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Rabbi Brad Hirschfield Special Guest as Rhode Island PBS Presents Night of Jewish Culture

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND (August 26, 2008) – An acclaimed author, lecturer, rabbi, and commentator on religion, society, and pop culture, Brad Hirschfield offers a unique perspective on the American spiritual landscape and political and social trends to audiences nationwide.

Rabbi Brad Hirschfield, president of the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership (CLAL), will be at Rhode Island PBS on Wednesday, September 3 to co-host an evening of television programming that celebrates the Jewish culture. The special evening, sponsored in part by the Jewish Federation of Rhode Island, is part of the Rhode Island PBS fundraising drive. Representatives of the federation will also be in the studio to answer telephones and take donation pledges.

The special programming on September 3 begins at **7 PM** with ***The Jewish People: A Story of Survival***, in which Rabbi Hirschfield appears. This original production is the first Jewish film organized around the central themes of survival and the achievement of a people. Moving chronologically, ***The Jewish People: A Story of Survival*** offers a sweeping overview of four millennia and the numerous civilizations -- Babylonian, Roman, Muslim, Spanish, Soviet and other -- that have ruled over the Jewish people.

The Jewish People: A Story of Survival unfolds through historical photographs, documents and interviews about the Jewish culture with notable luminaries, including writer Elie Wiesel, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate; author Fran Lebowitz; Professor Alan Dershowitz, Harvard University; Professor Lawrence H. Schiffman, New York University; archaeologist William G. Dever, University of Arizona; archaeologist Jodi Magness, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Professor Christine Hayes, Yale University; Professor Benjamin Gampel, Jewish Theological Seminary; Professor Deena Copeland

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Klepper, Boston University; Professor Michael Stanislawski, Columbia University; and Rabbi Brad Hirschfield, National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership.

At **8:30 PM**, ***Visions of Israel*** presents an aerial tour of Israel, the latest from the acclaimed "Visions" series. In honor of Israel's 60th Anniversary, Israeli-American violinist/conductor Itzhak Perlman narrates a fascinating video about the country. Set to ethnic music with informative narration, stunning high definition aerial footage showcases Israel in all its diverse glory, flying over the country's many holy sites, including the Western Wall, the Temple Mount and Church of the Holy Sepulchre, alongside such modern achievements as the ingenious irrigation system that actually helped make a desert bloom.

The evening's programming concludes with ***A Yiddish World Remembered*** beginning at **10 PM**. Produced and directed by Andrew Goldberg, the story of Jewish life in Eastern Europe is brought to life again by some of the remaining eyewitnesses. Narrated by Academy Award nominated actor Elliott Gould and accompanied by never-before-seen archival films, vintage photographs, and traditional Klezmer and cantorial music, the documentary takes a realistic and enlightening look at this unique and all-but-vanished way of life.

For those in rural communities, there was often no running water or electricity. For many, anti-Semitism was a part of daily life. But for everyone, crowded conditions and poverty seemed to prevail. Despite these trials, through the eyes of the individuals interviewed, we learn that Jewish communities were close-knit and often even joyous places to live. This television special explores everything from the fascinating language of Yiddish to the Rabbis and Rebbes that often ran the communities to the powerful Jewish movements of Khasidism, Bundism and Zionism.

To watch these programs, watch WSBE Rhode Island PBS on channel 36, digital 36.1, RI cable 8, DirecTV 36, or Dish Network 7776 on September 3, beginning at 7 PM.

WSBE Rhode Island PBS is owned and operated by the Rhode Island Public Telecommunications Authority, a quasi-public agency of the State of Rhode Island. Rhode Island PBS is a viewer-supported member of the Public Broadcasting Service. Now celebrating its 40th anniversary year, Rhode Island PBS uses the power of commercial-free media to educate, inform, engage, and inspire viewers of all ages. For more information about the programs and services at Rhode Island PBS, visit www.RIpbs.org.

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