Magazine for Jews
Stresses Liveliness

By N. R. KLEINFIELD

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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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 maga-
azine will switch to a monthly schedule.
Mr. Rubin said the periodical had
drawn compliments from the Ortho-
doxx, Reform and Conservative sectors
of the Jewish religion.
Praise is not money, however. Jew-
ish 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 maga-
zines 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 Federa-
tion of Jewish Agencies of Greater
Philadelphia.

To spread the word about Jewish Liv-
ing, Mr. Rubin sometimes dabbles in
bartering. For instance, he has con-
vinced Kineret Foods to print a sub-
scription 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 demonstra-
tions 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 sur-
veyed the wealthiest Jewish families in
North America. (Among them: the
Pritzkers, the Newhouses, the Bron-
mans and the Rosenwalds.)

Presenting a Lively Aspect

There was a story on famous Jewish
athletes, such as Sandy Koufax. An-
other article dealt with choosing the
right summer camp. (About 150 of
them in the United States have a Jew-
ish 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 qual-
ity 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 in-
come 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 in-
dustry. For instance, only kosher foods
may be promoted. Also, Mr. Rubin dis-
dains Jewish stereotype ads.

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

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