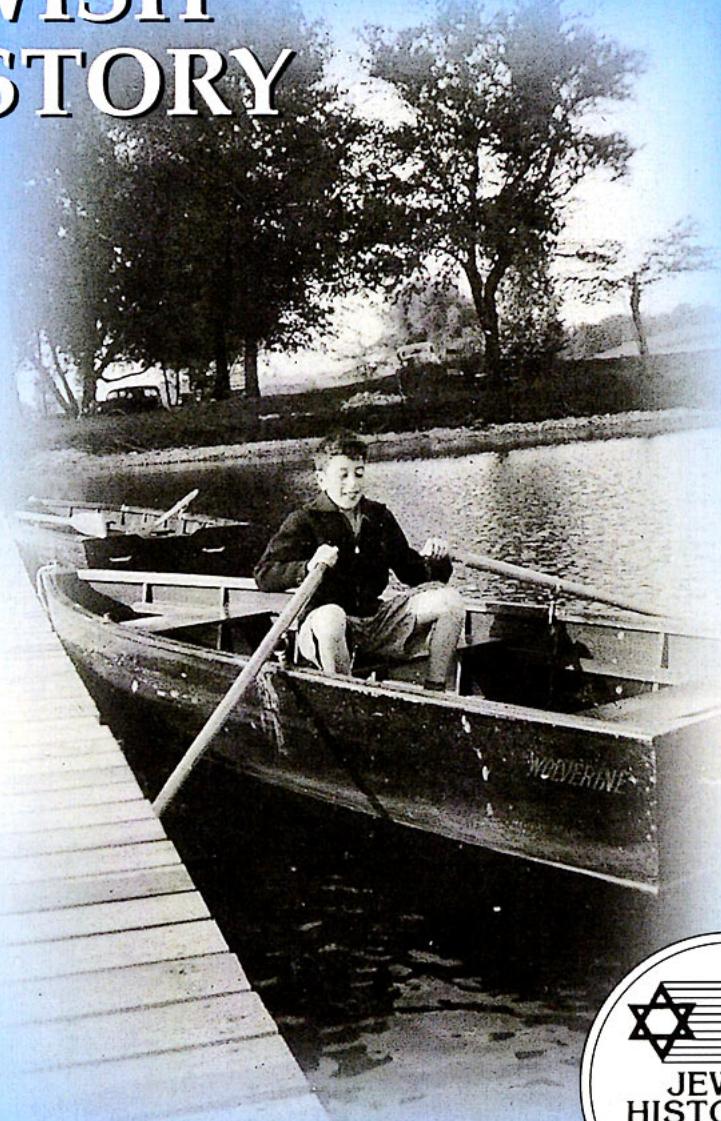


# MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY



*Fred M. Butzel...The Man Behind the Name  
Remembrances of Jewish Camps in Michigan  
From Junk Peddlers to Industrialists  
A Jewish Crewmember on the Edmund Fitzgerald*



Volume 48

Fall 2008, Tishrei 5769



**The mission of the  
Jewish Historical Society of Michigan  
is to educate, celebrate and promote  
awareness of the contributions  
of the Jews of Michigan to our state,  
our nation and the world.**

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*Michigan Jewish History*  
is dedicated to the memory of  
Sarah and Ralph Davidson and Bessie and Joseph Wetsman,  
the parents and grandparents of William Davidson  
and Dorothy Davidson Gerson.

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**EDITOR**

Wendy Rose Bice

**ASSOCIATE EDITOR**

Gloria B. Ellis

Edited by Marilyn Krainen

Designed by Laurie Blume, *BlumeDesign*

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6600 West Maple Rd.  
West Bloomfield, MI 48322  
(248) 432-5517  
[jhsomichigan@msn.com](mailto:jhsomichigan@msn.com)  
[www.michjewishhistory.org](http://www.michjewishhistory.org)

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**COVER PHOTO**

*Newly arrived immigrant Benno Levi spent his summer youth at Camp Mechia.*

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# MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

אשר ישאלו בנים מהר אח אבוחם... יהושע ד:כג

*When your children shall ask their parents in time to come...*

Joshua 4:21

## THE JOURNAL OF THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN

Volume 48

Fall 2008

Tishrei 5769

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# Editor's Letter

Our family had the recent pleasure of hosting three young — and as my daughter referred to them — “hot” athletes from the JCC Maccabi Games. The boys hailed from Mexico. Besides sharing many meals together, good stories and amazing sports competition, we also took pride in giving them a glimpse of our great state. In fact, for four or five days, all over the metropolitan Detroit area, families were showing off this incredible place to young athletes, and in some cases, their families.

We met a family from Los Angeles who had never been to Michigan. They were beyond words at the quality of life we enjoy here: the green land that surrounds many of our homes and lines our streets, our fantastic Jewish Community Center campuses both in Oak Park and West Bloomfield, the schools, the cities of Ann Arbor and Birmingham, our universities and the lakes. The mother of a New Jersey soccer player, after marveling at how little traffic we have (really?), exclaimed, “I want to live here!” The young athletes who stayed in our home loved the malls, Comerica Park, the weather and — most of all — the people.

It is a blessing to hear these compliments. It reminds me how fortunate those of us who live in this place called Michigan really are. We have a rich history we love to share and preserve.

Probably none of the Maccabi Games guests took the time to read *Michigan Jewish History*. Even though I mentioned my post as editor, I didn’t pull an issue off my shelf (shame on me!). It is also likely that none of the visitors took note of how we, the Jewish people of Michigan, work diligently to preserve our important history.

Few regions in this country can boast our bevy of resources: The Jewish Historical Society, the Yearbook Collection, the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit’s Cemetery Index, the Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives, the Leo M. Franklin Archives at Temple Beth El (Bloomfield Township) and the newly established Jewish War Veterans of Michigan Archives.

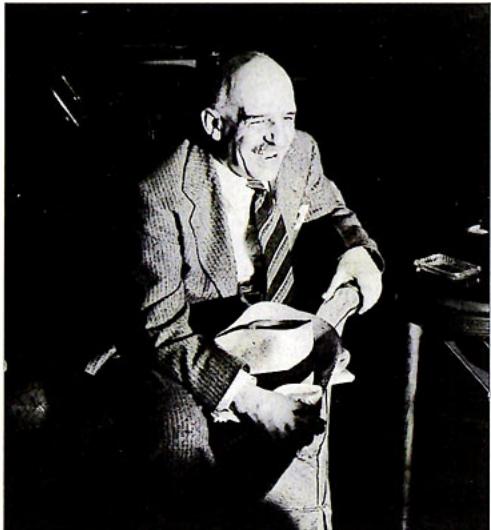
The Jewish War Veterans have decided to take the important step of permanently preserving the artifacts, letters, photos and stories of war veterans from all battles. These items, housed alongside the archives at Temple Beth El, capture the bravery and emotion of war, the precious sacrifices young men and women made for this country, for this world, so no one will forget.

Those of us who love our state and our history deserve to stand tall. We are an amazing group of people! We are great hosts, but more importantly, we are fantastic stewards of the stories of those who have made this state, and this world, a better place for all. — Wendy Rose Bice

# Featured Articles

## FRED M. BUTZEL THE MAN BEHIND THE NAME

By Wendy Rose Bice



©Isadore Arnold Berger

*Fred M. Butzel was known as the Dean of Detroit Jewry.  
The philanthropist and community leader passed away at age 70 in 1948.*

Each fall, at the annual meeting of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, the Fred M. Butzel Memorial Award for Distinguished Community Service is presented to a member of the local community whose leadership and devotion rise above all others and who exemplifies the characteristics of the award's extraordinary namesake, Fred M. Butzel.

Past recipients of the award have included names familiar to the Michigan Jewish community: Max M. Fisher, William Davidson, David and Doreen Hermelin, to name a few. These men and women have led lives devoted to making the world a better, kinder place. They intimately knew that the reward for their devotion to others had nothing to do with awards or plaques, but the gifts they received in return: the inner peace and satisfaction of seeing others smile because of the kindness of a stranger.

For this reason, it is easy to imagine that Fred Butzel's heart must have been very, very full.

## **"He waves away all attempts to catalog him"**

When Frederick Magnus Butzel passed away at the age of 70 in 1948, the entire Detroit community came to a stop – flags flying at half staff – to honor the man known to many as Uncle Fred, to others as Looyer Bootzel and to most simply as Mr. Butzel. Thousands of people of different faiths, ages and race attended the service where a Boy Scout honor guard stood silently in tribute. In remembering Butzel, Detroit Free Press columnist Malcolm W. Bingay wrote that this was a man who could not be described in any simple fashion. "He waves away all attempts to catalog him," Bingay wrote.<sup>1</sup> "He cannot be labeled."

Born in Detroit, in 1877, Fred Butzel was the third of four sons of business leader Magnus and his wife, Henrietta. Like his brothers and his father, the always smiling Fred found success in business and contentment in philanthropy.

It's nearly impossible to list all the organizations and causes Butzel dedicated his time to. His philanthropy ranged from handing \$100 bills to storefront church leaders to chairing the Jewish Welfare Federation's Allied Jewish Campaign. He helped organize and establish the Trisquare Club, the first self-governing organization for boys, and was considered one of the leading figures of the American Jewish Committee. During World War II, he chaired the local War Camp Community Service chapter and served as vice president of the Detroit Community War Chest. Countless friends honored him by asking him to serve as best man at their weddings, and Butzel regularly attended bar mitzvahs in the poorest of homes.



*Fred and Henry Butzel remained close their entire lives. They were two of four sons born to Henrietta and Magnus Butzel.*

### **The Butzel Patriarch**

Fred Butzel's father, Magnus, left his native Bavaria in 1852 to join his brother, Martin, in New York. The two men had learned the trade of their father, a sash and blind maker. Nine years later, Magnus was offered the opportunity to join his brother-in-law, Emil S. Heineman, a successful merchant and clothing manufacturer, in a partnership in Detroit. Magnus hiked up his trousers and came west. One year later, Martin joined his brother in Detroit. Their firm became known as Heineman, Butzel and Company, which later was shortened to Butzel Bros. and Company. In 1869, Magnus married Henrietta Hess of Cincinnati, and the couple bore five sons: Maurice, who served in the Spanish-American War; Henry, who became a Michigan Supreme Court justice, and his twin, David, who died



*Henrietta Hess, of Cincinnati, married Magnus Butzel and moved to Detroit. Photo courtesy of Erwin Simon*



*Magnus Butzel emigrated from Bavaria to join his brother, Martin, in New York in 1852. Photo courtesy of Erwin Simon*

in infancy; Fred, and Lawrence.

Magnus set a strong example that his sons obviously grew up to follow. The elder Butzel was a member of the Detroit Board of Education, president of the Detroit Library Commission, one of the first members of the Detroit Board of Commerce and a charter member and president of the Michigan Club, the leading Republican organization in the state. He served as president and secretary of Temple Beth El, helped found the Russian Refugees Committee and was president of both Pisgah Lodge of B'nai B'rith and the Phoenix Club, a social club for Jewish Detroiters who were excluded from similar clubs throughout the city. Magnus died in 1900, Henrietta in 1928.

The Butzel sons grew up in an era that is really unparalleled in U.S. history. At the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Detroit, like so many large cities, was experiencing a massive influx of Russian immigrants eager to establish themselves in their new home while, at the same time, struggling economically and socially. Only a few decades later, Eastern European Jews



*The Butzel brothers, (l to r) Fred, Henry, Maurice, and Lawrence bore striking resemblances to each other.*

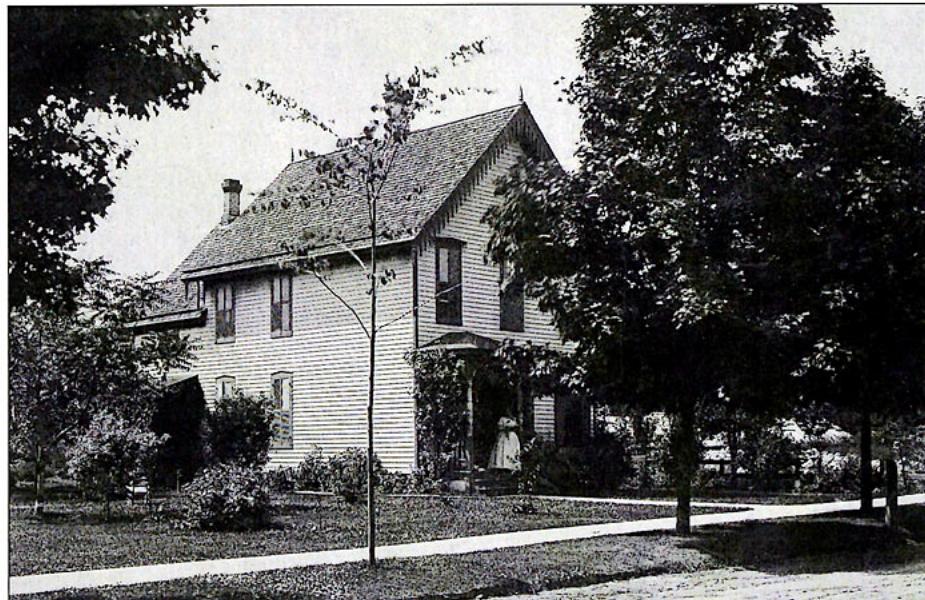
also began streaming into the city. This period of time became known as the era of the "charity organization movement"<sup>2</sup> when social services took off. All of the seeds for the nonprofit organizations we take for granted today were laid during these years.

The Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit can be traced to the 1899 establishment of the United Jewish Charities; Camp Tamarack was born as the Fresh Air Society in 1902; and the Jewish Women's Club, a cultural club, evolved into and merged with National Council of Jewish Women. The Hannah Schloss Memorial Building, built in 1903, was Detroit's first Jewish community center with gymnasiums, classrooms and much needed bathtubs for those without the comfort of central plumbing.

All of these organizations, now more than a century old, were created in response to the needs of the community as the influx of immigrants began to flock to the industrial capital of the U.S.: Detroit. And, if you look deeper into the histories of these important organizations, you'll see that a small and mighty group of passionate individuals were behind these ideas: Schloss, Hart and Butzel, among others.

### A Passion for Teaching and Mentoring

Just a boy when the first immigrant wave came into the city, Fred Butzel stood at the ready when, as a young man, he saw the next batch of immigrants arrive. At a time when Orthodox Eastern European Jews were often met with hostility from other acculturated Jews, Butzel reached a warm hand in their direction. In 1898, he got his first job teaching English



*This home, located at 36 E. University Ave in Ann Arbor, was where the Magnus Butzel family lived between 1890 and 1900.*

to four young immigrant boys<sup>3</sup>. As time went on, he continued to provide financial and emotional support to countless immigrants, be it with money, free legal advice or jobs.

The Trisquare Club, one of Butzel's most cherished affiliations, broke new ground in many ways. The concept of a club that allowed boys to govern themselves – including setting rules of governance, discipline and membership – was revolutionary. Considered a “manual training club,” the boys conducted debates and oratorical contests, participated in athletic events and held social outings. Several adults, including Butzel, not only contributed their time and funds to the club, but so enjoyed the “spontaneity and originality of the boys”<sup>4</sup> that they became members of the club at a fee of two cents per week.

