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Dear JSM Readers,

Celebrations of life – in Judaism they are as joyful as the birth of a newborn, as heart-felt as a young couple exchanging vows, as full of pride as parents seeing their teens become b'nai mitzvah, and as mournful as when we accept the end of a loved one's life.

I have been fortunate over the past few years to share some joyous family simchas. Although we've had no recent weddings, births or b'nai mitzvah in our family, we mourned and celebrated the life of my mother who left us in November just before Chanukah.

In her honor, I am establishing the Alice G. Drake Volunteer Award sponsored by Jewish Scene Magazine. Details of this award and the application process will be featured in our Health, Body & Soul issue in March 2014. My mother taught by example how to support her community and care about the environment. She would be proud that her family is carrying on her name in the tradition of tikkun olam.

This issue celebrates the Moss-Magdovitz wedding (page 4), the Rothschild-Danziger wedding (page 8) and the bar mitzvahs of Isaac Weiss (page 6) and Grant Malkin (page 10). The geniuses behind each celebration were event planners Sheril Greenstein (page 9) and Janis Kiel (page 5). Together with the help of many vendors and creative photographers, these professionals created and captured these wondrous moments for eternity.

We hope you gain some helpful insights from their preparations and enjoy looking at the photos. There are so MANY photos (more than we could fit on our few pages). Please visit [www.jewishscenemagazine.com](http://www.jewishscenemagazine.com) where the families have shared their celebrations with those additional photos.

Thank you so much to our advertisers, some new, and others who have supported our efforts throughout the past eight years. We also graciously accepted donations from Robin Joyce (A Catered Affair) and event planner Janis Kiel. Without this support, this issue would never be.

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Shalom,

*Susan C. Nieman*

Susan C. Nieman – Publisher/Editor



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Andrew and Marissa met in elementary school. Today she is the Operations Manager at Dinstuhl's Fine Candies, while Andrew works for Two Rivers Power.



# Wedding Wonderland

By Susan C. Nieman | Photos by Jaffe Studios

**With Segways, a 10-foot-tall chocolate waterfall, fountains flowing with milk, dark and white chocolate, 500 pounds of candy, and an enormous stage, Willie Wonka might have met his match.**

"Marissa loves to laugh and have fun," said mother-of-the-bride Judy Moss, whose family owns and operates Dinstuhl's Fine Candies in Memphis, Tennessee.

So it was no surprise that Marissa Moss and Andrew Magdovitz wanted to share that fun-loving spirit with family and friends on their wedding day. Event planner and long-time family friend Janis Kiel combined forces with Marissa's parents, Judy and Larry, to pull off an evening fit for the stage of the Cannon Center for the Performing Arts.

Janis had worked with the Mosses on two other weddings and two bat mitzvahs. "It is always fun to work with Janis," said Judy. "With her help, we've created three very different but beautiful and fun weddings for our children."

The evening was full of surprises for guests as well as the wedding couple. And the Cannon Center, which is attached to the Memphis

Convention Center, provided a perfect backdrop for their grandiose vision.

"Having the chuppah on the Cannon Center stage meant that the bridesmaids would have to walk a long way down the steps from the back of the theater then up steps to the stage," said Judy. "So before the ceremony the girls placed their shoes at the bottom of the stage and walked barefoot. During the ceremony, we had Oompa Loompas (yes, little people!) help them put on their shoes and climb the stairs to the chuppah.

"Marissa made glittery tennis shoes that lit up," said Judy. "The shoes glowed white during the ceremony and different colors during the reception. After Andrew stomped on the glass and kissed Marissa, we filled the stage and concert hall with bubbles."

The couple made their grand entrance on motorized Segways. "The Segways were





perfect for us,” said Andrew, son of Sally Magdovitz and Brad Magdovitz. “We had a crash course and practiced during the weeks and days leading up to the wedding. We hadn’t seen anyone make a grand entrance that way. That’s how we roll.”

Upon entering the ballroom, guests were greeted with hanging buffet tables suspended from the ceiling with 30-foot ropes and lit from beneath to cast a glow. The dessert table, created by Dinstuhl’s, displayed a 10-foot-tall chocolate waterfall and more than 500 pounds of candy and baked goods. Three fountains flowed separately with milk, dark and white chocolates.

Marissa had planned the father/daughter dance to Tim McGraw’s song “My Little Girl.” Imagine her surprise when Crystal Shawna, a Native American Indian, country music recording artist, arrived to sing in

person her hit, “You Can Let Go.”

“Whenever Larry or Marissa had heard that song on the radio, they would call the other to listen to it together,” said Judy. “Crystal agreed to change the words to her song to fit the words from “priest” to ‘rabbi’ and ‘altar’ to ‘chuppah.’ There wasn’t a dry eye in the place.”

“The overall weekend was amazing, from the Mexican-themed Friday night dinner to the rehearsal dinner at AutoZone Park and the big wedding at the Cannon Center, it was just amazing,” said Andrew.

“The Mosses love to think out-of-the box, which makes the project so exciting for everyone involved,” said Janis. “The end product has always been talked about for many years to follow.”

