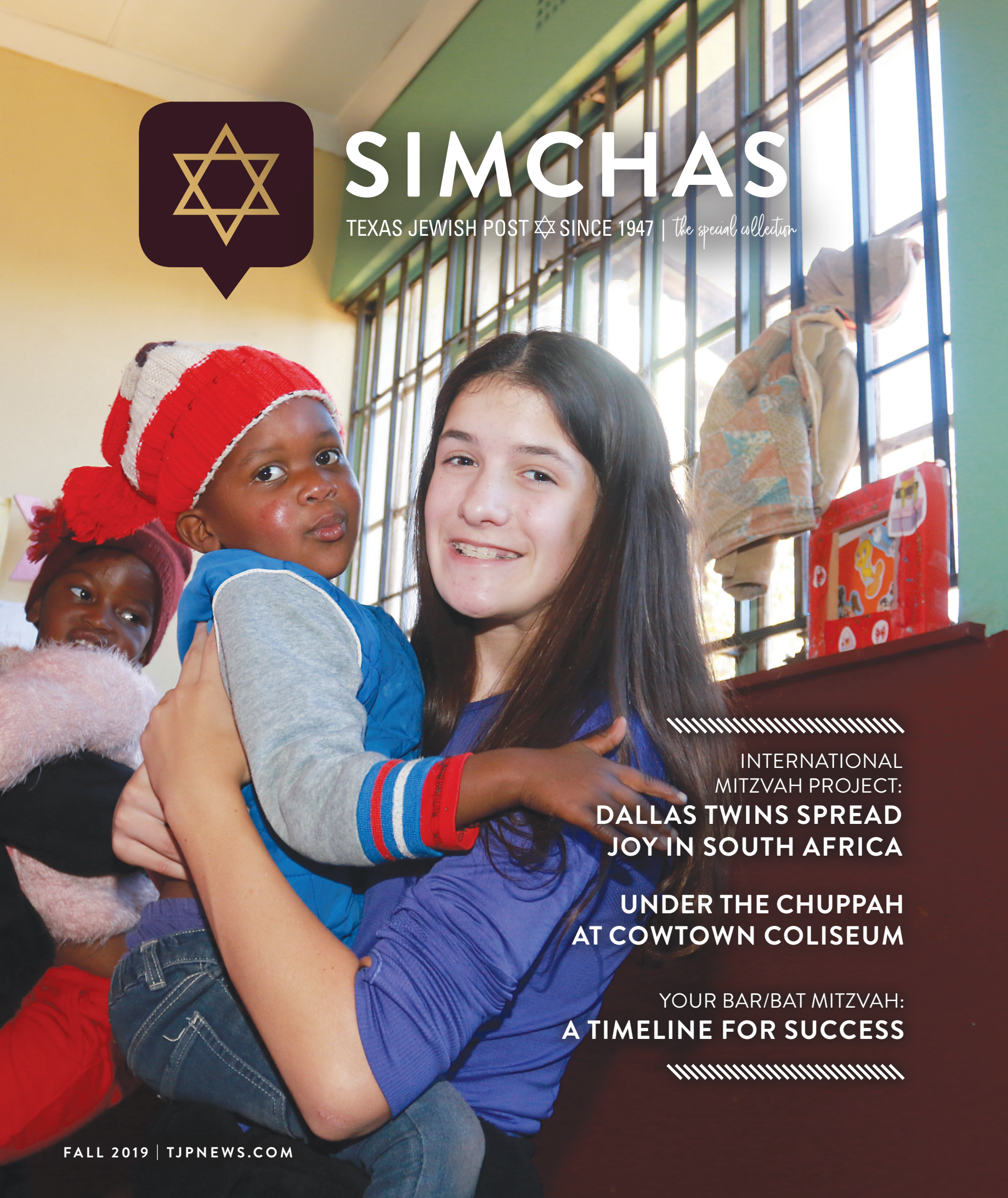




# SIMCHAS

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**JIMMY WISCH**

PUBLISHER & EDITOR | 1947-2002

**RENE WISCH**

PUBLISHER & EDITOR | 1947-2010

**PUBLISHER & EDITOR**

SHARON WISCH-RAY

SHARON@TJPNWS.COM

**VP SALES & CIRCULATION**

SUSAN WISCH

SUSANW@TJPNWS.COM

**VP SALES & MARKETING**

AMY DOTY

AMYD@TJPNWS.COM

**LAYOUT DESIGNERS**

CHAD AUSTIN

EJ CHONG

**COPY EDITORS /**

**PROOFREADERS**

PHYLLIS LAVIETES, BRIAN

BATEMAN, LEAH VANN

**AD REPRESENTATIVE**

NANCY SADICARIOS

NANCY@TJPNWS.COM

**AD DESIGNER**

CHAD AUSTIN

CHAD@TJPNWS.COM

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COVER PHOTO: ILLAN OSSENDRIYER  
EMMA YURICH HOLDS BONGANI DIANZI, 4. EMMA AND HER BROTHER JACK ALONG WITH THEIR PARENTS AND SIBLINGS, BROUGHT NECESSITIES TO THE COMMUNITY AS PART OF THEIR KARING FOR KLIPTOWN B'NAI MITZVAH PROJECT.



# From the publisher's desk

## PRESENTING SIMCHA CELEBRATIONS OF ALL TYPES



I will soon be heading to Israel for my great-niece Rosie's wedding to Avi, her bashert. That upcoming event put me in mind of simchas. Which, in turn, brings me to introducing this "Special Collection: Simchas" magazine. In it, we're happy to share several stories with you, which deal with an array of simchas.

Our cover story follows the b'nai mitzvah trip to South Africa of brother and sister, Emma and Jack Yurich. The twins and their family brought joy to many needy children in Kliptown, Soweto, creating a beautiful and unique mitzvah project. And, mazal tov to Dr. Irwin Kerber, who, like many recent octogenarians, celebrated his second bar mitzvah at age 83.

Speaking of b'nai mitzvah, our evergreen

bar/bat mitzvah planner is followed by an essay about a mother's angst concerning sports versus synagogue.

Turn to Page 14 for your chance to "Guess the celebrant." It could be your rabbi or cantor; to find the answers to this super-cute photo feature, take a look at Page 28.

Moving on to another type of simcha, keeping Jewish tradition alive amid current wedding trends requires creativity and budgeting. A great example of mixing venue and tradition can be found in the article "Cowtown Wedding." Rabbi Andrew Bloom of Congregation Ahavath Sholom in Fort Worth used his vast interfaith resources to make a bride's dream come true: standing beneath

the chuppah in the Fort Worth Stockyards, at Cowtown Coliseum. It doesn't get much more creative than that!

Finally, we learn about a couple's 77th wedding anniversary. Mazal tov to Anna and Sid Binder, who celebrated this incredible milestone June 28. To steal a line from "When Harry Met Sally:" "I'll have whatever she's having."

