

# COLLECTANEA

## NEWS IN BRIEF:

### JEWS IN THE AMERICAS FELLOWSHIP AND SPEAKER SERIES

This semester, Dr. Sharonah Fredrick returned to finish her work on Jewish piracy. Dr. Avigail Oren conducted research in our Library's Florida Jewish newspapers; Dr. Hilit Surowitz-Israel studied sources pertaining to the colonial history of the Curaçao Jewish community; Dr. Mariusz Kałczewiak examined Yiddish and Spanish records from 19th century Argentina, and the author Eleanor Stanford collected Judaic materials for her novel on 1960s Brazil. Dr. Stephanie Pridgeon, who examines cinematic representation of Jewish revolutionaries in Latin America, will give a public talk in the Judaica Suite on Tuesday April 17, 2015 at 5:00 pm.

### ISRAEL TOURISM COLLECTION

UF undergraduate student Hope Scheff, who in addition to majoring in art history, has volunteered this semester to help process the [Federman Family Israel Tourism Collection](#). This donation from Amy Federman includes maps, brochures, postcards, pamphlets, and printed guides that the family gathered during several visits to Israel, mainly in the 1970s. We would like to thank Ms. Scheff for her kind, diligent, and precise work.

**UF** UNIVERSITY of  
**FLORIDA**

## Helping to Preserve Havana's Old Jewish Community Library



Prof. Guerra at the entrance to El Patronato

During UF's spring break, in the company of Judith Russell, Dean of the Libraries; Lillian Guerra, Waldo W. Neikirk Professor of Cuban and Caribbean History, and Lauren Krebs, a UF graduate student, I travelled to Havana, Cuba. The purpose of the visit was to initiate a joint project to digitize sections of the Jewish Community's library and to compile a permanent record of its holdings. Havana's major synagogue and social center, El Patronato de la Casa de la Comunidad Hebrea de Cuba, was established in 1952 in the Vedado business district. The building was designed by one of Cuba's leading architects, Achilles Capablanca, and in its heyday it comprised a synagogue, club rooms, a restaurant, offices and a library. A large portion of the original building was sold to the state in the 1980s and became the Bertolt Brecht Cultural Center. Today, the remaining building houses the Gran Sinagoga Bet Shalom, a dining hall, an office, and the community's venerable old library. The library was established by Abraham Marcus Matterin, a Lithuanian immigrant to Cuba in the 1920s who became a prominent community leader. Matterin developed and maintained the community library until his death in 1983. Today, the library contains approximately 15,000 books which, in addition to classical works of Jewish history and literature, include materials relating to the history of the Jews in Cuba and Latin America. Adela Dworin, the Vice President of Casa de la Comunidad Hebrea de Cuba and CEO David Prinstein, who are both passionate advocates for their community's heritage welcomed us and allowed us to explore the collection. Following this visit and before she begins her PhD studies at UF, Ms. Krebs will return to Havana to begin scanning high priority materials. With the help of community members, Ms. Krebs will provide on-site digitization training. She also hopes to engage the youth in activities that emphasize the importance of their library. The Cuban project is an important component of the Price Library's efforts to record and preserve the Jewish experience in Latin America, the Caribbean and Florida, supported by our prestigious National Endowment for the Humanities Challenge Grant.

Dr. Rebecca Jefferson, Curator, Isser and Rae Price Library of Judaica  
Photo credits: Rebecca Jefferson and Lauren Krebs



Inside the community library

## A Special Visit to the Judaica Suite

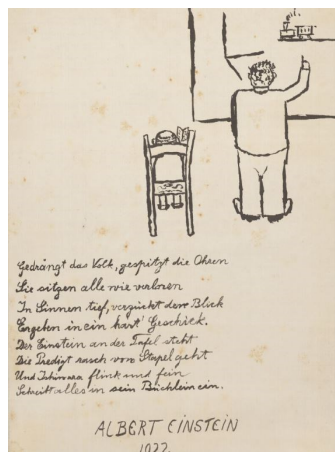
On February 28, 2018, Dr. Peretz Lavie, President of Israel's Institute of Technology (Technion), and his wife Lena Lavie, a cell biologist, visited the Judaica Suite together with Dr. Sachio Semmoto, a leading Japanese entrepreneur, and his



