

## Letters

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Whenever I visit a synagogue out of town, I always eat a hearty dinner beforehand because, as a vegan, all too often there is no food I can eat at the *oneg*. I wish that every temple would include fresh fruit, veggies, hummus, and/or other vegan offerings. With so many brands of vegan cream cheese, pastries, and the like available at Whole Foods and natural food stores, there is every reason to create *onegs* that make every guest feel at home, and where no animals are harmed in the production of the food.

*Patti Breitman  
Fairfax, California*

### Cell Phones & Cancer

My husband died nine years ago, at age 59, of a malignant brain tumor. He rarely used a cell phone. His closest friend died two years earlier of the same disease. He frequently used a cell phone. Howard Fine of the Neuro-Oncology Unit at the National Institute

of Health opined to us at the time he treated my husband that cell phones are NOT implicated in causing malignant brain tumors, and other scientists/physicians have expressed the same view. I am shocked that *Reform Judaism*—not a scientific magazine—would publish Ellen Marks' flawed article implicating cell phones in causing brain tumors.

*Jane C. Bergner  
Bethesda, Maryland*

### Ellen Marks Replies

I am sorry for Mrs. Bergner's loss and I understand there are brain tumors unassociated with cell phone use. Over the past decade there have been rapid changes in the expansive use of this technology and more knowledge about its possible effects on health, prompting the World Health Organization/International Agency for Research on Cancer to classify cell phone radiation as a possible human carcinogen.

I am not opposed to cell phone use, but given the evidence I have seen and what I've learned from the hundreds of

people who have contacted me, I felt it was incumbent upon me to warn readers to take precautionary steps. In matters of life and death, especially concerning children, it is better to err on the side of caution.

### Clergy Officiation for Non-Members

In response to Randi Jaffe's "Debatable: Should Clergy Be Able To Officiate for Non-Members?" (Fall 2011), where in our texts does it say that clergy can't officiate at lifecycle events for non-members?

In Pirkei Avot we are taught that the world stands on Torah, service to God, and kind deeds. How do you incorporate the spirit of this wisdom if you refuse help and comfort to non-members in need?

I believe that our primary purpose in this world is to follow this wisdom of our fathers. By doing so, Jewish communities will be strong, vibrant, and healthy.

*Fran Klein  
Vienna, Virginia  
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