In closing, we hope you enjoy this "Special Collection: Simchas" edition. And, while we are still a few weeks away from Rosh Hashanah, please accept our best wishes, from our TJP family to yours, for a happy and healthy New Year.

SHARON WISCH-RAY

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# IN THE BEGINNING, THERE WAS A PLAN

## EASY GUIDE FOR A STRESS-FREE BAR/BAT MITZVAH WEEKEND

By Vicki Samuels Levy  
*Jewish Herald Voice*

**N**o matter the size of your family or the number of friends who share your simchas, it's easy to feel overwhelmed when you begin planning one of the most important days in your child's life. To put the week into perspective, make an outline, start a list and develop a realistic plan, so that when the weekend finally arrives, you will be able to relax and kvell.

Enter the bar/bat mitzvah planning zone. While children are supported in their studies by rabbis and Hebrew teachers, the loving supervision of their parents gives them the foundation upon which to draw confidence and poise. The celebration will be joyous, and you will be able to appreciate the significance of this milestone in your child's life because you were well-prepared and planned for the obvious, as well as the unexpected.

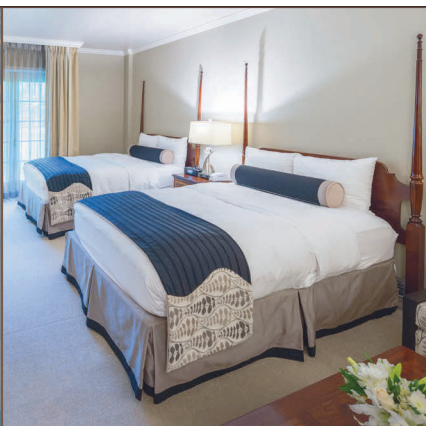
Organization being the key to your

memorable weekend, planning can start at any time. Whether you choose to coordinate the weekend entirely by yourself, or engage the expertise of a professional planner or close friend; whether your simcha will involve 30 or 300 guests, you no doubt will want this milestone to reflect your values. This timetable is a map for that journey — all that remains is for you to be flexible.

First, learn the requirements of your own synagogue. Particulars, such as Oneg Shabbats and Kiddush luncheons, will vary. Before receiving the bar/bat mitzvah date, find out when Shavuot and Simchat Torah are. If you have other children or relatives who will be participating in these ceremonies, you may choose not to have your children share their simchas on the same weekend. Also, if your child attends summer camp, try to have a date either before summer begins, or well after, as most synagogues want the children completely engaged in Hebrew practice during the final few months.



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## 13 YEARS AHEAD

- When your child is born, start a savings account. It can make a difference if you foresee a 200-person guest list down the road. If you don't need the money, put it toward a trip to Israel, college or a second honeymoon for you and your spouse.

## 1 TO 2 YEARS AHEAD

- You will receive your child's date from the synagogue. If this will be a B'nai Mitzvah, where your child shares the bimah with a partner, consider going together for the celebration and sharing expenses. If you choose to have two independent parties, meet with the other family, hopefully to select times so classmates might be able to attend some or all of both friends' celebrations.
- Have a special family meeting to share the joy with all members. Together, create something meaningful for siblings, regardless of their ages.
- Project a budget that will reflect your lifestyle.
- Book the band/DJ if you haven't already.
- Reserve synagogue hall for Kiddush luncheon.

- Pay deposits early to lock in current prices.
- Book hotel, party room or caterer.
- Select a party planner — or best friend — to help you through the process.
- Attend weekly Shabbat services with your children.
- Choose a mitzvah/tzedakah project. Involve the entire family.
- Inform out-of-towners of the upcoming event, by phone, email or "save-the-date" cards.

## 10 TO 12 MONTHS AHEAD

- Begin intensive Hebrew lessons.
- Select photographer and/or videographer.
- Select the florist.
- Select the bakery.
- Select decorator.
- Select entertainment (party buttons, caricaturist, magician, etc.).

## 8 MONTHS AHEAD

- Make guest list and set up an index-card file, by hand or in the computer. Include a column that shows the guest's relationship to the child, and columns to record gifts and thank-you notes written.
- Revisit your budget; otherwise, the spending can get out of hand.
- Serve wine only for the Kiddush; no open bar. Remember, this is a children's event you are planning!
- Use a loose-leaf binder with dividers or other filing system. There are great planning books at area Judaic gift shops. Categorize and organize. Keep all business cards, estimates, notes, lists, etc.
- Plan theme or color scheme. Possibly enlist the help of a party planner.

## 6 MONTHS AHEAD

- Make up final guest list. Invite all family; include former spouse and in-laws. Remember, this is your child's celebration: Put your feelings aside! Include rabbi(s), cantor, B'nai Mitzvah teachers, religious school and secular

*see* Planning, P.6

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## Planning *continued* FROM P.5

teachers, youth advisers and sports coaches.

- Consider sending invitations to the president, governor and mayor. Your child may receive a handsome congratulations card.
- Order invitations, maps, napkins, kippot, etc. The RSVP date should precede the event by at least three weeks.
- Select a calligrapher.
- Prepare a program (optional) for guests that gives personal information about the child and explains the ritual to non-Jewish guests.
- Investigate hotels and transportation for out-of-towners.

## 5 MONTHS AHEAD

- Purchase tefillin, tallit, yad and Kiddush cup.
- Plan Sunday brunch. A family member or close friend may wish to host this for you.
- Plan family Shabbat dinner.
- Plan what you will bake and freeze for at-home meals and oneg.
- Order table favors or giveaways for dance contests.

## 3 MONTHS AHEAD

- Invitations in hand, number the backs of response cards and record on your guest list. (Some guests may forget to write their names on the reply cards.)
- Include map, as needed, with invitations.
- Purchase special postage stamps.
- Mail out-of-town invitations.

## 2 MONTHS AHEAD

- Order flowers/centerpieces.
- Mail in-town invitations.

## 6 TO 8 WEEKS AHEAD

- Arrange for hosts and junior hosts.
- Select family or friends to sit on bimah.
- Arrange aliyot.
- Order from party rentals company, if needed.
- Finalize hotel reservations.
- Confirm caterer(s).
- Make seating chart for dinner or sit-down

Kiddush luncheon.


- Make up or order hospitality baskets for out-of-towners. Include directions and phone numbers.
- Send honorary gift to synagogue.

## 4 WEEKS AHEAD

- Plan candle-lighting ceremony or other special service for the party.
- Plan Havdalah.
- Shop for clothes for the family.
- Send wish list of songs to DJ/band.
- Arrange for security at home during "away time," if you believe it is necessary.
- Create a timeline for the celebration of how you want events to unfold.