Butzel remained committed to youth throughout his philanthropic career. The Trisquares spawned many other organizations that Butzel eagerly supported, including the first Boy Scout troop in the area, Troop 23, which met at the Hannah Schloss Memorial Building.

### A Most Unusual Law Career

A graduate of the University of Michigan, Butzel transferred to the Detroit College of Law to complete law school and to be closer to his father, who was losing his eyesight. Admitted to the bar in 1899, Butzel, by his own admission, was not an exceptional attorney. Nonetheless, he joined his brother Henry in founding a law firm that would eventually become Butzel, Levin, Winston, Youngjohn and Quint.

Julian Krolik, a prominent Jewish communal leader and president of his family's dry goods business, A. Krolik & Co., commented that Butzel practiced “law little and respects even less its technicalities.”<sup>4</sup> Yet, Butzel certainly utilized his education. In addition to keeping his office door open to the countless people who streamed in for free legal advice, he also served as a director of the Detroit Federal Savings and Loan Association; director of the Detroit Motorbus Co., the company that pioneered bus service in the city of Detroit, and trustee for the Aaron Mendelson Fund, which enabled him to direct funds toward the education of and social services to the less fortunate, particularly newly arrived immigrants.

The Legal Aid Bureau links Butzel's name to its founding, as he freely gave of his time, experience and knowledge to the organization. Upon his death, the members of the Legal Aid Bureau drafted a resolution declaring that Butzel was “a one man legal aid bureau and for years gave his assistance and legal skill to the problems of scores of individuals who required a lawyer's help but were unable to retain one in the course of practice.”<sup>5</sup>

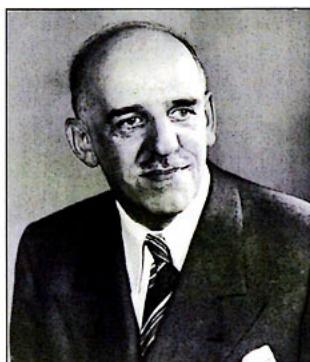
His legal career and keen and incisive mind afforded him the opportunity to practice what he really loved: community service. The charming bachelor never married but “was wedded to his people,” wrote

Detroit Jewish News publisher Philip Slomovitz upon Butzel's death.

For more than 20 years, Butzel retained the position of president of the Ford Republic, later known as Boys Republic, a service for "wayward" boys. During World War I, he chaired the local War Camp Community Service chapter and helped establish the Detroit Patriotic Fund, the agency formed to consolidate the various war relief agencies. The Patriotic Fund eventually became the Detroit Community Fund, of which Butzel served as vice chair.

In the years leading up to World War II, Butzel's affiliations included this impressive list:

- Active executive board member, Detroit Community Fund
- Board member, Detroit Urban League
- President, Parkside Hospital
- Chair, Resettlement Service, aiding Jewish refugees
- Chair, Executive Committee, Jewish Welfare Federation
- Chair, Federation's Allied Jewish Campaign
- Board member, Detroit Jewish News



*Fred M. Butzel was known and revered for his absolute conviction to aiding the less fortunate. Rabbi B. Benedict Glazer, of Temple Beth El, said Butzel was "a prince and a mighty man."*

As homefront preparations for war got under way, Butzel not surprisingly jumped in, becoming vice president of the Detroit Community War Chest, vice chair of the Wayne County USO and chair of the local draft board. At the same time, Butzel served at the request of Mayor Edward Jeffries as vice chair of the City of Detroit Mayor's Interracial Committee, an important post necessitated by tensions long brewing between Southern blacks and whites who had streamed into the city for automotive and war production jobs in the early 1940s. In 1943, a three-day race riot left the city reeling from 34 deaths and much destruction. A year later, the committee convened to examine race relations, housing and transportation problems within the city.

### The Kindness in His Heart

Perhaps the greatest testament to Fred Butzel's passion and service to humanity can be found in a forest in Israel. In 1937, to celebrate his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, the Jewish National Fund Council of Detroit, along with many other prominent organizations, congregations and individuals throughout the community, raised funds to plant the Fred M. Butzel Forest in Palestine. It was a distinct honor shared by only a few others in the world. In fact, at the time the only other American with a forest in his name was Supreme

Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis, honored on his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday by the Hadassah women's Zionist organization.

Project chairman Clarence H. Enggass never could have imagined the community response to the idea. Within days of an announcement, 200 individuals and businesses sent funds to Enggass. In short time, at the cost of \$1.50 a tree, the committee planted 10,000 trees.

For Butzel, the forest meant more than being honored by his hometown. It represented the community's acceptance of his Zionism, a passion not shared at the time by many fellow Reform Jews. Butzel also advocated teaching Hebrew to American Jews, a viewpoint not appreciated by those who felt assimilation meant leaving their native language behind.

A lifelong member of Temple Beth El, Butzel fervently believed that the Jewish homeland had to be Palestine and nowhere else. He ranked his support of a Jewish state at the top of his obligations, and shortly before his death, he saw his friend Chaim Weizmann elected president of the newly declared nation. Rabbi Leo M. Franklin of Temple Beth El wrote: "Fred was seldom bound by the conventions that enslave most of us. He had convictions to which he dared live up, no matter how unpopular they might happen to be in some quarters."<sup>6</sup>

Erwin Simon, Henry Butzel's son-in-law (and law clerk), recalls that Fred "was a very strong man in his ideas and relationships." He wasn't afraid to go against his contemporaries, knew exactly what he wanted and got along famously with Jews of all affiliations: Conservative, Orthodox and Reform. Describing a man of incredible charm and extraordinary wisdom (but "a terrible driver who drove his car low-rider style"), Simon says he "enjoyed being with him."

Others who knew Butzel described him similarly: charming, brilliant, passionate, helpful, a friend, an advocate for the underdog. He never hesitated to provide advice and criticism, albeit sometimes harshly.

They also mention Butzel's brilliance for playing and selecting music. An accomplished pianist, Butzel hosted a small musical gathering each week in his home on Rowena Street, which boasted two pianos, back to back, Simon recalls. Whether they featured piano duets or listening to his fabulous music collection, the gatherings were warm and friendly. Maxine R. Levin, a Jewish News arts columnist wrote that Butzel had a particularly keen appreciation for



*Butzel provided college loans to dozens of aspiring attorneys who always paid him back upon graduation.*

artists. "When I was a youngster and just learning to paint, it was already then an old custom to see Fred Butzel for his criticism and encouragement. Countless talented boys and girls, seeking understanding and approval for their artistic efforts have found their way to him, as the one person in Detroit both qualified and appreciative of what makes up an artistic personality and ambition."<sup>7</sup>

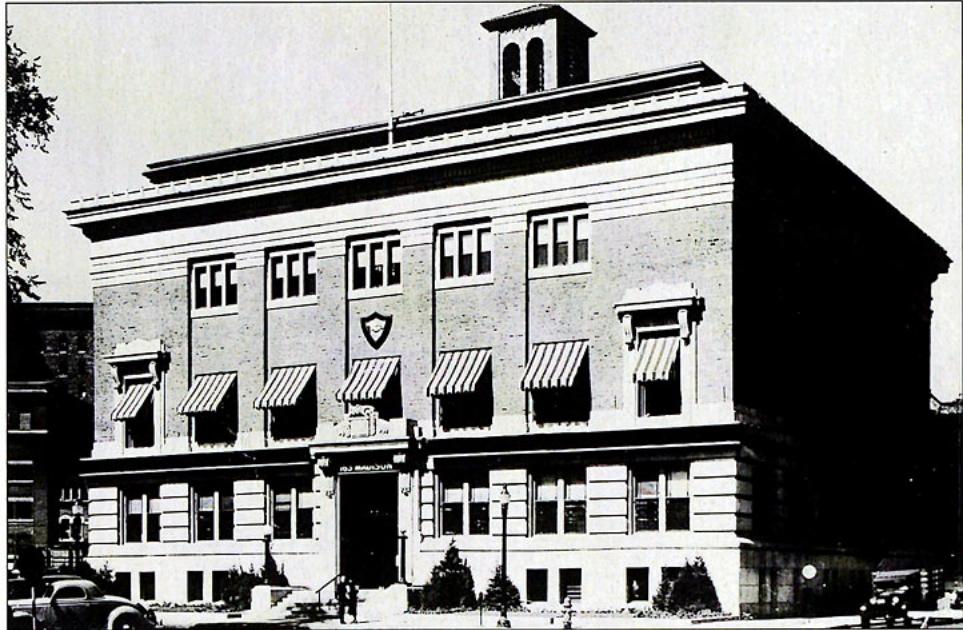
### From Loss to a Beginning

After Fred Butzel's death in 1948, the city of Detroit and the Jewish community sought ways to honor him by properly immortalizing his contributions.

The Jewish Welfare Federation and the Allied Jewish Campaign established memorial funds in his memory. His home on Mack Ave. was deeded to Parkside Hospital as a home for nurses of all races who worked at the four neighboring Detroit hospitals. (The black-owned medical center primarily served as a hospice residence for terminally ill Harper Hospital patients.)

In 1952, the Detroit Jewish community came together to dedicate the Fred M. Butzel Memorial Building located at 163 Madison. The building would serve for nearly 50 years as the home of the Federation.

The Butzel Library, located at East Grand Blvd. and Harper – near the site of the Poletown General Motors plant – had been dedicated in memory



*Located on Madison Ave. in Detroit, the Fred M. Butzel Memorial Building became the home of the Jewish Welfare Federation and several other organizations. The building was sold in 1991 when Federation moved its offices to the current Bloomfield Hills location.*



#### ELEMENTARY MIDDLE SCHOOL

*Fred M. Butzel School, located on Detroit's east side, was dedicated in 1960.*

of Fred's father, Magnus Butzel, in 1912. After Fred's death, a wing carrying his name was added to the Albert Kahn-designed building. The library was permanently closed in 1982 and later sold.

In recognition of his leadership among youth, Detroit Public Schools dedicated in 1960 the Fred M. Butzel Elementary School, on Van Dyke St. on Detroit's east side.

It would be the Butzel Award, however, that would be the most enduring of the memorials. The Fred M. Butzel Memorial Award for Outstanding Community Service is considered the Jewish community's highest honor. To date, more than 60 men and women have received the award.

The initiative began in 1950, when Nate S. Shapero, president of Cunningham Drug Stores and a Jewish communal leader, launched a campaign to establish an award for outstanding civic service. His idea was to ask each person in the community to donate \$1 with the goal of \$10,000 to help fund the costs of the program, including the "cup, trophy, plaque or medallion" presented to each recipient.<sup>8</sup>

The following year, a special committee of highly regarded Jewish leaders came together to craft the criteria for the award, which would be given to an individual who demonstrated outstanding Jewish communal



*Abraham Srere presented the first Butzel Award to Julian Krolik. Srere received the award three years later in 1954. Photo courtesy Jewish Community Archives*

my brother Fred, were he still here, and it is also my own judgment when I state that Julian's outstanding contributions to Jewish as well as non-Jewish causes place him in the unique position of having contributed more to the public during the past few years than anyone else I know. In many ways, he follows in the footsteps of my brother Fred for Julian gives not only a large part of his income but, what is still more important, almost his entire time to public causes."

Those words could be echoed for all of the subsequent recipients who find themselves in the fortunate position of possessing the gifts of leadership, compassion, the wisdom of foresight, the passion of giving and the desire to make this world a place we are all proud to live in.



*Wendy Rose Bice is the editor of Michigan Jewish History and is also a freelance writer and consultant. Interestingly, as familiar a name as Fred Butzel is, Bice – like many other Michiganders – was unfamiliar with all of the contributions Butzel made to the community.*

leadership. Specifically, the committee stipulated that candidates must exhibit the following:

- Length of service to the Jewish community
- Service to the total Jewish community as well as its constituent parts
- Service as a representative of the Jewish community in the organized general community
- Character and integrity in communal affairs

In April 1951, Abraham Srere, chairman of the Jewish Welfare Federation and the Fred M. Butzel Memorial Committee, presented the award to Butzel's good friend Julian Krolik. Three years later, Srere himself became a Butzel Award recipient.

Fred's brother, Henry, justice of the Michigan Supreme Court and another eventual award recipient, lauded the selection of Krolik as the initial recipient. "I would voice the opinion of

## Julian Krolik

**T**ogether with his friend, Fred M. Butzel, Julian H. Krolik inspired many to take action when volunteerism or dollars were needed, championed the underdog and often fought for unpopular causes including Zionism. A Detroit native, Krolik was president of the Jewish Welfare Federation, the North End Clinic and one of the most notable leaders of the Allied Jewish Campaign. In 1951, when it came time for community leaders to choose the first recipient of the Fred M. Butzel Award, they looked no further than the man who often stood by Butzel's side, Julian Krolik.

Unable to attend the annual meeting where the honor was bestowed upon Krolik, the Honorable Henry M. Butzel, Fred's brother wrote: "I know of no one else more deserving of the first Fred M. Butzel Award for outstanding services...to the Jewish community and the community at large than Julian." Butzel went on to mention Krolik's outstanding contributions to both Jewish and non-Jewish causes and his ability to give "not only a large part of his income, but what is still more important, almost his entire time to public causes."

Krolik's first foray into philanthropy occurred while a student at the University of Michigan when he helped organize a fund for Russian immigrants. After graduation in 1906, he entered the family dry goods business, A. Krolik & Co., where he remained active until shortly before his death in 1956.

In 1936, Krolik married Golda Ginsburg Mayer. The couple had four children. At the time of his death in 1956, Krolik was vice president of United Jewish Charities, Jewish Community Center and Sinai Hospital.