**For more photos from this celebration, visit [www.jewishscenemagazine.com](http://www.jewishscenemagazine.com).**

## Marissa and Andrew Magdovitz

March 17, 2013

**Venue:** Cannon Center for Performing Arts/Memphis Convention Center

**Event Planner:** Janis Kiel

**Florist:** Hollidays Flowers

**Caterer:** Hilton Hotel

**Cake:** Yolo Bakery

**Lighting:** Nolan Audio Visual Solution

**Candy:** Dinstuhl’s Fine Candies

**Entertainment:** Gary Escape & The Atomic Dance Machine, Keia Johnson and Crystal Shawanda

**Invitations:** Something So Write

**Photography:** Jaffe Studios

**Videographer:** Storytellers with Don Lawler



## About Janis Kiel

Janis began planning events 23 years ago when she had the brilliant idea to plan her son’s bar mitzvah. “Not only did I enjoy the planning process, the creative juices began to flow, and the results were a huge success,” she said. “As my friends began asking me to help with their kids’ mitzvahs, I had built a business I wasn’t even looking for. As the same kids began getting married, the natural progression was to plan their weddings. I’ve lost count of the number of kids for whom I’ve had the pleasure of planning more than one simcha. There were no computers or Internet in the beginning of my career, and I feel that gave me good roots for establishing my own ways of doing things. I had to “make things happen” rather than relying on others’ ideas. I have also watched many trends come and go. I am looking forward to planning an event for the child of someone for whom I’ve already planned two life-cycle events. Lucky me!



Larry and Judy Moss with Janis





Isaac Weiss donated a portion of his bar mitzvah money to the Child Advocacy Center where he also helped organize the bears that are given to children served by the agency

# Comic Celebration

By Susan C. Nieman | Photos by Paige Miller Photography

Isaac Weiss has two favorite past times, according to his parents – reading and watching TV.

So Cathy and Craig had no problem planning a theme for their son's bar mitzvah celebration. The fun was in watching it all come together.

"Comics have slowly filled Isaac's bookcases in his room," said Cathy. "He loves just about anything on TV, but some of his favorites are The Simpsons and Family Guy, and anything having to do with villains and superheroes. Tying these two passions together created quite a party."

Opera Memphis' location, minimal decorations and the colors – red, white and black – were perfect for the theme and atmosphere we were looking for," said Cathy.

"We transformed Opera Memphis into a comic book," said event planner Sheril Greenstein. "Guests arrived to a giant black

and white draped tent with custom comic strip chandeliers. Next, they entered a draped room greeted by Homer from The Simpsons and The Family Guy gang. The main room became Gotham City with guests feeling like they were dining on the rooftops with red splattered lighting."

Catwoman made a surprise appearance. "She was a real hit amongst all the teenage boys," said Cathy.

"Working with Sheril was a wonderful experience!" exclaimed Cathy. "She was the mastermind behind the whole weekend. Sheril brought her fabulous ideas to the table, while listening to and incorporating our ideas and vision. She helped us stay on task and made sure every deadline and detail was met in a timely manner."

The Weiss's chose vendors based on recommendations and personal preference. "Paige Miller, our photographer, came highly recommended by friends and family" said Cathy. "We wanted an artsy feel to the pictures and Paige was able to capture the moment with her unique creativity. As for the food they wanted to jazz things up by using a different caterer for each event. "Another Roadside Attraction created our Southern Friday night dinner menu. We love the eclectic foods they pair together. Simply Delicious handled Saturday lunch. Their attention to detail and service was just what we were looking for. We knew Erling Jensen would be up for the challenge of our Saturday evening party. His food is always fabulous and well delivered. And Robin Joyce – A Catered Affair prepared a delicious farewell brunch. Robin has catered events at our house and is always very personable and easy to work with. The Garden District arranged all the flowers for the weekend. Their shop is one of my favorites, and they always create beautiful centerpieces!"

"The whole weekend was everything we could've asked for and more," said Cathy. "The theme was so much fun to work with and create. It's truly amazing how you make so many little decisions throughout the planning process, and then it all comes together to be able to share with family and friends."

## Isaac's Bar Mitzvah

- **August 24, 2013**
- **Event Planner:** Shindigs By Sheril
- **Florist:** Garden District
- **Rentals & Tenting:** Classic Party Rentals
- **Cake Pops:** Lauren Rhoads, The Cake Lady Bakery
- **Invitations:** Stovall Collection
- **Photography:** Paige Miller Photography

## Luncheon:

- **Venue:** Temple Israel
- **Caterer:** Simply Delicious Catering

## Evening

- **Venue:** Opera Memphis
- **Caterer:** Erling Jensen



For more photos from this celebration, visit [www.jewishscenemagazine.com](http://www.jewishscenemagazine.com).





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Lindsey and Michael live in Cincinnati, Ohio, with their dog, Jackie. They are currently in their third year of rabbinical school and serve as student rabbis – Lindsey at Temple Beth Shalom in Fort Walton Beach, Florida, Michael at Temple Israel in Paducah, Kentucky. In his spare time Michael still travels doing comedy.

# Destination Memphis

By Susan C. Nieman | Photos by Paige Miller Photography

Temple Israel was an obvious choice for Memphis, Tennessee, native Michael Danziger, but the Southern synagogue was unlike any that Lindsey Rothschild had ever envisioned for her wedding day.

"We originally figured we would go the traditional route and get married in the New York City metro area where my family lives," said Lindsey. "But, I realized that every venue there would be just that – a venue, not a meaningful place for our wedding. I know how much Temple Israel means to Michael, who has many great memories there. His father, Rabbi Harry Danziger, is rabbi emeritus. That synagogue played a big part in making him the person he is today. When I visited Memphis for the first time, I fell in love with the Temple, and now I am so glad that I have great memories there too."

Lindsey thought it would be fun to show her friends and family what the South is really like! "For a bunch of people from Jersey, Memphis is an exotic destination!" she exclaimed. "My friends loved exploring downtown and were blown away by the beautiful synagogue and the strong Memphis Jewish community."

"I (mostly) joked that some of the folks coming from the East Coast expected the Temple in Memphis to be some kind of little shack," laughed Michael. "It was certainly fun to see and hear their reactions when they arrived at the 'shack.'"

The couple met in Jerusalem in rabbinical school at Hebrew Union College. "Our classes were all assigned by Hebrew level and we were both in 'kita bet' so we spent all day together," said Lindsey. "We got close when Michael started giving me guitar lessons."