Peretz Lavie (right) and Sachio Semmoto visit the Judaica Suite. Photo credit: University of Florida Foundation YouTube videos.

wife. President Lavie and Dr. Semmoto are both doctoral graduates of the University of Florida. Semmoto completed his PhD in electrical and computer engineering. He subsequently founded many major mobile network companies, including eAccess Ltd. and eMobile. Peretz Lavie graduated with a PhD in physiological psychology. He later returned to Israel and set up the Center for Sleep Medicine at the Technion. As President of the Technion, one of Lavie's

major achievements has been the joint creation of the Technion-Cornell Institute of Innovation. The Judaica Suite tour was organized by Jason Steuber, the Cofrin Curator of Asian Art at the Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art. Steuber realized that this distinguished group would enjoy seeing the Libraries' small collection of [Albert Einstein](#) materials, which includes letters and a scroll with a drawing and poem, all handwritten by Einstein during his visit to Japan in 1922, as well as a signed photograph and a photo of his host, Yamamoto



A scroll containing a drawing and poem by Albert Einstein, 1922.

Sanheiko. Einstein's tour of Japan took place just after he had won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1921. Yamamoto Sanheiko, the president of Japan's most successful publishing house, Kaizosha, arranged for Einstein's lecture series, a parade through Tokyo, and a meeting with the Emperor and Empress. Sanheiko's granddaughter, Janet K. Yamamoto, a professor of veterinary medicine at UF, donated the collection to the Libraries in 2011. Steuber is publishing an article about these fascinating Einstein materials, and the Libraries' [recent exhibition](#) of items from the collection will soon be online. The Lavies and Semmotos were impressed with the Einstein collection and enjoyed seeing the Judaica Suite. President Lavie gave the Judaica Library a gift of three books, including an anniversary history of the Technion, first founded in 1912.

## The Price Library's Edible Hagadah?



Hagadat Afikoman (Te'eneh, c.1996)

Among the Price Library of Judaica's outstanding collections is a set of Passover Hagadah from around the world. The Passover Hagadah is a salient text of Judaism and Jewish scholarship. Not only does it discuss the Hebrews' history of escape from bondage and deliverance to liberty, but it also syncretizes generations' deliberations about the meaning and significance of the story of Exodus. This story of triumph inspired Jewish communities all over the world throughout the centuries, and each Hagadah reflects how new and old readings were projected onto the ancient words. The Price Library's diverse Hagadah collection was recently supplemented by an exceptional Hagadah from Tel Aviv, the *Hagadat Afikoman* (Te'eneh, c. 1996). Encased in plastic, a piece of matzah (unleavened bread, eaten during the week of the Passover holiday) adorns the front cover. The word *afikoman*, according to the Babylonian Talmud, comes from the Greek *epikomon* meaning "that which comes after." The *afikoman* is one half of a matzah that has been broken into two pieces during the early part of the Passover Seder (the evening meal that opens the holiday). It is usually hidden by the head of the household as a way to keep the children engaged. The child who later finds the *afikoman* gets a reward. The text and commentaries of the Library's new *Hagadat Afikoman* are printed in Hebrew, and the text represents a unified liturgy for both Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews. Printed on the front cover is a Passover holiday greeting from Israel's Center for Dentistry. A second note informs the reader that even though the matzah on the cover is kosher for Pesach, it should not be eaten!

## NEH Challenge Grant



During this penultimate year of our five-year [NEH Challenge Grant](#), the federal government will give us **\$1 in matching funds for every \$1 you donate, up to a total of \$90,000. No gift is too small!**

Thanks to your generous support, we can provide the resources and knowledge for vital and groundbreaking scholarship into the global Jewish experience and help preserve endangered materials.

## Further Information

To inquire about the Judaica Library and how you can assist with the preservation and study of its materials, please contact the curator, Dr. Rebecca Jefferson, at [rjefferson@ufl.edu](mailto:rjefferson@ufl.edu), or our Jewish Heritage Coordinator, Dr. Katalin Rac at [katalin.rac@ufl.edu](mailto:katalin.rac@ufl.edu).

To visit the Judaica Suite, please see our website at: <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/judaica> for opening hours and visitor information. We look forward to giving you a tour!

Wherever you live in the world, you can explore our Library collections and those of our many partners through more than 189,000 pages of digital content in our [Jewish Diaspora Collection](#).