*The very first Butzel Award was presented to Butzel's good friend and fellow philanthropist, Julian Krolik.  
Photo courtesy Jewish Community Archives*



# The Fred M. Butzel Memorial Award

1951	Julian H. Krolik	1980	Phillip Stollman, Mrs. Max (Frieda) Stollman
1952	Henry Wineman	1981	Irwin Green
1953	William Friedman	1982	Philip Slomovitz
1954	Abraham Srere	1983	Martin E. Citrin
1955	Mrs. Joseph H. Ehrlich	1984	Samuel Frankel
1956	Samuel H. Rubiner	1985	Joseph H. Jackier, Edythe Jackier
1957	Henry M. Butzel	1986	David Handleman
1958	Abe Kasle	1987	George M. Zeltzer
1959	Sidney J. Allen	1988	Avern L. Cohn
1960	Theodore Levin	1989	Matilda Brandwine
1961	Irwin I. Cohn	1990	Joel D. Tauber
1962	Mrs. Henry Wineman	1991	Jack A. Robinson
1963	Leonard N. Simons	1992	William M. Davidson
1964	Max M. Fisher	1993	Conrad L. Giles
1965	Nate S. Shapero	1994	David S. Mondry
1966	Morris Garrett	1995	Dulcie Rosenfeld
1967	Tom Borman, Abraham Borman	1996	David B. Hermelin
1968	Mrs. Harry L. Jones	1997	Mark E. Schlussel
1969	Paul Zuckerman	1998	Jane F. Sherman
1970	Hyman Safran	1999	David K. Page
1971	Louis Berry	2000	Carolyn Greenberg, Hugh W. Greenberg
1972	Erwin S. Simon	2001	Doreen Hermelin
1973	Celia Meyers Broder	2002	Robert Naftaly
1974	Alan E. Schwartz	2003	Michael W. Maddin
1975	George M. Stutz	2004	Stanley Frankel
1976	Jack O. Lefton	2005	Penny B. Blumenstein
1977	Golda Krolik	2006	Diane and Emery Klein
1978	Mandell L. Berman	2007	Honorable Paul D. Borman
1979	Stanley J. Winkelman		

## Endnotes

- 1 A Leader Passes, column by Malcom W. Bingay; Detroit Free Press; May 23, 1948.
- 2 The Jews of Detroit, by Robert Rockaway; Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1968; pg 103
- 3 Reminiscences of Fred Butzel: 1877-1948; Michigan Jewish History; Volume 32, Winter 1991.
- 4 Fred M. Butzel – A National Institution; Julian H. Krolik; The Jewish News, August 28, 1942
- 5 Resolution of the Members of The Legal Aid Bureau in the Memory of Fred M. Butzel, 1948
- 6 Fred M. Butzel – The Man, by Dr. Leo M. Franklin, Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Beth El; The Jewish News, May 28, 1948.
- 7 Fred M. Butzel: Patron of Arts and Artists, by Maxine R. Levin. The Jewish News, Date unknown.
- 8 Nate S. Shapero. Letter to Abraham Srere dated February 14, 1950.

# REMEMBRANCES OF JEWISH CAMPS IN MICHIGAN

## PAST AND PRESENT

◆  
**By Edie Resnick**



*The first Fresh Air Society outing on Belle Isle in 1902.*

**S**am Levinson, a famous 1960s humorist, once said, "Kids don't go away to camp. They are sent away." While that may be true for some of the kids who hated being separated from their family or who loathed the camp food, the incessant mosquitoes or tremendous heat, the majority of overnight campers have loved the experience.

Summer camp is nothing new for the children of many Michigan Jewish families. In 1902, Blanche Hart and Ida Koppel, two affluent Temple Beth El of Detroit members, began taking poor immigrant boys and girls out of the city to Belle Isle for a dose of fresh air, healthy food and sunshine. The day camps offered games, swimming and other activities the women felt would be of benefit to the health of their charges. Anyone who has read, "A Timeless Treasure," Wendy Rose Bice's account of the Fresh Air Society's history, knows that children from underprivileged families were thought to be in danger of becoming "consumptive" (tuberculosis).

Those young pioneering campers share much in common with all those since who've benefited from overnight summer camp: conquering homesickness, learning about independence and returning with indelible

memories of fun, adventure, lasting and, in many cases, loving friendships. Many have met their spouses at camp and many formed careers based on their experiences.

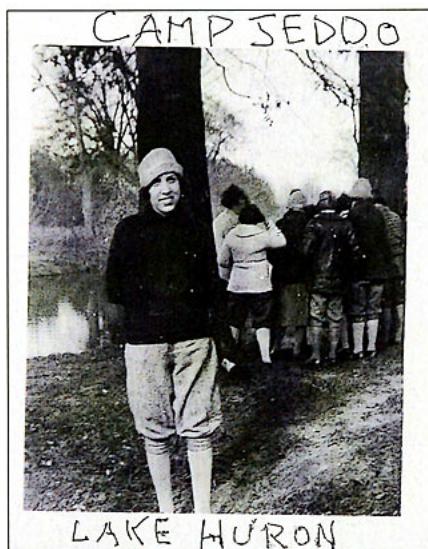
This article travels back in time to look at the Jewish camps of Michigan, many of which have disappeared.

### CAMP JEDDO: A Place for Girls

According to Eleanor P. Eells, author of "History of Organized Camping: The First 100 Years," the overnight summer camp is purely an American innovation. The idea of giving children the opportunity to live in the out-of-doors in a group setting – with the goal of having a glorious time free from city distraction – began in the late 1800s. By the early 1900s, a movement started to encourage young boys who had grown up in urban environments to develop self-reliance and survival skills. Many parents worried that their sons were becoming too "soft." Perhaps the influence of Teddy Roosevelt had something to do with that attitude, but the Boy Scouts soon attracted boys of both Christian and Jewish faiths to go tent camping. The boys wore uniforms, cooked on campfires, learned to follow orders and did without "modern" equipment. Outdoor camping soon appealed to girls who were gaining more freedom and independence. The Girl Scouts (founded by Juliette Lowe in 1912) and the Campfire Girls were the first to bring programming specifically for girls to Michigan.

Jewish women were not far behind in offering camping programs directed specifically to females. In 1922, the Young Women's Hebrew Association rented a large homestead with a big garden on the shores of Lake Huron near Jeddo for young business women and students ages 16 to 30. In 1933, the National Council of Jewish Women Detroit Section took over the program. Each session, 22 young Jewish women were offered a place to sun, swim and play tennis, badminton, golf and archery. They could roller skate or just relax and read the books in the small library.

In 1930, a week at Camp Jeddo cost \$11, and the camp was open from July 1 until Labor Day. Kosher meals were served. On Friday nights a brief



*In 1928, a vivacious Lea Damsky Field attended Camp Jeddo as head counselor. As counselor, one of her main tasks was making sure her charges completed their K.P. duty, swept halls and cleaned bathrooms.*

Photo courtesy of Harriet Siden

religious service was held. Campers were told to bring shorts and knickers, and each had to provide a current health examination.

For a brief period, in an effort to boost enrollment as World War II began, the camp allowed boys to attend. A short time later, the camp provided housing for young men and women who were in the area working in the local victory gardens. Neither effort was enough though. In 1943 the camp permanently closed, and one year later, the property was sold.

### **CAMP FARBAND AND KINDERWELT and CAMP KINNERET: Preparing for Aliyah**

In the years leading to World War II, Jewish camps were dotted across the state. Most are now long gone but remain enshrined in the memories of a precious few. The origins of many of these camps can be traced to the polio outbreak of the 1930s. During the Great Depression, parents amazingly found ways to fund camping fees so their youngsters would be in a safer place during the summer months.

With the success of the scouting movement, camps designed to encourage young Jews to prepare for aliyah to Palestine also became increasingly popular. The hope for the possibility of a new Jewish state helped initiate the establishment of Zionist camps throughout the United States and Canada. Teenaged boys and girls, influenced by their parents who had left oppression in Europe, were inspired by the Zionist promise. They were taught to cook, clean, raise gardens and deal with domesticated animals. Hebrew and Yiddish classes were held after chores, and the history of Palestine and the Jews was taught and discussed. In short, campers were being trained to live on a kibbutz. Religious training was not given, but Friday nights were special as everyone cleaned up and wore white to dinner.

The earliest of these camps in Michigan were Camp Farband and Kinderwelt, both located near Chelsea. Older students and teachers were counselors. Farband was a structured camp for children ages 4 through 16. The youngest were housed in a cottage nursery setup and were looked after by a Mrs. Goldoftis who called them her "peaches nuts," a term that never failed to amuse the older campers. Her husband, a mild pleasant man adored by his campers, taught Yiddish and Hebrew.

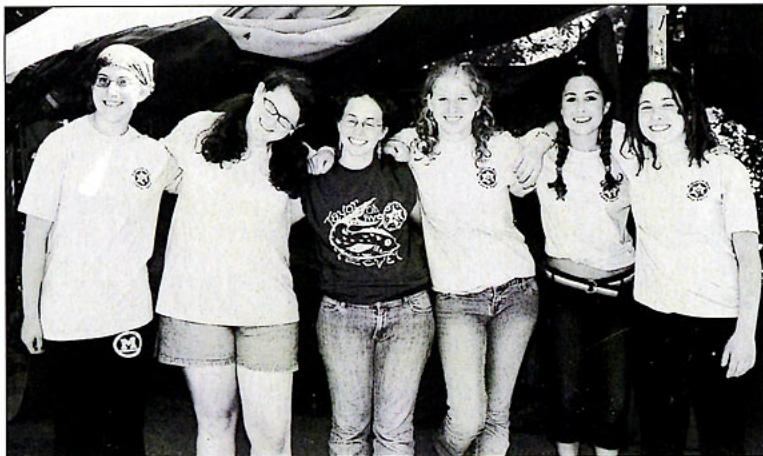
Across the road from Camp Farband was a smaller camp called Kinneret. Built by teenage campers, it belonged to the Habonim branch of the Labor Zionist movement. Campers came from as far away as Illinois and Ohio and lived in tents under primitive conditions. With no lake on the property, campers crossed the road to swim at Farband.

Many of the Farband and Kinneret alumni went on to become well-known educators, doctors and even owners of private camps. As is typical of the overnight experience, campers returned annually, eventually outgrowing the camper age and coming back as counselors and even camp directors. Campers Norman and Sol Drachler, Tom and Lily Cohn,

Leonard and Ann Baruch, Allen Zemmol, Mayer Subrin, Gerry Schrier, Allan Gelfond, and many others met at Kinneret and Farband and became lifelong friends, and in some cases, husband and wife.

Allan "Geli" Gelfond was the last director of Kinneret, which closed in 1955. Norman Drachler was director of Camp Farband sometime before he became superintendent of Detroit Public Schools.

In the post-World War II era of prosperity, these camps became outdated. Attendance dropped and newer, private camps came into being. Families began traveling more and many owned or rented cottages. Farband closed in 1968 and was sold to the Jewish Welfare Federation of Toledo which renamed the camp in honor of Dr. Orrin Plous. After updating some of the cabins, his family used it for weekends. Eventually, the camp itself was abandoned and a prison was built next to the property.



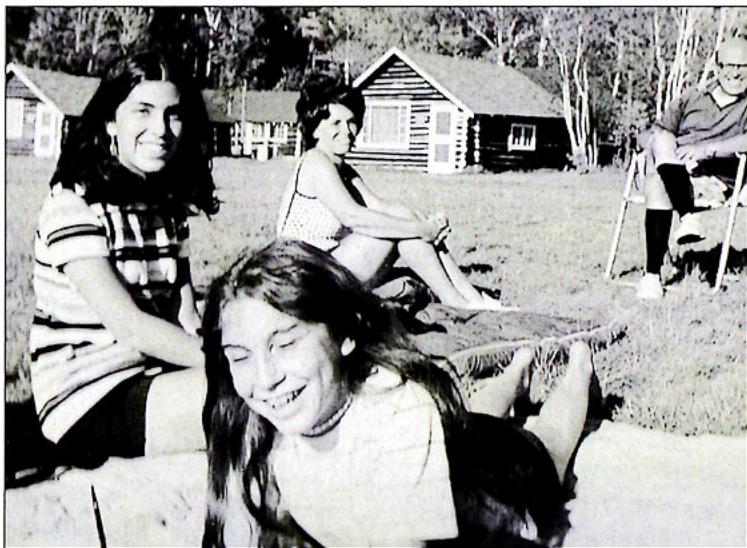
*These 2005 Camp Tavor counselors enjoyed a summer of memories.*

*(l to r) Michelle Resnick, Sara Brand, Lauren Brown,  
Yael Schwartz, Lena Kazer, Rosie Kiken.*

### **HABONIM-DROR CAMP TAVOR AND CAMP PETOSEGA**

Before Camp Farband closed, a new Habonim camp had already been built on the site of Cooper's Resort on Kaiser Lake in Three Rivers. It exists today as a co-ed, kibbutz-style Habonim camp named Camp Tavor. Campers, ages 9 through 17, hail from Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin and Illinois. There is a pool, a lake, an air conditioned club house and a kosher kitchen. The purpose of the camp is to encourage independent Jewish thinkers who will help to make the world a better place through social action and community building.

Leonard Baruch, Camp Farband's director, wanted to open his own camp. In 1955, he and Bertrand Sandweiss, who had been a head counselor at Farband, purchased a rustic 300-acre campsite on Pickerel Lake near



*Leonard Baruch and his family summered at camp. Pictured here in front of some of the camp cabins are daughters Miriam (Goldberg), Rhonda (Feldman), wife Ann and Leonard in the background.*

Petoskey. The grounds had been designated as a State Sanctuary by the state of Michigan and included an airstrip and a stream that ran right through the center of the camp.

Within a year, Sandweiss and Baruch built cabins, a dining room, showers, toilets and an infirmary. Camp Petosega opened in 1956 for boys and girls ages 7 to 16. Their camp brochure reads, "Prevailing winds caress the camp where hay fever and colds do not exist."

Campers were never aware that the very flat baseball diamond had once been a landing strip for small planes. A wooden bridge over the stream separated the boys' and girls' cabins. Cabins were given Jewish names, and every Friday — before everyone prepared for Shabbat services — a refrigerated truck would arrive loaded with kosher meat.

Students who passed a navigation course were able to take excursions to Mackinac Island aboard a cabin cruiser. Teachers and college students were hired as senior counselors. The camp offered opportunities for self-expression in music, dance and art as well as numerous sports, horseback riding and riflery.

Although the camp's neighbors had little experience with Jews, they soon became friendly. In the middle of the 1966 camp season, the kitchen burned down in the middle of the night. Neighbors pitched in and rebuilt the facility in ten days. During



*Leonard Baruch*



*Bertrand Sandweiss*

that time, local school buses picked up the kids and took them to a nearby school for meals. During the red and gray color wars, the local sheriff rode in on horseback, and the Indian Council ring on Saturday nights provided campers like Mindy Soble with many fond memories.

Sadly, Bert Sandweiss died while swimming at camp in 1970. By 1974, Leonard Baruch no longer had the stamina he needed to continue to run the camp. He sold it, and it became an Emmet County park called Camp Petosega offering rental cabins.

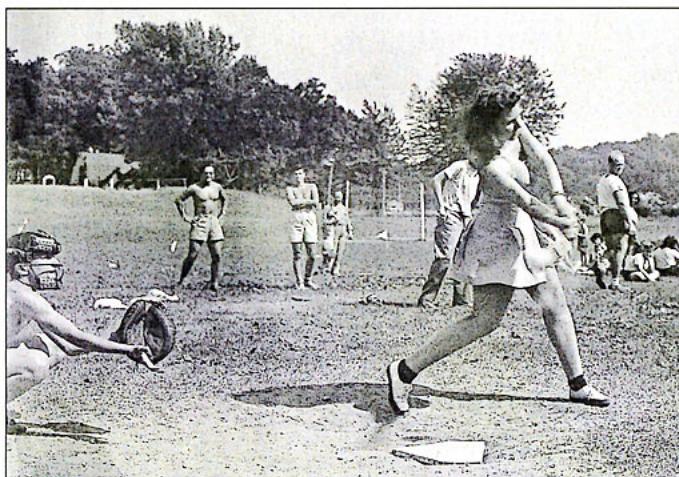
### CAMP NAHELU

Naomi and Ehiel Lesowater bought property on the shores of Perry Lake near Ortonville in 1937 or 1938, and opened a private camp for boys and girls called Nahelu. Some say that Nahelu is the combined first names of the owners. Others claim it was named after their two children.

