



The value of being generous

Check out our 12-page Charitable Giving special section B section

UMass icon recognized

On Valentine's Day, House lawmakers honored local Jewish leader Albert "Albie" Sherman with plans to build a research center in his name at the UMass Medical School in Worcester.

See Page 2

'Perfecting' the kosher café

On Feb. 18, NRM Catering opened A Perfect Taste in Stoughton. The new kosher café offers customers creative and healthy entrees for less than \$9.

See Page 5

Back from a Birthright Israel trip

See Pages 6-7

■ Camp Directory

See Pages 15-17

■ Male and female behavior

See Page 28

■ The debate on 'New Directions'

See Page 30

SHABBAT TIMES CANDLE LIGHTING

Parshah: Vayakhel

BOSTON	5:15 PM
MANCHESTER, N.H.	5:16 PM
FALL RIVER	5:16 PM
PORTLAND, MAINE	5:11 PM
PROVIDENCE	5:17 PM
SPRINGFIELD	5:22 PM
WORCESTER	5:18 PM

ERUV STATUS:

BOSTON	781-446-9797
MALDEN	781-322-5686
SHARON	781-695-0505



PHOTO BY GARY BAND

Preserving Boston's Jewish history

Steve Greenberg, executive director of the Vilna Shul Center for Jewish Heritage, speaks about the former Orthodox synagogue turned Jewish museum on Phillips Street in the West End. See story on Page 3.

Hebrew College chooses a 'visionary' new leader

Contract negotiations underway for president-elect

By Lorne Bell
Advocate Staff

As Newton's Hebrew College prepares to graduate the first-in-the-nation trans-denominational rabbinical class this June, the school will also be starting a new chapter in its leadership. Rabbi Daniel Lehmann has been tapped to replace Rabbi David Gordis, who announced his resignation last year after 15 years as the college's president.

"It has been a long and exciting journey, and the time has come, and so I feel very good about it," said Gordis. "[Lehmann] is a distinguished Jewish educator, a visionary and an institution builder. I think he will be a wonderful president, and I am very pleased with the selection."

Lehmann is an Orthodox rabbi and comes to Hebrew College with an exten-



PHOTO COURTESY OF HEBREW COLLEGE

Rabbi Daniel Lehmann

sive background in pluralistic Jewish education and organizational leadership. Most recently, he was the founding headmaster of Gann Academy in Waltham – also known as The New Jewish High School of Greater Boston – from 1997-2007. He has taught at the Wexner Heritage Foundation at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and the National Center for Learning and Leadership.

He was also the founding president of the North American Association of Jewish High Schools and founder and executive director of the Berkshire Institute for Music and Arts, a teen-centered summer arts program. Lehmann is currently a doctoral candidate in Education and Jewish Studies at New York University's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development.

"Hebrew College, since its inception, has been focused on preparing and educating Jewish educators, and I spent most of my career in formal Jewish education," Lehmann told the *Advocate*. "The opportunity to be involved in enhancing the profession of Jewish education and ensuring a strong pool of educators going into the

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CHECK OUT THE JEWISH ADVOCATE'S MARKETPLACE ON P36-37





PHOTO BY GARY BAND

Steve Greenberg points out details on an image at the Boston Center for Jewish Heritage.

Center preserves Jewish history

Historical exhibit opens at former shul

By Gary Band
Advocate Staff

Tucked away on Phillips Street in the West End of Beacon Hill is a treasure trove of memories from a bygone but vitally important era in the history of Boston.

Although the Vilna Shul Boston Center for Jewish Heritage has been in various stages of repair since the early 1990s when the work to save the building and the capital campaign to create the center began – and certainly since 1985 when the former Orthodox shul closed after 65 years at 14-18 Phillips Street – now more than 10 years and \$3 million later, the roof and windows are fixed and a moving exhibit opened on the first floor in December.

Costing \$100,000 to complete, the formerly cavernous first floor is currently home to a collection of enlarged photos, maps, charts, books, original pieces of furniture and an electronic interactive “shtender” on which visitors can go back in time to the once vibrant Jewish communities of Roxbury, Dorchester, Mattapan and the West End itself.

While informative and more aesthetically pleasing than before the recent restoration, the exhibit is a temporary one that would require more money to refurbish the area and complete a more permanent display. Among the enlarged photos is one of the Baldwin Street Synagogue taken in 1910, reportedly the earliest image of a Boston synagogue on record. It was donated by a

woman who had it in a drawer for 50 years. The bima from the synagogue is said to now be at Temple B’nai Brith in Somerville.

Steve Greenburg has been the center’s executive director since 2005. Knowledgeable and gregarious, he is intimately familiar with the history of the area, the Jewish migration and all the items on display in the center where Havurah services are held once a month and scores of programs have been held over the last few years, 40 in 2007 alone.

“All over the area, primarily young people working in the city want a place to connect to their Judaism,” he said during a recent tour. “We want to be the center for Jewish history and culture in Boston. We want to keep the memories alive.”

While more than 2,000 people contributed to the fund that made the current condition of the former shul possible, there is an ongoing campaign to raise another \$3 million to make the center what it should be, Greenberg said. “People have been very generous and we are very fortunate.”

But while much more needs to be done, including restoring the original paint in the sanctuary and on the exhibit, people are grateful for the center’s existence. Mel Berger of Newton works in Boston and came in to have a look around. He and his parents used to attend High Holiday services at the shul in the 1970s. His grandparents are from Vilna, Lithuania

“This building is a legacy to the

history and heritage of the immigrant Jewish community,” he said standing near the bima in the sanctuary facing the intricately carved wooden Ark. “There is no place in Boston central to the Jewish experience. To have this here pulls the stories together. It’s fascinating and there is no other place like it.”

At the place where Patriot’s owner Jonathan Kraft’s grandfather was a cantor, Greenberg said it is a miracle that it still exists, not bought by a real estate developer or demolished and turned into a parking lot. “It is a blessing, and it was saved by the efforts of the Jewish and non-Jewish community alike.”

In an area once home to dozens of synagogues, the Vilna Shul Center is the only original standing structure dedicated to Jewish life in the area attracting tourists of all religions and backgrounds. As for unaffiliated Jewish people, Greenberg said they may not walk into a synagogue but they may walk into a museum.

“This is a permanent location where Jewish culture and spirit can be seen and touched,” he said. “People have come in here who say they haven’t been in a synagogue in 30 years, but felt comfortable coming to a historical site that’s Jewish. Others who grew up in the area have said ‘Thank God there is a place that has more than just an imprint of a mezuzah on the doorway or a Star of David on a building that’s now a church,’” Greenberg said.

Vilna Shul Center for Jewish Culture

Invites you to join

Ellen Smith

lecturer, historian, Brandeis University faculty member and co-editor of the widely acclaimed book *The Jews of Boston*, will be speaking at the historic Vilna Shul.

Sunday, March 9, 2008

3:00 – 5:00 PM

18 Phillips Street Boston, MA 02114
Validated parking (\$10.00) in the underground portion of the Charles River Plaza garage

Please sign up online at www.vilnashul.com
For information, steven@bcjh.org or 617-523-2324
Suggested donation \$10/person - \$18/family

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• Wines of the Month •

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Our store is under the strict Orthodox supervision of Rabbi Mordecai Twersky. All meats are deveined, soaked and salted.

