
- Partial Wedding Packages
- Day/Month of Wedding Coordination
- Honeymoon Travel Planning
- Complimentary Consultation with All Wedding Packages

Serving Bucks, Montgomery, Philadelphia, Chester, & Delaware Counties

info@deserveyourtime.com | 267-968-1210 | www.deserveyourtime.com

@DeserveYourTime
f i t

Leave all
the planning
to us

puppy is six pug puppies,” she said adoringly, so they adopted the one to join their three cats.

Expanding their musicality beyond the Dead, the pair later discovered a mutual love of opera after a random splurge subscription to The Met. They’ve met tenors Luciano Pavarotti and Plácido Domingo, as well as soprano Denyce Graves of *Carmen* notoriety, who Maddie — full name Madeline Denyce Garcia (after Anne’s old roommate, not the Dead’s Jerry) Ginsberg — is named after.

They don’t always agree on music, however. (AC/DC without earplugs didn’t sit well with Anne.)

But when Metallica came to the Mann Center one season, Anne told Mike “the only way I’m going to go with you” is if he also bought tickets to the ballet.

“I thought, he’ll never agree to this,” she laughed. But Mike showed up to her workplace with an envelope with four tickets: two



Mike and Anne Ginsberg with daughter Maddie.

for the ballet, two for Metallica. “Well, I guess I gotta go now!”

Though he got rid of his rocker demeanor, Mike has since added a handful of tattoos to his look after his 40th birthday, something he never thought he’d do.

Maddie, now a 17-year-old high school senior, plans to get a matching one with her father — most likely an infinity sym-

bol with three hearts — once she turns 18.

All of their different interests keep the family grounded.

“My dad used to say to me, ‘How can anyone get high on life?’” Mike said. It may be a corny connotation, but he believes in the statement. “Watching [Anne and Maddie] together, even if they’re just sitting on the sofa hanging out, that’s the most important thing in the world.”

Although they’ve grown together the past 25 years, Mike said he doesn’t feel any older — and grateful they met each other when they did rather than put up with the anxiety-producing dating app era of today.

“We’ve been married five years and we have 20 years of experience on top of it,” he joked.

“Sometimes I look at him and it’s like we just got married, and sometimes I look at him and think it’s been 250 years,” Anne laughed. “[But] when it’s the right person, you will know.”

Sometimes, that right person is a cat. ●

rkurland@jewishexponent.com; 215-832-0737

JEWISHEXPONENT.COM

SIMCHAS

OCTOBER 26, 2017 11

Something Borrowed

RACHEL KURLAND | JE STAFF

IMAGINE A REAL-LIFE *Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* scenario — except you don't know who will wear your pants next, or where.

Enter the world of *gemachs*.

Within Orthodox communities, *gemachs* are a go-to mode of shopping for just about everything: books, nursing supplies, furniture, party decor and entertainment, and clothes for all occasions.

Specifically, one might say the most important occasion of all: your wedding day.

Gemach is an abbreviation of *gemilut chasadim*, meaning “acts of kindness.” Of course, it's a mitzvah to give without receiving anything in return, so many within these communities set up shop for *gemach* bridal dresses (as well as bridesmaid dresses and accessories like headpieces, veils, tiaras or shoes).

Some are free, others are rented. But the small amount spent on a *gemach* gown — compared to high-end wedding dress prices — usually goes toward charity or the cost of running the *gemach* storefront itself.

Those running these unofficial stores — which are common mostly in New York, New Jersey and Israel — are unpaid.

Of 13,000 brides and grooms surveyed in the U.S. for *The Knot's* 2016 Real Weddings Study, the national average cost of a wedding is \$35,329 (pre-honeymoon). The average cost of the dress is \$1,564.

Of course, outliers like big Manhattan spenders can't really be compared to a DIY wedding in someone's rural backyard, but these digits can easily break the bank.

(After all, we can't all be brides at *Say Yes to the Dress*' Kleinfeld, though we can dream.)

With the cost of the dress itself, accessories, alterations and the time it takes to put it all together without the flick of Fairy Godmother's magic wand, it's easy to go over budget on the single look — and then you have to plan the rest of the wedding.

Mrs. Tuchinsky, who preferred not to use her first name, had a tight wedding budget — let alone for a wedding dress — and a trip to David's Bridal put her promptly on the *gemach* path.

She searched Allure Bridals, too, and asked a David's Bridal seamstress how much it would cost to build upon an existing dress to make it modest. While that method can provide many fashionable options, it was out of her budget.

While some dresses from secular companies may come with sheer long sleeves or higher necklines, that doesn't mean it's exactly what the bride wants.

“Once I realized that was many times the



Shayna Edney

amount I could spend, I immediately started contacting *gemachs*,” added Tuchinsky, who got married last March in Lakewood, N.J.

She really didn't see the point in buying an extraordinarily expensive gown that would hide in her closet never to be seen or worn again.

“Obviously, if you own it you can rent it or lend it to other brides, but I couldn't afford to purchase a gown to begin with,” she noted.

After a few peeks in several *gemach* stores, she ended up at Zichron Yehudis Miriam Bridal Gemach in Brooklyn.

“It's an amazing *gemach* with dedicated volunteers who truly only care about you finding a gown you love,” she explained. “They spend as much time with you as you need. For \$250, you can rent a dress, a petticoat, shoes, a veil and a headpiece.”

She opted for all of the above, minus the shoes.

“They really do a huge *chesed*.”

And after trying on about 10 gowns, she found the one.

“They let me add a rhinestone belt that I really loved,” she recalled, “and I also loved that the lace from the bodice extended past the waistline onto the tulle of the skirt.”

Every once in awhile, she thinks back on her dress from her big day.

“I'm glad other brides can wear the dress I wore and enjoy it as much as I did,” she said. “I hope I'll see my dress again,



Mrs. Tuchinsky

PHOTOS PROVIDED

Literally



“ACTS OF KINDNESS AND GIVING ARE NOT JUST FOR THE ORTHODOX — IT IS A MITZVAH AND A QUALITY THAT BINDS THE ENTIRE JEWISH NATION.”

because it really would make me happy to know someone else was wearing it. I just hope she has an amazing wedding day!”

Most Orthodox engagements are short, too, meaning Shayna Edney only had less than three months to find her wedding dress.

“Especially when your engagement period is only a few months, there is not a lot of time to save for a wedding,” she noted.

While some seamstresses thrive within this time frame, it doesn’t necessarily outweigh the cost.

After another failed attempt at David’s Bridal, and nothing stood out at other *gemach* stores, Edney found her gown at a *gemach* in Passaic, N.J., just 20 days before the August 2016 ceremony in Baltimore.

The *gemach* she visited was run out of a woman’s converted basement; hundreds of white tulle variations lined each wall and closet, organized by size.

Edney had the room to herself as the only client that day, so she took her time — several hours, in fact — to find a match.

She chose a poofy tulle ballroom gown, bedazzled with modest jewels on the bodice, which she rented for \$250 (\$200 went to charity, the other for cleaning and repairs).

Fortunately, the dress was a perfect fit in style and size; no alterations required. Post-nuptials, the dress was mailed back.

“A person getting a [modest] dress from a *gemach* is not so different than a person getting a regular dress from a store,” Edney

explained. “The only difference is that the *gemach* dresses have been worn before — but you would never be able to tell.”

The ones rented are in pristine condition, and consistent repairs or alterations keep them looking fresh.

“When a person buys a dress from a regular store, it’s not like you’re getting a one-of-a-kind — there’s hundreds of dresses out there just like the one you bought,” she added.

Edney emphasized that *gemachs* aren’t just for Orthodox Jewish weddings, nor should they be.