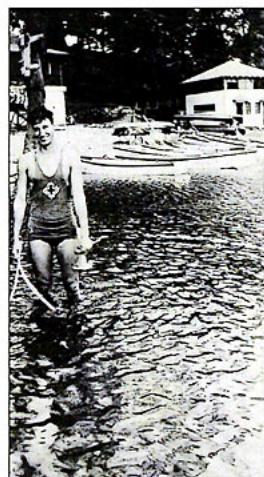
Nahelu's cabins had no toilet facilities. Separate washhouses called basoks were provided for each side of the camp. The basoks were the source of many camping jokes and pranks especially for counselors who had the nightly task of walking bed-wetters to the toilets.

Younger children were referred to as Brownies and Bluebirds and were housed in a small farmhouse facility located away from the rest of the camp. An older woman took care of the children with help from junior and senior counselors.

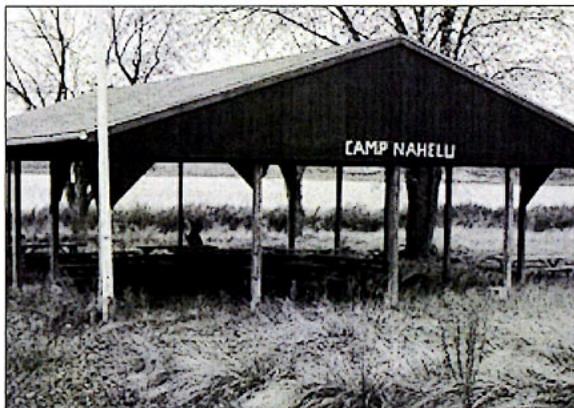
Nahelu stressed individual and team sports. Horseback riding, swimming and boating were taught. Maurie Reizen, a senior camper in 1935, remembers the camp baseball team playing against other Jewish



*In July 1947, the senior boys played the female counselors in a game of ball.  
Photo courtesy of Nancy Serlin*



*Maurie Reizen held the post of waterfront director in 1939, 1940 and 1945.  
Photo courtesy of Nancy Serlin*



*Before the Camp Nahelu property was sold, few buildings remained. Today, Nahelu is a subdivision. One old cabin that was remodeled into a house remains on the property.*

camps in the area, particularly Fresh Air Camp at Brighton and Mehia in the Irish Hills. He particularly remembers the frustration of the annual color wars event, noted for the ferocious competition between the boys and girls. Nahelu's camp colors were orange and blue. Finding words to rhyme with orange for the skits and songs necessary to win the event was "dreadful."

Reizen chuckles easily as he relates stories about Mr. Lesowater who spoke with a heavy Jewish accent. At the opening of staff meetings, he would complain about food being wasted with the words, "Vile glensing tru de garbage cans..." (While glancing through the garbage cans...). When Lesowater visited the waterfront, he would yell at the waterfront staff to "take de hoars from de bitch!" (Take the oars from the beach). By 1945, Reizen was a young married man. That year he left camp for the last time and entered medical school. The following summer, Tom Cohn became waterfront director, and Edie Resnick (the author) became his assistant. Cohn later went on to open Camp Maplehurst. Resnick became waterfront director the following year, where her husband-to-be, fresh out of the service, became her assistant in charge of boats and canoes. They were married the following September.

Around 1945, the Leswaters sold the camp to Stan Michaels. Michaels had been the head counselor and loved the camp. His wife, Elsie, from Windsor, Ontario, helped recruit many Canadian campers and counselors. At the time, medical students were exempt from the Canadian army, helping Michaels fulfill his male counseling needs during the war. While most able American boys had been drafted, the abundance of future doctors from Toronto who had once been campers in the camps of Algonquin Park brought new ideas and enthusiasm to the programs. Among the staff members those years were Bernie Friedman who taught riding and Aaron Gornbein who was the sports director. These two went on to found Camp

Tanuga, which is still in operation.

In 1968, Nahelu was sold to Fred Stern. He kept the name and then rented the camp to a variety of groups. A Sikh College retreat returned there for several years. A theater arts program came back often as did a music group. It even housed a human rights workshop. In 2003, his eyesight failing, Stern said it was time to "hang it up," as not enough groups were interested in using camps like his anymore. He regretfully petitioned Brandon Township for a change of zoning from recreation to rural estates. The land was sold to a developer who divided the 77 acres into cluster housing for 31 home sites. An auction of the buildings and equipment was held on November 20, 2004.

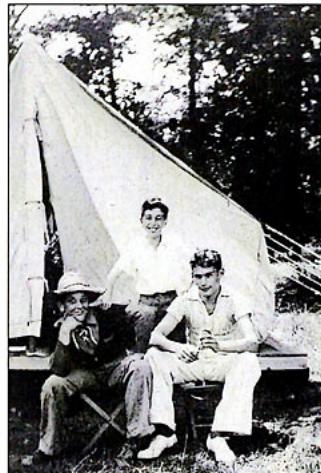
Although Camp Nahelu came to an end physically, the memories of the place, the people and the experience never left the hearts of the many former campers and counselors. A very successful reunion was held at the home of Fran Gurwin Bell in 2005. About 50 former campers and counselors attended, sharing joy, laughter and tears.

### CAMP MEHIA

Camp Mehia was built in 1935 and opened the following year on the shores of Wampler's Lake in Lenawee County. The property had been owned by Cynthia Finch and Herman Hane, and the road leading to the property currently bears the name "Hanes Highway." It was run by Movsas and Shulamith Berkovich, eastern European immigrants. Campers remember Mr. Berkovich as a sweet man, but they say that the Mrs. was a bit more difficult.



*The Gray Tower, an Irish Hills tourist attraction, was just a short walk from the camp. "A trip to the top was a fantastic experience," remembered Benno Levi, a camper at Mehia in 1936 and 1937.*



*Benno Levi, center, was a newly arrived immigrant when he first attended Camp Mehia. He is flanked by Harold Landis (l) and Ben Vogel in the summer of 1936.*

Mrs. B, as she was often referred to, was "high up in the staff of Jewish Family Services and worked with war refugees," according to former camper Benno Levi. Levi, his sister and brother were sent to Camp Mehia the first year it opened. They had just arrived in the country from their native Germany.

When Mehia opened, the Levi children joined some 80 other campers. Three years later the camp expanded to accommodate nearly 200 boys and girls. Campers enjoyed all of the traditional camp hoopla: color wars, shared team games with other camps and young eager college students spending their summer as counselors. Many marriages resulted from the summer romances that started at that camp. Burt Shifman remembers being there in 1937 or 1938. His wife, Sue Kerner, was also a camper there. Rena Tepman, also a counselor, recalls the camp closing in 1951. It was sold to the Detroit Conference United Methodist Outdoor and Retreat Ministries and is still in operation as the Judson Collins Center, a retreat.

### CAMP AVRUNIN

Camp Avrunin was one of the earliest private Jewish camps that opened in Michigan. In the early 1930s, Mrs. Clara Avrunin bought the Millen Hotel on Big Wolf Lake near Jackson. Cabins for children were erected on the property, and a regular camp program was started with about 150 campers. [This writer has an early recollection of being four years old and being in a crib-like bed when my mother stopped by to see me. A family picture shows my mother sitting with me near the lake at the same camp.]

Sylvia Savin Iwrey remembers Herbert Gold, now a well-known Beat Generation author, poet and journalist, as both a camper and a counselor at Avrunin. Iwrey recalls Gold always losing points for his team during the



*Mrs. Mollie Feinberg relaxes by the Old Mellon Hotel, circa 1930. Parents would stay at the hotel while their children took part in the co-ed camp program or stayed in a nursery.*



*The original Millen Hotel on Wolf Lake, circa early 1900s.  
Courtesy of Jackson Public Library*

color wars because his bed was so messy. At age 6, Elaine Brode Serman began attending the camp. She came every summer until she was 16, in 1942, the same year the camp closed. By that time, the camp had been sold to the former head counselor, Alice Mellen, who had renamed it Camp Sherwood. Mellen encountered a problem with that name because a Camp Sherwood already had been established in Northern Michigan. The next year she changed the name to Camp Sherbrooke.

When the camp permanently closed, nothing replaced it. Former camper Harold Brode visited the site a few years ago and reports that the buildings were gone and the land was empty.

### **CAMP WALLOON, CAMP KAIRPHREE AND CAMP PLAYFAIRE**

In 1938, a young man named Seymour Tilchin purchased a parcel of farmland and 3,200 feet of waterfront on the south shore of Walloon Lake near Boyne City. He was a high-school teacher, ardent Zionist, lawyer and editor and publisher of the Jewish Chronicle.

Tilchin knew very little about running a camp, but he hired an experienced team to run the camp he called Camp Walloon for Boys. It offered a variety of activities including softball, riding and swimming. Mickey Fishman, who left the camp to go into the service and later opened Camp Michigama, was the waterfront director.

Tilchin also purchased a former camp on the shores of Lake Charlevoix, approximately six miles from Camp Walloon. Camp Kairphree for girls operated for two years in 1940 and 1941.

By the end of the 1941 season, Tilchin decided that he couldn't run the camps and keep up with his growing law practice. In 1941, he sold Camp Kairphree and Camp Walloon. Jack Mann purchased Camp Walloon, changed the name to Camp Playfaire, and made it a co-ed camp.

Sylvia Granadier Rosen, a counselor at Playfaire, remembers having a good time at camp despite the fact that a war was going on. World War II had a profound effect on private camps. Male counselors, food, transportation and equipment were in short supply. Because Mann couldn't staff his operation with Canadian doctors and counselors, as did Camp Nahelu, he had to close the camp. The property went through several hands until the early 1970s when developers purchased the property.

### **CAMP MICHIGAMA**

Brothers Mickey and Herman Fishman were both athletes from Detroit and naval officers who had attended camps in the East. When they returned from their WWII tour of duty, they decided to open a camp that stressed athletics and self-discipline. While still in uniform, they traveled to West Branch to examine an 80-acre parcel of raw farmland on Peach Lake. With money borrowed from parents, friends, family and the local bank, they built a boys' camp. As was common in that era, they chose an Indian theme

for the camp and opened it in 1946 with 12 cabins with toilets, a waterfront, a mess hall and a shower house.

Baseball was an important activity at Michigama. The camp was organized into divisions, and each division had three teams. Teams were very competitive, and their best teams played the Little League teams in neighboring towns. Larry Sabbath, a camper there the first year it opened, recalls playing baseball constantly. The camp also offered water skiing and lake swims and blue and gold teams for the color wars. In a particularly exciting act of drama, one year the Fishmans arranged for a plane to fly low over camp to drop the announcement of the color war and the team lists.

In 1952, the Fishmans opened a girls' camp, Michigama Hill, with eight cabins and a mess hall. Horseback riding was added to the program and 17 activities were offered including nature, music and dance. Camp shows were important and operettas were staged on visiting days. The camps were run "kosher style" with services Friday night and Saturday morning. Friday night was shower time for all, with white outfits required for dinner.

A cook, Rifka Stringer, from a kosher delicatessen was hired to run the kitchen. She stayed 12 years. Mickey Fishman recalls driving to Detroit three times a week to keep the kitchen supplied with kosher foods.

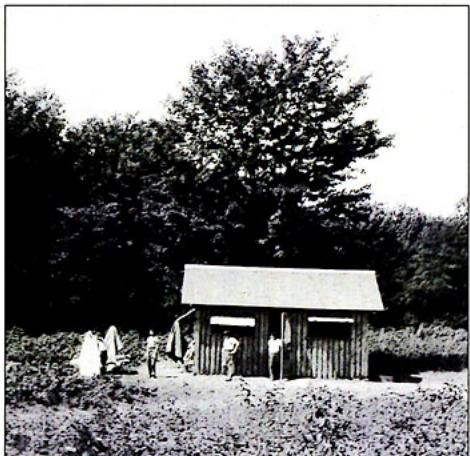
Herman Fishman sold his share to his brother in the early 1960s to focus on his insurance business. In 1966, when Mickey's wife, Boots, became very ill, Mickey made the decision to stay by her side. That was the last year the camps remained open for a full season. Fishman kept the camps open for a couple of years as a place for groups. In 1969, Fishman sold the boys' camp. The original farmhouse is still there, and the mess hall is a garage.

The girls' camp remained in the family until 1970 when it was turned into a co-op for ten families. The mess hall and the cabins were fixed up as holiday retreats. Fishman's daughter, Bonnie, proprietor of the catering company, Bonnie's Kitchen in Bloomfield Township, purchased one parcel and continues to return. A caretaker maintains the property, so some of the camp spirit still survives in the next generation.

### CAMP NORTH STAR

In 1946, Benjamin "Bankie" Rubenstein, a child psychiatrist from Detroit, bought a large hunting lodge on 94 acres in Steuben in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Located in the Hiawatha National Forest, between Munising and Manistique, the camp was so remote that no town existed within 20 miles in any direction.

Rubenstein built cabins and carved out a sandy beach on the shores of Bonworth Lake. The camp could accommodate 100 to 125 boys. One cabin was built away from the others so Dr. Rubenstein could bring a few of his patients to camp and continue their treatment.



*In 1947, Ben Rubenstein, his nephew and some other men built 12 cabins on the property.*

Photo courtesy of Marc Rubenstein



*In 1947, Dr. Rubenstein gathered friends and relatives to help prepare the grounds for a camp that would open a year later.*

*Top row (l to r) unidentified person, Ed Goodman. Third row, (l to r)*

*Marc Rubenstein, Julia Rubenstein and Bob Singer. Second row (l to r) Al Stroll, "Banky" Ben Rubenstein, Jill Stocker and Dina*

*Rubenstein. Bottom row (l to r) Dorothy Siegel and Florence Stroll.*

Photo courtesy of Marc Rubenstein

It was the summer of 1947 when the camp opened for its inaugural season and it started with a crash and ended with a bang – literally. As the buses arrived on opening day, a huge thunderstorm brewed. An enormous tree, struck by lightning, crashed to the ground just missing the dining and recreation hall. On the last day of camp, a bear, which had been raiding the garbage burial site all summer, ventured into camp. Left with no choice, the caretaker shot the bear right in front of the cabins.

The boys canoed and used rowboats in the lake, which was too small for sailing. The fresh cool waters provided plenty of fish for catching and eating. Campers received swim instruction and indulged in all kinds of field sports including riflery and archery.

When he realized he couldn't maintain his practice and run the camp, Dr. Rubenstein sold it to a couple who kept it operating for a year or two. Some of the remaining cabins are owned by private owners, but the place is in much disrepair and the fields are overgrown.

