

## WEDDINGS AND ENGAGEMENTS

## Gruley-Hogan

Traci F. Hogan and Bret A. Gruley were married Sept. 12 at St. Hugo of the Hills.

The bride is the daughter of Kathleen A. Price of West Bloomfield. She is a graduate of Michigan State University Eli Broad College of Business. She is a cardiovascular surgical sales specialist with Medtronic Inc. in Birmingham.

The groom is the son of Al and Patricia Gruley of Birmingham. He is a graduate of Michigan State University Eli Broad College of Business. He is a financial analyst with Federal Mogul Corp. in Southfield.

A reception was held at The Community House. The newly-weds honeymooned in Hawaii, and they are making their home in Royal Oak.



BY KATHIE O'DONOHUE  
SPECIAL WRITER

Raised in a traditional Jewish home, Beverly Cohen was astounded when as an adult she felt absolutely compelled to learn about Jesus Christ. "I felt (what I now know to be) the Holy Spirit telling me if I wanted to go to heaven, I needed to be 'right' with Jesus," she relates.

She describes approaching a Christian co-worker, a woman about whom Cohen says "I just knew there was something different about her... I knew she had something I needed. I asked her to tell me about Jesus, and she did, though at the time, I just wanted her to fix things for me."

Thus began a great spiritual turning point for Cohen and her husband, Jeff, of Rochester Hills, who now call themselves "Messianic Jews," which refers to Jewish people who have come to accept Jesus Christ as God's promised Messiah. Other names for this group of believers include "Jews for Jesus," and "Completed Jews."

Does accepting Jesus as Messiah Jesus or Yeshua (pronounced YESH-uah) make one less Jewish? "Absolutely not," says Rabbi Loren Jacobs, head of Congregation Shema Yisrael, a Messianic synagogue in Southfield. Though it is a real fear for many Jews who come to this belief, Jacobs states, "if Yeshua is really the Messiah, then believing in him is the most Jewish thing one can do."

Jeff Cohen struggled with this when he initially accepted Jesus, telling himself, "Okay, I'm worshiping Jesus. It doesn't sound Jewish, but it is." Indeed, Cohen's new found belief was so integral to his faith, a career decision to transfer from New Jersey to the Detroit area several years ago was based on the availability of a Messianic Jewish synagogue. Had there not been one, Cohen says, "I wouldn't have taken the job."

"People have the mistaken idea that Christianity and Judaism are polar opposites," Rabbi Jacobs said. "But they really are not. The more I learned about Christianity, the more it strengthened my own Jewish identity. And this is what Messianic Jews are discovering all over the world: that Yeshua is the fulfillment of Judaism."

Yet Jews are not typically

## BELIEFS &amp; Values

## Messianic synagogue members accept Jesus; cultivate Jewish roots, lifestyle



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BERNER

**Conversion:** "People are interested in the Jewish roots of Christianity and we're the oldest form," says Rabbi Loren Jacobs, head of Congregation Shema Yisrael, a Messianic synagogue in Southfield.

taught about Jesus or are only exposed to him as the "Gentile God." Though Jesus' life is chronicled in the New Testament of the Bible Jacobs points out, "Traditionally Jews do not read the New Testament."

"Some may not realize Jesus was Jewish, raised in a Jewish home, participated in Jewish worship and tradition. His followers and the initial members of Jesus' church were Jewish."

How does a person raised in to such a transformation?

Though Loren Jacobs was raised in a Reform Jewish home, he questioned God's existence. When a college freshman at Northwestern University, he described himself as spiritually searching and chose philosophy as his major. Since a primary emphasis in philosophy is the question of God's existence, through his study Jacobs began to believe that God was real.

After attending a lecture on Bible prophecy focusing on the Old and New Testament messianic prophecies, Jacobs was struck by the uncanny relationship between these prophecies and events in the New Testament. He subsequently borrowed a roommate's Bible and read the entire New Testament.

This signaled his spiritual transformation in 1975. Jacobs dropped out of Northwestern at the end of freshman year, joined a Christian church, was baptized and became involved with Jews for Jesus. He later attended Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, because it was "one of the few

Christian colleges that has an area for Jewish studies, which I majored in," Jacobs states. He became a Messianic rabbi and relocated to West Bloomfield in 1986 with his wife, Martha, a fifth generation Messianic Jew.

