

## CHAT ROOM



JONI HUBRED

## Bridal nerves unravel as big day approaches

I knew it was coming, even before she started screaming.

Nineteen days before the wedding, The Bride lost it.

I've been her Wedding Attitude Coordinator long enough to recognize the signs: e-mails laced with ALL CAPITAL LETTERS and exclamation points, the wild "I'm getting out of here" look in her eyes. Mostly, she has shown a tendency to, shall we say, overreact.

First, it was The Great Potato Debate. Planning a menu to suit the tastes of 150 people is no small task. She called first asking what kind of entrée I'd prefer.

The next day, I got another call. "Red skins or whipped?" was all she said.

"Excuse me?"

"Would you rather have red skin potatoes or whipped?"

"Red skin," I replied without hesitation, thus stepping into the very center of a battle between The Bride and The Groom over which type of potatoes to serve at the reception. Had I known, I'd have taken the Fifth.

The next day was devoted to e-mail exchanges regarding the tenuousness of their relationship, based on his unwavering devotion to whipped potatoes. To my complete amazement, this appeared to be a make or break issue.

I would come to learn that every argument, minor disagreement or annoyance in the last two weeks before a Big Wedding is a make or break issue.

## Toast crumb caper

Take the Toast Crumb Caper. As it happens, the Bride and Groom have separate butter tubs, apparently because the toast crumb issue has reared its ugly head in the past. The Bride is meticulous about these kinds of things, ranking just this side of Martha Stewart on the domestic scale.

The Groom...being a guy...doesn't take crumbs so seriously. Neither do I. I sort of miss having someone else's toast crumbs in my butter tub.

But I digress.

The Toast Crumb Caper was resolved quickly, with only the tiniest bit of attitude adjustment required. The Potato Debate raged for days. It wasn't until the Bride let slip a telling bit of information that I started thinking perhaps there would be room for compromise.

"I guess I should let him have whipped," she said. "He let me pick everything else on the menu."

Perhaps in that case, I pointed out, she ought to give in on this one.

"But you have to take my side," she countered. "That's one of your duties as bridesmaid."

"Forgive me," I replied humbly. "I was temporarily blinded by the preponderance of evidence in his favor."

Eventually, the Groom succumbed to the pressure. Bridal showers and bachelor/bachelorette parties passed almost uneventfully - photographic evidence notwithstanding. These last few days, I've watched, occasionally biting my tongue and reminding the Bride that stress magnifies even the smallest of problems.

This week, we'll pick up our dresses and rehearse the ceremony. I'll share one last dinner with two single people who have become close friends and the next day, watch them become one.

It's been my great privilege to witness the growth of their love, from their first date to the afternoon he picked her up in a limousine and delivered a romantic proposal of marriage. They've accepted responsibility of caring for one another despite character flaws, insecurities and conflicting potato preferences.

They've learned love is less about perfection than persistence; pride and ego mean nothing when set against the heart of someone you love more than life itself.

On Saturday, they'll stand together before God, family and friends, and declare their intention to share the rest of their lives.

I'll be among those standing with them, in a perfectly altered powder blue dress that has no big bows, high-heeled shoes and elbow-length gloves dyed to match, wishing them every happiness in the world.

Joni Hubred is editor of the Farmington Observer.

# Center for New Thinking turns 25

By MARY RODRIQUE  
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It's a learning opportunity for the learned. A continuing education experience that spans politics, religion, the arts and literature.

Rabbi Sherwin Wine, founder of the humanistic Judaism Birmingham Temple in Farmington Hills, is celebrating 25 years at the helm of The Center for New Thinking this month.

He describes its birth as "a way to provide a public forum to discuss new ideas in the arts, sciences, philosophy and religion."

