Dear Editor/Publisher:

As the pioneer Jewish genealogist in America, I am well aware of the immense and continually growing interest among Jews in tracing family roots. This past summer, I chaired the Sixth National Summer Seminar on Jewish Genealogy. A second International Seminar on Jewish Genealogy is scheduled in London in 1987. More than 30 communities in the U.S. and Canada have organized Jewish Genealogical Societies with new ones constantly being formed. The larger societies publish newsletters filled with queries from avid researchers.

This leads me to suggest that your readership is ripe for a column on Jewish genealogy which would include information on how and where to research and would encourage write-in questions from readers.

To create such a column, no one is more competent than Miriam Weiner, the only Jewish genealogist certified by the prestigious Board for Certification of Genealogists, headquartered in Washington, DC. Certification requires submission of documented research as well as passing rigid tests in evaluation of data. Members of the Board have indicated to me that Ms. Weiner's performance was outstanding.

The State University of New York in Albany granted her a B.A. in Historical Studies with an emphasis on Judaic Studies and the Holocaust. The University called upon my expertise to evaluate her research and I was able to state without reservation that she demonstrates a remarkable capacity for discovering unique and unusual sources for genealogical data. I have heard her lecture and have read her sprightly columns and am more than impressed by her capacity to answer difficult queries and to lead questioners to sources they had neither heard nor thought of.

To add to her own impressive store of information, she has available the resources of the computerized Family Finder of the combined Jewish Genealogical Societies as well as several agencies around the world that specialize in tracing missing relatives, notably survivors of the Holocaust.

Add to these capacities her ability to express herself in a lively, literate style, and you have an ideal columnist.

Sincerely yours,

Rabbi Malcolm H. Stern

Affiliated with: AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES, Cincinnati, Ohio 45220
Director: JACOB R. MARCUS, Ph.D.
September 10, 1989

Dear Colleague,

Not a single week passes that someone doesn't submit a column proposal to me. Space always plays a major role in the evaluation process. However, every now and then, one proposal grabs your attention, compelling you not to send the standard rejection letter.

Such was the case with Miriam Weiner's "Roots and Branches" column. I realized, after reading the column two or three times that if it held my interest, what would it do for my readers?

We introduced Miriam's column in The Jewish Times in February, 1988 and it has run monthly ever since. Reader reaction has been very strong and remained consistent, generating letters to my office as well as seeking more information from Miriam directly.

Reader response is the best indicator for an editor to discover which columns or news stories are being read. "Roots and Branches" has been a consistent winner.

Every editor seeks to retain current readers and increase circulation, with a focus towards the younger generation as a way to balance the "graying" community, and most important, to ensure a continuity of readership from generation to generation.

Miriam's multi-faceted columns provide the link for this generation, showing them the way, removing the obstacles and enabling readers to walk in the footsteps of their "bubbas" and "zaydes" in the old country.

Without reservation, I recommend "Roots and Branches." It is timely, well-written, personal and popular.

Sincerely,

Leon E. Brown
Editor

LEB/rb
July 28, 1988

Dear Colleague:

The Jewish News has been publishing "Roots and Branches," a column on genealogy by Miriam Weiner, for more than a year now and I continue to be amazed at the positive reader response it draws. In fact, I'd say it is one of the best-read columns we run.

The column is well-written and crisp. Miriam has the ability to take a subject that could very easily fall victim to the dullness of a research report and turn it into a journalistically professional column that has a warm, human interest touch. It is written in a style that invites both old and young alike to read it.

I have also found Miriam most cooperative and more than willing to localize her columns when possible. This cooperativeness extends to letters between her and readers -- an attitude that strengthens the bonds between a paper and its readers.

I heartily recommend that you publish her column. I think you, too, would be as amazed and pleased as I am.

Sincerely,

Charles Baumohl
Editor

CB/sfb
June 13, 1988

Dear Colleague:

We have been using Miriam Weiner's column for almost one year, and have found it to be very well received by our readers. The column elicits a steady stream of mail from people of all ages interested in documenting their family histories.

The articles are always on time -- and timely. My sense is of a professional who knows her field thoroughly.

Sincerely,

Fredda Sacharow
Associate Editor
Jewish Exponent

FS:dl
9 June 1988

Mr. Bernard Wax  
American Jewish Historical Society  
2 Thornton Road  
Waltham, MA 02154

Re: Miriam Weiner

Dear Mr. Wax:

I have enclosed two copies of our newspaper, "The Federation Voice." I became editor of the "Voice" in April and these are the first two issues under my "reign."