“Acts of kindness and giving are not just for the Orthodox — it is a mitzvah and a quality that binds the entire Jewish nation,” she said. “Dress *gemachs* should be for everyone of every religion and every social status. There is no reason for every single bride to spend \$1,000-plus on a wedding dress when they can borrow from a *gemach*, and then alter it as they please.

“I wish that more people would donate their wedding dresses to *gemachs*,” she continued, “instead of leaving them in a box for 30 years until *maybe* their future daughter gets married and *maybe* will wear their dress.” •

rkurland@jewishexponent.com; 215-832-0737

WE’RE UNIQUE! COME OUT AND SEE WHY!



- **Unique, Historic Venue**
- **Available for Weddings, Parties, Fundraisers, Corporate Events and More**
- **Indoor/Outdoor Ceremony & Reception Areas**
- **Picturesque Landscape**
- **On-site Event Consultant**
- **Magnificent Photo Backdrops**

WEST LAUREL HILL



610.668.9900

www.westlaurelhill.com
225 Belmont Avenue, Bala Cynwyd

William A. Siekel, F.D., Supervisor, West Laurel Hill Funeral Home, Inc.

BAR AND BAT MITZVAH PROJECTS TEACH GIVING BACK, EVEN AFTER THE CEREMONY

MARISSA STERN | JE STAFF

THE COUNTLESS HOURS spent learning and practicing your Torah portion.

The late-night anxieties parents experience as they double check they've called the caterer and decorators for last-minute changes.

The payoff of becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah in front of your closest friends and family — before they chuck candy at you.

Preparing for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah isn't easy, but once you're off the bimah and riding the sugar high of dozens of Shirley Temples, it all comes together.

But there is one other element of the important event that shouldn't be overlooked: a Bar or Bat Mitzvah project.

These teens found unique ways to complete their projects by working with organizations that were meaningful to them and, importantly, let them play with some puppies.

Justin Oser has always loved animals, so volunteering with Dog Town Rescue in Montgomery County was a natural fit for his Bar Mitzvah project.

Justin became a Bar Mitzvah in June 2017 and was able to present the organization with a \$500 check after he — in addition to playing with the puppies — sold lip balm to family and friends.

He created a website for the product and volunteered his time to the animals.

"I always loved working with animals, so I wanted to help them," the Pennbrook Middle School seventh-grader said. "I walked them, fed them, played with them — kind of whatever they needed."

His mother, Debbie Oser, volunteered with him, as he was under 12 years old at the time.

"I saw that he was just very loving and caring toward [the animals]. He knows dogs at rescues or at certain pet stores, that they're waiting to be adopted and are always kept back behind closed doors, or in a cage or behind the glass, etc., and he's always had sensitive feelings toward that," she said. "So I would see him just be happy hugging the dogs and playing with the dogs, just being fulfilled that he was able to give them some playtime and love."

He also previously convinced his family to give some love to their own dog. After plenty of pleading, the Osers relented and brought home Chester, a shih tzu who will be 3 next month.

"It's because of Justin," Debbie Oser laughed. "He would kind of hock us and bother us — he really, really wanted a dog."

Volunteering with the organization and completing his mitzvah project taught Justin "to give back and help others."

"Just knowing I was helping the animals," he said of the most rewarding part, "and they could get out of the cage and I could help them and play."

"It was a wonderful experience for him," Debbie Oser added. "I was very happy that he was able to help Dog Town Rescue because they go out of their way to try to help as many animals as they can and they're just great people, so for Justin to be able to help them as well as fill his heart helping the animals and getting to give them a little bit of love, I thought it was a great experience."

For Noah Goldstein, his Bar Mitzvah project came about by accident — though his mother, Debra Goldstein, notes she doesn't believe in coincidences, especially with this project.

When going to pick out invitations for his June 2017 Bar Mitzvah, they found one company, Checkerboard Ltd., whose design is made especially for the Jewish Foundation for the

PHOTO BY PAVLINA2510/THINKSTOCK

Righteous (JFR). The organization provides financial support “to aged and needy non-Jews who rescued Jews during the Holocaust and preserves their legacy through a national education program.”

“The sample invitation for what we were looking at had the blurb about the JFR and my mother and I read it and we instantly knew that was kind of what we wanted to do for my project,” recalled Noah, a Garnet Valley Middle School student.

Through JFR’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah program, participants are “twinning” with a righteous gentile who hid and thereby saved Jews during the Holocaust. Noah was twinned in October 2016 with Wladyslawa Dudziak, whose family hid and saved Rozia “Rose” Bieman in Poland.

He developed a relationship with JFR Executive Vice President Stanlee J. Stahl who, in November 2016, invited Noah to the JFR’s annual gala in New York to recite the Motzi.

“It felt very special to be able to be part of the twinning program with the JFR and it felt extra special to be one of the chosen people to sing the Motzi at the dinner that kind of celebrates the great deeds that the righteous people made during the Holocaust,” Noah said.

He began fundraising for the organization, launching a GoFundMe effort with the goal of raising \$18,000 in honor of *chai*, and corresponding with Rose Bieman and her family, including husband Micha Golan and four children. The story about Noah’s project and link to his GoFundMe can also be found on the JFR’s homepage.

They belong to Congregation Beth Emeth in Wilmington, Del., but his Bar Mitzvah took place at Robinson’s Arch in front of the Western Wall in Israel. That’s a significant place for his Bar Mitzvah as Debra Goldstein’s late father, Herschel Israel Frankel, is buried on Har HaZeitim — and he was joined by some special guests.

In addition to his family, Noah became a Bar Mitzvah before Rose and her family.



Justin Oser with one of the puppies at Dog Town Rescue.
PHOTO PROVIDED

“It made it more memorable due to my Bar Mitzvah project, and having the woman who was saved by the righteous to come and witness my Bar Mitzvah really felt good,” Noah said.

For Debra Goldstein, there were no coincidences with this project.

Prior to leaving for Israel, Noah’s school had an assembly in which a Holocaust survivor who was saved by a righteous gentile, Ruth Kapp Hartz, spoke about Stacy Cretzmeyer’s book about her, *Your Name is Renée*.

The luncheon after Noah’s Bar Mitzvah was held at Confederation House in Jerusalem, which they later learned was founded by Kalman Sultanik, who survived several concentration camps and was a former vice president of the World Jewish Congress.

See PROJECTS, page 16

Design Your Perfect Event

**BUSINESS MEETINGS, SOCIAL
NETWORKING RECEPTIONS,
WEDDINGS, BAT/BAR MIZVAHS,
AND OTHER PRIVATE EVENTS**

CENTER

ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN

DESIGN

www.philadelphiacfa.org/facility-rental

PROJECTS

CONTINUED

"We were meant to see that invitation, to find the JFR," Debra Goldstein said. "Noah being lectured at his public school by someone who was hid and saved by a righteous — that was meant to be. And we had no idea that when we went to the restaurant, when we booked the restaurant for the luncheon, the Confederation House, that had some connection to the Holocaust, and it just really felt meant to be."

FOR NOAH AND HIS FAMILY, CONTINUING THE WORK WITH JFR IS IMPORTANT, EVEN POST-BAR MITZVAH.

For Noah and his family, continuing the work with JFR is important, even post-Bar Mitzvah.

The GoFundMe page remains active at gofundme.com/NoahHelpsJFR, and will remain so until he reaches his \$18,000 goal. As of publication, he's hit more than 50 percent with \$9,254 raised. They continue to exchange emails and photos with Rose and her family and cultivate their relationship.



Noah Goldstein with Rose Bieman at his Bar Mitzvah.

PHOTO PROVIDED

"Our whole family was incredibly moved from start to finish," Debra Goldstein said.

