

L'dor v'dor — sometimes with a twist

By Jessica Taper
Special to the TJP

As Jews, Judaism is the religion we know, and for many of us, it has a significant role in the way in which we think, act and go about living our daily lives.

Each generation hopes they do a good job passing it down to the next and keeping its traditions and its importance relevant for the next generation. Most of us learn it through our parents, our spouse, Jewish youth groups,

college affiliations, camps or some combination of those places. We get married and when it is time to raise children we start to focus on it more.

When people enter into a mixed marriage there can be challenges, and hopefully those issues are resolved before children are brought into the picture so religion is an important part of their upbringing rather than a point of contention.

When Marcia and James Webb were married, they knew some

day they would have children, and although Marcia was Jewish and James was Christian, they agreed their children would be raised Jewish. James totally embraced Judaism; he attended High Holy Days services with Marcia, they hosted Shabbat dinners and Passover Seders and he enjoyed learning the moral lessons and the Jewish commitment to tikkun olam — repairing the world.

Ironically, when the Webbs decided to move to Plano in 2001, it was James who found Congregation Beth Torah and enrolled their 3-year-old son Max in the preschool. Marcia was still in Florida with Max and their 6-week-old son Joey but they wanted Max to start preschool as soon as they officially moved to Plano. The preschool experience started the Webbs' connection with Congregation Beth Torah.

"I don't know if we jumped in with both feet or we were roped in, but we became very involved with Beth Torah," James said. "We made friends with members of the synagogue who immediately became our Dallas family, and the leadership of the congregation welcomed me as a part of their Beth Torah family."

The boys both grew up through the preschool. They progressed through the Learning Center and both started attending Camp Young Judaea after second grade.



Submitted photo

James, Joey and Max Webb at Joey's bar mitzvah

The synagogue was the center of their life. Marcia joined the adult b'nai mitzvah class and Max became a bar mitzvah in March 2011.

"It was a whirlwind and I remember that feeling of pride watching Max on the bimah. The shy preschooler who did not like even being onstage was up there leading this service," said James. "The celebration was great and my family enjoyed being a part of it all."

In November 2011, they got a March 2014 date for Joey's bar mitzvah and then, everything changed. Three weeks later, Marcia was unexpectedly diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and given very little chance at recovery. Marcia made her friends promise that no

matter what, Joey's bar mitzvah had to be as perfect as Max' was. She knew James would make it happen, but she wanted him to know he would have the same support system she did.

In June 2012 Marcia passed away. "In her final moments, I promised her that I would love her forever and that I would continue to raise our boys Jewish," James reflected. "I made that promise for two reasons — to honor Marcia and the moral and societal lessons I had learned from Judaism, and to provide a constant in my boys' lives — Judaism is just a huge part of who they are."

James sent the boys to Camp Young Judaea that summer — it was another step in keeping their lives on track. When they came



Bridge Builder Academy
What makes us unique and special?

1. We use Certified Teachers that are also Special Ed certified and/or trained
2. Uniquely customized curriculum specifically for your child

Website: Full-time enrollment (Nationally and Globally Credited) • Homework Support (Tutoring) Homeschool Support Supplemental Developmental Enrichment

Call us at (972) 516-8844
Visit us online at www.bridgebuilderacademy.com
Visit our campus at 1221 W. Campbell Rd., #209, Richardson, TX 75080

CONGREGATION BETH TORAH

WE MAKE VEGETARIAN CHILI COOL

HOT

IT'S "Z" BEST!

Beckloff Pediatric Behavioral Center

A counseling and educational center focused on helping kids, teens and families.

Where kids become kids... again!

Teen Counseling ADHD Coaching Parenting Family Counseling Play Therapy
Divorce Care Parent Facilitation Speech & Language Therapy Testing & Assessment

BP BC www.drbeckloff.com (972) 250 1700



IT'S ABOUT TIME...

Celebrating 25 Years

CHABAD OF PLANO/COLLIN COUNTY

25 YEARS OF CHABAD OF PLANO
TIME TO REFLECT | CELEBRATE | THANK | INSPIRE | GROW

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29 | 7:00 PM | LANG CHABAD CENTER
Featuring acclaimed pianist Ethan Bortnik

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO PURCHASE TICKETS,
VISIT CHABADPLANO.ORG/EVENT
Sponsorship Opportunities Available | Refreshments Served

Honoring Dr. Scott Katz and the Rovinsky, Zebaida, Gurfinkel and Ohayon Families




home from camp they traveled the remainder of the summer, as a family, and talked a lot about what was ahead. James had a life insurance policy for Marcia and it was important to him that the boys help decide how to donate the funds. "We agreed the things that their mom valued centered mostly around the Jewish community, kids and education."

In Marcia's honor the Webb family donated funds to establish the Marcia Fischer Webb Youth Lounge and the Marcia Fischer Webb Education Scholarship Fund at Congregation Beth Torah. "Beth Torah's Preschool and Learning Center were both so important to our family. I grew up in a church where we had a youth lounge and it was where we all just went to hang around as friends, sometimes to discuss religion, but mostly a place where we all felt comfortable just being kids," said

James. "I contributed the money and our family friends, the Tapers — Howard, Jessie, Gabrielle and Samara — and synagogue president, Alan Hoffman, brought this dream to life based on what I was imagining and they knew Marcia would love.

