

library materials. When the exhibit is all finished, hold an open house.

Since the group of cards or boats will fall into obvious time periods, you have some interesting history lessons ready-made. Perhaps you can involve one of the religious school classes in researching the events, both worldwide and in Jewish history, that caused emigration.

You could stop here or go on to a more elaborate project, for instance, a history of the synagogue or of the library. For such projects, you would need considerable space to hang copies of documents and photographs.

By involving the patron directly and personally, you are not only focusing on the library, but are also promoting the concept of the congregation as a family with shared experiences. The librarian should provide the idea, the magnet if you wish, to attract the patron to the collection. Then reinforce each visit. Plan to give every participant a book mark, a card listing the library's hours, a copy of your recent acquisitions list, and a book-reserve card which can be mailed back to you.

All the time and effort you will have spent on any of these three projects will have been worthwhile if the goals attracting the attention of the members of the congregation to the library, increasing circulation, and serving the community's information needs are achieved.

References

Berman, Margot S. *How To Organize A Jewish Library: A Source Book and Guide for Synagogue, School and Center Libraries*. New York: JWB Jewish Book Council, 1982.

Tuchman, Helene L. *Large Type Books of Jewish Interest*. New York: JWB Jewish Book Council, 1983.

Margot S. Berman is the Librarian of Temple Beth Am in Miami, Florida, and is also in charge of the Resource Center in its Day School. She is a former President of the Association of Jewish Libraries and represents the AJL on the Council of National Library and Information Associations.

Writing for Newsletters: Positive Publicity for Libraries

Rita Berman Frischer

*Sinai Temple Library
Los Angeles, California*

A vital part of every Judaica librarian's job is to engage in public relations (PR) outreach efforts in order to present his or her library and its many activities in a positive way and attract various "audiences." The librarian should give high priority to making his/her library known to current and

potential patrons. In-house publications are usually an outstanding avenue for communicating what the library does, and the newsletter editor will view a lively, interesting librarian's column as an asset. Therefore, this introductory guide to PR articles is offered.

LIBRARY LINES

by Rita C. Frischer

In late August, I joined **Aviva Lebovitz** and several teachers from Sinai's school in attending the Annual **CAJE Conference of the Coalition for Alternatives in Jewish Education**, held this year on the campus of Stanford University. We had lots of company. More than 1600 educators, administrators and specialists — some in sandals and cut-off shorts, others in black suits and full beards — met in workshops, modules and **rikkuzim** to share information, insights and knowledge. From all over North America, from as far away as South Africa and Argentina, they came. Many brought families. They lived in the dorms and took advantage of the excellent child care offered so the adults could learn together. The questioner in one topic proved the **maven** in another; the instructor today became the novice student tomorrow. Giving and attending workshops, I was constantly impressed by the depth of caring most of these people demonstrated and the sometimes faltering, but constantly renewable, sense of dedication to Jewish education. May it always be so.

While at **CAJE**, and earlier in the summer when I attended the Association of Jewish Libraries convention in Atlanta, I discovered many new materials which will soon be on our library shelves and available to our teachers, students and adult learners. I also had a chance to preview the exciting **HERITAGE: CIVILIZATION AND THE JEWS** series now being shown on public broadcasting. I hope you are all watching it and following **Muriel Mosler's** coverage of the supplementary reading matter available here in the Blumenthal Library.

However, **Muriel** is dealing with adult books, and before I end this column I want to mention to you an excellent work for young readers, 8 to 12, which can be a marvelous adjunct to this program, as well as to any family visit to **THE PRECIOUS LEGACY: JUDAIC TREASURES FROM THE CZECHOSLOVAK STATE COLLECTIONS** now in San Diego.

JOSEPH AND ANNA'S TIME CAPSULE, written by award winning **Chaya Burstein**, is an absolutely lovely book put out by Simon & Shuster Summit Books in cooperation with the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service and based loosely on the adult book documenting **THE PRECIOUS LEGACY** exhibit. It recreates the lives of two children, 12 and 10, in 19th century Prague. **Joseph** and **Anna** speak for themselves as they describe their daily lives in the first half of the book. Then, the second half suggests to the modern reader that he or she assemble a **personal** time capsule representing the life of a **20th century Jewish child**. Gently the book encourages examination of values and assignment of priorities, as the child of today chooses what is important enough to carry the message of today to generations yet to come. Continuity and responsibility to the future are implicit but not preached about; and the blend of watercolor illustrations by **Nancy Edwards Calder** with actual photographs of items from **THE PRECIOUS LEGACY** helps to blend past and present, representational and real.

Incidentally, to find a full-color, beautifully illustrated book at the low price of \$8.95 currently marked on **JOSEPH & ANNA'S TIME CAPSULE** is extraordinary in this day of \$14.95 picture books. I can comfortably recommend this book to you as a gift for your own children or anyone else's. Come look at the library's copy and see if you don't agree.

Figure 1. Report on new books seen at professional meetings (*Sinai Speaks*, October 1984).