"It's meant a lot to me," Noah added. "I've put a lot of time and work into my Bar Mitzvah project and the fact that I feel good about the decision that I made to pick the JFR really makes me think I made the right decision in making the JFR my Bar Mitzvah project."

"It really took me by surprise because when I stepped into the invitation store, I would never think that I would step out with the start of a path that would leave me with a relationship that I will never forget." •

mstern@jewishexponent.com; 215-832-0740

BAT AND BAR MITZVAH TUTORING.COM

WE PREP FOR SUCCESS



We provide one-to-one tutoring for Prayers, Divrei Torah, Torah and Haftarah Portions. Our study sessions are tailored to teach to each student's personal learning style.

Susan Levey
215-850-5598 • info@batandbarmitzvahtutors.com

Susan Golboro
610-506-5814 • sgolboro@batandbarmitzvahtutors.com

7605 Old York Road, Melrose Park, PA. 19027

Let us guide you and your family on this Jewish journey of learning by preparing for your special day!



Formerly of Fleets

TAILORED CLOTHING
SPORTSWEAR
ACCESSORIES
FOOTWEAR

FORMAL ATTIRE...

SALES & RENTALS
FOR MEN & BOYS!

*Sizes 2-50+
Regulars • Slim
Husky
Portly • X-Longs*

From Generation to Generation
**A Family Tradition
For All Occasions**



3rd Generation of the Dorfman Family

HOURS: M. T. TH. F. SAT. 10-5 • WED. 10-8 • SUN. 12-4
RED LION RD. & HUNTINGDON PIKE
HUNTINGDON VALLEY, PA
215-914-2060
WWW.THEMENSANDBOYSSTORE.COM



*Celebrating
Our 20th
Anniversary*

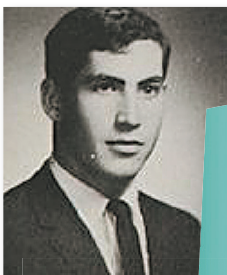
THE PRIME MINISTER of Israel won't be in attendance when Cheltenham High holds its 50th class

reunion Nov. 4 at the DoubleTree Hotel in Plymouth Meeting, but at least 100 of Benjamin (then known as Ben) Netanyahu's fellow classmates should be.

They'll listen to the music of their generation, reminisce about the good old days, proudly show off pictures of their children and, in many cases, grandchildren, and travel back in time.

That's what reunions are all about. As much as we cringe looking at those pictures back when we had full heads of hair and were filled with hope, there's a certain fascination looking at ourselves and others and seeing how our lives turned out.

See REUNIONS, page 18



Ben Netanyahu

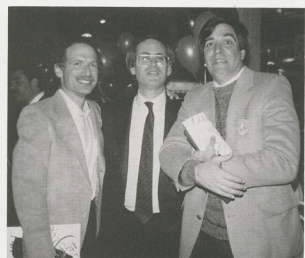
REUNIONS

Celebrate

THEN—AND NOW

JON MARKS | JE STAFF

Cheltenham High School's Class of 1967 20th reunion at the Reading Terminal Market



CHEERS



REUNIONS

CONTINUED



Scenes from the Norristown JCC Tiferet Israel 2016 reunion



Dan Seltzer just wished then he knew what he was signing up for when he was CHS class president.

"They did not tell me it was a lifetime job," laughed Seltzer, who orchestrated this reunion and all its predecessors. "But it's been fun working on it, though some of the meetings were 75 percent socializing and 25 percent work. When you throw a party, you want it to be good. I'm hoping I'll be extremely happy to have seen a bunch of

"We probably had our first meeting about a year ago, then had a meeting once a month at somebody's house or a restaurant. If you make it too large, then it's hard to make decisions because everyone wants a say. I assigned jobs: centerpieces and signs, decorations, badges, etc. My first thought was we should just tape our names on our foreheads and look for each other."

Bala was also the site for Overbrook High School's Class of '57

"My first thought was we should just tape our names on our foreheads and look for each other." — Mark Simon

people I haven't seen in years and maybe reestablish some friendships that have drifted. And when it's over, I guess I'll feel a little relieved."

For most of the people who show up at a reunion, the work is already done. They're just there to mingle and have a good time. They have no clue what went into making it possible.

"We've had one every five years, but this year no one else stepped up to the plate to do it," said Mark Simon, the brains behind George Washington High School's 50th reunion, which occurred Oct. 7 at Bala Golf Club. "There were about eight to 10 people who helped out. We had about 85 coming from a class of 587, but it was absolutely fantastic.

60th reunion on Oct. 22. That one came about when Irene Kohn was having lunch last year with a couple of her classmates.

"They put me in charge," said Kohn, a retired teacher. "I was working with a spreadsheet from our 50th [reunion] and was able to locate about 200 people and send out invitations. The problem is I'm a procrastinator, so I didn't get them out as early as I should have."

The other problem was having little familiarity with social media networks like Facebook and Twitter, which can relay a message more quickly and efficiently.

See REUNIONS, page 20



- Weddings
- Bar & Bat Mitzvah
- Birth Announcements
- Parties
- Personalized Stationery
- Calligraphy
- Printing System on Premises



The Gift Shoppe

- All Occasion Gift Baskets
- Hostess Gifts
- Jewelry
- Party Essentials
- Boutique Candy
- Baby Boutique

352 Righters Mill Road, Gladwyne, PA 19035

Phone **610-649-1100** | **610-649-4850** Fax

www.gladwynepharmacy.com



REUNIONS CONTINUED

George Washington High School 50th reunion from left: Doug Verb, Mark Simon and Jerry Shinfeld



That's what Steve Schwartz realized last year when he staged a reunion for those who had belonged to the Norristown Jewish Community Center before it merged with Tiferet Israel in Lansdale and Bet Israel to become Tiferet Bet Israel in Blue Bell.

Once he started posting about the reunion on Facebook, it made a world of difference — so much so that the 60-year-old Schwartz plans to do it again in a year or so.

"It was a smashing success," Schwartz said. "Joining Facebook generated a lot of activity. We picked the right day to have it, just before Shabbat. We had cooked dinner Thursday night and charged each family \$18 for dinner. After dinner, we reserved an hour for people to reminisce. Then we went around and handed out parts for services because the rabbi and cantor were away that week."



Woodcrest
COUNTRY CLUB

WEDDINGS | BAR & BAT MITZVAHS | EVENTS

300 East Evesham Rd. | Cherry Hill, NJ 08003

Events@WoodcrestCountryClub.com
WoodcrestWeddings.com
856.219.4099



"It had been 20 years since they merged. People told me afterward, 'I thought it was a crazy idea, because who would want to relive their Hebrew school days? I can't believe you pulled it off.'"

No one knows whether there will be a next one for the Cheltenham Class of '67, with members in their late 60s. A sobering

"It was a new school," Simon said. "We were the second class to come in as eighth graders."

"Mike Kaplan, who won awards as a costume designer in Hollywood for *Star Trek*, was in the class, and there were plenty of doctors and lawyers. I'd say we contacted about half the class. We had people coming from the West Coast and

"We just want to celebrate the fact that we're here and that this is a special moment — a once-in-a-lifetime event."

reality they'll note is that 45 classmates are now dead.

"We're doing a plaque for them," said Carol Alsberg Siegel, who selected the DoubleTree because it was a place for classmates from outside the area to stay, while suiting other reunion needs. "For everyone else, we're having something informal on Friday where people can stop by and have a drink and socialize."

"Saturday night is the reunion, then Sunday there's a brunch, which is included for hotel guests and open for anyone else from the class. I've been on the committee for every reunion we've had, and it's been fun."