"When Lindsey and I met, we were already in the midst of such exciting life moments – beginning rabbinical school journeys and moving to Jerusalem for a year," said Michael. "I suppose it's no surprise that people with similar values, interests, and outlooks might meet in such a specific program, but getting to do it together made all those incredible opportunities and experiences even more special."

"We became good friends very quickly, and discovered that we have similar goals and passions, but enough differences to challenge each other, too," he continued. "When we got back to America and started school in Cincinnati, then we knew the magic wasn't just in Israel, but that we had fun together, could work together, and enjoyed 'real life' together, too."

Lindsey enjoyed the wedding planning process, and realized that having local wedding planner Sheril Greenstein was a smart move. "I spent many hours that were supposed to be devoted to school work on Pinterest and wedding blogs," she admits. "And while planning from afar sounds like it should have been stressful, I actually found it quite easy."

The couple had a lot of support and help from their families in New Jersey and Memphis. "We visited Memphis for only two weekends," she said. "On the first visit Sheril set up vendor interviews. When we got their proposals a few weeks later, it was clear that the vendors we chose really understood our vision." On their second visit they had trials and run-throughs. "When I saw (and tasted) the final products, I was blown away," said Lindsey. "It was better than anything on my Pinterest board. At that point



everything suddenly became real and we started to get very excited.”

Lindsey knew she wanted a fun, elegant party atmosphere at their wedding and loved the colors gray and pink. But being married in autumn – her favorite season – she also wanted to incorporate fall’s harvest theme. “This was no small order,” said Lindsey. “But our vendors seamlessly introduced fall elements using my color palette.”

Throughout the process, she communicated her preferences and ideas to Sheril, who worked with the vendors to create a finished product that exceeded their wildest expectations. “Because we were planning from afar, having a wedding planner whose judgment and taste we trusted was invaluable,” she said. “Since I couldn’t be there to see every detail or coordinate logistics, it gave me peace of mind to know that Sheril would never let anything fall through the cracks.”

For more photos from this celebration, visit [www.jewishscenemagazine.com](http://www.jewishscenemagazine.com).

### Lindsey’s Advice:

Hire creative and talented people and then actually trust them. I found that my vendors and Sheril knew what I wanted better than I did. Our wedding had many moving parts and managing them all on my own from afar would have been overwhelming. Sheril was a great resource because she knew every aspect of the wedding, big and small. She was able to always keep the big picture in mind and make sure the many parts fit together seamlessly.

Don’t get bogged down by details. Communicate a general vision and bring pictures that convey the ambiance of the wedding you want, then leave it to the pros. It’s fine to have a few specifics in mind, but plan on being open to new ideas as they arise.



Instead of a traditional wedding cake the couple wanted pies, cakes and harvest-flavored donuts on giant farm tables under crystal chandeliers.



Another Roadside Attraction served whiskey and apple cider cocktails in mason jars and incorporated fall flavors like pumpkin and pomegranate into the meal.

## About Sheril Greenstein

Over a decade ago, I was on the treadmill with my personal trainer friend when I was asked to coordinate his wedding. Never did I realize that a small favor would turn into my true passion. With the role of rabbi’s wife under my belt, I understand the value of life-cycle events and aim to bring each client’s unique ideas and priorities to the spotlight.

I am known for my artistic background and attention to detail in planning creative events ranging from dream weddings and bar/bat mitzvahs to toddler birthday parties and anniversary dinners. (I specialize in mothers and mothers-in-law to-be—Dr. Sheril at your service!)

Throughout the event planning, I am available 24/7 for consultation and follow-through with vendors, caterers, invitations, graphic design, floor plans, and the organizational details that make your dream a reality. I value the relationship with each of my clients and love making lifelong friends in the process. Because of my role, my clients are able to enjoy time with family and friends, knowing that all will be taken care of. Shindigs by Sheril is not about me—it’s about you.



Shara’s Paperie Studio created timeless ivory and gray paper goods.

### Lindsey & Michael Danziger

October 26, 2013

Venue: Temple Israel

Event Planner: Shindigs By Sheril

Florist: L & Jay Productions

Rentals/Lighting: Classic Party Rentals

Caterer: Another Roadside Attraction

Entertainment: Gary Goins Band

Invitations/Paper Products: Shara’s Paperie Studio by Shara Danziger (Sister-in-law)

Photography: Paige Miller Photography





Guests dined in the room where Isaac Hayes' Cadillac is displayed.



# MALKIN BAR MITZVAH SHINES LIGHT

By Susan C. Nieman

Photos by Norman Gilbert Photography, LLC

Grant Malkin lit the bimah with funny and thought provoking ideas from his Genesis Torah portion during his bar mitzvah ceremony at Temple Israel. "Using a light bulb, Grant simulated God's light," said his mother, Andrea Malkin. "It had multiple meanings – God's light and what it means when God shines his light."

Grant's luncheon also shed light on his acts of tikkun olam and tzedakah – the good deeds that he dedicated his time to while preparing for his special occasion.

"I enjoy using the Mitzvah Project as the central theme for the luncheon as it explains how and where each child has spent time learning what becoming a bar/bat

mitzvah is really about," said event planner Janis Kiel, who helped the family pull the weekend events together. "The sense of pride I've seen in these kids from their accomplishments has been amazing."

Janis designed a centerpiece to showcase the Memphis Child Advocacy Center and the FedEx Family House where Grant volunteered by helping stock shelves with food items and teddy bears for the kids that are housed there.

The celebration continued that evening at the famous STAX Museum.

"What an interesting treat for all the guests, especially the out-of-towners," said Andrea. "As they enjoyed cocktails and appetizers, the guests not only experienced some of Memphis' finest musical moments, but dined in one of the coolest areas of the museum where Isaac Hayes' restored 1972 gold-trimmed, peacock-blue Cadillac El Dorado is displayed.