## 3 WEEKS AHEAD

- Prepare personal notes about your child for the rabbi's use in blessing (if applicable).
- Prepare your personal remarks.
- Make place cards.
- Reconfirm flowers/centerpieces.



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- Reconfirm music, entertainment, etc.
- Make copies of everything: prayers, speeches, seating charts, candle-lighting ceremony. Give a copy to a friend in case you forget anything.
- Coordinate transportation to and from airport and events.
- Coordinate with party facility how room will be arranged, including where guest book or photo board will be placed and where gifts may be placed. Decorate a box where guests may drop their cards (party planner may provide).

## 2 WEEKS AHEAD

- Get haircuts; complete last-minute clothes shopping.

## 1 WEEK AHEAD

- Confirm caterer(s), hotel and give final count.
- Adjust seating chart, if needed.
- Prepare “emergency” bag for synagogue and celebration, including sewing kit, toothbrush/paste, makeup, hair accoutrements, personal items.
- Family rehearsal for services.



PHOTO: ROMY MODLIN PHOTOGRAPHY

## FRIDAY OF BAR/BAT MITZVAH

- Bring food to synagogue for Oneg Shabbat (if applicable).
- Participate in Friday evening service. Host Oneg Shabbat or dinner.
- Prepare extra sets of directions to the party and bring to synagogue with you.
- Get plenty of rest!

## SHABBAT

- Be prepared to kvell and have the most wonderful weekend of your life!

## AFTERGLOW

- Support your child in making a monetary tzedakah donation and writing thank-you notes.

*Adapted from the Jewish Herald Voice*

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# PARENT'S TOUGH CALL: SOCCER OR SYNAGOGUE?

SELECT SPORTS, BAR MITZVAH  
COMPETE FOR FOCUS

By Kimberly Burnham

*This story originally appeared on Kveller.*

**Y**ou might think that being a Jewish soccer mom is no different from being, say, a Christian soccer mom or a Buddhist soccer mom. In some ways you'd be right.

But I've recently realized that there are some unique challenges for Jewish families when it comes to raising soccer-obsessed kids. Take one recent Sunday, when my 10-year-old stepson, Yair, was so involved in a soccer game that he seemingly lost a shin guard while playing on the field — or, more likely, he was so eager to play that he didn't even notice that he wasn't wearing it in the first place.

The following week, when I found his missing shin guard in the lost and found at our synagogue, I realized that his dream to be a professional soccer player was on a collision course with our plans for him to become a bar mitzvah. It's a sticky situation, and it's going to become even more difficult as his 13th birthday approaches.

Here's the situation: Nearly every week, we are forced to choose between soccer and Jewish activities. Yair's soccer often coincides with Hebrew school, Sunday school or Shabbat services. And he is hoping to move up into his soccer league's premier traveling team, which means even more practices and more time away from synagogue. Just how much time he plays in a game is largely dependent on whether he attends all his practices and is on time. As such, for several weeks this spring, I had to pull him out of Hebrew school early on Wednesdays in order to make it to his practice on time.

But that's just the beginning — sometimes his games are on Saturday morning, coinciding with Shabbat services, and sometimes they're on Sundays before Sunday school is finished. Sometimes we are lucky and his game is in the afternoon. More often than not, however, it's a juggling act; the games are typically in the morning and can be as far as a six-hour drive away. This means that most weekends, we assess what Yair can miss — be it a game or a Shabbat service or a Hebrew lesson — and if soccer wins that week, who will drive him to the game.

Fortunately, Yair is good at Hebrew. He's on track with what he'll need to know for his bar mitzvah, but



PHOTO: ADOBE STOCK

still, we have to choose: What can he miss at synagogue? What should he miss from soccer?

It will be even more challenging in the months leading up to his bar mitzvah, as his nearly 13-year-old brother, who is also obsessed with soccer, is learning. He has to attend all Friday and Saturday services in the three months before his big day. We, the collective we, will have to force a choice between becoming a bar mitzvah and playing in all of his soccer games. It is not a real choice, not in our family — ultimately the bar mitzvah takes precedence. The synagogue's expectations are too high, the social pressure to become a bar mitzvah too great.

Still, we worry: Will he start to hate being Jewish if it stands in the way of his potent dream of being a



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professional soccer player? Will he never come back to synagogue after being strongly encouraged — some might say required — to miss soccer in order to go to services the year of his bar mitzvah?

Why are we forcing this choice, or making it so that playing in every soccer game is not even an option for Yair? It is a good question — one I have thought about a lot in the last year. I am a convert to Judaism; I grew up Mormon and there were Sunday basketball games and Sunday swim meets that I couldn't participate in. My teammates were not happy and I was sad to miss the events but, at the same time, I felt proud of my connection to family and church. I knew my family and my religious community had my back — they loved me, they celebrated me and they wanted the very best for me. Missing Sunday events was part of the price of that loyalty, and part of being in that tribe.

I know that my childhood experiences are very different from Yair's. At the same time, he is proud of being Jewish. He descends from a line of rabbis who value the observance of Judaism, particularly because of how it builds character and develops community relationships. So with Yair, we try to focus on what he gets out of going to synagogue: friendships, a connection with his heritage, a connection with God and Torah, and hopefully some joy and grounding in a good life. He gets some of these things from soccer, too — how

to be a leader, grace in the face of winning and losing, camaraderie, a sense of belonging.

Right now — and especially according to Yair — the list of soccer benefits seems longer. But we also have to think about the future, and what these choices mean: What will make him a better man in this nuanced and complicated world — going to every soccer game or every Jewish event?

For now, at least, some of the questions are still in the future. And the other week, Yair's missing shin guard mysteriously turned up in the synagogue's lost and found. I say "mysteriously" because, even though I knew it was lost, I never expected to find it there. It almost felt like it was transported there, symbolizing both the divide and the connection between synagogue and soccer.

The day the shin guard was lost was much like any other: I picked Yair up early from Sunday school. As I'm driving, a flurry of questions escapes my lips: "Are you ready? Do you have your soccer cleats and shin guards on? Is there a water bottle back there?" As Yair changes into his uniform in the backseat, I am reminded that all these decisions are being made by and for a kid who is still too small to sit in the front seat of the car. "Did you finish the kosher hot dog I brought for you as a snack? Did you take off your kippah?" It wouldn't be the first time he had run out onto the field still wearing it.

Adrenaline is rushing. It is a hurried transition from the meditative quiet of synagogue to the bustling exuberance of a youth soccer game.

Yair is a good player on his team, and they especially need him today, as a few players are absent and they don't have any substitutes. Yair makes a great assist and his team wins 7-2. When Yair finds out a couple of other boys are staying to play in the next game, so that the team will have some substitute players, he begs to stay and play.

"OK," I concede. He quickly eats a granola bar and Rice Krispies treat from the car and is back on the field playing 30 minutes later.