They also came from far and wide for GW, which was in its infancy when the Class of '67 graduated.

Hawaii. When you analyze it, people who had a lot of friends in high school, people who've been successful in life, they show up."

That is, after all, the whole point of reunions.

"We just want to celebrate the fact that we're here and that this is a special moment — a once-in-a-lifetime event," Seltzer said. "And we'll still have our website up for three years or so afterward so people can post pictures and send emails. But I still find it hard to wrap my mind around that we've been out of high school 50 years." •

jmarks@jewishexponent.com; 215-832-0729



***Legendary.
Intriguing. Connected.***

Ideally located in Philadelphia's Rittenhouse Square, the Warwick offers an atmosphere that combines a sense of history with culture and innovation. From catering services to event planning, let the Warwick handle every aspect of your special day. Celebrate where legends have stayed and history's been made.



Contact Lauren Belsh, Catering Sales Manager
lauren.belsh@warwickrittenhouse.com
220 South 17th Street \ \ Philadelphia, PA 19103
215.735.6000 \ \ WARWICKRITTENHOUSE.COM

THE BIG ZERO:

Planning a Milestone Celebration

JON MARKS | JE STAFF

50th birthday party
done up to look like
the Breakers in
Palm Beach.

PHOTOS PROVIDED

VALORI ZASLOW likes planning parties with a big zero. “The bigger the zero, the more fun people want to have with the event,” said Zaslow, who’s run ReEvent for 20 years. “People often come to me looking for something unique and creative.”

For a party planner, those are the magic words. While a wedding or a Bar Mitzvah may be more significant, celebrating a milestone — like a big birthday or an anniversary — takes on a different charm.

That’s because it’s focused specifically on the man, woman or couple they’re celebrating.

“The thing about birthdays is you can really enhance and enjoy the uniqueness of that individual,” said Sandra Steinfeld of Philadelphia Party Planners, a relative novice with three years in the business after 20 years as an attorney. “When you’re doing birthdays, it’s about someone who’s already established themselves. It’s about what makes that person who they are. I really like that.”

And the stress level is nowhere near as high as when you have to deal not only with the bride and groom, but their parents and who knows what else.

“There’s much less anxiety doing a birthday party for someone of multiple years,” agreed Lynne Brownstein of Arrangements Unlimited in King of Prussia. “But I’m probably not a good person

to ask, because almost every event I do becomes so personal. I’ve been in business so long, there’s hardly a person in the community who hasn’t done something with us. Everybody’s looking for something to celebrate.”

They just all do it a little bit differently.

One anniversary couple might love to dance, so the party will have a dancing theme. Someone else might’ve been into art and culture, so the party will reflect that. Maybe they were into comedy or mysteries, so that will be the focus.

Whatever the customer wants, the party planner will try to make it happen.

“We can do a murder mystery or a character impersonator,” said Sharon Lee Daniels of Mae & Co., who’s played her Marilyn Monroe character so well that an older man once thought she was the real Marilyn. “Whatever they need from us.

“We can either do the whole production or just pieces. We’re doing a party soon for someone who’s turning 60 and having a ’50s theme. We’re making it seem like it’s in a diner and having the person’s name put on a record. This family loves to dance, so we’re also bringing in a Michael Jackson lookalike to do *Thriller*,

**“THE BIGGER
THE ZERO,
THE MORE FUN
PEOPLE WANT
TO HAVE WITH
THE EVENT.”**



Above:
Mary
Beth and
Mark Russo.
Left: Sharon
Lee Daniels as
Lady Gaga
PHOTOS PROVIDED

even though he wasn't even born in the '50s. We take dramatic license."

The clients don't seem to mind as long as they're entertained. Sometimes, the star of the night has no idea what's coming.

"Doing surprise parties are a fun endeavor," Zaslow said, "because you're often creating another whole event to detain the person being surprised. The person being honored thinks they're going somewhere else, so we'll usually have

See ZERO, page 24

WWW.MAINLINEPARTYEXPO.COM THE CYNWYD CLUB
332 Trevor Lane
Bala Cynwyd, PA
12/3/2017
12-4PM

THE CYNWYD CLUB PRESENTS

the
Main Line Party Expo
and Holiday Boutique

SPONSORED BY
JE
JEWISH
EXPONENT

THIS YEAR'S MOST EXCLUSIVE PARTY SHOWCASE!

☆

Goldstein's Men's & Boy's Apparel
Your Mitzvah suit for that special day

DKNY

Family owned and operated for 115 years
Since 1902

Goldstein's

Men's and Boys' Clothing
Now carrying shoes

Visit us in our new location
2537 S Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19148
215-468-0564

Major Credit Cards M, T, Th, F, Sa 10-5:30; W 10-7:30 • ALTERATIONS AVAILABLE
www.goldsteinsclothing.com

ZERO

CONTINUED

a group working to coordinate and keep them away.”

No one has more fun in that case than the party planner.

“I’m not the one who has to keep the surprise,” Brownstein said. “That makes it more fun for me watching.”

But as men and women get up there in years the tone for the party may change.

“We did a 90th birthday once and it was lovely,” Zaslow said. “There was a big board with stars and everyone wished upon a star and put up a star for her. She had a small group of maybe 10 friends. It’s nice to be able to celebrate at that age. But I’ve never done one for someone who’s 100. A lot of families take it upon themselves then.

“It depends on the person’s state of mind and ability to get around.”

However, Brownstein, who’s been in the business 41 years,

has experienced that.

“I did a couple of 100-year-old birthdays and both were in retirement homes,” Brownstein said. “Besides the family, we invited all the people in the home and had Dixie cups and lollipops that made it easy for them. It was very emotional to see all those people together and see how important it was.”

But you don’t have to be turning the century mark for a birthday to be emotional. And you don’t have to rent out an expensive venue and spend a fortune, either.

“It’s up to each individual,” Zaslow said. “If it’s a special birthday and people really want to celebrate and have the means, then the sky’s the limit. But most come with a budget in mind and try to stick to that. I’ve done some very nice at-home parties — an intimate dinner for 15 to 20 couples, where they brought in a caterer and music. I’ve done



Top: Billy's "fortunate 50" birthday at a Chinese restaurant. Right: A golf-themed cake.

PHOTOS PROVIDED





**Philadelphia
Party Planners**
WEDDING SPECIALIST

Let us create the completely worry-free and
fabulous wedding you’ve dreamed of — from complete
wedding planning or just *day of* coordination services.

Sandra Steinfield, Owner
215.285.7892 ♦ philadelphiapartyplanners.com

a lot of retro parties, where we had retro candy bars.

"People want to be creative, so we usually start planning four to six months in advance."

Preparation and the ability to adapt on the fly is key, according to Steinfeld, which is where her legal expertise comes in handy.

"It's all about planning," she said. "Don't wing it because it never comes out all right. So have contingency plans. If anybody believes they can pull off an event

without one glitch happening they're dreaming. Being a lawyer I'm trained in analytical thinking.

"I map out what could go wrong. I review all the vendor contracts. I need to know what is this person getting and what are they paying for? Then I put a whole schedule together."

While party planners may put together weddings and Bar and Bat Mitzvahs by the score, and even throw together an occasional divorce party, those milestone birthdays hit home the most.

Mary Beth Bogan Russo's 50th birthday party
PHOTOS PROVIDED

"I lost my mother when I was very young and I miss her," Zaslow said. "It really gives me a very warm feeling to see people who are alive and still able to celebrate." •

jmarks@jewishexponent.com; 215-832-0729

"IF ANYBODY BELIEVES THEY CAN PULL OFF AN EVENT WITHOUT ONE GLITCH HAPPENING THEY'RE DREAMING."