"The kids danced non-stop in the old recording room at STAX amongst intelligent lighting and glow sticks," she continued. "We couldn't have asked for a better venue for young

and old! Stax provided guests the option of touring the museum and there were separate areas where the kids could

have their own space and the adults could have room, away from the loud music, to visit and socialize.

"Janis was the genius behind the décor and arranged everything," said Andrea. "The venue didn't call for a "theme," but we incorporated Grant's initial G into the décor and Garden District used succulents at both parties. They were really cool and modern – especially for a boy."

Using a light bulb, Grant simulated God's light.

For more photos from this celebration, visit [www.jewishscenemagazine.com](http://www.jewishscenemagazine.com).

## Grant Malkin's Bar Mitzvah

**Ceremony/Luncheon:** Temple Israel

**Saturday Night:** STAX Museum

**Event Planner:** Janis Kiel

**Caterer:** Robin Joyce, "A Catered Affair"

**Photographer:** Norman Gilbert Photography, LLC

**Florist:** The Garden District

**Invitations/Paper Goods:** Something So Write





photo courtesy of  
Buena Vista Winery

## Buena Vista Winery Is Re-Invigorated

| By Gary Burhop |

Buena Vista Winery has a rich, delicious and colorful heritage based on its founder, the self-proclaimed "Count of Buena Vista," Agoston Haraszthy, a vivacious and eccentric pioneer with a veritable love and unending commitment to California wine.

Surrounded by his own tales of intrigue and political exile, The Count emigrated from Europe in 1840 in pursuit of opportunity and freedom in the burgeoning American West. In 1850, he was elected sheriff of San Diego County, built the first jail and served in office for two years before heading north. Rather than follow the forty-niners in search of gold in the hills of Northern California, Haraszthy sought "purple gold" – the perfect 'terroir' for exceptional wine. He ultimately settled in Sonoma, birthplace of California and capital of the short-lived California Republic.

He founded Buena Vista Winery in 1857, ultimately selecting the cool climate area near San Pablo Bay known today as the Carneros region and straddling the Napa and Sonoma County lines. He was a committed farmer, experimental innovator and vintner, respected author, shrewd businessman and a brilliant and incredibly zealous promoter. In the early days of Buena Vista, and what would become the Vinicultural Society, The Count and his son, Arpad, were commissioned by the Californian government to travel throughout Europe and bring back vine cuttings. After months of travel they succeeded in bringing back over 487 different varieties, modern winemaking techniques and styles that would go on to influence the likes of Charles Krug and many others. Even by today's standards, The Count has to be considered California's most acclaimed and flamboyant vinicultural pioneer and evangelist.

Today, many wineries tout their gravity flow designs that allow for the gentle transfer of the wine without pumps during every step of the process. Buena Vista did that 150 years ago. Boutique wineries make a big deal about how the caves that they have dug into the mountainsides provide ideal conditions for their wines to age in barrels. Buena Vista dug their first caves in 1861. Haraszthy experimented with blends, barrels and techniques to reduce yields and sought to make the best wines possible. All of which sounds quite like today's winemakers!

He died in 1869, reportedly after an unfortunate encounter with an alligator or crocodile in Nicaragua, and the winery was sold. The new owners left it abandoned, and it remained dormant until 1949.

Recently the Boisset family of Burgundy fame acquired Buena Vista. Under the direction of Jean Charles Boisset, Buena Vista is reclaiming its renown. In addition to raising the quality of the pinot noir, zinfandel, chardonnay and cabernet sauvignon, in the Haraszthy spirit, Boisset introduced a proprietary red blend aptly named The Count (\$20) and just recently created and released a limited bottling called The Sheriff Red Blend (\$30), a bold combination of Cabernet, Merlot, Petite Sirah, Syrah and Grenache.

If one is looking for a high quality to value ratio, look no further than the current wines from Buena Vista Winery.

Gary Burhop owns Great Wines & Spirits located at 6150 Poplar Avenue in Regalia, Memphis, Tenn., 38119 and invites your questions and patronage. Contact him at 901.682.1333 or garyburhop@greatwinesmemphis.com



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photo album



Jessica (right) with Jackie Paller in the Casino Night photo booth.

# Meet Jessica Steinberg

| By Stacy Wagerman |

Jessica Steinberg moved to Memphis from Pennsylvania with her family in 1996. As a teen she was involved in activities at Temple Israel and BBYO as well as participating in sports at the Memphis Jewish Community Center. She graduated from Germantown High School in 2005 and attended the University of Missouri. Following graduation in 2009, she moved back to Memphis where she is an investment strategies analyst with Vining Sparks, IBG.

## Why did you decide to come back to Memphis after college?

To be close to friends and family. Memphis has a lot of opportunities in the investment banking industry, so I was lucky to be able to come home and find a job.

## Tell us a little about your family.

My parents are also in Memphis, and can usually be found in the MJCC workout room. Anyone can spot my dad because he's always wearing Pittsburgh Steelers attire. My older sister lives in Baltimore, Maryland and is very involved in the Jewish Community up there.

## What is your view of Jewish Memphis?

Memphis' Jewish community is very tight knit and welcoming to newcomers. You can always find someone in a bigger city that has a friend or relative in the Memphis Jewish Community...and that's why it's always fun to play Jewish Geography.

## What would you tell people thinking about making the move to Memphis?

The people of Memphis make this city great! It is a fantastic place if you are looking to be a part of a community. Not too big and not too small. You can always find things to do no matter what your interests, and the weather is (usually) great! Having moved here when I was 10 from a small town in Pennsylvania, I was amazed at how big the Jewish community is here.