Why Write? I'm Too Busy Cataloging

To this rhetorical question, one could respond: Why catalog, if the books sit on the shelf because no one knows they (or you) are there? Judaica librarians are *selling* the written word, the inscribed law, the captured fable, the hard bound *bobe-mayseh*. Printed material is the most natural form of publicity for us. By using words to sell words, we can easily and conveniently reach out to all our audiences, writing one month for the scholarly, another for young parents, next for the politically alert, and then for the romantic novel set. By identifying target groups and goals, and varying articles accordingly, we benefit both our patrons and our libraries, while projecting to decision-makers an excellent image of a library which is thoughtfully administered, progressively comprehensive, efficient, and friendly.

But I Can't Write

There is no magic to writing competently; it requires clarity of thought and confidence. If you don't know what you want to say, you will have trouble saying it. Your ideas should be kept simple at first, focusing on a single theme or central point, with the language straightforward and accessible. To keep your prose lively, vary your sentence length and avoid passive verbs. Don't say, "This book will be long remembered," but instead "You will remember this book." By using active verbs and keeping your thoughts uncluttered, you will hold your reader's interest.

As for the second requirement, *confidence*: if you concentrate on the good you are doing your library, you will manage to get the first article written, however painfully. Then, when you see your words in print and get positive feedback, your confidence will grow.

What If You Have No Newsletter— Or the Editor Won't Give You a Column?

In the face of these deterrents, the librarian should simply write with other means of distribution in mind. Submit a regular column to the Sisterhood bulletin or the school's publications that are mailed to parents, always remembering to gear content to your audience. In the first instance, you might concentrate on novels, current events, books on Israel or women's issues; in the second, Jewish parenting, guides to home holiday celebrations, general child-rearing aids, or recommended children's books to read aloud.

You might also consider mailing out a single-page "Library Lines" publication of your own three or four times a year, enclosing it in a regular organizational mailing and filling it with capsule reviews of new books,

LIBRARY LINES

by Rita C. Frischer

In the U.S. Conservative Movement, the status of women has been an issue absorbing perhaps a disproportionate amount of attention and energy during the past couple of years. And, according to a U.J. sponsored lecture I attended last night, this situation may not be resolved satisfactorily for some time to come.

It seems to me that this month's festival of Purim is the perfect occasion on which to consider seriously our personal perceptions of the role of women in Judaism. The Purim story, which is supposed to be told amidst loud revelry and boisterous celebrations, has some far from frivolous implications for those sensitive to the universal human need for autonomy and dignity, a need which knows no gender. So besides teaching your children to boo Haman this year, you might consider talking with them about Vashti and her angry refusal to be shown off to her husband's drunken guests or about Esther and how tactful and manipulative she needed to be to save her people. You might discuss whether more direct action might have put her in as much hot water as her predecessor, and how a modern girl might feel in Esther's place.

Leaving the megillah behind, those of us with daughters may want to become sensitized to the image of girls and women in the books our children read. Are they passive? Rebellious? Conformist? Goody-goody and idealized? Those of you with sons may want to consider how your boys are learning to regard girls and women. As enablers whose own talents should always be secondary in importance? As decorative? As silly but necessary? As friends? As equals?

I am always amazed, when I read children's literature, at how many hidden attitudes are contained in seemingly innocent little stories. Whether we ourselves are for the status quo or for change, surely it behooves us, as parents and grandparents, to take a personal stand on this vital issue. Only by examining our own values and speaking of them openly can we transmit them to our children.

Books about women's roles:

Slobodkin — **Sarah Somebody** — At a time when only boys are educated, a nine-year-old Polish girl gets to go to school and finally becomes "somebody." (6-10)

Cohen — **Bitter Herbs and Honey** — During the early 1900's a young Jewish girl in a small town conflicts with her family's traditions when she expresses a strong desire to go to college. (11-14)

Girion — **Like Everybody Else** — Though Samantha Gold's mother, a well-known writer of children's books, is not like any of the other Jewish mothers in their New Jersey suburb, Sam finally learns to accept and respect her uniqueness. (11-14)

Ruby — **Two Truths in My Pocket** — Six short stories examine modern problems such as interracial dating, relationships between the generations, and the upheaval in a traditional rabbinic family when the daughter, not the son, wants to follow in the father's footsteps

Figure 2. Column on Jewish women's issues inspired by Purim (*Sinai Speaks*, March 1985).

annotated lists on timely topics, library events and hours, etc. Using a columnar format and embellishing it with clip art logos, cartoons, etc., will make your single or double sheet look very professional and call much positive attention to your library.

If you are near a campus, mail your reviews and other releases to the college paper or Hillel publication. Send them an occasional brief column about library materials of special interest to college-age Jewish students. Perhaps some of their students would like to write reviews for you to publish.

Finally, as you gain confidence in your writing, perhaps you'll want to offer to write timely reviews and opinion columns for your local general or Anglo-Jewish newspaper. As long as your by-line identifies you as librarian at "XYZ" synagogue, you will be

garnering exposure and increased respect for your library and for your own degree of professionalism and competency.