Already an in-demand lecturer when the Center debuted in 1976, Wine presents lectures based on his wide experiences. A voracious five books a week reader, generally he'll devour a biography, a current event, tomes of history, philosophy or religion, and one work of poetry or fiction. He also travels extensively each summer. Last year, he trekked to Siberia and Central Asia. This summer he'll visit Armenia and Mount Ararat, the site where Noah's Ark was found.

## Open to everyone

The Center transcends religion, ethnicity and politics. Its first home was in the Baldwin Library in Birmingham, until a major renovation forced a move in 1980. Its second home was an auditorium in the basement of Somerset Mall in Troy.

"We loved the mall," said Wine. "It was a place where you could drop in. Why not be able to shop for ideas along with other things? It was an exciting environment."

Again, a mall expansion forced a move to the ballroom of the Kingsley Inn in Bloomfield Hills, where the group met for nine years. In 1989, the center moved to its current location, the Birmingham Unitarian Church at Woodward and Lone Pine roads.

"It is an exquisite space," said Wine. "There is a glass wall looking over the trees. The Center for New Thinking is not connected to religion. It's an educational program."

Members come from throughout the metro area, including Grosse Pointe, Farmington Hills, Royal Oak, Detroit, Plymouth - even as far away as Windsor, Maine. Wine is the chief lecturer. Two members of his faculty are Harry Cook, a former religion writer for the Detroit Free Press and pastor of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Clawson, and Jack Lessenberry, a journalist and college instructor.

"Over the course of a year, we invite

■ 'You just can't imagine the range of information. I go because I know I'll be fascinated.'

Edie Broida  
—Farmington Hills

six or seven guest lecturers for special presentations," said Wine.

They've included local celebrities such as attorney Geoffrey Feiger, artist Graham Beale, psychologist Sonya Friedman, Detroit politician Sharon McPhail, and national figures like Susan Sontag and William Manchester.

Forums are scheduled 10 a.m. Tuesdays and 7:30 p.m. Thursdays September through mid-June. Once a month in the spring and fall, there is a Sunday Alternative program, which meets at Pike Street restaurant in Pontiac and includes breakfast. Programs run 90 to 120 minutes, with intermission.

"The way most education is done, you have to sign up for classes," said Wine. "That's too limiting. With the Center, you can drop in for whatever event you want. The whole idea is to remain freely open. When people are in the mood, they can do it."

Doralee Goldman, of Franklin, has made a lot of friends at the Center.

"You can't just go once," said Goldman, who is on the Center's board of advisors. "Every time I went to a lecture, it was an entirely different subject. I've learned more from Sherwin in the last 25 years than my entire school life."

## Plug in intellectually

For Farmington Hills resident Edie Broida, the center was a place to plug in intellectually after she retired from teaching at age 55.

"I was going to go back to school, to U-M or Marygrove, but then I found the Center," she said. "It covered arts, politics, history and travel. You just can't imagine the range of information. I go because I know I'll be fascinated."

Often, she says, Wine's talks have made sense of the news events of the day for her because he offers a wide historical perspective on each topic. "He gives you a whole overview," she said. "The second thing, he keeps you in suspense. You can hear about Cortez and you learn the whole history of Spain. Sherwin Wine has been my university since I retired."

The lectures are available on tape and are aired on 28 community cable and television stations, although not cur-



STAFF PHOTO BY SHARON LEMMON

Lecturer: Rabbi Sherwin Wine, founder of the lecture series, reads and travels extensively to gain information for his talks.

rently in Farmington.

The Center has also published two books by Sherwin Wine, *In Pursuit of Happiness* and *Staying Sane in a Crazy World*. Both are available on Amazon.com.

Ginny Bailey of Bloomfield Hills found the Center after Sherwin Wine lectured at her women's club.

"I was a phys. ed. major in college so I didn't get a lot of humanities," she said. "He gives such a globalist view and he never interjects his opinion into the

lectures. It's unique because of the broadness of the program."