## Why did you want to be involved in the Jewish community and with Memphis Jewish Federation?

The great part about living in Memphis is that there are so many opportunities to get involved. I've been involved with the Jewish community most of my life, from coaching young girls basketball at the MJCC to volunteering at Temple Israel's Mitzvah Day many times. I'm sure there will be many new opportunities to get involved in the years to come, as well.

## How long have you been a part of Federation and how did you get involved?

I recently got involved because of the wonderful recruiting ability of Stacy Wagerman, who asked me to serve on the YAD Committee. This year I'm co-chairing YAD's Casino Night with Melissa Bennett and Yoni and Aviva Freiden on February 15. We are looking forward to another great event this year!

## How would you like to leave your footprint on YAD and the Memphis Jewish community?

I hope to get more young people to come to YAD events. YAD is a great way to get everyone involved whether they're moving back to Memphis and not sure who is here that they know, or are new to Memphis. It allows young adults to take time and connect with everyone else, when otherwise they wouldn't.

## What is your favorite Jewish childhood memory?

My favorite memory is going to the Temple



Lauren Luskey, Gabby Rozen, Leigh Eisenberg, Tracy Lazarus, Melissa Bennett and Jessica enjoy YAD Happy Hour.

Israel Hanukkah parties every year. We would play dreidel, and everyone brought their own menorah to light. And of course there were awesome latkes!

## What is your favorite Memphis memory?

Three years ago I ran the St. Jude 5K, and it was an awesome experience. My company participates in the St. Jude Heros program, and we raised the most money that year for St. Jude. I raised almost \$3000 and was so proud that it was all going towards the kids at St. Jude. If I were an avid runner, I would do it every year. But I'm not, so now I just donate money.

## Favorite Places in Memphis?

I love the Wolf River Trails, FedEx Forum (Go Grizzlies!), Sakura and the M JCC.

## Favorite Activities?

Playing kickball with my awesome team in the fall and spring, playing softball at the JCC in the summer, tennis, and going to Grizzlies games.

## What do you wish that everyone knew about Memphis Jewish Federation and the Memphis Jewish community?

A lot of people don't know the depth of the Federation, and I didn't until I got involved. There are so many different aspects that benefit the entire Jewish community. And everyone can get involved with the parts that are important to them; so that way the whole community will benefit.



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# EAT, DRINK AND UNWIRE

By Mark Hayden

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**Arguably the most exciting day in Grizzlies history might have been one of the most memorable days in Memphis's downtown history. And team COO Jason Wexler believes that combination symbolizes a natural fit.**

---

Even though the San Antonio Spurs threw water on the party with a 101-83 thrashing of the Griz in the third game of the Western Conferences Finals last May, it represented the best of Memphis.

"That Saturday afternoon game was probably one of the best days in downtown Memphis," said Wexler. "It was packed from Main Street to Beale Street. People were eating, drinking, smiling, talking and having a great time. It was still Memphis In May, the Redbirds had a game that night, and there was just a terrific vibe in the city."

Wexler contends that was the original vision when the Grizzlies and FedExForum arrived in the Bluff City. Continuing on with that winning tradition is realistic and quite attainable.

"When the Grizzlies and Tigers are having success downtown, the city is having success, too," said Wexler. "It sets a tone that says we can really accomplish some things."

"Being the only sports franchise in the city makes it hard to quantify how important the Grizzlies are," he continued. "Memphis is a city that wants to grow and has high aspirations for growth. The reality is that the cities that are growing and doing well are cities with professional sports franchises."

"It remains a way to recruit talent and business," he explained. "There is a real economic and civic connection, a common bond across the community where people can relate to each other. The basketball side and business side of the ledger are important for the growth of the city and vice versa. We want to create bonds in the business community and throughout the broader community in a way that mirrors those that the city has with the team."

Goals to improving the game-day experience came soon after the new ownership stepped in. Those goals include everything from creating a lounge where the fans can visit before, during and after the game: (The Fly opened in November and is located just off the Forum's lobby) ramping up the entertainment during time outs and halftime, and the improved wireless environment inside FedExForum.

"We want people to come to the games earlier and stay later; to think of the FedExForum experience as more than a game buzzer-to-game buzzer event," said Wexler. "Part of that is a more interesting and diverse dining experience where fans can dine out, see their friends and enjoy the overall experience of the game."





In addition to providing a stepped up dinner-time/snack menu this season, arena merchants are banking on more local fare. "We've focused on our menu and local food vendors. Since food is such a big part of the in-game experience, we want to do the best that we can," he added.

While the lounge and new food vendors are visible improvements at the 18,119-seat basketball arena, officials have been working feverishly on the wireless connection. Through majority partner Robert Pera's global communications technology company, Ubiquiti Networks, they've worked to create an improved wireless environment while also creating a new Grizzlies' app.

"We've made great progress but have been slow to roll it out," explained Wexler. "If you're at a Griz or Tigers game and connect to the Grizzlies Wi-Fi network you'll see a much improved wireless environment."

Once perfected it should accelerate fans access to Facebook and Twitter while also providing instantaneous stats, scores and information about the team.

"In the past everyone tried to get reception on their phones at the same time usually during a time-out or halftime by uploading their photos," he said. "That overloaded the system. A stronger wireless system should allow everyone to access information much quicker."

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**"We want people to come to the games earlier and stay later; we want them to think of the FedExForum experience as more than a game buzzer-to-game buzzer event. Part of that is a more interesting and more diverse dining experience where they can dine out, see their friends and enjoy the overall experience of the game."**

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Also part of the whole NBA fan experience is the in-game entertainment: the music, the cheerleading and activities between time-outs.

"We're always looking for ways to innovate our entertainment, be more creative and entertaining," he said. "We've given our creative people a lot of leeway to find fun and different things during the game. Some things work better than others but everyone has a different sensibility, so you look for things that are broad that everyone will enjoy. We are producing a show, and, like any good show, we are always looking to get better."