DON'T MISS ANY OF JAN'S TRUNK SHOWS

Exclusive offers for trunk show dress purchases
go to JansCatalog.com to receive your trunk show offers!

MARISSA BARTELLI
10/26-10/29



MONTAGE/IVONNE D
CAMERON BLAKE
10/26-10/29



WAYNE CLARK
FRASCARA
11/9-11/14



TARIK EDIZ
11/25-11/26



SARA MIQUE
10/26-10/29



RENE RUIZ
11/2-11/5



FERIANI
11/16-11/19



RINA DI MONTELLA
11/25-12/3



save up to \$500 on your Dress and Alterations at Jan's!

shopping in PA doesn't make
much cents



by law all PA dress retailers must charge you 8%
sales tax on your Dress and Alterations! Pay nothing extra at Jan's!



Open 7 Days • 856-428-8181 • 406 Route 70 • Cherry Hill NJ • JansBoutique.com


Jan's





Philadelphia Native Offers Destination Weddings In a Unique Locale

KEVIN WALKER | JE FEATURE



Lara Goldman
PHOTO BY JOSE LUIS ZAPATA PHOTOGRAPHY

MOST PEOPLE associate weddings with love and commitment, and rightly so. After all, it's a ceremony to unite two people together, building a life they will share. That's the part they write songs about.

But a wedding also comes with another constant: questions. *So many questions.*

Who to invite, for example. Who to hire to take photos, for another. Floral arrangements. Cake designs. Bridesmaid dresses. Donut wall or no donut wall?

It's a virtual minefield of decision-making. And topping the list, towering high above all others, is the ultimate question: where to have the wedding?

In Philadelphia, choices abound. Country clubs and major hotels host weddings. So does the National Museum of American Jewish History, the Fairmount Park Horticulture Center and the Franklin Institute.

Local wedding planners can give you glamorous art deco weddings, country barn weddings or traditional weddings like your grandparents enjoyed.

But there's another choice. It's not for everyone. But for those who want a unique wedding outside of Philadelphia, it's a *really* great option:

The Central American country of Belize.

Some people might be aware Belize rates high as a stunningly beautiful wedding location. What they may not know is its other advantage, a woman named Lara Goldman.

The Philadelphia native lives in Belize and runs a company that specializes in coordinating destination weddings. She knows Philadelphia. She also knows everyone and everything about Belize. She's the person to talk with if you want to, say, swim with sharks or zip line your way to a ceremony in a hut in the jungle.

Or, as Goldman puts it, "The answer is yes, what's the question?"

PHILLY-ZEAN AT YOUR SERVICE

Before everyone starts Googling "Where is Belize?": The country runs for about 200 miles along the eastern Central American coast. Belize sits east of Guatemala, north of Honduras and just south of Yucatan and Quintana Roo (which you likely did not know existed until you read this sentence).

Thrillist named Belize one of the best countries to visit where locals love Americans, calling it an "even chiller extension of southern California." *Travel and Leisure* magazine readers ranked Belize as one of the best destinations for travelers.

Goldman, who grew up and lived in the Philadelphia area until 2006, runs a business — Romantic Travel Belize — through which she coordinates destination weddings for couples. That includes everything from finding a venue, arranging hotels for guests and the wedding party, setting up transportation, and hiring all the people needed to get things just right.

"Planning a destination wedding is not the same as planning one locally, and it's certainly not the same as planning a vacation," said Goldman, who lives in Ambergris Caye, Belize. "There is a lot more to consider, especially when you have guests traveling all this way."

Goldman handles all that. Articulate and blessed with a great sense of humor, Goldman summed up her job this way:

"I tell brides, 'My job is to protect your wedding from everyone — including you.'"

Goldman said in her 11 years as a Belizean — or a "Philly-zean," as she calls it — she has come to know everyone in the area that has anything to do with planning and producing a

See DESTINATION, page 28



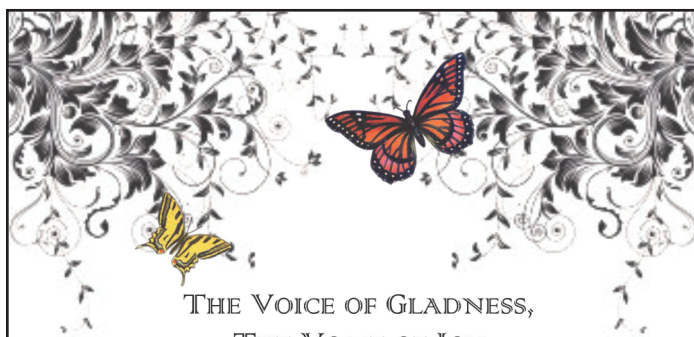
WEDDINGS • BAR/BAT MITZVAHS

COMMITMENT CEREMONIES • FUNDRAISERS • CORPORATE MEETINGS

NETWORKING EVENTS • HOLIDAY PARTIES • REHEARSAL DINNERS

CAPACITY
50-1000 GUESTS

CONTACT **267.295.2949** OR **EVENTS@WORLDCAFELIVE.COM**
3025 WALNUT ST. PHILADELPHIA, PA • **WORLDCAFELIVE.COM**




THE VOICE OF GLADNESS,
THE VOICE OF JOY

קול ששון וקול שמחה

WEDDINGS
and
OTHER JOYFUL CELEBRATIONS


Sanctuary ♦ Chapel ♦ Rabbi's Study
Complete Catering Facilities
Blue Bell, Pennsylvania
610-275-8797 ♦ www.tbibluebell.org

TIFERET BET ISRAEL




ISRAEL
BAR-BAT MITZVAH
FAMILY TOURS

Small Groups - Personal Attention
Fine Hotels - Unique Itineraries



TOVA GILEAD, INC.
www.tovagilead.com
1-800-242-TOVA



Logo designed by ©studio Kalderon



Beach wedding
PHOTO BY MONICA GALLARDO
PHOTOGRAPHY

wedding. That includes musicians, photographers, tour companies, boat captains, hotel managers and caterers.

"I know everyone," she said. She laughed, adding, "I know who gets drunk by 5 p.m. and doesn't return phone calls."

Goldman has planned more than 100 weddings. In December, she will coordinate a Jewish wedding for Danielle Rayzberg and Nathan Brandys. Goldman is bringing in a rabbi for the ceremony. The event will include a full chuppah and ketubah on the beach for 91 guests, who are coming from as far away as Sweden, Poland, Israel and Canada.

Goldman has some people coming in herself. The rabbi is from Mexico. The wedding photographer is well-known, respected Philadelphia photographer Rebecca Barger.

For Goldman, who once was a vice president at a Philadelphia company, there are similarities between her old job and new one.

"I still herd cats," she said.

STARTING A NEW LIFE

In just 46 years, Goldman has experienced a meteoric corporate career, small business success, personal tragedy and a new phase as an expatriate entrepreneur.

Goldman was born in Northeast Philadelphia in 1971. Her family moved to Bucks County in 1980 as part of what she calls the "great Jewish migration." She graduated from Council Rock High School in 1989 and earned a bachelor's degree from what is now Arcadia University in 1993. By 29, she had risen to the position of vice president of employee relations at large, public company.

Her job got phased out in 2003 when the company was sold and a new executive team moved in.

"I decided the next idiot I was going to work for was going to be me," she said.

Goldman opened an antiques shop, La Tela, in Berwyn. Her husband, Tom Lennon, pitched in to help. He had been laid off as an airline pilot following 9/11, and was flying cargo planes. He helped her make deliveries and supported her around the shop.