Congregation Shema Yisrael currently holds service at Highland Park Baptist Church in Southfield. The congregation has grown to 120 people, comprised both of Jews and Christians, a 40/60 percent split respectively. "People are interested in the Jewish roots of Christianity and we're the oldest form."

While most Christians are likely involved in Christmas plans and preparations on this December afternoon, Darline Stewart, Christian member of Shema, prepares to light the first candle on her menorah. Eleven years ago Stewart and her husband Bill, of Brighton Township, first attended services at Congregation Shema Yisrael. Stewart recalls her husband telling her "They're different, they're genuine." She adds: "Shema is a genuine place of love where God's name alone is lifted up."

Stewart grew up attending Lutheran school and her husband was Catholic. When they married, they agreed to raise their children in the Catholic Church. Yet both felt spiritually incomplete - until they discovered the Jewish roots of their faith at Congregation Shema Yisrael. Stewart feels "the religious system has done a disservice to the Jews, for as scripture states 'salvation is from the

Jews.' She believes many Christian denominations are "far too involved with marketing, enhancement of the gospel message, and non-Biblical traditions, when the Bible should be the focal point of one's faith."

How does a Jewish family respond to one of its members becoming a Messianic Jew? With a heartfelt laugh, Rabbi Jacobs shares that his family "was less than ecstatic. It was very difficult, because for a Jewish person to acknowledge faith in Yeshua in a positive way is not considered a good thing in the Jewish community. The Jewish person who embraces Jesus is seen as someone who is joining the persecutors of the Jewish people."

"Over the years my family has seen that I have not become a persecutor of Jewish people. If anything, I am more loyal."

Beverly Cohen recalls an exchange with her parents when she revealed the news. Her father turned to his wife and quipped "It must've happened when you dropped her as a baby." All things considered, Cohen says her parents were "very good about it," and her mother accepted Jesus as Messiah before her death. She adds: "We're still working on dad."

"There is tremendous community and family pressure to keep Jewish people from really considering this issue," said Rabbi Jacobs. "There's a price to pay including lack of acceptance, ostracism, disapproval from family and community."

"There are an estimated 100,000 Messianic Jews in the U.S. and 6,000 in Israel. Currently there are 150 Messianic synagogues in the U.S. and more than 50 in Israel. A Messianic synagogue is a place where people can worship the God of Israel, believe in Messianic Yeshua, live a Jewish lifestyle and raise their children to be Jewish."

Visitors are welcome at Congregation Shema Yisrael, and children's programs are available. The congregation will hold a regular 10:30 a.m. service this Saturday at Highland Park Baptist Church, 28600 Lahser Road in Southfield.

Call 358-3850 for more information. Rabbi Loren Jacobs e-mail is L.Jacobs777@aol.com and the web address is <http://www.shema.com>

## Mendenhall-Stadtherr

Mr. and Mrs. Reginald Mendenhall of Troy announce the engagement of their daughter, Dianna Lynn, to Jason Edward Stadtherr, son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stadtherr of Minneapolis, Minn.

The bride-to-be is a graduate of Athens High School, Vassar College and the University of Michigan. She is an optical engineer with North American Lighting, Inc. in Farmington Hills.

Her fiancé is a graduate of St. Thomas Academy and Purdue University. He is a design engineer with Toyota Technical Center U.S.A., Inc., Ann Arbor.

A February wedding is planned.



## How to submit your special announcement

Local engagement, wedding, anniversary and birth announcements run in the Thursday and Sunday editions of The Observer & Eccentric.

Residents of the Birmingham-Bloomfield, West Bloomfield and Southfield areas should send their engagement, wedding, anniversary or birth information, with or without photograph, to: Attn: Brides, The Eccentric, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009.

Residents of the Troy and Rochester areas should send information to The Eccentric, 400 Water Street, Suite 203, Rochester 48307.

Residents of the Farmington area should send information to the Farmington

Observer, 33411 Grand River, Farmington 48335.

Preprinted forms that outline the information needed for your engagement or wedding announcement are available at Observer & Eccentric offices.

For engagement announcements, please submit at least 45 days before the wedding.

Black and white, 5 x 7 photos are preferred, but color photos and other sizes will be accepted.

If you have questions regarding your announcement, call Sue Wills of Birmingham at (248) 901-2560; Debbie Douglas in Rochester at (248) 651-7575, or Katie McManus in Farmington at (248) 477-5450.

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