Fulfilling these objectives should help lay the blue print for the short and long-term success of the Grizzlies and its fans, he believes.

"We hope to create sustained success for both the basketball and the business side," said Wexler. "We have a plan on growing our footprint regionally while staying true to our core selves in Memphis and the Mid-South."

"Memphis is a personal town and we try to get out and meet as many fans as possible," he said. "Showing that commitment really matters."



Mark Hayden has been a frustrated athlete almost all his life. If you know of any untold stories out there, let me know. Any comments or suggestions are welcome at marktn58@aol.com.

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# “JEWTOPIA:”

## Stereotypes Have Never Been So Funny

| By Rachel Galvin |

Things are not utopia in “Jewtopia.” In fact, it is pure dysfunction in the worlds of Jews and gentiles in this film; but that is what makes it so funny. Imagine a gentile man who seeks out his old Jewish buddy, Adam Lipschitz (Joel David Moore), to learn how to become Jewish and find himself a Jewish wife, so he won’t have to ever make a decision in his life again.

But his friend is having issues of his own. He is about to marry a woman obsessed with having a child and with parents whose mishegoss is just as intense as his own parents. With pressure like this, no wonder he is a neurotic. His anxiety started at an early age – with asthma problems probably brought on by his sheer panic, and a meltdown during his bar mitzvah that he never could live down.

Meanwhile, Christian (Ivan Sergei), the gentile, has redneck parents that are completely opposite – a military dad and subservient housewife mom.

Adam teaches Christian that being Jewish means that no table in a restaurant is ever good enough – the music may be too loud, the lights too bright or there could be a draft. Once the menu arrives, the entree is never good enough. It has to be “altered beyond all recognition.”

Anyone Jewish, or who has eaten with a Jew, may recognize this “adorable” trait. These are just two in a long line of tips that Christian tries to win over the heart of Alison (Jennifer Love-Hewitt). The key, he finds, is first winning over dear old mom, Marcy (Wendy Malick). Is it a disaster in the making or is it beshert? You will have to watch “Jewtopia” to find out.

For director Bryan Fogel, he just wanted to “create something that people would enjoy.” He seems to have met that goal.

“It’s all about mining the culture, family, religion and heritage for comedy,” he said. “The audience seems to respond with lots of laughter, which is all I set out to do. No stereotype is universally true, but there is some truth in them, which makes them funny.”

If you are Jewish, you will be rolling in the aisles. Gentiles can laugh at the dynamic between husband and wife, parents and children, and between friends, just as much. Regarding the “rednecks” in the film, Fogel said he got his inspiration from observing others, and made a reference to popular TV shows like “Duck Dynasty.”

What makes this comedy gold is not only the truth behind the comedy but also the A-list cast including Jon Lovitz, Rita Wilson, Tom Arnold, Jamie Lynn Sigler, Nicolette Sheridan and Camryn Manheim.

“Casting was a miracle,” said Fogel. “Once one said, ‘Yes,’ another said, ‘Yes.’ We did not have a lot of budget to pay. It was really about the cast responding to the script and looking for a fun film to do. I was really fortunate.”

Before becoming a film, “Jewtopia” was a hit play that started in Los Angeles in 2003 and eventually moved to the Big Apple, where it became one of the longest running off-Broadway plays.

“The film took five years to get made,” he said. “We had a good draft by 2008. It took a long time to get funded. We shot it in a month.

“Your budget dictates so much of what you can do,” he explained. “In theater, you are more limited by imagination. If something doesn’t work, you just change it and the next day try again. With film, what you shoot is what you get. It is a radically different creative process. Rewards come at the end. With theater, it is an immediate response.”

This first-time filmmaker graduated in 1995 from the University of Colorado in Boulder (CU) with a degree in Sociology and Psychology, but an interest in comedy. “I never looked at CU as a step toward what I was going to do with my life,” he said. “College is about discovering what you like to do. In LA, it became clear to me.”

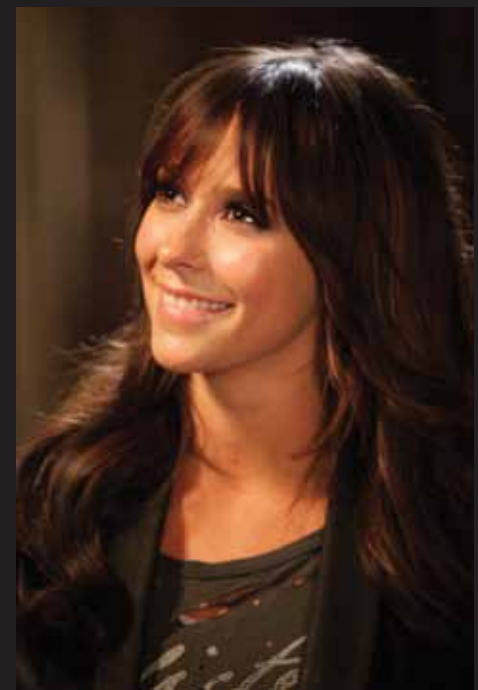
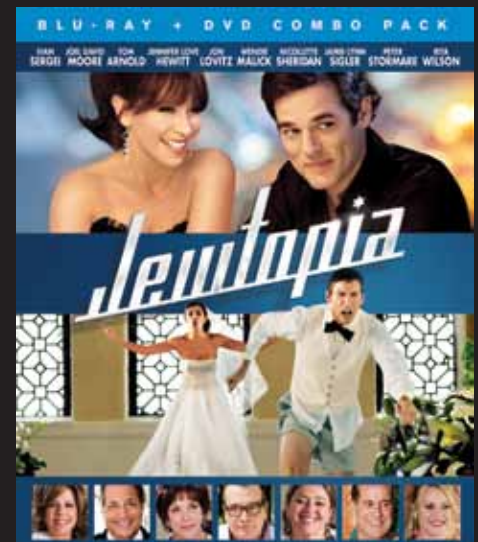
After moving to Los Angeles in 1997, he moved to New York (2004 to 2007). He currently lives in Malibu, California. Besides promoting “Jewtopia,” he is actively working on another movie and a television project. In addition to his one-man show he is developing, he travels as a speaker.