"Camp Young Judea continues to play a role for my boys so we also donated funds in Marcia's honor to establish 'The Fisch House,' a kitchen at Camp Young Judea," added James.

Additionally the Webb family established the Marcia Fischer Webb Endowment for Communities in Schools of Tarrant County, a nonprofit organization focused on children and education, and the Marcia Fischer Webb Education Trust, which will provide college scholarships for more than a dozen young adults to help with their college expenses. They also started a fund for the

Florence Melton Adult Education program at Temple Beth Shalom in Chicago. Marcia grew up at that temple and was encouraged by her sister Randy, a Melton graduate, to join the program in Dallas.

With the help of friends and family, James also made sure that Joey's bar mitzvah was meaningful and memorable. "Joey's bar mitzvah was an incredibly emotional experience. We wanted to pay tribute to Marcia, but we also knew she would have wanted us to keep the weekend focused on Joey," reflected James. "We had a huge turnout from Marcia's family and from mine. I know much of that was to help support all of us as a family."

By that time, James was dating his future wife, Cathy, and her family was included in the weekend too. Cathy is not Jewish, but she has also embraced the Jewish traditions and hosts family and



Submitted photo

The Marcia Fischer Webb Youth Lounge at Congregation Beth Torah friends for holiday dinners. James the boys. Cathy has continued and Cathy attend High Holy Day services and are there to support see KIDS, p.30



Lakehill Summer Camps

Kindergarten through High School

June 5 - August 11

Academic Readiness • Acting & Film Making • Arts
Community Service • Cooking • Crafting & Building • LEGO
Outdoor Adventure • Science & Discovery • Sports • Technology • and More!

Morning, afternoon, and full-day teacher-led camps are available as well as FREE before-and after-camp care.

Half-day Camps | \$240 per week (8:00 am - 1:00 pm or 1:00 - 6:00 pm) Full-day Camps | \$315 per week (8:00 am - 6:00 pm)

TWO LOCATIONS IN EAST DALLAS
summercamps@lakehillprep.org

Online Summer Camps Guide:
www.lakehillprep.org/summer-camps

L A K E H I L L
PREPARATORY SCHOOL



Let me make your next Toyota experience the easiest!!
Biggest discounts in the metroplex!
Home delivery!
Special pricing, and interest rates available!

SPECIAL FLEET PRICING IS AVAILABLE

FREEMAN



Mark Stoller, Fleet/Leasing Manager
(817) 287-5254 • mstoller@toyotatime.com
204 Northeast Loop 820, Hurst, TX, 76053
www.freemantoyota.com

CALL SOON
SPACE IS LIMITED!

J'S ART

Join the fun this summer!

- Kid Camps - for ages 5 - 13
- Art Skills Camps for ages 10+
- Teen/Adult Classes
- Sewing Classes too!

Bring this ad in for \$10 off!



jsartstudio.com 972/931-1933



Now Enrolling for the 2017-2018 School Year
Call for a Campus Tour Today!

Ann & Nate Levine Academy – an inclusive, dynamic Jewish day school – fosters creativity, critical thinking and intellectual curiosity and graduates confident, ethical Jewish citizens and leaders.



2016-2017 Eighth Graders (pictured above with Nate Levine) are currently in Israel for Levine Academy's Annual Gerda Vogel Marx Israel Experience

- Early Childhood Education through Middle School
- Innovative STEM and Humanities Programs
- Transportation from South of LB
- Graduates Matriculate to Dallas Private Schools
- Tuition Assistance Available

Michelle Feinberg, Director of Admissions
mfeinberg@levineacademy.org
18011 Hillcrest Road
Dallas TX 75252
972.248.3032

KIDS

continued from p.15

Marcia's tradition of collecting menorahs and adds a new one to the collection every Hanukkah.

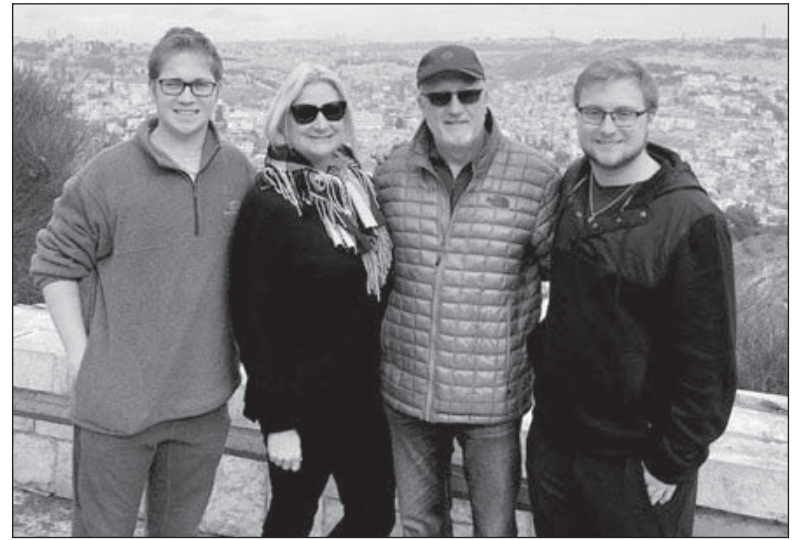
Max made his first trip to Israel through Camp Young Judaea's Tel Yehudah program in high school and then decided to spend his first year of college, in Israel, in a program called Year Course. James, Cathy and Joey