### JEWISH CAMPS OF TODAY

Although the experiences are much the same, the expense and equipment needed to run a summer camp has changed dramatically since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Jet skis, computer rooms, web pages with daily photographs of campers in action, rope courses and golf carts have become the standard in camp operations. The following camps are alive and well, attracting boys

and girls and staff from Michigan and from all over the world. Many still retain a largely Jewish clientele. A few are highly specialized. While all of these camps offer a variety of activities, they, like their predecessors, emphasize teaching kids to get along with others, have fun and develop skills and self esteem that will last a lifetime.

### FRESH AIR SOCIETY: CAMP TAMARACK

Fresh Air Society is the oldest of the Michigan camps, now enjoying its 106<sup>th</sup> season in continuous operation. From the humble beginnings described earlier in this article, the Fresh Air Society, a non-profit Jewish agency supported by devoted community members and the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, encompasses more than 1,250 acres in Ortonville, (a distant suburb north of Detroit), along with additional camp sites: Camp Kennedy in the Upper Peninsula and the Charles N. Agree Outpost in Wawa, Ontario. In 1970, the Butzel Conference Center was built in Ortonville, to serve senior adults.

As it did from the beginning, the Fresh Air Society strives to make sure that no child is denied a camping experience. Thanks to private donors and the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, campers from families who cannot afford the entire tuition are subsidized and attend as any other child.

The organization boasts a family of camps with campers arriving from across the country, Canada and Israel — as well as counselors from around the globe. Camp Maas is the main residential summer camping program for children ages 7 to 14. Older campers delight in travel trips to the Western United States, Alaska or the outposts of either Kennedy or Agree. Programming at Fresh Air encompasses Jewish philosophy and traditions and campers observe dietary laws and special Shabbat programming.

Campers live in different villages according to age and gender, and all campers experience glorious waterfront activities such as jet skiing, skiing, swimming and canoeing, and overnight camping outside of the lodges. Campers gather to eat together in a large, newly built dining hall and the camp has a covered pool, horseback riding and go-carting facilities.

### CAMP TAMAKWA

In 1936, Lou Handler, a Detroiter, partnered with Omer Stringer, an outstanding Canadian canoeist, to open a camp in the Algonquin Provincial Park in Ontario. Handler, a well-known local prizefighter and sportsman, had been a counselor at Camp Arowhon in Algonquin Park and fell in love with the area. With help from his father, he was able to lease property in the park and he opened a small camp for boys in 1936, attracting children from both Michigan and Toronto. When Handler went into the army in 1943, Canadians took over the camp until 1946. After he returned from service in 1946, he re-opened the camp and brought back many of his former staff

members and campers.

The camp, which ultimately became co-ed, remains in operation today and is owned by former campers and counselors Vic Norris and Craig Perlmutter. The spirit of "Uncle Lou" and his love of camping and water sports still prevails. Many of Camp Tamakwa's campers are third generation and return year after year from all over the USA and Canada. A movie about summer camp experiences, "Indian Summer," was produced by former camper and comedian Mike Binder and filmed at Tamakwa. In addition to Binder, Tamakwa's alumni include prominent Detroiters such as David Hermelin, Gilbert Silverman and Judge Avern Cohn, and celebrities such as Chevy Chase and Gilda Radner.

Although located in the Canadian "bush," the camp averages 220 kids a summer, with nearly half of them hailing from Michigan.

### CAMP SEA-GULL

Lew and Regene Schulman were professional educators who first met at Camp Farband and later became counselors at Camp Nahelu. Like others who loved the camping experience, the couple decided to open a co-ed camp for children ages 7 to 16. They purchased a camp called Q-Gull, located on Lake Charlevoix, in November 1954, and renamed it Camp Sea-Gull. It had 10 or 12 cabins and a dining hall. The Schulmans lived at the back of the dining hall, and each year they tore down one old cabin to replace it with a new one. When their son Bill was born in 1957, the family finally had a cabin of their own. Lew ran the camp and Regene ran the office until 1972. Two of their children, Bill and Jack, worked in the kitchen and the craft shop and ultimately became counselors. Their sister Jo (Klein) also became a counselor and later the Arts and Crafts director. When the elder Schulmans retired, Bill and Jack, who like their parents are educators, took over the camp.

Today, the camp is no longer a co-ed operation. Each session, 120 girls attend camp in "an intimate environment that encourages independence, personal growth, and life-long friendships." Cabins have toilet facilities and showers are nearby. Riding, weaving and lapidary, a low ropes course, map and compass reading and wilderness trips are available for appropriate ages. What a far cry from what Camp Jeddo offered young women in the 1920s!

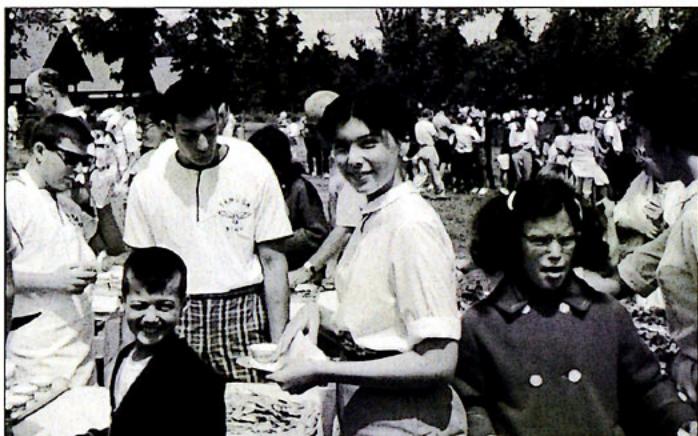
### CAMP TANUGA

Camp Tanuga was originally a fishing retreat with four cabins and a part of what is now the dining room. In 1952, Bernie Friedman and Aaron Gornbein purchased the property intending to open a Jewish camp with an excellent sports and water program. Friedman had been the riding instructor and Gornbein the sports director at Camp Nahelu. A year later, Tanuga opened with 60 boys and girls.

Today, Tanuga hosts some 200 campers each summer, many of whose

parents and grandparents also attended. Almost 250 former campers came together for a 50<sup>th</sup> reunion in 2002. Sid Friedman, a lifelong Camp Tanuga camper, remembered the BBB Award given by the older boys' counselors that was abolished in the late 70s. The most popular event of the season was color wars, and the skits held the night before the color wars were often the highlight of the session.

Gornbein passed away in 1983. Friedman continued to run the camp until his son Sidney took over. Mark Coden, a second generation Tanuga camper, is now a director with Sid. In 1988, Bernie Friedman passed away, but Tanuga continues to follow his philosophy "to give youngsters a chance to explore the great outdoors and to learn a little about themselves."



*Camp Tanuga's visiting day, early 1960s.  
Photo courtesy of Edie Resnick*

### CAMP WALDEN

In 1959, Larry Stevens and Neal Schechter purchased 150 acres on Long Lake south of Cheboygan. Both were Detroit area public school teachers and had been counselors at Camp Tanuga.

They purchased the bulk of the property from the camp's next-door neighbor, Ed Slezak. Originally a girls' camp called Michakewa Lodge, the property featured eight small cabins, a mess hall, an arts and crafts cabin and a counselors' lounge. When Stevens and Schechter opened Camp Walden, 60 boys and girls, ages 7 to 17, attended. Since then, the camp has expanded adding a recreation hall, more cabins and facilities. The camp now serves up to 250 campers a season.

Bob Resnick, a Walden camper and counselor in 1973, recalls the bells that were used to signify changes in activities. The counselors hated the noise, and they would steal the clappers out of the bells on a regular basis.

Walden was one of the first camps to offer the opportunity for children to create their individual activity schedules (as opposed to doing



*A Walden camper poses for a picture that would make any mother proud!*

everything as a cabin group). A wide range of activities including performing arts, riding, media, and an extensive waterfront program have been added to the list of things to do.

Neal Schecter retired from the camping business in 1989. Larry and Ina and their daughter, Elizabeth Stevens, and son-in-law Scott Ruthart have continued to run the camp where "having fun is stressed more than winning." The year 2008 marked the 49th season.

### CAMP MAPLEHURST

Maplehurst was the name of a 400-acre estate on Torch Lake built in 1910 and owned by a wealthy Chicago couple. Located near Kewadin between

Traverse City and Elk Rapids, two other people owned the property before Dr. Thomas and Lily Cohn bought it to run as a camp for gifted children in 1955. Tom had a doctorate in psychology and had previous camp experience at Farband, Fresh Air Camp, Merrill Palmer Camp and Nahelu.

Maplehurst attracts kids from all over the country whose parents are interested in a camp that provides choices and fosters decision-making and leadership opportunities. The camp offered computer programming when personal computers were in their infancy and continues to innovate. Of course, campers experience the usual sports and water programs on the camp's spring-fed private lake.

Today, Laurence Cohn and his wife, Brenda, continue the tradition begun by his parents. Laurence holds a Ph.D. in psychology and education



*Campers climb aboard the Camp Maplehurst bus.*



*Camp Maplehurst campers receiving a dance lesson.*

and has taught psychology at the University of Michigan since 1972. The camp draws a diverse group of campers and educators.

### CAMP GAN ISRAEL

Camp Gan Israel was established in 1961 near Kalkaska in Lubavitch City, Michigan. It serves the Yiddishkeit and Chassidishkeit communities and is supported by the Esther Allen Fund. Boys from the ages of 7 to 13 spend a month at the camp and another 18 days at the Lubavitch Center in Oak Park. Girls from grades two through seven spend a month at the camp. The older girls in grades eight and nine are called "Pioneers."

The camp is located on a 660-acre nature preserve. It has a shul, computer and photography labs and a Beis Medrash. There are three private lakes on the property, and activities include mountain biking, sports, woodworking and floor hockey. There is a Rambam Center hosted by Feivesh Finkel, and they have a spirited color war competition. Like Fresh Air, Camp Gan Israel attempts to include every child who wishes to attend, thanks to available scholarships.

### WOODEN ACRES CAMP

Harvey Finkelberg and his wife, Linda, opened the Wooden Acres Camp in 2003 at the Double JJ Resort in Rothbury, in Oceana County on the west side of Michigan. Finkelberg had been executive director of the Fresh Air Society and Linda had worked in administration. The camp has two sides, a junior side for boys and girls ages 7-11 and a senior side for ages 12-15. Up to 200 campers are housed in cabins with showers and toilets. Wooden Acres offer a wide variety of activities from tennis, field sports, water sports, riding and golf to travel experiences for the senior campers. Kosher-style meals are served and services are held on Friday nights and Saturday mornings.



*Campers enjoying the pool at Wooden Acres.*

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

From the simplicity of a day in the fresh air, to elaborate Western and Alaskan trips, the experience of summer camping has evolved. Still, be it a large camp or a small camp, a young child or a teen, the summer camping experience remains important to Jewish families. Parents who were campers themselves hope their children and grandchildren will enjoy the fun and independence they tasted, will learn the skills that are unique to camping and experience the beauty of the environments that surround them.

Of course, there were many other small Jewish camps and farms located throughout the state that have not been mentioned here. Either there was insufficient information about these organizations or their existence was unknown by the author of this article.



*Edie Resnick was a counselor at Fresh Air Camp in Brighton during World War II. Edie was also a camper at Avrunin Camp for six years and the Girl Scout Camp Metamora for five years. For three years before she married her husband and fellow Fresh Air counselor, Donn, she was a senior counselor and waterfront director at Camp Nahelu in 1947. Resnick is a member of the Advisory Board of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan.*

*Special thanks to the following people  
for sharing their camp memories:*

Connie Adler	Allan Gelfond	Barbara Ross
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Sol Drachler	Donn Resnick	David Skornia
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Mickey Fishman	Bob Resnick	Rena Tepman
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*Additional thanks to those who helped with research on camps that no longer exist:*

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Jeannette McDonald, assistant librarian, Jackson District Library

Bette Shifman, graduate research assistant, The Bentley Library, University of Michigan

Grass Lake Charter Township Clerk, Grass Lake, Michigan

Clarke Historical Library, Central Michigan University

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# FROM JUNK PEDDLERS TO INDUSTRIALISTS:

## THE GENDELMAN AND NATHAN IRON AND METAL COMPANY

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**By Carole Nathan Metzger**

The scrap metal industry has been a vital part of the Detroit area's economy as long as manufacturing has been the city's mainstay, and a large number of the owners of these businesses have been Jewish. In its 1936 study, "Jews in America," Fortune Magazine reported that 90 percent of the American scrap metal industry, a half billion dollar business, was Jewish-owned. They listed the following firms as leaders in the field: Luria Bros. & Co. of Philadelphia, Hyman Michaels Co. of Chicago, Charles Dreifus Co. of Pittsburgh and Luntz Iron & Steel Co. of Canton, Ohio.<sup>1</sup> Fortune explained this Jewish dominance by stating, "Jews are in scrap iron because they were once in the junk business and they were once in the junk business because a penniless immigrant could make a start there on a shoestring."<sup>2</sup> S. Joseph Fauman's 1941 study of the Jews in the waste industry in Detroit found a very similar result.<sup>3</sup>

This article traces the growth and evolution of Detroit's scrap metal industry from the junk peddler's domain to a critical defense industry of World War II and beyond by examining the history of Gendelman and Nathan Iron and Metal Company and its successor, Detroit Scrap Metals.

### Clerks and Peddlers

The major migration of Jews from Russia and other parts of Eastern Europe to Detroit began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, triggered by poverty, oppressive pogroms and discrimination. Most of the immigrants arrived with little cash, spoke little or no English and had few applicable job skills. They took whatever jobs they could find and were particularly interested in employment that left them free to observe the Sabbath and holidays. While New York and other cities had large numbers of Jews in the needle trades, in 1907 Detroit's most common Jewish occupation was "clerk," followed by "peddler." Many of these peddlers were engaged in the junk trade.<sup>4</sup> The junk peddler walked the alleyways of the city, picking up anything that could be resold. Some men specialized in paper, others in rags, and many in scrap metal. The peddler also visited businesses such as office buildings (for paper) and tailors (for rags) and collected discards directly from them. Most began with a small handcart, progressed to a horse-drawn wagon and

finally a truck. The goods were taken to a dealer's yard and sold there, one wagonload at a time. Often the dealers began as junk peddlers themselves and started with a small yard adjacent to their homes.