“I was a keynote speaker at the Jewish Federation in Montreal,” he said. “It was an hour of comedy, a big event. I want to continue to do that as often as I can. I would love to perform for other organizations or charities looking for a fantastic evening of entertainment.”

When not working in the industry, this 40-year-old mench spends a lot of time biking, skiing, traveling and spending time with his girlfriend.

“Jewtopia” will be available on Blu-ray/DVD combo pack and VOD on February 11. The film originally enjoyed a limited release in theaters. To find out more about the film and the director, visit [www.JewtopiaWorld.com](http://www.JewtopiaWorld.com).

Rachel Galvin has been a professional freelance writer for 15 years in South Florida, Los Angeles and elsewhere working for over 35 publications. From celebrity interviews, fashion and art to business profiles, school news and restaurant reviews, she has covered it all. She is involved in the film industry, has written a book about the business and interviews filmmakers on her own online radio show. She loves meeting new people and learning about various industries. Her biggest passion is promoting others and helping others to express themselves to the world.





# Home Is Where The 'Art' Is

By Joel Ashner

"Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life."

- Pablo Picasso

"Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time."

- Thomas Merton

Having beautiful art in your home adds so much to your surroundings. It can be soothing, energizing, thought provoking, or just add brightness to your day.

Joan and Arnold Weiss thought it would be fabulous to have the same effect for the seniors at Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab (MJHR), so they offered to chair the HOME IS WHERE THE 'ART' IS project, which will kick off with an event on Sunday, February 23, from 2 to 5 p.m. at MJHR.

"We are working to bring beautiful art to the walls of MJHR as well as raise needed funds to maintain the high level of care they provide," said Mrs. Weiss. "Carefully selected pieces of art have been donated to the Home, and the community will have the opportunity to dedicate a piece of artwork to a loved one." The HOME IS WHERE THE "ART" IS event will celebrate this project and bring the community together to see what is available for dedication. In addition there will be art available for purchase at the February event with part of the proceeds benefiting MJHR.

In preparation for the event, The Daily News (Memphis) is producing a "Home is Where the Art is" newspaper with event and MJHR information, a sponsor list, and advertisements from area businesses that will be mailed to their subscribers and MJHR's mailing list. All the ad proceeds will benefit MJHR.

A dynamic committee was created to see this project through - artists, designers and people from the Jewish and non-Jewish communities, all who want to help make MJHR even more beautiful.

Since 1927, MJHR has been invested in the health and happiness of each individual who

enters its doors. Today the facility serves people and families of all faiths. MJHR serves patients seeking physical, occupational and speech therapy treatment, as well as residents seeking long-term care. In addition to the financial support the rehab services have added to the organization, MJHR relies on its strong relationship with the community to continue its work and fulfill its mission in the Mid-South.

While many facilities like MJHR are attempting to reduce their growing deficits by eliminating services and qualified staff, MJHR seeks positive ways to respond to these financial challenges. Its mission compels staff to seek solutions to these challenges

without impacting the quality of services. MJHR remains committed to providing high-quality care that exceeds the "minimum" governmental standards, and set them apart from many other facilities.

MJHR hopes the community will

embrace this opportunity to create a lasting tribute to a loved one and at the same time brighten the day of a senior by dedicating a piece of art. The HOME IS WHERE THE "ART" IS event is open to the public and free of charge.

For more information, contact Joan Weiss at 901.573.3113 or joanweiss@comcast.net or Joel Ashner at 901.756.3273 or jashner@memphisjewishhome.org.

Joel Y. Ashner is the Community Relations Director for Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab. She is originally from New Orleans and graduated from Washington University in St. Louis. She and her husband, Dub, have three children: Matthew, Louis and Becca.



A donated piece by Dr. Jay Cohen.

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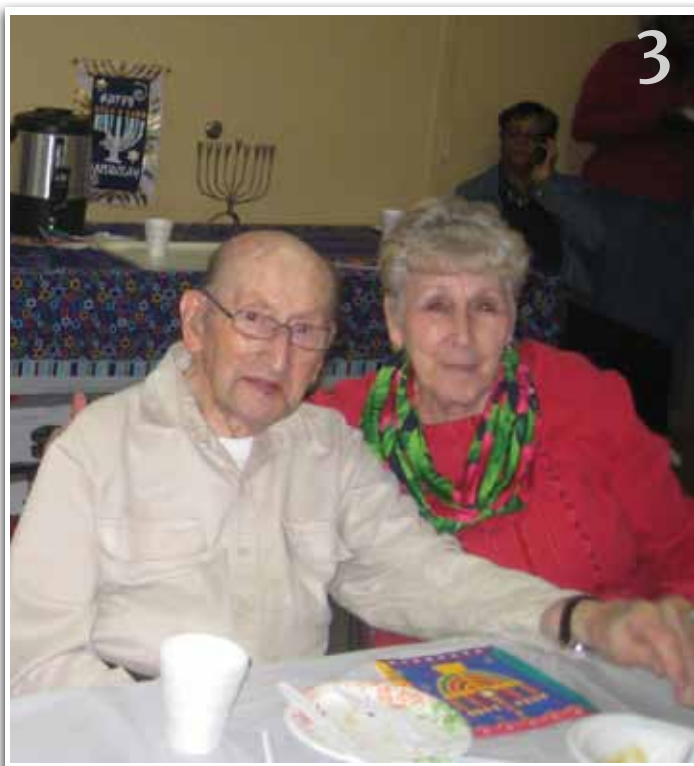
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**1** 8th graders collaborate on iPads. **2** Pom squad cheers on the Basketball Bobcats to victory. **3** BSSS once again teamed up with PJ Library of Memphis for a very successful Pancakes and PJs. **4** 6th Grader Field Trip. **5** 2nd Graders enjoy a visit from U of M Mascot Pouncer. **6** Middle School cross-country team.