went to visit Max in December. "I was so nervous letting him go do this program, but to watch him embrace his Jewish roots and call Jerusalem his city is inspiring," James remarked. "For me the trip brought things full circle — we toured Israel from both Jewish and Christian points of view. One day I would see all of the things that I learned as a child in church and the next day we were touring and discussing the things that I learned as an adult through the lessons of Judaism."

James said they felt very much a part of Israel and their tour guides actually thanked him and Cathy for continuing to raise and encourage Max and Joey to be involved in Judaism.

Joey is now a sophomore in high school and is very involved in BBYO, where he is currently serving as vice president of Lacey AZA.

When Marcia passed away, things could have gone very differently. James was raised in a Christian home and both his



Submitted photo

(From left) Joey, Cathy, James and Max in Israel

brothers are preachers at Baptist churches — one in Louisiana and the other in Mississippi. His religion is a very important part of who he is. While he readily admits it is not always easy being Christian in a Jewish home, he would not have changed a thing and he values the lessons he has learned through being exposed to both religions. Not only has James kept

his promise to Marcia, but also he continues to pass on a beautiful lesson of honor, commitment and tolerance.

No one can anticipate the twists of life. What a tribute it is to Marcia's memory and to James' character that he picked up the pieces and is ensuring that the torch is passed on to the next generation.

CRYSTAL

continued from p.24

relatives that I didn't know I had there (in Russia). But performing there and being an ambassador, if you will, for American humor in that country is something I look back on with great pride.

What did your father teach you during those "700 Sundays," before he passed away?

Besides teaching me a love for comedy, a love for reading, a love for baseball, he also taught me about doing the right thing. My dad was a civil rights giant in his own quiet way, in that he was one of the first promoters to integrate jazz bands. So the house, yes, was filled with Jewish relatives with stories, but sitting next to them was Zutty Singleton, who was a great jazz drummer, or Tyree Glenn, who was Louis Armstrong's trombone player, or any of these other great musicians. They were all just friends. My family label — Commodore Records —

produced Strange Fruit which is

Billie Holiday's epic song about lynching. It took a Jewish family to produce that record, to write that song.

How did your father's premature death shape your life and your relationship with your mother?

I was 15 and was dealt a bad hand. You can't help but be angry, and I was angry and had to learn to live with that, and to deal with my mother, who was suddenly widowed and forced back into the workforce. (Being) back home alone with her, while my brothers were away at college, made me grow up really fast. I admired her strength — at the age of 50 she was suddenly back in the workforce. Three sons in school and we all graduated college because of her. You watch that and learn what parenting is really about, and what being a son is really about. My mom sent me on a path of trying to do the right thing in my life and also valuing every moment that you live.

What's your secret to your happy, healthy and long

marriage?

We still feel that we're dating. After all these years, and all the things that we've been through, and all the joys and sadness that we've shared together — right from the beginning: You're 18 and you have to tell the in-laws (that) you're going to be a comedian.

But Janice's faith in me, her trust in me, her strength when things aren't going well. Our key is we keep laughing, we keep talking and we keep loving.

I'm going to remind you about a scene from your own movie, City Slickers. Curly, a cowboy, asks your character, Mitch, if you know the secret to life. Then, Curly holds up one finger and says "One thing." What I took Curly to mean is that each of us have to find that one thing that gives our lives meaning. What is that one thing, or maybe a couple of things, that gives you purpose?

The purpose is Janice and the kids, and continually doing right by them and right by myself. That's the most important thing ... and in my job, I have a purpose. I have a mind that still loves to create and I follow that deeply.

Cindy Sher is the executive editor of Chicago's JUF News.



WE BUY OIL, GAS, & MINERAL RIGHTS

Both non-producing and producing including Non-Participating Royalty Interest (NPRI) Provide us your desired price for an offer evaluation.

CALL TODAY: 806.620.1422

LOBO MINERALS, LLC

PO Box 1800 • Lubbock, TX 79408-1800 LoboMineralsLLC@gmail.com



TEXAS JEWISH POST ✪ SINCE 1947



SPARKMAN HILLCREST
funeral home • memorial park

is excited to be
a part of the
Kosher Chili
Cookoff



2017

LOOK
for us at our
booth and
SAMPLE our
Famous
Award
Winning Chili!



Sparkman-Hillcrest.com 214-363-5401