His team wins again. The boys are all happy. As he comes off the field, he says, "One of my shin guards came out of my socks." It was puzzling — just how does that happen? We look everywhere, walking up and down the field, asking other players and parents if they have seen a lone shin guard.

We can't find it anywhere, so later we buy him a new pair of shin guards. But then, the following week, the missing shin guard turns up in the synagogue's lost and found. It was discovered by security in the parking lot.

Apparently he played two games with only one shin guard. But I have to imagine that one shin guard was on duty, showing how much he cares about soccer, while the other one slipped away and sat quietly in synagogue. ☆



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# Karing for Kliptown

EMMA AND JACK YURICH CHOOSE MITZVAH PROJECT  
OVER TRADITIONAL GIFTS

By Gillian Klawansky  
South African Jewish Report

**W**hen Jack and Emma Yurich were preparing for their bar and bat mitzvahs in the United States, they weren't thinking about the oodles of boodle they might get as gifts, but about the children of Kliptown, Soweto, South Africa, they could help.

In July, they arrived in South Africa, and sought out Future Angels Day Care Centre, a colourful refuge breaking the gray cacophony of shacks that crowd Kliptown's sand streets.

The center became brighter still when the Yurich twins came to donate the goods bought with money raised through their b'nai mitzvah project, which they termed "Karing for Kliptown."

Welcomed by the singing voices of smiling children, parents and teachers, the twins finally got the chance to interact with the community they have been working so hard to assist.

Jack and Emma first heard about Kliptown when their South African-born mother, Joanne Yurich, visited the township three years ago on a trip back to South Africa. Joanne and her mother, Robyn Menter, were struck by the plight of the largely forgotten Kliptown community – which lacks basic infrastructure and sanitation.

"It was the first time I'd been to Kliptown. We'd never been to Soweto, even though we'd grown up in Johannesburg," recalls Joanne. "Ilan Ossendryver – a private Soweto guide and photojournalist – brought us to Kliptown, where the Freedom Charter was signed, and we were just so moved by the community. We wished that we'd known about their loss of hope, and that we could have brought more to help them.

"When we came back to the United States, we showed my kids all the pictures we'd taken. What really reached home for us was a picture of a little boy with a toy that he'd made from a milk carton. We showed the kids that these children don't have toys, they entertain themselves through music or a few soccer balls which are like gold to them."

Temple Emanu-El, the twins' synagogue in Dallas, encourages all those approaching bar and bat mitzvahs to do a mitzvah project.

"When the twins began talking about their mitzvah project, my husband Joe and I said, 'We really want you to do something that's impactful,'" recalls Joanne. "The twins had been so touched by what they saw and heard of Kliptown that they decided to dedicate their project to the community. That's how they came up with the idea to raise money for shoes and soccer





PHOTOS: ILLAN OSSENDRYVER

JACK YURICH AND EMMA YURICH WITH CHILDREN FROM FUTURE ANGELS DAY CARE IN THE CLASSROOM AFTER RECEIVING DONATIONS INCLUDING DRESS-UP CLOTHES AND TOYS.

balls for the kids, something that was necessary but fun too.”

“We wanted to do something that was important to us,” Emma said. “And since my mom is born here, it made sense to do this – it’s something that’s part of our roots. We spent a year raising money, and raised just more than \$27,000 [about R 383,000].” While

the twins set up a website and began raising money through fundraisers like bake sales, a selfless decision took the project to the next level.

“When we were about to do their invitations, they said, ‘We have everything we need, let’s ask people to donate money to the community instead of giving us gifts,’” Joanne said. “That was how they were able to

raise enough to be able to give more than just shoes and soccer balls.”

The twins ultimately donated AstroTurf for the playground, toys, a huge selection of dress-up clothes, 14 tricycles, clothing and three pairs of good

see *Kliptown*, P.12



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TEACHERS SURROUNDING CHILDREN AT THE FUTURE ANGELS DAY CARE IN KLIPTOWN, SOWETO, WITH PARENTS ON THE SIDE TO WELCOME THE YURICH FAMILY TO THEIR SCHOOL.



EMMA YURICH, TSHEPANG SELEPE (AGE 5) AND JACK YURICH

PHOTOS: ILLAN OSSENDRIYER

## Kliptown *continued* FROM P.11

quality tennis shoes for each of the 40 delighted kids and seven teachers, as well as 175 soccer balls distributed throughout the community.

After a year of fundraising, the twins, together with their parents, three younger siblings, grandmother and two family friends, finally visited

the community they'd heard so much about. They went to deliver the goods personally.

"We've never even been to South Africa," Emma said. "Being here is awesome, they're so sweet. We'd only seen pictures; it's a lot different from what I expected. The conditions are worse than I imagined. Meeting them is so sad, but being able to give them these things and play with them makes it a lot happier. Giving back has

always been important to our family, but this has been the biggest thing that we've done so far."

"It's amazing to be here because all of the work that we've done, it just really pays off," said Jack. "It's heartbreaking how the government has neglected this community." The family aims to keep the project going when the twins' three younger siblings have their bat and bar mitzvahs.

Dolly Ntshangase, the founder of the day care



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*Credit: Charla Storey*





JOE YURICH WITH FELICIA HARRISON (AGE 5) PLAYING IN THE CLASSROOM WHILE CHILDREN RECEIVE DONATIONS OF CLOTHING AND SHOES



EMMA, JACK, ALEX AND MATTHEW YURICH HANDED OUT 175 SOCCER BALLS TO CHILDREN THROUGHOUT KLIPTOWN. PHOTOS: ILLAN OSSENDRYVER

center, said the school had started in 2013 with 14 kids. Today, it caters to 40 small children under six, and while they get a social grant from the department, it's not enough to give the teachers a stipend and cater to the needs of the children, who are also fed two full meals and two snacks daily. The school ultimately survives through donations.

"This project is fantastic," said Ntshangase.

"Maybe this family was sent from above. We didn't expect this. Just getting three pairs of shoes and a tracksuit for each child is so wonderful. We think Joanne and her family will be blessed from above."

Ossendryver, who is thrilled by the initiative, is also dedicated to the center and the wider community. He personally assists, and frequently organizes fundraising initiatives, and brings

tourists to Kliptown. "I'm one of the few white people who come here," he said.

To give thanks, the community treated the family to a song by talented singer and guitarist Cleopas Ways, and to a special performance by the Kliptown Gumboot Dancers.