### **From Peddler to Scrap Metal**

Scrap metal firms, distinct from junk yards, first began appearing in Detroit around 1890, with 85 percent of them being Jewish owned in that year. This coincides with the increase in the manufacturing industry. As Detroit's manufacturing industries quickly expanded after 1900, so did the scrap yards that depended on them. One of the early scrap metal firms was S. Simon and Son, which began as a rag business in 1880.<sup>5</sup>

There are several differences between a junk yard and a scrap metal yard. The first is the material held there; a junk yard will contain items made of many materials such as wood, leather and cloth as well as all types of metals, while a scrap yard will only hold metal and usually specializes in either ferrous (i.e., containing iron) or non-ferrous metals. The second difference is the yard's customers; a junk yard is a retail operation open to the public while a scrap yard sells only to large, industrial customers, primarily steel mills. The third distinction is the source of supply; the junk yard's supplier is typically a peddler who has collected a mixed load of materials, and, while the scrap yard may deal with small peddlers, most of the scrap yard's supply is purchased in bulk from manufacturing operations such as steel fabrication plants or auto manufacturers.<sup>6</sup>

### **Mr. Gendelman**

During the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Isaac Gendelman, together with his wife, Rose (Levitt), emigrated from a small village in Western Russia to the Detroit area. Raising cattle – his occupation in Russia – did not provide him a useful skill in Detroit, so he had to find another way to earn his living. He was soon working as a junk peddler, walking through alleyways, looking for discarded items that could be sold. This occupation suited him well because it required no investment. Gendelman had arrived



*The Gendelman Family –  
(l to r) Millie (age 11),  
Rose, Anna (age 16),  
Belle (age 2), Joe (age 14),  
Isaac, Bea (age 9)  
- circa 1915.*

in the United States with just 25 kopeks (a small Russian coin). He was also a very pious man and could set his hours to avoid working on the Sabbath and Jewish holidays. Junk peddling was a common vocation at this time. In 1907, a directory of occupations within the Jewish community lists 54 junk peddlers, the tenth most common occupation in the list of 170.<sup>7</sup>

Gendelman began his junk collection business with a handcart but was able to save enough money to buy a horse. It had to be a very cheap horse, but still healthy enough to pull a wagon. He settled on a young, strong animal that was totally blind and named her Nellie. He would walk next to the horse's head, guiding it along and stopping it when he found something to retrieve. Over the years, other, sighted horses — all named Nellie — succeeded the blind one as Gendelman's business grew stronger. Eventually Gendelman replaced his horse and wagon with a Dodge truck. In these old models, the fenders were pieces of curved metal that arched over the wheels to protect the fragile rubber tires from damage. Isaac Gendelman was not a very good driver and he constantly scraped and dented the fenders. Each time he had an accident he took the truck to a garage where the mechanic hammered out the dent, as that was much cheaper than replacing the fender. Time and again the fenders were dented and hammered back into shape. Finally the metal was so thin and soft that the fenders flapped like giant elephant ears when Gendelman drove along.

This transition from handcart to horse and wagon and then pickup truck was often the path for the Jewish junk peddler. The next step up the economic ladder was to "dealer," the person who bought the scrap from the peddlers and prepared it for bulk resale.

Gendelman continued to build his business, until finally in the 1930s he ran a scrap metal yard. He bought leftover scraps of metal from the manufacture of cars and other objects, sorted them into the correct metal alloy types, cut them into standard size pieces or compressed them into bales, and resold them to steel mills to be melted down and remade into new steel.



*Bea Gendelman circa 1944*

### **The Founding of Gendelman and Nathan Iron and Metal Company**

When Isaac Gendelman's third daughter, Bea, married Hyman Nathan in 1936, Gendelman brought his new son-in-law into the business, renaming the firm Gendelman and Nathan Iron and Metal Company. When his youngest daughter, Belle, married the next year, her husband, Max Somberg, left his job as a house painter to join the business.

*Isaac Gendelman and Hyman Nathan**Bea and Hyman Nathan*

The Gendelman and Nathan yard was located at 15306 12<sup>th</sup> Street at the corner of Fenkell in central Detroit, a location that disappeared under the John C. Lodge Freeway in the 1950s. The yard was relatively near the heavily Jewish Oakland area (bounded by Caniff, Alger, Oakland streets and the railway tracks). Between 1910 and 1920, many Eastern European Jews settled in this area and many of the early Jewish-owned waste firms were also located here.<sup>8</sup> Among the other Jews in the scrap metal business in Detroit at this time were Harry Grant and Harry Goldman, who ran Southern Scrap Metal, and Max Stotter and Samuel J. Leve.<sup>9</sup>

As were many of the scrap businesses, the Gendelman and Nathan yard was located directly on a railroad line. The yard was bordered on one side by the tracks of the Detroit Terminal Railroad, a short line built between 1904 and 1919, which ran from the Detroit River on the east side through North Yard, Highland Park, Fullerton and finally to the Ford Motor Co. Rouge complex in Dearborn on the west. The scrap came into the yard by truck and left by railcar.

### **World War II and the Scrap Business**

During World War II, scrap metals were considered a critical industry, and price controls were put in place on 40 different grades of iron and steel scrap. Iron and many other metals do not get "used up." When iron or steel's useful life as a car or a washing machine or a railroad track is over, due to corrosion or failure or obsolescence, it can be melted down and made into new steel. It is usually cheaper to remelt scrap metal than it is to mine and refine new iron ore. As electric furnaces began to dominate the steel industry, the use of scrap increased to the point where in 2006 two thirds of the steel made in the United States came from recycled scrap.<sup>10</sup>

During the WWII years, Detroit grew at a tremendous pace. Auto manufacturing plants were converted to produce trucks and tanks for the war effort. Steel mills ran at full capacity. Detroit became known as the "Arsenal of Democracy" because of all the war materials being manufactured in the city. Recruiters for the factories toured the American South, encouraging workers to move to Detroit to fill the factory jobs left vacant by men who had gone into the military. Many Southerners took the offer and came to find a city with great overcrowding. People had money from the jobs but not much to spend it on as there were no new cars, little new housing, and limited food due to rationing.

Even with price controls, business boomed for Gendelman and Nathan. The scrap yard hired a number of African-American men to work in the yard, hauling, sorting, shearing and bundling the chunks of metal.

### The Detroit Race Riot of 1943

Between 1933 and 1943, the African-American population of Detroit doubled to 200,000, as blacks arrived in search of prosperous war-time employment. By June 1943, months of false rumors, lootings, beatings, killings and general mayhem on the part of both whites and blacks led to nearly 36 hours of ugly race riots. The lethal mix consisted of the Southern whites, who brought not only their prejudices to the North but also their Ku Klux Klan chapters; Northern whites who were frightened by the influx of so many rural blacks; and the black community, angered by intense discrimination and tremendous housing shortages. The riots left 34 dead. Attempts by police to stop the violence were not effective. Finally, Mayor Edward Jeffries appealed to President Roosevelt, and federal troops were brought in to quell the riots.<sup>11</sup>

Not surprisingly during these unsettled times, many black residents feared leaving their homes. Isaac Gendelman, concerned about his scrap yard employees, realized he could not pay them if they did not come to work. Further, he knew in his soul that the riots and the hatred were wrong—echoes of the pogroms against the Jews that had ripped through his native Russia 40 years before.

Gendelman together with his strong young sons-in-law, Hy Nathan and Max Somberg, cranked up their toughest, biggest Dodge truck — normally used to haul the huge loads of scrap metal — and drove through the angry streets of Detroit into the black neighborhoods to pick up their workers. They went to each man's house and said that if the man wanted to come to work,

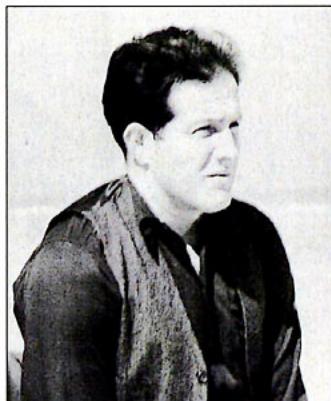


Max Somberg

Gendelman and his sons-in-law would drive him and keep him safe. They picked these employees up and delivered them safely home again that night.

During the riots, whites who entered the black neighborhoods were often attacked, and whites who were found to be aiding blacks were also targeted by the white crowds. Gendelman's actions defied both the black and white rioters and stood for what he knew to be the proper, human action.

Sidney Bolkosky, in his study of the Detroit Jewish community between 1914 and 1967, found that Jews were the least prejudiced against blacks of any group among the white population of Detroit. Many Jewish leaders including Fred Butzel, retailer Stanley Winkelman, Rabbi Morris Adler of Congregation Shaarey Zedek, and Rabbi Leon Fram of Temple Israel were involved in trying to calm tensions both before and after the riots.<sup>12</sup>



*Aaron (Curly) Nathan*

### **Family Ties in the Scrap Business**

During WWII, Hy Nathan's younger brother Aaron (Curly) closed his family's grocery store and joined Gendelman and Nathan. As the Nathan brothers were both of draft age, they feared that the yard might lose its bosses, so Bea Nathan, Hy's wife, left her teaching job with the Detroit Public Schools and came to work in the scrap yard office.

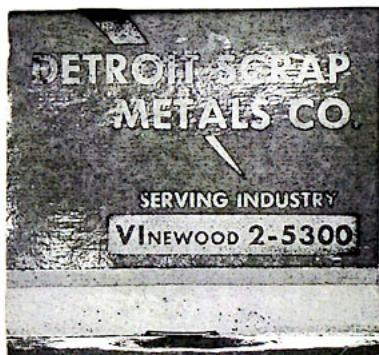
During the mid 1940s, Max Somberg left Gendelman and Nathan to start his own firm, Somberg Metals, as a specialist in non-ferrous scrap. He did not move far, however, as his operation was housed in a building at the back of the Gendelman and Nathan yard.

In 1945, Hy and Curly Nathan's sister, Ann, married Dave Segal, and Hy assisted his new brother-in-law in setting up his own firm, D. Segal Scrap. Dave Segal, helped by his wife, handled the salvageable items that were not appropriate to Gendelman and Nathan's business.

This clustering of family members was not unusual in Jewish-owned scrap companies. Many scrap dealers in 1940 were in family groups, and most of the dealers learned the business from parents or relatives. Fauman's study showed that in 1920 all of the 25 family name groups that he could identify in the waste industry (including scrap metals) were Jewish.<sup>13</sup>

### **Detroit Scrap Metals**

In 1945, Isaac Gendelman, then in his mid-60s, retired and was bought out by Hy Nathan. The name Gendelman and Nathan was retained at least through 1951, as shown by a report from July 1951 on the company



Gendelman and Nathan advertised in a number of ways, handing out ashtrays, matchbooks and emery boards with the company name and address on them. The inside of this matchbook states "We are ready to assume your every scrap problem iron—steel—non-ferrous."

finances. At the time, the yard was still located on 12<sup>th</sup> Street.

Eventually the firm's name became Detroit Scrap Metals Company, owned by partners Hy Nathan and his brother, Curly. The Detroit Scrap matchbook has gold lettering on a shiny red background; it places the yard on West Fort Street in the southwest part of Detroit near River Rouge. The matchbook states "We are specialists in high speed steels & nickel alloy scrap" and goes on to list rocket alloys, jet alloys, and rare metals; used tools and machinery, electric motors, pumps, etc.; and new and used structural steel: plates, bars, rods, and pipes. The nature of the business had become much more sophisticated; it was now as far from Gendelman and Nathan's promise to assume every problem as Gendelman and Nathan was from Isaac Gendelman's horse and wagon.

In the early 1970s, Curly Nathan, ready to retire, and Hy Nathan, by then primarily engaged in other businesses, decided to sell the business. In 1971, the Mahler family purchased the company, retaining Curly as a part-time consultant for another year.

### **Current State of the Industry**

According to John Seabrook in a recent New Yorker article, the 1960s and 1970s "were a glorious time to be in scrap." America was incredibly prosperous and Americans were throwing away objects at an amazing rate, feeding the scrap industry. Price controls instituted during the Korean War had ended, and the market was booming. In the late 1970s and 1980s when high-quality, low-cost steel from Japan began to dominate the American market, the industry changed dramatically. American steel mills began closing across the country.

Until the 1990s, the scrap metals industry continued to be composed of small local firms that did business on a handshake basis. The technology had evolved to include huge machines that chop up junked cars and automatically separate out the ferrous metals from the copper and aluminum and remove the fluff (upholstery, cardboard, etc.). Other machines can quickly load scrap into containers for shipment to Asia for further sorting and use in their steel mills.

In the middle 1990s, a major change came to the scrap industry, finally ending its Jewish dominance. A nationwide scrap firm, Metal Management, was founded by executives from the waste industry, backed by private-equity firms. The new corporate way of doing business replaced the personal relationships built on trust and years of cooperation with a new anonymous corporate bureaucracy.<sup>14</sup>

### **From Junk Peddlers to Industrialists**

The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan is interested in gathering a list of Michigan Jewish scrap metal dealers dating back to the late 19th century. If you have access to any names or records, please contact us at (248) 432-5517 or [jhsomichigan@msn.com](mailto:jhsomichigan@msn.com).



**Carole Nathan Metzger** was born and raised in Detroit. The scrap metal industry flows in her veins with her grandfather Isaac Gendelman, and her parents Hy and Bea Nathan. A graduate of The University of Michigan with a Master of Science in Computing and Information Sciences from Oklahoma State University, Metzger is now pursuing a second career in non-fiction writing. She lives with her husband David in Chevy Chase, Maryland.

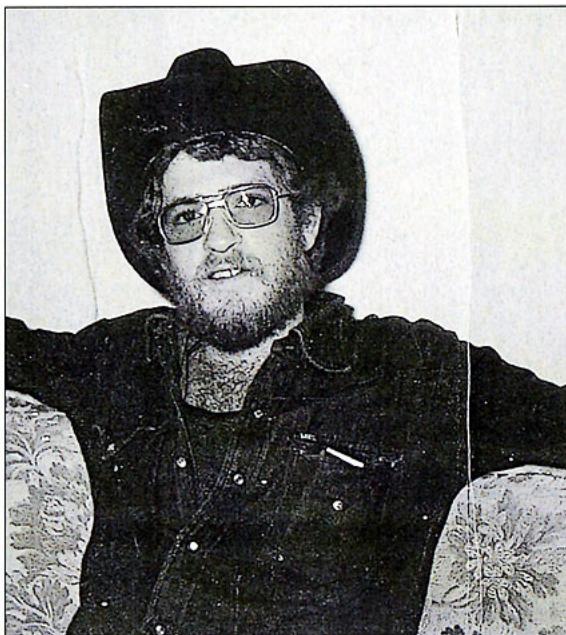
### **Endnotes**

- 1 The Editors of Fortune, Jews in America, Random House, New York, 1936, p. 43 (Note: In February 1936, Fortune Magazine published an article about Jews in America. It was so popular that later that year Random House issued the article in book form titling it "Jews In America.")
- 2 The Editors of Fortune, p. 77
- 3 Fauman, S. Joseph, The Jews in the Waste Industry in Detroit, Jewish Social Studies 3 (1941), pp. 43-56
- 4 Rockaway, Robert A., The Jews of Detroit, From the Beginning, 1762-1914, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1986, p. 144
- 5 Fauman
- 6 Barringer, Edwin C., The Story of Scrap, The Institute of Scrap Iron and Steel, Washington, DC, 1954
- 7 Fauman
- 8 Fauman
- 9 Bolkosky, Sidney, Harmony & Dissonance: Voices of Jewish Identity in Detroit, 1914-1967, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1991, p. 169, p. 281
- 10 Seabrook, John, "American Scrap," The New Yorker, January 14, 2008, pp. 46-59
- 11 "The 1943 Detroit Race Riots," The Detroit News, Rearview Mirror, Thursday, February 11, 1999, <http://info.detnews.com/redesign/history/story/historytemplate.cfm?id=185>
- 12 Bolkosky, Chapter 22, pp. 265-269
- 13 Fauman, Table II, p. 44
- 14 Seabrook

# A JEWISH CREWMEMBER ON THE EDMUND FITZGERALD:

## THE STORY OF DAVID "COWBOY" WEISS

◆  
**By Dean Baird, M.D.**



*Photograph courtesy of Great Lakes Maritime Academy*

*But the Lord cast a mighty wind upon the sea, and such a great tempest came upon the sea that the ship was in danger of breaking up. -Jonah 1.4*

On November 9, 1975, the S.S. Edmund Fitzgerald, one of the largest freighters on the Great Lakes, encountered a massive winter storm, with torrential winds and high waves. By the next day, the ship had sustained significant damage, to include loss of all radar. At 7:10 p.m. on November 10, a nearby ship, the Arthur Anderson, received a radio transmission from the Edmund Fitzgerald that "we are holding our own." Within minutes, the Edmund Fitzgerald disappeared from the radar screen of the Arthur Anderson, and suddenly sank, with no distress signal ever sent. The tragic loss of all 29 crewmembers in the Edmund Fitzgerald catastrophe,



*Photograph by Bob Campbell; Photograph courtesy of Great Lakes Historical Society*

immortalized in the classic ballad by Gordon Lightfoot, includes the story of a Jewish American maritime college student, David "Cowboy" Weiss, who lost his life in the sinking, but likely played a heroic role in the valiant attempt to keep the ship afloat in the raging, stormy sea.