The 25th anniversary celebration is planned Monday June 23 for the Townsend Hotel in Birmingham, and will include food, music, reminiscing as well as a lecture by Sherwin Wine on events of the past quarter century.

For more information on the Center for New Thinking, call 248-338-0105 or visit the website: [www.centerfornewthinking.com](http://www.centerfornewthinking.com)

# Barrels come out for AAUW book sale

The American Association of University Women, Birmingham Branch, is again rolling out the book collection barrels for its annual used book sale.

The group relies on the public to donate books, and each year places the

barrels in various community locations for book donations. AAUW members will also pick up books for those who cannot get to a barrel.

The AAUW promotes equity and lifelong education for women and girls,

and positive societal change. Book sale proceeds are used for local scholarships and community projects. AAUW, Birmingham Branch, is in its 81st year.

Joanne Schultz, of Farmington Hills, chairwoman of Barrels and Store Pick-

up for the book sale, asks that donated books be in good condition. No condensed Readers Digest or textbooks are taken, and the only magazines accepted are *Architectural Digest*, *Martha Stewart Living* and art magazines.

"The barrels are new and I'm a new member of AAUW, Birmingham Branch," said Schultz. "I'm very enthusiastic about this used book sale and want to help get all those great book donations from the community."

The barrels will be available until the end of August. The 74th Used Book Sale will be Sept. 14-16, at the Birmingham Masonic Temple on Woodward between Quanton and Lone Pine.

The barrels this year are located at: Farmer Jack's, Maple/Lahser and Adams Square; Kroger's at Maple/Woodward and Telegraph/Lone Lake; Vics at 13 Mile/Southfield; Hollywood Supermarket, Coolidge/15; Damman Hardware, Telegraph/Maple; and Birmingham YMCA on Lincoln.

Call (248)626-0360 for home pick-up. The service will be available until Aug. 18.

Roll out the barrels! Dorie Marshall, Orchard Lake, (from left), Don Walker, Bloomfield Hills, Joanne Schultz, Farmington Hills, Jean Walker, Bloomfield Hills, and Philip Schultz, Farmington Hills, prepare the barrels.



# Concert features show tunes to '50's rock

Adat Shalom Synagogue welcomes Dr. Sanford Finkel in concert at 7:30 p.m. tonight.

"Music of the Soul: From 2nd Avenue to '50s Rock" will be in memory of Sally Finkel Zelman, Ben Finkel and George Zelman.

Finkel is director of the Council for the Jewish Elderly Leonard Schanfield Research Institute in Chicago and also serves as medical director of its geriatric institute.

A graduate of the University of Michigan Medical School, he has a long list of honors and has served in clinical and teaching positions from Northwestern University Medical School to

Bar Ilan University in Ba'er Sheva, Israel.

In the '50s Finkel was a teenager at Adat Shalom, where his parents, Sally and Ben, and the Zelman family were active members.

## Wide audience appeal

Finkel's charismatic style generates wide audience appeal. Since 1982, he has assumed the role of Chazzan at several synagogues in the Chicago area. He also began giving concerts at that time, performing with the Maxwell Street Klezmer Band since 1988.

In recent years he has been the keyboardist and vocalist for the Big Band

Sound of Deerfield and the Highland Park Pops and Jazz Orchestra. He has studied with several cantors including Alberto Mizrahi. This fall he will serve as the High Holy Day's Chazzan at a Conservative congregation in Los Angeles.

The June 21 concert will offer a wide range of music, including Yiddish songs, Hebrew melodies, cantorial selections and American favorites from Broadway musicals to Rock and Roll.

"Giving this concert will be a very special experience for me," said Finkel. "My parents had rich and varied musical tastes. I believe I can convey the meaning and depth of their musicality

at the synagogue."

The evening will be underwritten by the Ben Finkel and Sally Finkel Zelman Memorial Fund.

The community is welcome. There is no charge for the program.

For more details, call Adat Shalom at 851-5100.



Dr. Sanford Finkel