*This article first appeared in the July 11 edition of the South African Jewish Report and is reprinted with permission.* ✡



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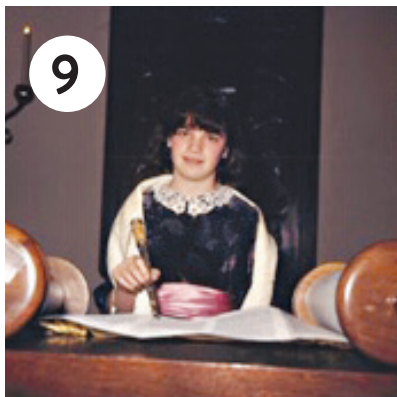




# Guess Who?

DALLAS-FORT WORTH AREA RABBIS AND CANTORS SHARE THEIR B'NAI MITZVAH JOY

Think you know who's who? See page 28





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# Mazel Tov,

## AND AGAIN 70 YEARS LATER

### DR. IRWIN KERBER CHANTS TORAH THE FIRST TIME AT 13

By Deb Silverthorn

If a bar mitzvah can claim “today I am a fountain pen,” then the Shabbos weekend of June 21 allowed Dr. Irwin Kerber to proclaim himself the pen, the ink and all the wisdom that might flow forth as he celebrated a second bar mitzvah.

At the age of 83, Dr. Kerber stood before his friends, family and community at Congregation Anshai Torah to read, pray and instill in all present a can-do spirit.

“Seven years ago I was exercising on a treadmill when I experienced chest pains,” Dr. Kerber said. “After a helicopter transport, strapped to a gurney and ultimately having new blood vessels inserted, I was a little closer to Hashem. I told Him I wasn’t

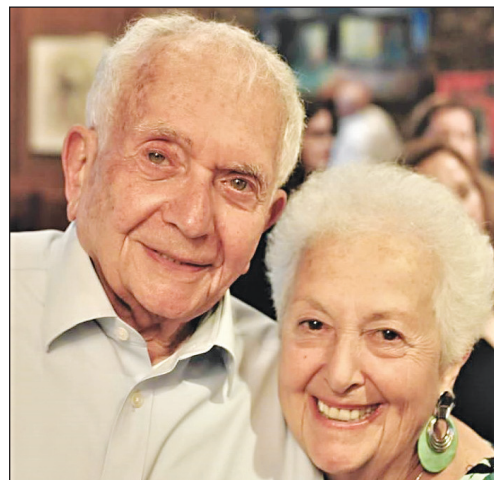


ON JUNE 11, 1949, A THEN 13-YEAR-OLD IRWIN KERBER READ FROM THE TORAH PORTION NASO, THEN CELEBRATING WITH (LEFT TO RIGHT) HIS MOTHER HELEN, SISTER ELLIE AND HIS FATHER BENNY, FRIENDS AND FAMILY.

ready to meet Him – that I hoped to see my grandchildren graduate from college.”

Blessed with the opportunity to live at least 13 years beyond the Torah-ascribed “three score and 10,” Dr. Kerber stood at the bimah to reaffirm his Judaism.

“Irwin is a beautiful human being with a heart of



PHOTOS COURTESY KERBER FAMILY  
AS THEY WERE 70 YEARS AGO, BROTHER AND SISTER DR. IRWIN KERBER AND ELLIE GOLDMAN, ARE STILL CLOSE AND KVELLING TOGETHER AT HIS SECOND BAR MITZVAH.

gold. He’s driven by passion and care for his fellow human beings, coming in contact with the Divine every time he’s delivered a baby over the course of his exceptional career,” Congregation Anshai Torah’s Rabbi Stefan Weinberg said. “He’s a gift to his family, his community, and, especially to every medical student that experiences his unique blend of

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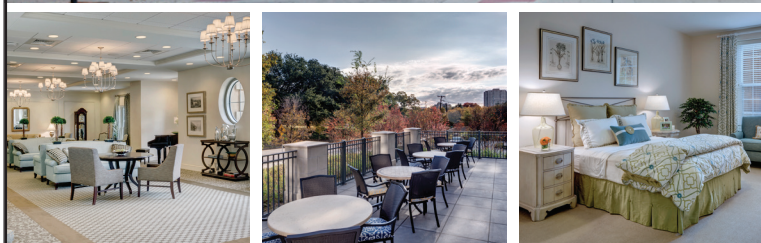
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humor, wisdom and appreciation of awe.”

“I knew he was wise and thoughtful, but I had no idea he was so sensitive. We’d traveled to Israel together on a Jewish Federation mission but I hadn’t noticed how impactful the trip had been,” said Rabbi Weinberg.

“As we sat in my office, and he broke into tears reading his speeches, I knew Irwin was not to be denied his moment on the bimah, surrounded by family and friends.”

Dr. Kerber is a Bronx, New York native. Shabbos for the family was on the horizon each week as his mother lit the candles with blessings and cooked her best feasts.

“Our family was the best and Irwin and I were always by each other’s side,” Dr. Kerber’s sister Ellie said. “It was just the two of us for so long, and I remember the first time we celebrated him – the party, the dressing up, the excitement. It was so special and coming here to be together again.”

Friends with Ellie, the then Paula Topper came by to do homework or share a meal. When it was she who jumped up to help in the kitchen, Dr. Kerber’s father told him not to let her get away. Sixty-one years later, the couple is still together.

Dr. Kerber attended SUNY Downstate Medical School, then interned at Harrisburg Hospital in

Pennsylvania. He joined the U.S. Public Health Service, stationed in Memphis, Tennessee, and did temporary duty with the United States Coast Guard.

After a residency at the University of Tennessee in Memphis, the couple moved to Dallas, where Dr. Kerber completed a fellowship in gynecologic endocrinology at UT Southwestern. He was in private practice for 32 years, while his wife taught at Solomon Schechter Academy (now the Ann and Nate Levine Academy). The family grew to include children Michael (Michele), Jeffrey (Sharron), Hedy, Gary (Angela) and Kevin (Amy) and their grandchildren.

As for Dr. Kerber’s mitzvah project, he smiled when describing it.

“My mitzvah project began in 1960 when I delivered the first of many hundreds of babies.”

Dr. Kerber has shared his 42 years of knowledge by teaching at UT Southwestern Medical School. “Bringing life into the world — working hand-in-hand with G-d, that is a mitzvah and my honor.”

Standing on the bimah at Anshai Torah delivering his d’var Torah, Dr. Kerber paraphrased Rabbi Hillel saying, “I can stand on one foot and tell you it is about love, family and friends — and exercise and diet and all the rest is commentary.