David Weiss, the third of four sons of Aaron and Selma Weiss, was born in Paterson, New Jersey, in 1953, and, after moving in 1958, was raised in Southern California. He attended Hebrew school with his brothers at Temple Solael, a reform congregation in West Hills, California. His childhood included schoolwork, football and music. Weiss' mother Selma describes him as "a great kid and a bit of a daredevil." He is further characterized by his brother Don as not always satisfied with the status quo and wanting more out of life. He was a dreamer who believed that the world can be a better place. Weiss was an accomplished 12-string guitar player and vocalist, who composed and performed music in his grade school and college years. A black cowboy hat and black cowboy boots, along with his renegade persona, inspired his nickname of "Cowboy."

After completing high school, Weiss ventured to Colorado, and subsequently traveled to Michigan with a friend. It was during his visits to Michigan that Weiss first saw commercial ships on the Great Lakes and decided that his calling in life was to pilot ships. He applied and was accepted as a cadet at the Great Lakes Maritime Academy in Traverse City. He would be trained as a Great Lakes commercial ship officer. Weiss' closest friend at the Academy was Dean Hobbs (currently serving as a Great Lakes ship captain) who shared Weiss' love for automobile mechanics and music.

Captain Hobbs and other classmates were inspired by Weiss' hard work and his desire to make a positive mark in life.

Weiss was a dedicated student at the Great Lakes Maritime Academy. He learned the fundamentals of commercial ship piloting, including the age old maritime skill of navigating by the stars. Besides extensive classroom training, a significant part of the cadet experience at the Academy involved spending nine months aboard commercial vessels on the Great Lakes, observing and participating in the operation of these ships. Specifically, cadet training entailed three round trips on each of the five Great Lakes and twelve round trips on rivers in the Great Lakes Region. The goals of the cadet are to learn about the inner workings and operation of commercial ships in a real time situation. This type of onboard cadet training was relatively new at that time, and involved observation and participation by Academy students in the ships' wheelhouses and interaction with senior maritime officers.

Weiss was assigned the chore of mail pickup at various locks, which are enclosed bodies of water designed to raise or lower ships as they pass through the Great Lakes. At mail pickup, cadets often shared both good and bad experiences they encountered during their training on different ships. Additionally, cadets sometimes "traded" ships with one another when meeting at locks, in order to fulfill the previously described training requirements. Such trades involved one cadet swapping wheelhouse duties with another cadet in order to obtain a more varied experience on different ships and different lakes and rivers. Hobbs had arranged to swap his cadet training aboard the tanker, Amoco Indiana, with David Weiss, aboard the Edmund Fitzgerald. Hobbs explained that he had gone so far as to pack his bags for the impending transfer to the Edmund Fitzgerald. This trade was to occur when the two ships met at the Sault Ste. Marie Locks, which allows ships to travel between Lake Superior and the lower Great Lakes. Because of storm conditions, the Sault Ste. Marie Locks were closed and the cadet trade never occurred. Instead, Weiss remained on the Edmund Fitzgerald. When asked if it was predestined for Weiss to be aboard the Edmund Fitzgerald for the ill-fated journey, Hobbs thought this to be true and said, "these thoughts certainly go through your head."

*You cast me into the depths,  
Into the heart of the sea,  
The floods engulf me;  
All Your breakers and billows  
Swept over me.*    -Jonah, 2.4

With Cadet Weiss aboard, the Edmund Fitzgerald left Superior, Wisconsin, at 2:20 p.m. on November 9, 1975, en route to Zug Island, near Detroit. Another freighter, the Arthur Anderson, bound for Gary, Indiana,

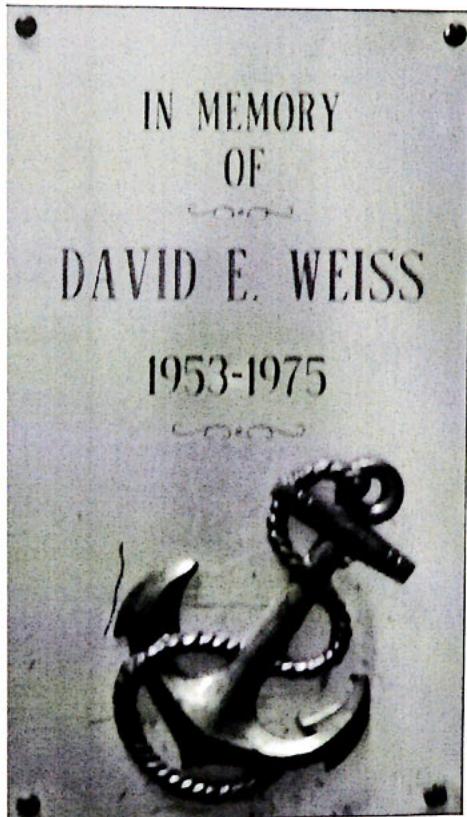
from Two Harbors, Minnesota, was located about 15 miles behind the Edmund Fitzgerald for much of the voyage. A massive winter storm arose with winds as high as 52 knots and waves as high as 35 feet, unleashing an unrelenting wrath on the massive freighter. On November 10, the Edmund Fitzgerald reported significant damage, with loss of all radar, and was forced to rely on the Arthur Anderson for navigational guidance in the treacherous waters. Damage aboard the ship likely led to flooding in a starboard tunnel, and possibly other locations on the ship. According

to Hobbs, Weiss would "always provide leadership and assistance when given the opportunity"; therefore, it is likely that Cadet Weiss was assigned by ship officers to lead an emergency squad of sailors into a flooded chamber in a valiant attempt to pump water and keep the ship afloat. Despite this plausible attempt by Weiss and his fellow crewmembers, the Edmund Fitzgerald suddenly vanished from the radar of the Arthur Anderson and sank to the bottom of an unforgiving Lake Superior, tragically taking the lives of all 29 intrepid crewmembers, including David "Cowboy" Weiss.

The sinking of the Edmund Fitzgerald is especially heartbreaking because of the abrupt nature of the incident, preventing any attempt at lifeboat deployment. According to Hobbs, the ship was "afloat one moment and broken into two pieces at the bottom the next." Like the Titanic, because of its sheer size, many thought the Edmund Fitzgerald was unsinkable. However,

the Titanic took over an hour to sink; the Edmund Fitzgerald took only moments. Weiss and his fellow crewmembers perished in a single moment, without having the opportunity to signal for distress or deploy lifeboats.

Weiss' passing was just three days prior to his 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday. His brother Don had mailed him a shirt as a birthday present, and it was returned as



*David Weiss Memorial  
Plaque at Congregation Beth El,  
Traverse City, Michigan.  
Photograph courtesy of Terry Tarnow,  
past president Congregation Beth El,  
Traverse City, Michigan*

undeliverable.

After the tragedy, Weiss' father, Aaron, and Julius Belfour of Suttons Bay attended a memorial service at the Great Lakes Maritime Academy where the two sang Kaddish. According to an account in the Traverse City Record-Eagle, 250 people attended the memorial service, during which a fellow cadet placed a white flowered memorial wreath into a calm Grand Traverse Bay. "Many tears were shed," the paper reported, as a procession of cadets, family and other attendees walked by the floating wreath.

A 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary memorial service for the crewmembers of the Edmund Fitzgerald was held on November 10, 1985. Kaddish was recited by Dr. Lew Romer and Terry Tarnow of Traverse City's Congregation Beth El. Gordon Lightfoot, songwriter of "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald," spoke during the ceremony. A memorial wreath was placed into the water by Weiss' parents.

In 1999, a consecration ceremony was held aboard the Coast Guard cutter, Mackinaw, over the Lake Superior wreckage site of the Edmund Fitzgerald, to honor the lives of all 29 valiant crewmembers who perished in the turbulent storm nearly 25 years earlier. This ceremony was attended by Captain Dean Hobbs, who placed a Great Lakes Maritime Academy cap in the water to commemorate the life of Cadet David Weiss.

Prior to the ceremony, the weather conditions were extremely foggy. However, as the memorial service began, a bank of clouds parted and the sun shone down directly on the Lake Superior memorial site. After the memorial ceremony, the Mackinaw returned to port and encountered a single ship coming out of the Sault Ste. Marie Locks: the Arthur Anderson.

David "Cowboy" Weiss is memorialized at Congregation Beth El in Traverse City, the oldest synagogue in continuous use in the state of Michigan, currently celebrating its 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary. According to long-time Beth El congregants Ellen Fivenson and Terry Tarnow, Kaddish is recited yearly at the synagogue in David's memory.

Despite the calamitous outcome, the life of David Weiss continues to be celebrated and admired for his strength and spirit; indeed, a real Jewish-American cowboy.



*Dean Baird, M.D. is a resident of Potomac, Maryland and is a physician with a specialty in radiology. He is married to Kathy Baird and has two teenage children. He is a congregant at Temple Beth Ami in Rockville, Maryland.*

## **WOMEN AND THE ARTS**

In the Fall 2006, Vol. 46 edition, *Michigan Jewish History* celebrated the 7<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Jewish Women in the Arts award presented annually by The Festival Dancers and the Janice Charach Epstein Gallery both based at the D. Dan and Betty Kahn Building of the Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit. The list of recipients contained some spelling errors and omissions, so we thought we'd honor these women once more and provide an update on the most recent winners, too.

2006 became the final year for the Jewish Women in the Arts (JWA) Awards. Founder Harriet Berg together with writers Esther Allweiss Ingber and Shelli Liebman Dorfman, photographer Deanna Sperka and book designer Ruth Adler Schnee are publishing a book summing up the careers of the 55 JWA honorees. The book will be released in 2009.

### **Jewish Women in the Arts Honorees • 2000-2006**

#### **2000**

Esther Broner, *Literature*  
Margo Cohen-Feinberg, *Patron Of The Arts*  
Yolanda Fleischer, *Theater*  
Harriet Gelfond, *Visual Arts*  
Norma Glasser-Penchansky, *Music*  
Paula Kramer, *Dance*  
Sonny Lipenholtz, *Music*  
Ruth Redstone, *Literature*  
Ruth Adler Schnee, *Visual Arts*  
Deanna Sperka, *Visual Arts*  
Vivian Stollman, *Visual Arts*

#### **2001**

Eileen Aboulafia, *Visual Arts*  
Shirley Benyas, *Theater*  
Norma Goldman, *Literature*  
Susanne Hilberry, *Visual Arts*  
Shelly Komer Jackier, *Dance*  
Ann Kutnick, *Music*  
Sunny Segal, *Dance*  
Elaine Serling, *Music*  
Corrine Stavish, *Literature*  
Hanna Stiebel, *Visual Arts*

#### **2002**

Harriet Berg, *Dance*  
Judith Levin Cantor, *Literature*  
Bertha Cohen, *Visual Arts*  
Kitty Dubin, *Theater*  
Elaine Lebenbom, *Music*  
Evelyn Orbach, *Theater Bio*  
Ilse Roberg, *Visual Arts*

#### **2003**

Beverly Baker, *Patron Of The Arts*  
Barbara Fink, *Dance*  
Barbara Keidan, *Visual Arts*  
Hope Palmer, *Theater*  
Merry Silber, *Visual Arts*  
Joan Weisman, *Literature*  
Melba Winer, *Patron Of The Arts*

#### **2004**

Carolyn Dorfman, *Dance*  
Lee Hoffman, *Patron Of The Arts*  
Janet Kelman, *Visual Arts*  
Sue Marx, *Film*  
Sylvia Nelson, *Gallery Director*  
Carol Solomon, *Music*

#### **2005**

Lynne Avadenka, *Visual Arts*  
Karen Goodman, *Dance*  
Marsha Miro, *Literature*  
Betty Kowalsky Stasson, *Music*  
Irene Walt, *Patron Of The Arts*  
Henrietta Hermelin Weinberg, *Theater*  
Ann Zirulnik, *Dance Education*

#### **2006**

Jessica Fogel, *Dance*  
Helen Kerwin, *Music*  
Florence Morris, *Art Dealer*  
Ruth Rattner, *Patron Of The Arts*  
Joan Freeman Shwayder, *Music*  
Linda Soberman, *Visual Arts*  
Jean Sosin, *Patron Of The Arts*

# ARCHIVED TREASURES

## Bentley Historical Library

**The** Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan is home to the Michigan Historical Collections, a compilation of materials covering not only the history of the state, but also the lives of individuals and activities of organizations who are part of this story. The collections are comprised of more than 4,500 archival collections, 65,000 printed works, over 10,000 maps and 1.5 million visual images.

The archival collections contain the papers of such noted Jewish individuals as Bernard Isaacs, educator and administrator of Detroit's United Hebrew Schools; Sherwin T. Wine, the University of Michigan graduate who founded the Secular Humanistic Judaism movement; William Haber, University of Michigan teacher and administrator and noted economist and labor mediator, and Albert Kahn, the architect who pioneered changes in industrial design. Also, the Bentley contains the records of Jewish organizations such as Temple Beth Emeth of Ann Arbor and the Workmen's Circle Arbiter Ring.

The Borman Family Papers document the successes of Russian-emigrant brothers Tom and Abraham Borman in their supermarket chains including Food Fair and Farmer Jack's and their life-long commitment to humanitarian efforts for the greater Southeastern Michigan area, the Detroit Jewish-American and global Jewish community.