The couple had renovated a 1920s Tudor house in Drexel Hill. Things were going well. Then, on a Friday in 2004, the phone rang. The MU-2 plane Tom was flying had gone down. He managed to crash land without hurting anyone on the ground, but he died.

Goldman spent the next 18 months grieving, then trying to figure out what to do with her life. After a long period, she began to jokingly ask friends about the cost of moving away to a tropical island. Finally, her sparring partner at the gym — she had taken up boxing — took her seriously and talked to her about the low cost of living in Central American countries such as Costa Rica and Belize.

Belize intrigued her, although she wasn't exactly sure where it was. She listed her Philadelphia house for rent. She wrote in her journal that if a person wanted to rent her furnished home for a year, she'd take it as a sign to go. Literally the next day, a couple contacted her and asked to rent the home. For an entire year, fully furnished.

"The universe made it very clear to me that I needed to go," Goldman said. At that point, she realized the only thing holding her back from making a move was fear. She concluded that "fear is not a reason."

She got on the plane and cried during the flight.

"Not because I was leaving home, but because I felt like I was going home."

Two weeks after hearing about Belize, she had moved there.

BACK IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Goldman said Belize in 2017 reminds her of growing up in Northeast Philadelphia. There's a neighborhood quality in Belize where everyone knows everyone else. She loves that aspect of living there.

Goldman first went into business in Belize with Lemon Crush Belize, a lifestyle brand that started with bikinis adorned with vintage costume jewelry. She began to market to brides, and quickly learned that brides needed help with much beyond just bikinis. They wanted help with all aspects of the wedding.

Romantic Travel Belize was born. It is now a full-service destination management and event design company.

After more than 100 weddings, Goldman will hold her first Jewish wedding Dec. 8. The couple are first-generation Americans. Their parents immigrated to the U.S. as adults.

"I have a rabbi who will be doing a small Sabbath. The couple are hosting a catamaran trip for their guests to snorkel the world's

second-largest barrier reef, then with some sharks and stingrays, then to a neighboring island, Caye Caulker," Goldman said.

That all sound fabulous. But it's the norm for Belize weddings.

Exotic settings are part of the attraction. Get married in Belize, and you can swim with sharks, get married underwater, take a zip line ride in your wedding dress or get married on the beautiful beach. Goldman said a recent wedding took place on a sandbar in the ocean, with the chef cooking while standing in the water.

Craftspeople in Belize are willing to make anything people need for their weddings.

"Things are handmade and handcrafted by people who actually care," Goldman said. She noted that there are no mega-resorts and multiple weddings each day. Couples get the complete focus of the people working there, who take great pride in putting on a beautiful wedding.

Goldman is busy enough that she typically asks for people to contact her six months in advance for weddings in the high season (November through April) and three months during other times of the year.

Goldman said she now focuses more on "design brides," or couples "who have a specific vision, service level desire, and taste level but who realize you need to trust someone who knows what they are doing."

As for Goldman, life did not go the way she anticipated when she was younger. But she truly enjoys coordinating weddings and working with couples to realize their vision.

And she enjoys her newfound home, not just for the natural beauty, but the wonderful people.

"I love that it is a true community, like old-time Philly," she said. "At the end of the day, no matter where you live on planet Earth, it's all about love and you don't have love without people." •

GIVE GIFTS OF ISRAEL BONDS

FOR ALL CELEBRATORY OCCASIONS



Mazel Tov
BONDS

STARTING AT

\$100

.....

eMitzvah*
BONDS

STARTING AT

\$36

INVEST IN ISRAEL BONDS

ISRAELBONDS.COM



Development Corporation for Israel
Harold F. Marcus, Executive Director
Sharon Richman and Susan Schiffrin, Registered Representatives
1500 Walnut St., Suite 1302 • Philadelphia, PA 19102
philadelphia@israelbonds.com • 215.545.8380 • 800.752.5671

*Available only online. This is not an offering, which can be made only by prospectus. Read the prospectus carefully before investing to fully evaluate the risks associated with investing in Israel bonds. Issues subject to availability. Member FINRA.

SEARCHING FOR AN



BAR AND BAT MITZVAH PARTY VENUE? CONSIDER THESE CHOICES

KEVIN WALKER | JE FEATURE

BAR OR BAT MITZVAH ranks among the most traditional of all Jewish events — for good reason. Strip away all the fun party details and glitz, and a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is meant to mark the transition of a boy or girl into the full responsibility of being a member of the Jewish community.

It's an event backed by centuries of tradition, but that doesn't mean the celebration afterward has to be that traditional.

In recent years, many parents planning parties for their son or daughter have moved away from the traditional trappings, such as country club luncheons. Event planners in the Philadelphia area have, of course, seen the trend and made the moves to accommodate it.

"They're not so much off the beaten path," Stacey Kesselman, owner of Exceptional Events, said of the Bar and Bat Mitzvah venue choices in modern times. "They are just different venues outside of a country club or hotel."

SPORTS AND CENTRIFUGES

Kesselman, who also coordinates weddings through her business, has years of experience planning Jewish ceremonies and events. Those include Bar and Bat Mitzvah celebrations in unusual places.

In October, she planned a party for a soccer fan at Talen Energy Stadium, home of Major League Soccer's Philadelphia Union. The event included decorations with the colors of the team and other soccer-related items, such as place cards and water bottles.

They also had soccer jerseys as a giveaway gift for party guests. Kesselman said she has held parties at the Wells Fargo Center, home of the 76ers and the Flyers. But it was the 76ers that were the focus of one particular Bar Mitzvah, where everyone attended a 76ers game first and then stayed after for the party.

While the stadiums are fun, Kesselman said among the most unique places she has coordinated a Bar Mitzvah was at The Fuge. "The Fuge," she said, "is very cool."

“YOU HAVE TO REMEMBER, THE PARTY GUESTS ARE MOSTLY CHILDREN, YOU WANT TO THINK ABOUT CONVENIENCE FOR THEM AND THEIR PARENTS.”

So what is it? Located in Warminster, The Fuge is a completely round facility with 12,000 feet of space. It houses the world's first and largest centrifuge, according to The Fuge website.

Kesselman said in addition to the unique space, The Fuge offers two large movie screens that can show a live feed of the party or a montage of videos and photos. The facility also has a staff of chefs and caterers to handle all the food needs.

UNIQUE VENUES

The Philadelphia area boasts many such facilities for a different kind of Bar or Bat Mitzvah venue, including some of the following.

Lincoln Financial Field. The home of the Eagles and a venue for big concerts also can host a party. The stadium is able to host parties as small as a half dozen or as big as 5,000. The stadium uses Aramark Catering for events.

Fels Planetarium at the Franklin Institute. This is a cool place to visit at any time, but it especially shines for big events. The ceiling can display lights, stars, a full moon or any images you can think of. Much like The Fuge, this is a unique space.

Battleship New Jersey. Got a kid with a thing for ships, the sea and history? The Battleship New Jersey is open for tours, and also rents out space for special events such as a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. For those who choose to hold their party on the main deck, the Philadelphia skyline and the Camden Waterfront provide a spectacular view. The ship has 11 different venues that can handle groups as small as 15 and as big as 3,000. The venues include the Officer's Wardrobe, the Crew Mess, the Captain's Cabin, the Admiral's Cabin and the Main Deck.

Adventure Aquarium. Located near the Camden Waterfront, the aquarium houses more than 8,500 aquatic animals and holds more than 2 million gallons of water. How's that for unique? Adventure Aquarium rents out space for corporate events, birthday parties and Bar and Bat Mitzvahs. The aquarium provides chefs to make food exclusive to the party, including entrees and desserts from Mexico, Italy, Asia and France.

