

THE JEWISH ADVOCATE®

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Living memories

Although it's a bit off the beaten downtown Boston path, if you don't know where it is, you may walk by or near it all the time and not see it or realize what it is. But now that the exhibit on the Jewish history of Boston has been open since December, the Vilna Shul Boston Center for Jewish Heritage is a site worth seeing.

And equally if not more importantly, it is a site worth enhancing and preserving for all time. Like the Old North Church, the U.S.S. Constitution and the Old State House at Washington and State streets, to name just a few Boston landmarks, the Vilna Shul Center is worthy of the Greater Boston Jewish community's support and celebration.

As executive director Steve Greenberg says, "Accessibility to memories is important. These are the things we need to save."

With images going back to the turn of the century through the 1950s along with maps and charts that chronicle where the Jewish community lived, where they prayed and worked over the last 100 years, it is a collection of precious memories that testify to the Jewish presence, growth and prosperity in the old neighborhoods of the North End, Dorchester, Roxbury and Mattapan to the present day in Brookline, Chestnut Hill, Newton and beyond to the north, south and west.

Like other major cities with a Jewish museum like New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and Cleveland, Boston deserves a proper place to display all the richness of its Jewish history. As Greenberg says, "We must preserve our history or we will lose it."

The museum currently has just a small collection of images and artifacts compared to what may be out there in drawers, basements and attics. But with financial and material support from community members, the center has room and a desire to grow.

As the capital campaign continues, a final engineering plan is being drafted. The *Advocate* joins Greenberg and the 25 members of the center's board in hoping that the community will see this site as something worth supporting and preserving.

Albie's accolade

It is with great pleasure that the *Advocate* reports this week that a new research center at the UMass Medical School in Worcester will be named for Albie Sherman. Sherman, the school's vice chancellor, and a well-known and beloved figure in all circles of life in the Commonwealth, has been called the godfather of community relations, representing Jewish and scientific interests on Beacon Hill, and taking more legislators to Israel than anyone and being an all around mensch.

As he was admitted to the hospital to undergo kidney transplant surgery on Feb. 26, it is also with pleasure that we report its successful completion, and that Sherman is all right and expected to make a full recovery.

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Letters to the Editor

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The whole truth

To maintain the fiction that The Cambridge Peace Commission has no connection with The Cambridge to Bethlehem People to People Project, Marty Federman hides a number of important facts.

Cambridge Peace Commission records reveal a close, structural relationship between the two groups (even fundraising for the Bethlehem group was planned by the Peace Commission). The Peace Commission's taxpayer-funded director sits on both groups and provided city offices and services for the Bethlehem group.

At a recent meeting at City Hall, The Bethlehem Group attempted to ban access to its meeting by demanding that the public be ejected from the meeting room, a violation of Massachusetts law.

Minutes of the Peace Commission also reveal that the only reason its members declined to name Bethlehem a "sister city" of Cambridge was out of fear of legal prosecution arising from an alliance with a municipality that is governed by an overwhelming number of politicians belonging to designated terrorist groups – Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

It would seem that, to Mr. Federman and his group, the only people living in Bethlehem are either olive harvesters, craftsmen or performers in traditional dance troupes. Why is he so reluctant to tell the truth about the connection of the Bethlehem group with the Cambridge Peace Commission of which he is a member? Surely, he sees nothing illegal or unethical about the apparent close relationship between the two.

And, more importantly, if his Peace Commission is truly dedicated to peace in the Middle East and

understanding both sides, why has his group steadfastly refused (or refused to discuss) sending a solidarity mission to Sderot, the Israeli city under daily bombardment by Palestinian terrorists?

HILLEL STAVIS
Cambridge

A mistake in the candy story

In her haste to produce an infomercial for a new candy business, your reporter accepts as fact statements made by the proprietress that are patently untrue ("Business is Booming for Candy Wrappers" – *Advocate* Feb. 15).

"Nothing like this exists in the Boston area right now..." and "People...say how excited they are that candy is now available to the kosher community."

Had your reporter checked, or, more importantly, had the editor checked, you would have discovered that for over 20 years, first in Newton, and more recently in Sharon, a very high quality kosher candy manufacturer has been packaging and selling delicious handmade chocolates, dipped fruits and nuts and specialty items.

Sweethearts Three is no novice in the candy business. Their products are available in both dairy and pareve varieties; the Vaad supervises the exhausting conversion of their premises for Passover production.

It is understandable that the *Advocate* wants to support new, kosher establishments, and, indeed, there may be a market for the new candy items. However, both the reporter and the editor should be careful when endorsing claims of exclusivity that could damage the interests of a long-time, high-quality, icon in

the Boston Jewish community.

GERALD AND SANDRA WINE
Sharon

The loss of Larry Lowenthal

The Jewish community of Boston, and indeed the entire Boston area will suffer a loss with the departure of Dr. Larry Lowenthal as the executive director of the Boston chapter of the American Jewish Committee.

Larry's tenure in Boston has been in the great tradition of other Jewish community relations legends in the city. He has helped foster wide and deep relationships between the Jewish community and a wide range of groups.

In addition to the German-Jewish dialogue which was mentioned in your article, Larry has created roundtables and networking with a diverse range of groups. The list includes the Latino and African-American business communities, African law students at Harvard University as well as Irish, Italian and Muslim groups.

I have witnessed personally many important individuals from the vast mosaic of Boston's community give testament to Larry's importance as a nexus of information and connections across the cultural, business, political, and religious communities of Boston.

We will all be diminished by his departure. I sincerely hope that the American Jewish committee looks for an individual in the mold of Larry Lowenthal to fill his unique shoes. Hopefully this person will use Larry as a resource to continue the great and historic work of the organization.

ROBERT POSNER
Jaimaica Plain

Please include your name, address and telephone number. The Jewish Advocate reserves the right to edit letters.