“I didn’t realize how many factors would change



IN 2018 DR. IRWIN KERBER TOOK HIS GRANDSON JORDAN TO ISRAEL ON A MISSION TRIP WITH THE JEWISH FEDERATION OF GREATER DALLAS. MEMORIES FLOWING, DR. KERBER RECALLED BEING IN AWE OF THE MENORAH AT THE KNESSET. AT HIS SECOND BAR MITZVAH AT ANSHAI TORAH IN JUNE, DR. KERBER READ FROM BEHA’ALOTEKHA, WHICH INCLUDES G-D’S INSTRUCTION TO MOSES OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MENORAH.

in the 70 years since I first became a bar mitzvah — my voice and memory just the beginning,” he said. “There were so many issues to learn about from Beha’alotekha but what impacted me most was God’s instruction to Moses of the construction of

see Irwin, P.18



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PAULA AND DR. IRWIN KERBER, FRONT AND CENTER, ARE FLANKED BY THEIR FAMILY, FRONT ROW, FROM LEFT, KEVIN KERBER, HEDY VANDERHEYDEN, MICHAEL, ZOE, GARY AND JEFF KERBER; BACK ROW, FROM LEFT, JORDAN VANDERHEYDEN, AARON AND MEL KERBER, ALEX VANDERHEYDEN, SARAH, JOSH, DANIEL, BEN AND LAUREN KERBER (NOT PICTURED JEREMY KERBER)

PHOTOS COURTESY KERBER FAMILY

## Irwin *continued* FROM P.17

the menorah, the quintessential symbol of Judaism.”

Dr. Kerber calls his wife, Paula, the menorah who lights the way for the family – the couple and their offspring and the next generation totaling 22.

“I was one of those who asked Irwin, ‘Why

are you doing this?’” Paula said. “In spite of my misgivings, I watched him persevere. His dedication is not only to his work, but also to his family and he can always be relied on, no matter what. Our family saw him spending evenings and weekends learning to read from the Torah, devoting himself wholeheartedly to this milestone.”

In a moment of reverse pride and kvelling, it was

Dr. Kerber’s children who presented him his tallis before the service – the same one he wore on June 11, 1949.

“This 70-year anniversary of his bar mitzvah has come to fruition,” Paula said. “He wanted publicly to acknowledge his gratitude to Hashem for letting him reach this significant time and all of us are indescribably proud.”

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Working with Rabbi Weinberg and tutor Karen Reid, Dr. Kerber took his studies very seriously. “Rabbi Weinberg was so encouraging, and Karen is eternally optimistic with the patience of Job,” Dr. Kerber said. “We met once or twice a week so I could be confident in my Hebrew, the prayers, I had to relearn the trope. I couldn’t have done it without them.”

“Although I have been tutoring for many years, Irwin is the first adult student with whom I have worked,” said Reid. “Despite his full schedule, he dedicated time to learning trope and chanting Torah, as well as developing and delivering an insightful and inspirational d’rash. I feel privileged to have guided Irwin through his studies and, not only was our learning mutual, but he serves as an inspiration to all ages.”

One of his office workers, attending her first bar mitzvah, recognized the Torah readings from his practicing while at work. When the time came to toss candies at the bar mitzvah “boy,” her whole row shared in the sweet wishes with whole hearts and great pride. In that, they were not alone.

“Irwin’s standing before the congregation on Shabbat was a powerful and beautiful statement. Expressing his commitment in words and deeds, Irwin touched the souls of all in attendance,”



AMONG THE GIFTS RECEIVED BY DR. IRWIN KERBER WAS A PAINTING BY HIS DEAR FRIEND NICOLE ROY. “MY MITZVAH PROJECT BEGAN IN 1960 WHEN I DELIVERED THE FIRST OF MANY HUNDREDS OF BABIES. BRINGING LIFE INTO THE WORLD - WORKING HAND-IN-HAND WITH G-D, THAT IS A MITZVAH AND MY HONOR.”

said Rabbi Weinberg. “Revealing his love for his Jewish roots, his strong ties to the land of Israel, his unequivocal need to defend Israel, right or wrong, his love and admiration for his family, and the mystery he experiences at every birth he oversees, define him as a man of extraordinary talent and depth.”

Beginning with Kabbalat Shabbat services, during which Dr. Kerber stood and sang alongside Anshai Torah’s a cappella choir Kol Rina, and a dinner hosted by close friends Michael and Nicole

Roy, Dr. Kerber’s talents and depth were continued to be lauded throughout the weekend.

“Dear Irwin, we have been touched immeasurably because of the insights you afforded us into your life,” Rabbi Weinberg said. “May you and Paula be blessed with many more wonderful years of good health and happiness with each other, and with your family.”

Indeed, to you Yitzchok ben Benyamin v’ Chaya, blessings and Amen! ✨



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# RABBI HELPS OUT-OF-STATE SENIORS MAKE HISTORY

## JERSEY COUPLE TIES THE COWBOY KNOT AT COWTOWN COLISEUM

By Nicole Hawkins

**W**hen Rabbi Andrew Bloom received a phone call asking for help planning a cowboy-themed wedding, he didn't question it.

Elaine Mostow Kaplan and Richard Glazer had an unconventional relationship from the start. They fell in love later in life, Kaplan in her 70s and Glazer in his 80s. The couple, who live on the East Coast, had a three-day trip planned to Fort Worth and decided they wanted to tie the knot in Texas style.

Bloom, who serves as a rabbi at Congregation Ahavath Sholom in Fort Worth, has known Kaplan for years, officiating her wedding to her late husband in New Jersey. Now, she wanted him to help start her new chapter with Glazer. He'd have one month to put together the perfect Texas wedding.

In Texas, couples from out of state typically have



CONGREGATION AHAVATH SHOLOM RABBI ANDREW BLOOM PERFORMS THE WEDDING CEREMONY OF ELAINE MOSTOW AND RICHARD GLAZER WITH CHUPPAH HOLDERS, CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM RIGHT, MARK ROSENFELD, STEVE GRETCHEN, JR FAIGIN AND RICH HOLLANDER.

a 48-hour waiting period to receive their wedding license, which wouldn't have allowed Glazer and Kaplan enough time to get married during their trip.

Bloom found a lawyer who explained the

situation to a judge, and had the waiting period waived for the couple.

Next, Bloom, who serves on the faith-based committee of the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo, called on its members asking for help in



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THE WEDDING PARTY, FROM LEFT, RICH HOLLANDER, LIA BLOOM, MICHAL BLOOM, MARK ROSENFELD, RABBI ANDREW BLOOM, ELAINE MOSTOW, RICHARD GLAZER, STEVE GRETCHEN AND JR FAIGIN

securing a venue for the wedding.

The committee arranged for the wedding to be held on the floor of the Cowntown Coliseum, home of the Stockyards Championship Rodeo, making it the first Jewish wedding in history to be held there.

“It was a traditional Jewish wedding from A to Z under the chuppah,” Bloom said.

The wedding was an intimate gathering of less than a dozen people, Bloom said. There was a traditional chuppah on the coliseum floor, with each corner held by members of Congregation

Ahavath Sholom, one of whom is a police officer who was on horseback for the ceremony.

The wedding was a special occasion for Bloom’s family, as his wife, Michal, and daughter, Lia, were signees on the ketubah.

Glazer and Kaplan’s children, friends and family didn’t know about the wedding until after it happened.