Material Culture. This art, antiques and hand crafts emporium is located near Fernhill Park north of downtown in the

former train station at the Atwater Kent Radio Factory. The building has more than 60,000 square feet of space for events, as well as plenty of art, antiques and architectural elements from around the globe on display. Food is prepared for each event using local, seasonable and sustainable ingredients by Baba Olga's Kitchen. It's all overseen by Chef Aliza Green, a member of the *Philadelphia Inquirer's* Culinary Hall of Fame.



ANOTHER CHOICE

Prices vary for any of the above venues and in different seasons. They also can change based on the size of the party.

Still, some parents might not want to tackle the price or the level of planning needed to use a large event facility. Karen Pecora of Philadelphia Event Planners said she often will discuss with parents options for how to decorate for a party that can turn more conventional spaces into a themed Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

“You have to remember, the party guests are mostly children,” Pecora said. “You want to think about convenience for them and their parents.”

Parents often feel more comfortable attending Bar or Bat Mitzvahs at more traditional locations, such as country clubs or hotels, she said. That said, “They are used to going to the same country club again and again,” Pecora said.

A solution for those who want something different but

don't want to rent out a large venue is to invest in decorating the space uniquely for a specific theme. Pecora said for some Bar or Bat Mitzvahs she will “strip it down” within the venue and completely redecorate. “You can turn any space into anything you want [such as] a ski lodge, for example,” she said.

She's also turned traditional venues into mini-football fields or baseball fields for sports-loving fans.

Whether renting a unique venue or decorating a traditional one with a different look, Pecora said one piece of advice applies to all: People almost always need more space than they think. Pecora said she nearly always recommends a larger space once parents give her their idea of what they need.

“Bigger is always better,” Pecora said. She then added, laughing, “You can quote me on that.” ●



HILARY DANAILOVA | JE FEATURE

LIKE A LOT OF MODERN COUPLES, Stephanie and Daniel Braceland didn't bother hiring a videographer for their August wedding at Philadelphia's Reading Terminal Market.

Instead, Stephanie, a special education teacher, created her own Snapchat filter — #braceyourselves17 — and instructed friends to post their smartphone videos online. "I like it better, because it's through my friends' eyes and not the eyes of someone I hired," explained the bride, who, ironically, moonlights as a wedding photographer.

The Bracelands' approach to videography typifies the DIY (do-it-yourself) spirit of today's Jewish brides and grooms, whose desire to personalize their nuptials is often as strong a motivation as saving money.

Plenty of thrifty couples still make their own centerpieces or buy their own liquor to trim the budget, of course.

But the impulse to put one's own handcrafted touch on wed-

ding elements comes naturally for millennials, a generation that knits for fun, cures pickles at home and curates their own social media brands.

That was the case for Stephanie Braceland, who admitted that she took on numerous tasks out of a desire to have things just the way she liked them — and to express the uniqueness of the couple's Philadelphia foodie relationship.

"Every wedding I go to starts to look the same, so I wanted to step out of the box," said Braceland, 35, who considered only unconventional venues for her interfaith ceremony (she is Jewish; Daniel, a 33-year-old software engineer, is Catholic).

So she spray-painted tin cans for the floral centerpieces, put Tastykakes and Goldenberg's Peanut Chews into Philly-themed goodie bags, and bought white umbrellas for guests to do the "Mummers' Strut" in homage to her South Philly grandparents, who had done the dance at her Bat Mitzvah two decades earlier.

"The millennials really want a story around what they're

buying, to make a personal connection for their wedding,” observed Jennie Love, who hosts DIY flower arrangement workshops for brides-to-be at her Philadelphia urban flower farm and floral design company, Love 'n Fresh Flowers. “They don’t just want to go to Target and get a mass-produced item. They want a physical connection with these objects.”

It’s the same impulse that has propelled the popularity of farmers markets, where an understanding of the provenance of organic rutabaga is now part of our culture. Love said her millennial customers bring that same artisanal ethos to wedding planning: Hand-assembling centerpieces from locally sourced peonies takes on significance apart from the financial savings.

“The seasonal and artisanal is really big,” affirmed Gabrielle Kaplan-Mayer, author of *The Creative Jewish Wedding Book* and an officiant with Journeys of the Heart, a Philadelphia agency that provides interfaith clergy. Like her colleagues, Kaplan-Mayer has observed a shift toward individualized and tradition-infused DIY elements.

Among the most common: chuppahs crafted from a family tallis or tablecloth, a signature cocktail incorporating local flavors, iPod playlists in lieu of DJs, and guest books that “are rarely just a book anymore,” Kaplan-Mayer said, but might be anything from a snowglobe souvenir to a framed family portrait.

One particularly ubiquitous trend is a photo display of departed loved ones, which couples craft into a decorative tree, arrange on a table or even incorporate into the chuppah.

“It’s very meaningful,” said Kaplan-Mayer, noting that today’s older couples may not have grandparents, or even parents, alive to attend. “In a traditional Jewish wedding ceremony, of course, you don’t say the kaddish. There really isn’t a moment where you acknowledge those people who have passed on.”

Not all DIY elements are handcrafted. Music is one of the most common vehicles for personalization in Orthodox nuptials, said Rabbi Yonah Gross of Congregation Beth Hamedrosh in Wynnewood.

“In the past it would be the cantor singing under the chuppah,” Gross noted. “Now, often, it’s siblings or friends who’ll sing.”

At Adath Israel, a Conservative temple in Merion Station, Rabbi Eric Yanoff has noticed that his tradition-minded couples increasingly use music to express their own tastes as well.

“It used to be that there were four Jewish songs that musicians chose from, but now I see people choosing a nice love song — maybe a Jewish love song, a modern Israeli love song, even a totally secular song,” he said.

When Cantor Lauren Levy, the cantor at Beth David Reform Congregation in Gladwyne, married Eric Goodman, a 32-year-old physician, in New Jersey last May, she chose a niggun as her processional.

“We knew it would be a fairly Jewishly literate crowd, and they’d pick up and sing along,” explained Levy, 34. “The idea of being sung along to as we walked to the chuppah was very meaningful.”

Levy also crafted a photo montage of family weddings, displaying them alongside a half-dozen multicolor wine bottles. In lieu of a guestbook, guests were encouraged to write blessings or advice and stuff them inside the bottles, which the couple plans to break open on significant anniversaries.

“The idea was to show that, with all those years of anniversaries that my relatives had, may we continue to read the blessings for the next 50-plus years,” Levy said.

Many couples limit DIY elements to such sentimental touches, since doing things oneself requires significant time commitment.

See DIY, page 34

The Boutique Created Especially for Girls
 Sizes 7-14, Preteen & Junior



Great Selection of Bat Mitzvah Dresses & Prom Gowns
Trunk Shows Coming in January
C. W. Designs
 Gowns, Dresses & Suits for your Special Occasion.
Sondra Celli Couture
 Custom Designed Gowns, Dresses & Suits



215-579-9899
 Closed Mon.; Tues.-Fri. 11 – 5:30; Thur. eves till 8; Sat. 10 – 5; Sun. 12 – 5
4 Cambridge Lane, Newtown, Pa. 18940
www.partygirlsnewtown.com

 Find us on Facebook
 Search Party Girls Newtown





Designer Outlet & Design Studio



www.rdmdesignspa.com

Designer clothing without designer prices

413 W. Ridge Pike, Suite 2 • Conshohocken, PA • 610-834-0367 • Mon-Sat 10-5

Henning's
www.henningsmarket.com
Senior Citizen's Day: Every Tuesday Receive 5% OFF
Henning's Custom Catering



Perfect For All Functions

- From Private to Corporate
- All Inclusive Meals
- All Food Cooked on Premises by our In-house Chefs
- Set Up & Service Available
- Meeting & Party Room Up to 60 Guests

Your Caterer For...
Baby & Bridal Showers • Weddings • Confirmations & Graduations
Corporate & Retirement Parties • Cocktail & Dinner Parties
Picnics & Holidays

DOUBLE COUPONS EVERY DAY
 290 Main Street • Harleysville, PA • 215-256-9533
OPEN EVERY DAY 7 AM-11 PM




Not every bride is as organized as Julia Katz, 30, who organized an assembly line to make bouquets, garland runners and centerpieces for her June 2016 wedding to Barry Katz, also 30. The morning before her outdoor ceremony at the Curtis Arboretum in Cheltenham, Katz picked up an army of pink, white and purple blooms, lined up clear glass vases, and gathered her family and bridal party on the patio of her future in-laws' Cheltenham house.



