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L. Aryeh Rubin, founder and editor of Jewish Living magazine

Magazine for Jews Stresses Liveliness

By N. R. KLEINFELD

There are a couple of hundred Jewish publications that appear regularly in this country. The bulk of them have similar characteristics: They are organs of Jewish organizations, they focus on ponderous issues, they look dreary, they run no advertising and they have tiny audiences.

Then there is Jewish Living. This is a lifestyle- and service-oriented publication that might be considered a New York magazine for Jews. It is slick-looking and independent of any Jewish organization. With a circulation of 156,000, it reaches more readers than any other Jewish magazine except Hadassah, which is given out free.

L. Aryeh Rubin, founder and editor of the New York-based Jewish Living, said he was distressed that the Jewish

way of life seemed to be waning. He felt that Jews needed a new medium, free of any organizational ties.

"Today, Judaism has to focus on the community," he said. "TV and sex have replaced the synagogue. Everyone is alike. Jews and non-Jews watch 'Different Strokes' and see 'M*A*S*H.' Plus a lot of Jews don't care about being Jews. We have a market that's shrinking."

A Year of Roaming in Europe

Mr. Rubin is 29. He graduated from rabbinical school, though he chose not to become a rabbi. Early in his career, he labored at a pharmaceutical concern and subsequently founded some medical magazines. Then he set aside a year and roamed through Europe.

"I drove 10,000 miles and went to 11 concentration camps," Mr. Rubin re-

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Magazine for Jews Seeks Flair

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called, "and it flipped my mind. I knew that I couldn't go the rest of my life and sell widgets."

He started Jewish Living a little over a year ago as an every-other-month publication. The seventh issue has just appeared, and in September the magazine will switch to a monthly schedule. Mr. Rubin said the periodical had drawn compliments from the Orthodox, Reform and Conservative sectors of the Jewish religion.

Praise is not money, however. Jewish Living has lost \$1.5 million so far, according to Mr. Rubin. He expects losses of \$700,000 more during the rest of this year, but after that he thinks things will pick up. Revenues this year should total about \$2 million for nine issues. The current edition contains 30 pages of ads, the biggest showing so far.

Barter as a Business Tool

Interest in publishing Jewish magazines seems to be on the upswing. Find, a lifestyle magazine directed at Jewish people on Long Island, has just made its debut. So has Inside, a lifestyle quarterly brought out by the Federation of Jewish Agencies of Greater Philadelphia.

To spread the word about Jewish Living, Mr. Rubin sometimes dabbles in bartering. For instance, he has convinced Kineret Foods to print a subscription coupon on its challah packag-

ing in exchange for ad discounts. Shriver Kosher Meals is the biggest preparer of kosher food served on airliners, and a Jewish Living order card comes with every one of its meals. And Jewish Living cooking demonstrations have been conducted at various shopping centers to whip up attention.

The magazine's editorial content is mostly upbeat. A regular "In the Beginning" section assembles amusing tidbits of Jewish interest. There is a column on Jewish music and Jewish musicians, and there are reviews of Jewish books. A recent article, "How to Succeed in Business Without Being Gentile," reported that fewer than 1 percent of the chieftains of America's major companies were Jewish, but noted that things were looking better. "Supergelt!" was an article that surveyed the wealthiest Jewish families in North America. (Among them: the Pritzkers, the Newhouses, the Bronfmans and the Rosenwalds.)

Presenting a Lively Aspect

There was a story on famous Jewish athletes, such as Sandy Koufax. Another article dealt with choosing the right summer camp. (About 150 of them in the United States have a Jewish orientation.) Future articles will deal with the Jewish funeral industry, Jews and alcoholism and America's top 10 rabbis.

The magazine is reluctant to preach a religious philosophy. "I'm not a mis-

sionary," Mr. Rubin said. "I'm not Oral Roberts. I want to put out a quality magazine. It can be a source of unity. Judaism is lively, and we want to present that."

A lot of Jewish Living is devoted to food. Recipes abound. The trial issue of the magazine was called Kosher Homes because Mr. Rubin wanted to lure food advertisers. Once he had done that, he changed the name to Jewish Living, which is what he had in mind in the first place.

With its limited reach — there are just two million Jewish families in the United States — Jewish Living has found it a struggle to get advertising revenues, though Mr. Rubin believes he has attracted an appealing audience from an advertiser's viewpoint. The median age of the magazine's readers is 39.2, and the median household income is \$32,500 a year.

Most of the ads are placed by food companies. Jewish Living has imposed certain advertising rules that differ from the standards of the magazine industry. For instance, only kosher foods may be promoted. Also, Mr. Rubin disdains Jewish stereotype ads.

Some advertisers have cooked up inventive messages. The Bell System has run an ad for long-distance calling headlined: "How to Kibitz With a Kibbutz in Haifa."

"Now, that's more like it," Mr. Rubin says.

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