“They came here as a complete surprise and then they announced to their friends and family by Facebook and text that they had gotten married,” Bloom said. “It was the Fort Worth way.” ✡



PHOTOS: TERRI HOLLANDER  
RABBI ANDREW BLOOM BLESSES THE HAPPY COUPLE, ELAINE MOSTOW AND RICHARD GLAZER, AS CHUPPAH HOLDERS STEVE GRETCHEN AND OFFICER JR FAIGIN, ON HORSEBACK, LOOK ON.

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# TRADITIONAL, TRENDY WEDDING IS POSSIBLE

SOCIAL MEDIA, SAVING MONEY, CREATIVITY AMONG OPTIONS FOR MODERN COUPLES

By Avery Cooper

**W**hen making your very long list of things to do to tie the knot, you might want to start with assessing how you wish to blend Jewish tradition with contemporary pizzazz. Which traditions do you want to keep, you know, traditional, and which things would you like to add a special touch to?

Randi Steinhart, certified special event professional for RS Event Productions, has found recent wedding trends to revolve around saving an extra buck and unique branding for the bride and groom.

“Their names or initials [are printed] on everything from cocktail napkins, dance floors, bar fronts, walls and mirrors,” Steinhart said. “I’ve produced a lot of different styles of weddings and each has their own uniqueness designed with the bride and groom in mind.”

While keeping up with the times, Jewish



PHOTO: ADOBE STOCK

IN MODERN JEWISH WEDDINGS, BRIDES AND GROOMS BLEND THE TRADITIONAL WITH THEIR OWN CREATIVE FLAIR.

brides and grooms add their trendy touches throughout their otherwise traditional Jewish weddings. After all, weddings are all about the bride ... yes – and the groom.

Steinhart’s clients haven’t strayed too far

from the traditional Jewish wedding. The events may incorporate different music genres to suit the happy couple or fewer flowers in order to stay within a smaller budget.

Jennifer Hines, special event professional for

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Tie A Bow Event Planning, has found similar trends at weddings for her clients.

Hines has noticed weddings becoming more tailored to the digital age with wedding websites full of all the necessary information and digital invitations. Although she was surprised to find so many couples not wanting to send out paper invites, she's intrigued to see the world of weddings evolving and moving online just like many other things. However, she hopes brides stick to going to a bridal store to say yes to the dress instead of ordering online.

A Jewish wedding is still a Jewish wedding, though. Hines said there's no bigger and rowdier party than an Orthodox wedding. If you ever have the privilege to attend such an event, be sure to pay attention to every magnificent detail because you'll never see a better party.

Keeping with tradition, you'll still find kosher catering at Jewish weddings along with quite modest wedding dresses during the ceremony. The ceremony is the most structured and specific aspect of a Jewish wedding; and when you get to have a look at the rings, you'll notice they still meet all the requirements for Jewish wedding rings.

On that note, you'll find all the trendy and unique touches at the reception – the real party. Having a band is the standard, but many couples have switched to hiring a DJ to supply the tunes and keeping the party more casual.

Other big changes you may observe are the venues. Several years ago, every hotel would be booked during wedding season; but, now, venues have become the best way for a couple to plan a wedding that matches their personalities.

Weddings have moved away from hotels, churches and temples to venues designed for weddings that allow for the creation of a distinctive setting.

"Venues are very turnkey," Hines said. "They're made for weddings and reflect the bride and groom's vision. Venues set the tone."

This makes a lot of sense when considering how much effort a couple has to put forth to create their desired setting in a hotel ballroom. A venue is creative, more stylized and special. A couple can decide on anything from a barn to a garden to a warehouse.

Additionally, Ruth Spirer, certified wedding planner for Weddings and Events by Ruth, has seen her own set of changes in the world of weddings. Couples have been leaning toward

incorporating Orthodox traditions such as their separate, pre-ceremony receptions, "Tisch" and "Bedeken."

Spirer says that "couples are adding important heirlooms into their chuppahs such as a grandfather's talit or a grandmother's dress.

She works on a mix of Orthodox and Reform or relaxed weddings, finding increasingly popular reception additions at them all. Food stations are being chosen compared to plated meals or buffets; fun desserts are popping up along with the traditional cake; and, the sentimental, personal "first look" moment before the ceremony, showing the groom seeing his bride in her gown for the first time, is now trendy.

"The emphasis is on fun and [having] a party atmosphere," Spirer said.

You'll find a lot of differences between the weddings you attend, but at least you know to expect a traditional ceremony at a Jewish wedding and one heck of a party that follows.

Today's Jewish wedding trends showcase the bride and groom and what sets them apart from other couples. Unique touches will continue to be added to weddings, and you'll just have to wait and see what people come up with next. ⬡



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# HAPPILY EVER AFTER, 28105 DAYS AND COUNTING

## BINDERS CELEBRATE ROOTS PLANTED IN 1942

By Deb Silverthorn

**A**nna and Sid Binder have taken the “to have and to hold” portion of their vows seriously beyond imagination, holding on to each other as husband and wife since June 28, 1942. Seventy-seven years after the two first committed themselves, they remain connected and in love in Houston, where they were married at Congregation Adath Emeth.

“We stayed together through thick and thin and there’s been lots of both,” said Anna Binder, 94, who with her husband, 97, still lives in Houston. “Living into our 90s, of course, helped us reach 77 years married, but living those years respecting each other has gotten us here, still in love.”

The couples’ branches of their family tree extended shortly after marriage to include daughter Barbara. Barbara married Herb Richman and had three



JUNE 28, 1942 WAS THE DATE ANNA AND SID BINDER FIRST SAID “I DO.” SEVENTY-SEVEN YEARS LATER, THE TWO ARE STILL LIVING HAPPILY EVER AFTER.

children: Trina, Laynie and Charlie. From Laynie came grandchildren Bennett and Georgie Towbin and Kol and Geffen Richman, son David and his children Kevin, Stacey (Chad Cloe), Teisa and Adam (Sara) and his grandchildren Brandon and Brian Binder, Zain Cloe and Kinsley and Kane Binder and son Steve (Mary), he of blessed memory, and their children Timothy, Andreana, Tessa and Julian. It’s a family



PHOTOS COURTESY BINDER & RICHMAN FAMILIES

ON JUNE 28, 2019 ANNA AND SID BINDER CELEBRATED 77 YEARS OF LOVE, HOLDING HANDS, AND BEING ONE ANOTHER’S FOREVER OTHER.

tree of deep roots continues to bare fruit – to have its branches grow, to cover the land with shade and security.

Charlie, Anna and Sid’s grandson has planted his roots in Dallas.