Above: A ketubah. Left: Wedding favors.
PHOTOS PROVIDED

"It was stressful," she allowed, recalling an emergency run to Lowe's for extra flowers. "We had eight people working at 9 a.m. Friday morning, and we had to be done by 2. But it worked out." Moreover, full-service flowers for her 150-person affair "would have been crazy expensive," added Katz, who also saved money by hand-lettering her signs and used a veil handmade by her mother.

For elements like photography, music and flowers, DIY savings can be substantial.

Full-service floral design costs upward of \$5,000 for a typical wedding, Love said, while her DIY brides — who buy bulk flowers and assemble most of the arrangements themselves — spend an average of \$400 to \$700.

But whether they pre-order specially grown blooms for Love 'n Fresh to assemble or do it themselves, Love said Jewish couples are noticeably more invested in their flowers.

"The Jewish faith encourages more appreciation for the natural world. At least that's my theory," she laughed.

The Silverbergs of Media certainly

bear out that theory.

"Woodsy wildflower" is how Michele Silverberg, who owns a gift-basket business, describes the theme for the June 2018 Brandywine Manor wedding of her son, Jason Silverberg, and his fiancée, Jordana Rychik, both 26.

For the couple's 2017 engagement party, Michele Silverberg hand-decorated with dozens of peonies from Love 'n Fresh. She'd had practice: At her daughter's own "terrain"-themed shower a

few years earlier, Silverberg made centerpieces of roses and succulents, and crafted terrariums as party favors.

"I'm a visual person, and I like things a certain way,

and my daughter had a very specific vision of having a rustic wedding that wasn't a cookie-cutter ballroom," explained Michele, who took a DIY approach to the 2016 Jewish nuptials of her daughter, Jessica Konopka, a 29-year-old Philadelphia art teacher.

For that affair at the Philadelphia Horticultural Center, Silverberg lined the aisle with hand-stained wooden crates that she filled with wildflowers. She also fashioned a chuppah from a tablecloth crocheted by her own mother, and hung vintage handkerchiefs on a decorative board for guests to take home. "I saw something like it on Pinterest," Silverberg explained.

The social media sites Pinterest and Instagram, as well as the artisan online retail collective Etsy, are driving both today's DIY wedding inspiration and the pressure to look unique in images that may go viral.

"Now there's this expectation that you're not just going to have your first dance, but you're going to have extravagant choreography," Kaplan-Mayer noted. "You're in the spotlight, and some people don't want to be in the spotlight."

Some don't — but others enjoy the experience of planning a DIY wedding so much that they look for ways to do it again. Braceland, who said she is still sorry her foodie nuptials are over, is now expanding her photography business to include full wedding planning.

"I enjoy doing stuff like that," she said. "I guess it's the teacher in me. I love to put my own personal touches on things." •

ADVERTISER DIRECTORY

Bat & Bar Mitzvah Tutoring	16
Center for Architecture	15
Congregation Tiferet Bet Israel	28
The Cynwyd Club	23
Dana Winiarz	
Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutoring.....	35
Dave & Buster's	4
Declaration of Invitations	11
Deserve Your Time	10
Development Corporation for Israel.....	29
Diamond Painting & Decorating, Inc.....	35
Elizabeth Johns	36
Elmwood Park Zoo	9
The Fabulous Shpielkes	35
Gabrielle.....	7
Gladwyne Pharmacy	19
Goldstein's Men's and Boy's Clothing	23
Hennings Market	33
Hilton Philadelphia City Avenue.....	2
Hot Foot.....	11
Hotel Dupont	5
Irma Brookstein	35
Jan's Boutique	25
Jude Plum Co.....	6
Kids Kuts.....	35
Linda Morrow Photography	35
The Mens and Boys Store	16
Party Girls.....	33
Philadelphia Party Planners	24
Quality Companionship Services.....	35
Quality Painting Services.....	35
Rabbi Rayzel Raphael	35
RDM	33
ReEvent	10
Sheraton Valley Forge.....	3
Tov Gilead.....	28
Warwick Rittenhouse	21
West Laurel Hill	13
Woodcrest Country Club	20
World Cafe Live	27





Diamond Painting & Decorating, Inc.

Historical Restorations • Brick And Stone Cleaning • Pointing
 Steeple Tack Work • Waterproofing • Caulking • Roofing • Masonry • Carpentry
 Cornice Repairs • Millwork Painting • Copper Work • Custom Sheet Metal Work

FREE ESTIMATES

Specializing in Residential Painting • Mention this ad for a 15% discount

MAIN LINE 610-668-1500

Specialists in Children's Haircuts



BY IMPERIAL COIFFURES LTD.

3340 Nazareth Rd.,
 Easton PA., 18042
610-258-2959

Walk-ins Only
 Mon-Fri. 9-5
 Sat. 9-3

Dana Winiarz
 Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutoring
 267-255-1084
 Danal0484@verizon.net





linda morrow photography
 www.lindamorrow.net



info@lindamorrow.net
 610-337-3137



Chai.

News for people who know we don't mean spiced tea.

Every Thursday in the
JEWISH EXPONENT
 and all the time online @jewishexponent.com.
 For home delivery, call 215.832.0710.


 Susan Watts

The Fabulous Shpielkes

Award-Winning
 Klezmer Music

Music For All Occasions

(610) 389-6036
 www.phillyklezmer.com
 susan@susanwattsonline.com

Elaine Hoffman
 Watts





Invitations
 Stationery
 Calligraphy
 Gifts

Irma Brookstein

Les Femmes
 157 Manor Road
 Huntingdon Valley, PA
 19006
 215-938-1440
 Fax: 215-938-0421

PAINTING, REPAIRS & HANDYMAN SERVICES

★ WE MEET ALL YOUR PAINTING AND HOME REPAIR NEEDS ★

Plastering, Patching, Water Stained Damage & Mold Removal
 Wood Staining & Refinishing
 Hardwood Floors Replacement & Refinishing

★ QUALITY WORK AT QUALITY PRICES ★

267-688-4671

10/18



Rabbi Rayzel Raphael

www.Shechinah.com
 1211 Ansley Ave.
 Melrose Park, PA 19027

215-237-2955 cell
 215-782-1221 home

RRayzel@Shechinah.com

Phyllis R. Shore
 p.shore@comcast.net

H 215-886-4040
 C 610-659-1110

Quality Companionship Services

Grooming and Dressing, Assist with Daily Activities
 Shopping, Meal Prep, Bills, Paperwork, Phone Calls
 Social Visits, Taking Walks, Reading
 Errands and Appointments, Etc.

Decluttering • Organizing • Packing and Unpacking

THE BEGINNING OF
SOMETHING
BEAUTIFUL



 Elizabeth Johns

www.elizabethjohns.com (610) 649-8100

46 ST. JAMES PLACE ARDMORE, PA 19003