**1** Roger Messinger and Kathy Heymann enjoy Thanksgiving dinner sponsored by Plough Towers Board of Directors. **2** Sara Lebovitz in fabric painting activity. **3** Joe Ashendorf and Joyce Binder celebrate at Chanukah party.





## Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab New Year's Celebration



## Memphis Jewish Federation YAD happy Hour



# SPUNKY AND SUCCESSFUL:

## Legendary Ed Asner Honored for a Lifetime of Achievement

By Rachel Galvin

Ask a younger generation about Ed Asner and they are bound to say, “Who?” But people of an older age will know right away about this 84-year-old living legend. A winner of seven Emmy Awards, the only actor to win in two categories, and five Golden Globes, Asner got his start in the late 1950s and continues to work today. In October, he received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Ft. Lauderdale International Film Festival (FLIFF) at Cinema Paradiso in Ft. Lauderdale for his contributions to the film industry.

During the event, Asner treated guests to a performance of scenes from his one-man show “FDR.” Switching from bellowing out lines to quieter contemplation of the tragedy at-hand (the bombing of Pearl Harbor), Asner stood his own during the performance, adding humor to the mix. When one man in the audience was talking, Asner broke the fourth wall, asking the man if he would like to make it a dialogue. Another time, he grabbed the prop phone seconds before it “rang” in error and immediately said with a sly smile, “I anticipated that one.”

His humor was evident throughout the evening. Humble yet cantankerous, he is a lovable curmudgeon, much like Carl, the character he voiced in the animated Disney Pixar movie “Up.” He bemoaned botching up his FDR performance, although the audience certainly did not know any different and, if they did, they didn’t mind. After all, it was Ed Asner.

Besides showing a montage created by Gordon Smith, which he praised, saying it was “the best

of his career,” FLIFF showed two short movies in which Asner played a role. The first was “A Man of the World,” directed by John Fingal O’Donnell, who was also in the audience. In the film, Asner’s character was lying in a hospital bed when his son, about to go off to Vietnam, comes in with an old-fashioned tape recorder in hopes of capturing some stories about how his dad made it through WWII. Instead, he is begrudgingly treated to a tale of a long lost love, how Asner’s character met a beautiful woman during the war who was a gentile but wished to be a Jew despite the Nazi persecution.

The other film also included two Jews. This one, “Good Men,” directed by Brian Connors, dealt with the men having a disagreement about various topics, including “conspiracy theories” about 9/11.

Asner was also interviewed briefly by Rob Davis, who asked him about his career, which includes memorable performance in everything from TV shows like “Roots,” “Gunsmoke” and “The Wild, Wild West” to his performance as Lou Grant in the “Mary Tyler Moore” and “Lou Grant.” Mostly a television actor, he has also done films including playing Santa in “Elf,” which he lists as one of his favorite roles. Of playing Santa, he said, “They haven’t found out I am Jewish yet.”

He said he took to the acting industry like “a moth at a flame,” “leaping at every chance” he could to do any part that was offered to him at school, including the Jewish heroes. Radio was a big influence on him, and he was part of a closed-circuit radio station at the University of Chicago. He began working in theater there and then New York. He did not move into television until he moved to Los Angeles.

In addition to acting, he has been quite the political and social activist in his life, and has also been SAG president. There, he said, he fought against agism, weak representation for minorities and women, and the onslaught of “runaway productions.”

“When I first came to Hollywood, you could

make a living as a freelance actor by doing maybe six shows a year and surviving, but by the time I became president, you couldn’t get those six shows anymore,” he said. “There were too many actors to compete against you.”

His advice to actors – “Nobody should go into showbiz. Take it from me, unless you are ready to be lynched ... in which case, what the hell!”

He called it a savage business and added, “I started out as a high school journalist, and I was thinking of going on to college and majoring in it. One day, my beloved journalism professor walked by me and asked me, ‘Do you think you can make journalism as a career?’ I said, ‘Yeah.’ He said, ‘I wouldn’t.’ I asked, ‘Why not?’ He

said, ‘You can’t make a living.’ I went on to be an overnight success as an actor.”

Whether he likes it or not, Asner has a lot of spunk. He may be controversial in his point of view on some issues, but there is no denying his success in showbiz.

Besides the slings

and arrows of the industry, Asner has been affected by Autism, both his son and grandson are Autistic. His son, Matthew, is an executive director of Autism Speaks, and Asner says his Autism has made him a better man. This loving father and grandfather hosted a poker tournament to benefit the cause, saying he would do anything to help Autism Speaks.

Rachel Galvin has been a professional freelance writer for 15 years in South Florida, Los Angeles and elsewhere working for over 35 publications. From celebrity interviews, fashion and art to business profiles, school news and restaurant reviews, she has covered it all. She is involved in the film industry, has written a book about the business and interviews filmmakers on her own online radio show. She loves meeting new people and learning about various industries. Her biggest passion is promoting others and helping others to express themselves to the world.





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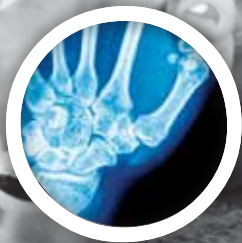


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