I have forwarded both to you so that you might read the article, in the June edition, written by Miriam Weiner. After meeting with her recently at the genealogy workshop held at the Providence Omni Biltmore, I was so impressed by not only Ms. Weiner, but by the work she does, I persuaded our Editorial Board to carry her column on a monthly basis.

Miriam ignited a spark hidden deep within my own soul to find my Ukrainian relatives and I am deeply involved in that quest right now. In order to better understand my own motivation, I have forwarded the May issue, before we began to carry Miriam's column, and noted the page numbers of the articles I wrote, explaining "from whence I come."

Miriam suggested I send these papers to you and I do hope you will enjoy both issues. Please let me know if I can ever be of any assistance to you, "down here" in Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

Patricia Henkin-Bookman

Encs.
cc: Miriam G. Weiner
Coordinate on Israel

To The Editor:

Every tour or trip to Israel is very significant this year. Each mission plays an important role in better understanding and Jewish identity.

Speaking as chairman of the Israel Programs & Aliya Committee of the United Jewish Federation and as the Israeli Community shaliah, we would like to better serve the community by having one office coordinate such information. In order to better serve those individuals and groups that are considering going to Israel, we hope to provide dates, costs and other information about trips and programs that are already available.

We hope you will help us by sending us your dates and other pertinent information to the Israeli Community Shaliah, Freddy Shechter, 242 McKee Pl., Pittsburgh, PA 15213 or by calling 683-7277. In return, we would be happy to send you a listing of programs and trips as well as educational programs available.

Marlene Silverman, chairman
Israel Programs & Aliya Committee,
Freddy Shechter
Israeli Community shaliah

Grateful for genealogy

To The Editor:

I am writing to inform you of my appreciation to Miriam Weiner, C.G. for her excellent response to my written request to her for material -- information, etc., related to Jewish genealogy. I read her column in the Jewish Chronicle with interest as I’m sure many others do who are now greatly interested in pursuing their Jewish roots and history.

She personally explored and then sent some very pertinent data to me which touches the topic of the Jewish community in Istanbul, Turkey, Spanish (Sephardic) Jews and much general genealogical information which will serve me very well in pursuit of my family’s historical and ancestral development.

Genealogy has always been a very important topic, world-wide; but there has certainly been a surge of interest and involvement in recent years by American Jews. Weiner’s column, I’m sure, will encourage and promote this study amongst your readers and add an additional aspect to the broad, topical coverage offered by the Chronicle.

As we delve into our personal pasts, it soon becomes apparent that our Jewish ancestors shared many common experiences which reaffirms the UJA’s famous slogan, we are one!

Leatrice G. Segel
Warren, PA

Not dead, yet

To The Editor:

In reference to your article, “Is Yiddish a Dying Language?”, we would like to tell your readers about a wonderful time we just spent at the Yiddish Folk Arts Program, sponsored by YIVO.

Held at the Paramount Hotel in the Catskill Mountains, “Klezkamp” was four days of intensive classes and workshops in Yiddish language, folk arts and culture. It was attended by about 200 people of all ages and, we were surprised to find, from all over the United States and Canada. Some, like us, had a minimal knowledge of Yiddish; some were native speakers.

Many were musicians who came to learn or practice klezmer music with some of the best professional klezmer musicians in the country. The excellent staff also included a star of the Yiddish theater. Activities were provided for school-age children, including the making of puppets and the chance to perform a short play in Yiddish.

The Yiddish Folk Arts Program was held over Christmas week, and we literally forgot that Christmas existed. It was a unique and enriching experience for us and for anyone who feels a strong emotional bond to the language. Yiddish may be a dying language, but happily, it is not dead yet.

Marsha Zuckerman
Michael Tobias
Rozy Engelberg
Pittsburgh
Dear Colleague:

As editors we never know exactly what we're getting when we agree to publish a new column. Sometimes first samples are great, but nothing ever quite matches it. Sometimes even though the column is well done, it doesn't get public acceptance for whatever reason.

All of this leads me to tell you about a success story. The Chronicle began publishing Miriam Weiner's genealogy column shortly after the General Assembly of the CJF in November 1986. The response to her column has been terrific. We average three to four letters each week, either in praise of her work or seeking further sources for their own genealogy pursuits. That's just half the story, however. Every inquiry to Ms. Weiner gets a prompt reply from her, and the amount of research material that she provides readers is astonishing. She is thoroughly professional in every way.

Her genealogy column, I feel, provides a much desired and highly readable format for readers. I would be happy to discuss her genealogy column privately with anyone in the AJPA who so desires. You may contact me at the Chronicle at 412-687-1000.

Sincerely,

Joel Roteman
Executive Editor