“By observing their endless love through my childhood, and now in my adulthood, they taught me that love is the foundation for building a life.” Charlie

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WISDOM TO THE NEXT GENERATION COMES AT A HAPPY BIRTHDAY MEAL FOR MAMMAW ANNA. (BACK ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT) DAVID BINDER, GEFFEN AND CHARLES RICHMAN, CHAD AND ZAIN CLOE, HAL TOWBIN, ADAM BINDER; (SEATED, LEFT TO RIGHT) KANE BINDER, BENNETT TOWBIN, ANNA BINDER AND KOL RICHMAN.

said. “Everything else follows. Life has its ebbs and flows but as long as they have each other’s love, that’s all they need. We all aspire to live a full life of laughter, joy, family, and love like Mammaw and Pop.”

That love didn’t happen at first sight, but it didn’t take long. The couple first met when she was 13 and he 16 at her eighth-grade graduation dance. Then, they met again the first day of school at San Jacinto High

School as she was putting books in her locker. He was a football player who would walk her home from school, and to pay for their earliest dates she would make sandwiches at the grocery store her parents owned and he’d wash football uniforms on the weekends at 25 cents apiece.

“My Mama said we needed to break up or she was going to send me to family in Ohio, but we just dated



ANNA AND SID BINDER, WHO HAVE CALLED HOUSTON HOME FOR ALL 77 YEARS OF THEIR MARRIAGE, VISITING WITH THE DALLAS BRANCH OF THEIR FAMILY TREE (BACK ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT) CHARLIE, HAL AND TRINA RICHMAN, HAL TOWBIN, SID BINDER AND BARBARA RICHMAN; (FRONT ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT) MAAYAN RICHMAN, ANNA BINDER AND LAYNIE TOWBIN.

‘quietly,’” Anna said. Despite Mama’s misgivings, Anna’s father and Sid were friends from the get-go; they’d sit at the tailor shop and visit.

When Anna and Sid announced to her parents that they wanted to get married, Mama popped back with a quick “No,” but her Poppa told her to leave them

*see Binder, P.26*



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PHOTOS COURTESY BINDER & RICHMAN FAMILIES  
THE NUCLEAR BINDER FAMILY OF FIVE - SID, DAVID, ANNA, STEVEN, OF BLESSED MEMORY, AND BARBARA.

## Binder

*continued* FROM P.25

alone. The wedding day, according to the couple, was like a comedy of errors; Mama had made the bridesmaids' dresses and one got stepped on and torn. Anna's brothers were fighting over which of their sons would carry the ring. The wedding cake caved in and a family member, well, he had just a little too much to drink.

"It was one thing after another," Anna said. "On our honeymoon, we locked the keys in Poppa's new car and a couple of soldiers saw us on the road and offered to help. Not much help, one of them picked up a brick and broke the window and handed us the keys – a tough start but 77 years later we're still here, we still laugh, and we're still in love."

Neither of the Binders attended college, but they learned to do whatever they needed to in order to survive and they always worked side-by-side. They owned,

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for many years, Sid Binder's Fine Jewelry stores and also Sid Binder's One-Hour Cleaners, Pookie's Nightclub ("Not an easy thing for a married couple with children," Anna said.) and Sid Binder's Jewelry and Loan. Into their 80s, the couple worked, going to auctions in Connecticut and renting space in an antique mall. It was multi-tasking of the highest order.

While the businesses might have had Sid's name on the header, he said it was his Anna who held up the office. "I was on the front line and she in the back, but together, we could, and did, accomplish anything."

Anna, who became efficient on computers during the couple's working days, is on Facebook. She texts, emails and faxes. She isn't held back a bit as technology marches on.

"My grandparents are literally two-of-a-kind." Trina Richman said. "They are so active, so professional, and in making their family always come first they have always been so inspirational. With their zest for life and their love for each other, they've definitely set the bar."

As hard as they worked, and they worked hard, they played hard too. Longtime members of Houston Congregation Beth Yeshurun, and Sid a proud member of the Masons and the Shriners for more than 60 years, the couple often traveled with

their children and by themselves — to Israel, Paris, Rome, Monte Carlo, Venice, Vienna and around the U.S. — everywhere "but the planet Mars," said Anna.

And then there was Vegas. Time for "rest" meant the two getting away to Las Vegas, where he'd shoot dice and she'd play blackjack. How serious their affinity? Amid Charlie's favorite words of wisdom, relayed from his grandparents, is "...and always hit on a soft 17." There's little more to say.

"My parents hosted it all and it was delicious, a fun time and everyone was always included," said Barbara. "Our parents taught us about hard work, about appreciating everything and caring for everyone around us and, most of all, they taught us about respecting each other — that was bigger than love. They taught us by example as we grew up and they are still living that respect and our children and grandchildren are learning firsthand."

As part of the six-family network of friends that called themselves "Rent-a-Group," the Binders and their friends get together monthly. The Binders' family homes the sites of Passover Seders, Hanukkah parties and many other occasions throughout the years. Now that they are the lone survivors, it is the memories of those years that still bring joy to the Binders.

"My grandmother has always made it a point to speak with us about standing on our own," said Laynie Towbin. "To make sure we could stand alone if need be, to have our own identity and to not hide behind our partners. As a small business owner, I appreciate her words, and she has inspired me to work even harder to always help support my family and to do so while being an excellent wife and mother first."

"My Pop taught me charm and charisma and how important it is to make a lasting impression whenever you meet someone and to always make everyone feel special and appreciated."

Regarding the next generations, the couple loves visits from the grandchildren and the "greats."

"It's such a pleasure when they're here and I tell my grandkids they just don't know what a fortune they have — but they will," Anna said. "It's incredible for us to watch them all and it takes us back to so many parts of our own lives."

"Everybody has difficult times and there've been moments for each of us where it was close to 'too much' but we had a magnetism. If you're going to get mad, get mad — but get over it and hold on to the love," she said. "For us the road was rough, the road was smooth, the road was exciting — mostly, it's been beautiful and wonderful." ☆



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# Guess Who?

ANSWERS FROM  
PAGE 14



1. Rabbi Dan Lewin, director of Mayaan Chai Foundation and TJP columnist  
2. Temple Emanu-El Rabbi Debra J. Robbins with Rabbi Paul Citrin  
3. Temple Emanu-El Rabbi David Stern is blessed by his father, Rabbi Jack Stern, while his grandfather, Rabbi Jacob Philip Rudin, looks on.  
4. Shaare Tefilla Rabbi Emeritus and JFS Community Chaplain Rabbi Howard Wolk

5. Cantor Sheri Allen of Congregation Beth Shalom  
6. Temple Emanu-El Rabbi Amy Ross  
7. Temple Shalom Rabbi Andrew Paley  
8. Shearith Israel Rabbi Shira Wallach with her mom Rae Wallach  
9. Congregation Beth Torah Rabbi Elana Zelony  
10. Congregation Anshai Torah Rabbi Stefan Weinberg

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