What To Write About

The librarian writer need not limit herself to book reviews, although these are always of interest. Almost anything can inspire a book-related column (see figure 1). Holidays are always timely subject matter, and we can write on either the primary or secondary themes they provide. For example, Purim can suggest columns on children's holiday books, *shalekh-mones* and *cooking*, anti-Semitism, Purimspiels through the ages, Vashti and feminism, or women's roles in Judaism (see figure 2).

An event in the non-Jewish world can inspire a column. I used John Lennon's death

as the springboard for a column on music, secular and sacred, and its place in Jewish life. I used the national furor about nuclear weapons and our Sisterhood's special program on this topic as the focus for a column on books dealing with Jewish attitudes towards nuclear war and war in general (see figure 3). The possibilities are endless.

You might also invite guest columnists (of proven ability) to take turns in the Library spotlight, providing reviews of new books or a round-up of favorite books on a special topic. Poll regular library users on their favorite book read during the past six months, and get them to tell why they liked it so much; then run several of these mini-reviews together with the reviewers' names.

Don't forget to occasionally call attention to special services of your library: audiovisual holdings, listening centers, large-print collections, rare books, and speakers. And if you have volunteers, it's always nice to feature one of them from time to time.

When you get home from the annual AJL conference or attend other in-service meetings, write about the event. Let the congregation know that the librarian is constantly striving to do a better job. This generates support for the library, possibly even financial.

Get Ready, Get Set, Write

The reader will surely come up with dozens of other ideas to supplement those suggested here. The members of the Association of Jewish Libraries are sincerely interested in having you share, in turn, your own most successful PR projects and programs, through presentations at Convention, or in the pages of the *AJL Newsletter* or *Judaica Librarianship*.

Accompanying this article are a few examples of my *Library Lines* column, a regular feature of the Sinai Temple (Los Angeles, California) bulletin, *Sinai Speaks*.

Rita Berman Frischer is Director of Library Services at Sinai Temple Blumenthal Library in Los Angeles, California.

LIBRARY LINES

by Rita C. Frischer

This month, Sinai Temple will confront the most pressing and terrifying issue of our time — the threat of nuclear warfare. Sinai's sisterhood will sponsor a program on this topic, one none of us likes to think about but which we cannot afford to ignore.

As Jews, we should have particular interest in what our religion tells us about warfare in general. Only then can we try to extrapolate a Jewish position on the potential destruction of civilization as we know it, through weapons undreamt of by the most pessimistic of prophets.

Because we feel that Jews are morally obligated to think deeply about such issues, Sinai Library has acquired a basic collection on this subject. Materials include periodical articles, chapters in collections on Jewish responses to various contemporary problems, and whole works dealing with the age of the Mushroom Cloud. For your thoughtful consideration, and to supplement Sisterhood's timely program, some of our resources are listed below.

BOOKS:

The Disarmament Catalog (c. 1982) — edited by Murray Polner. Addresses and essays on arms control.

God, Man and Atomic War (c. 1966) — by Samuel Dresner. Rabbi Dresner, once editor of *Conservative Judaism*, explores the issue of whether man is capable of controlling himself and whether he deserves to survive.

Preventing the Nuclear Holocaust: a Jewish Response (c. 1983) — edited by Rabbi David Saperstein. Sponsored by UAHC, this manual provides Jewish perspectives on war and nuclear weaponry, gives facts on current political and military conditions, and suggests various educational and action programs institutions may choose to adopt.

Talking to Children About Nuclear War (c. 1984) — by William Van Ornum and Mary W. Van Ornum. A sensitive guide to help deal with children's anxieties in this dangerous age.

CHAPTERS IN BOOKS:

"War and Peace" in **Generations in Crisis: Judaism's Answers to the Dilemmas of Our Time** (c. 1969) — by Gilbert S. Rosenthal, Rabbi Rosenthal marshalls evidence from classic Jewish sources to deal with the Atomic Age in a forthright manner.

"Nuclear Warfare" in **What Does Judaism Say About . . . ?** (c. 1973) — by Rabbi Dr. Louis Jacobs. Dr. Jacobs, author of *Jewish Values*, examines briefly Jewish law and its justification of war as defense of life. This is a premise contradicted by the extent to which nuclear weaponry threatens all human existence.

PERIODICALS:

"The Age of Auschwitz, the Nuclear Age" in **Moment** magazine, May, 1982.

"Choose Life," a special edition of **Keeping Posted**, vol. XXVIII, no. 1, Oct. 1982. Deals with the nuclear peril from a Jewish viewpoint. Especially good for junior high and high school readers.

"Confronting the Threat of Nuclear Holocaust" in **Jewish Monthly**, Nov. 1982, by Naron Chalew and David Szonyi.

"The Freeze: Pro and Con" in **The Jewish Monthly**, Nov. 1982.

Should you be tempted to play ostrich on this vital question, may we recommend you remind yourselves of the true "innocent victims" of war by reading **Childhood Under Fire; Stories, Poems and Drawings by Children During the Six Days War** (c. 1968) and **Children of War** by Roger Rosenblatt (c. 1983). The words of besieged children may cast a new, disquieting light on any attitude of fatalistic detachment.

Figure 3. Column noting literature on the Jewish attitude to war (*Sinai Speaks*, February 1985).