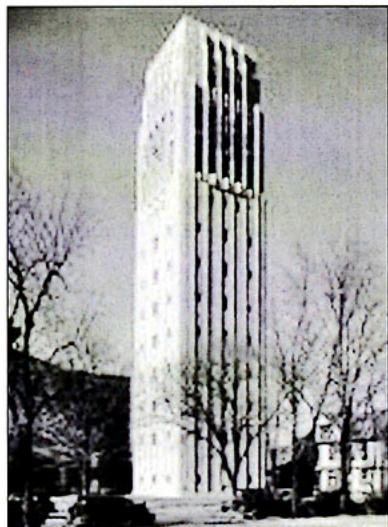
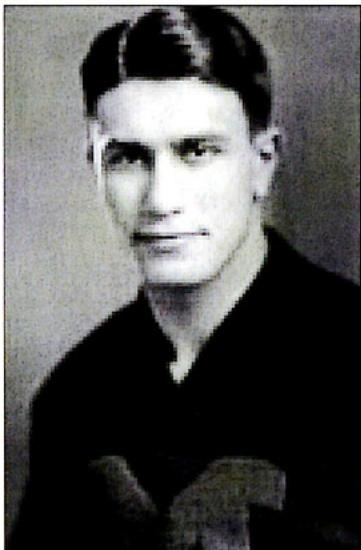


*Farmer Jack opening, Port Huron,  
January 1967*

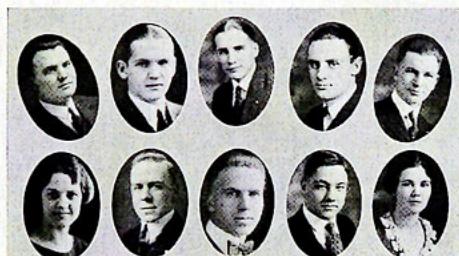


*Rosa Parks and the Borman family at the  
Farmer Jack opening on Rosa Parks Blvd.  
in Detroit, March 24, 1982*

*Benjamin "Benny" Friedman (1905-1982, considered one of the greatest passers and quarterbacks to play football. As a sophomore (1924) he played just five minutes as Red Grange and Illinois defeated Michigan, then guided the Wolverines to a 3-0 victory over the Illini in 1925. He went on to play for Cleveland, Detroit, New York, and Brooklyn and later entered coaching ultimately becoming athletic director of Brandeis University. Friedman is in both the National and Michigan Hall of Fame.*



Burton Tower, built 1936,  
Albert Kahn Architects



HAROLD HERMAN  
Mo Alpha Society; Bayonne Club; Class Football (5); Union Orchestra.  
Rayone, N. J.

WILLARD W. HERRING  
Theta Chi  
Cresterville

JAMES LORING HESS  
Academy Round-up Club; Craftmen's Club  
Cleveland Heights, Ohio

FRANKLIN R. HETZINGER  
Kappa Sigma  
Harkness, Kan.

ARTHUR FISHER HICKS  
Varsity Band (3); (4); University Symphony Orchestra (1) (4).  
Slippery Rock, Pa.

CAROL J. HENNETT  
Gamma Phi Beta  
Ludington

W. ARTHUR HICKS  
Commerce Club  
Mendon

WARREN F. HILL  
Marine

JOHN W. HINDES  
Delta Sigma Rho; Adelphi; Varsity Debating Team (3); Oratorical Board;  
Boeing Club; Craftsmen's Club  
Pewaukee

Alice Hinkson  
Kappa Kappa Gamma; Mortarboard; Wyvern; Women's Editor Chimes (4);  
Vice-President Women's Athletic Association (4).  
Lansing

Nativity

All photos courtesy of the  
Bentley Historical Library,  
University of Michigan

# Photo Archives

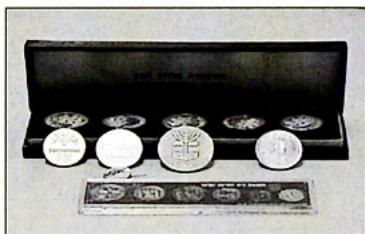
Yearbook page, "Michiganensian  
1921"; LSA Seniors Harold  
Herman thru Alice Hinkson

# Celebrities & Celebrations

## Commemorative Israel Coins

The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan has received a generous gift of commemorative Israel coins and medals dating from Israel's 25th anniversary in 1973. They were donated by Mrs. Carol Friedman Erickson of Ypsilanti, Michigan, from the collection of her late husband, Dr. Seymour Friedman, who died in 1985.

The donation includes an official mint set of six coins (agorot and lira) and a set of six Pidyon Haben silver coins (both issued by the Bank of Israel), an Israel State Medal issued by the Israel Government Coins and Medals Corporation, a silver "Hanukka Coin," and two special commemorative coins engraved "Let My People Go."



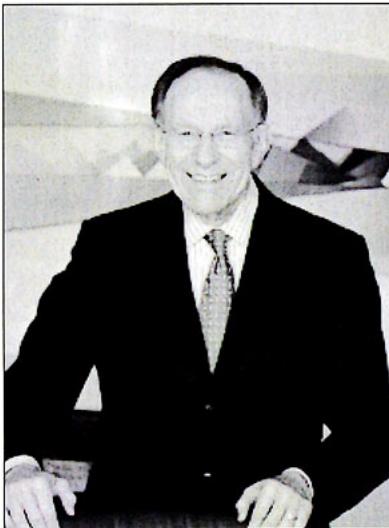
Mrs. Friedman Erickson reports that her late husband was "very proud of his Jewish heritage and collected coins just for personal historical mementos. Dr. Friedman was a member of Temple Kol Ami in West Bloomfield, Michigan, and later moved to Traverse City.

## Jack Robinson Inducted into the International Institute Foundation's Heritage Hall of Fame

Jack A. Robinson was inducted into the International Institute Foundation's Heritage Hall of Fame in November 2007, the plaque permanently displayed in Cobo Hall in Detroit. The Hall of Fame honored Robinson for his support of multiculturalism and the arts.

Robinson, a graduate of Wayne State University in Pharmacy, owned and operated Perry Drugs, a chain of 225 drugstores, which was sold in 1995 to the Rite Aid Corp.

Citing his life as "the example of the American dream," Robinson said: "I started out without much...but with hard work, goodwill and enthusiasm...I was able to build a business." Inspired by his Russian immigrant mother's excitement at becoming a citizen after she attended night school to learn English, he resolved to give back to the community.



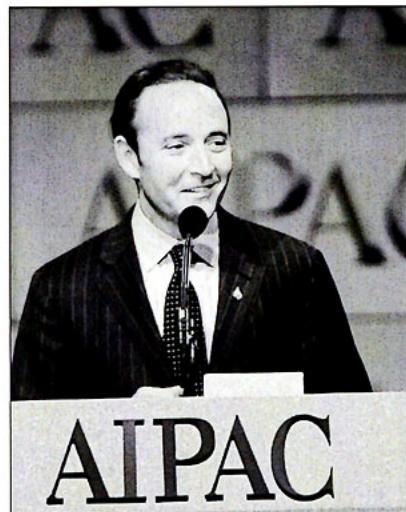
"This man...has become so charitable and so involved in making life in the Detroit area better," remarked Foundation Chairman Tarik Daoud at the induction ceremony. Robinson was also awarded the prestigious Fred M. Butzel Award by the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit in 1991.

Congratulations to Jack Robinson on this latest achievement in his life of leadership and contribution to the betterment of our community. – *Judy Levin Cantor*

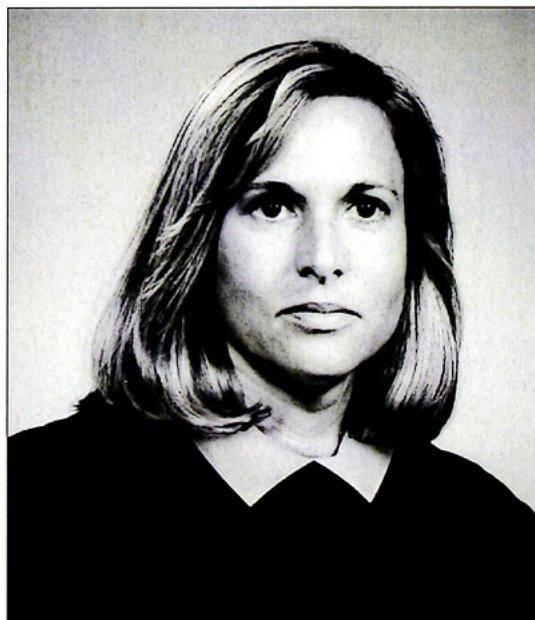
## **David Victor Takes on AIPAC Presidency**

**A**t the American Israel Public Affairs Committee's 2008 conference in Washington, D.C., attended by approximately 7,500 activists, students and scholars, including nearly 350 Michigan residents, David Victor of Bloomfield Hills became national president of the organization for a two-year term. The 49-year-old Victor, son of Steve and the late Arlene, is a second-generation activist in AIPAC.

Victor is president of American Educational Institute, a Birmingham-based company which provides continuing medical, dental and legal education. He is a former vice president of the Jewish Community Relations Council. His wife Kelly shares his commitment to AIPAC. Victor is the second Michigan resident to be elected to the national post; Edward Levy, Jr. of Birmingham was president from 1984-1986.



# Judge Helene N. White Nominated to the U.S. Court of Appeals



Judge Helene N. White was confirmed on June 24, 2008, to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, which hears appeals from the federal district courts of Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, and Tennessee. Judge White, known for her intellect, work ethic, and demeanor, was originally nominated by President Clinton in January 1997 and was re-nominated by President George W. Bush in 2008.

Her experience on the bench spans more than 17 years. In 1992, Judge White was elected to the Michigan Court of Appeals, 1st District. Prior to her Court of Appeals position, Judge White served for 10 years on the Wayne Circuit bench and two years on the Common Pleas/36th District Court. Throughout her service as a judge, she has been committed to listening to people, caring about justice and working hard to do what is right.

Judge White graduated from Barnard College with an A.B. and received her J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 1978. She lives in Detroit and is actively involved in the community receiving the Spirit of Detroit Award, the Detroit Human Rights Department Women's Committee's Horizon Award and the Eleanor Roosevelt Humanitarian Award. Judge White also serves on the boards of Michigan Legal Services, COTS (Coalition on Temporary Shelter) and many other civic and community organizations.

# Memorial Rededication of the Albert A. Fields Park in Detroit

**D**espite strong winds and a chilling drizzle, warm and heartfelt feelings marked the rededication of the Albert A. Fields Park at Florence and Forrer Streets in Detroit on November 15, 2007. The park honors the first deceased Jewish World War II soldier to be brought from Belgium for reburial in the United States.

The soldier's son, Dr. Sander M. Fields of Columbia, South Carolina, recalled the pride he felt on the warm summer evening when the park was first dedicated, in 1951, six years after his father's death. He stood by the side of his mother, Lillian Fields at that time.

"I knew from previous visits to the playground that it was in extremely poor condition," Fields said. "Never in my wildest dream, did I expect it would return to its original state and become a lovely place for children to play and enjoy themselves. There are no words that could adequately describe my family's appreciation and thankfulness for the hard work and diligence of the individuals responsible for the reconstruction and dedication of Fields Park."

With his wife Susan and sons Drs. Andrew and James by his side, Dr. Fields expressed gratitude to the Forrer Community Block Club for spearheading the neighborhood clean-up efforts and engaging Wayne County and the City of Detroit to allocate funds to rebuild and refurbish the park. Club member Yvonne Gibbs visited and worked on the park daily; she rescued the original damaged plaque from the jaws of a bulldozer and urged the city to commission a new one. "A person will always be remembered as long as you call their name," Gibbs said. "I hope that the children in our community will see the plaque and be inspired to think that they can strive to do some good." The renovated park site contains a rebuilt baseball diamond, new paved walkways and picnic tables.

As work progressed on the renovation project, Wayne County Commissioner Burton Leland was asked to assist in locating Pvt. Fields' surviving family. Leland turned to the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit. Sander Fields recalled, "On a lovely South Carolina morning, I received an unbelievable phone call. For me, it was like winning a multi-million dollar lottery! I was informed that the City of Detroit was in the process of renovating Fields Park and would shortly be rededicating it once again in memory of my father."



*Private Albert Fields served in the 80th Infantry Division. He was killed in action in Hoven, Germany.*

Fields acknowledged the role of his wife, Susan, who kept all of the original documents about Pvt. Fields' untimely death.

At the ceremony, Albert Fields' two grandsons, Andrew and James, detailed the events that preceded the hero's death, citing a January 1945 letter sent by the U.S. Army.

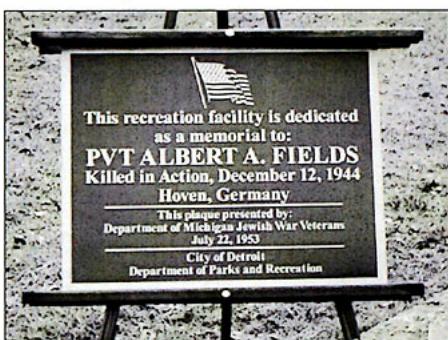
Even though Pvt. Fields was in a hospital in England recovering from shrapnel wounds sustained in a bomb blast, he was put back into active service in time to take part in the infamous Battle of the Bulge. As a soldier in the 80th Infantry Division, he and his unit were sent to Hoven, Germany, to capture a vital bridge. While under heavy fire, Pvt. Fields gave his life in order to give emergency medical treatment to casualties.

The letter lauded Pvt. Fields' gallantry in the action for which he was posthumously awarded the Silver Star, second only to the Medal of Honor. James concluded, "My father often wonders about what his relationship with Albert would have been like. My brother Andrew and I wish we had the opportunity to have known our grandfather. A part of all of us died with Albert Fields in Hoven, Germany, on that nasty winter day. No one will ever know the influence he may have had on his family and fellow Americans if he had not been killed defending his beloved country."

A Jewish War Veterans color guard opened the rededication program presenting arms after bringing the American and Israel flags to the podium.

Speakers included Vincent Anwunah, Detroit Recreation Department general manager, planning design and construction management; Stephanie Young, manager, Mayor's Northwest District Neighborhood City Hall and Robert Cohen, executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council, which worked with the City of Detroit in coordinating the event.

*– Alan Nathan*



*The Albert A. Fields Park at Florence and Forrer Streets in Detroit honors the first deceased Jewish World War II soldier to be brought from Belgium for reburial in the United States.*



*The Fields family (l to r) Dr. Andrew Fields, Dr. Sander Fields, Mrs. Suzi Fields, Dr. James Fields*

## A World of Thanks: Arnie Weiner Retires as BBYO Director

**A** World of Thanks for the Lives He Has Touched: a Tribute to Arnie Weiner" brought more than 700 people to Orchard Mall in West Bloomfield on the evening of March 15, 2008 to recognize the retiring director of Michigan Region B'nai B'rith Youth Organization for his 39 years of service. The program followed the third annual "Fashion Unleashed," a fund-raising venture for the youth program, which annually serves more than 1,000 Jewish teens.

A product of the Grand Rapids AZA chapter, Weiner received his master's degree in social work from the University of Michigan and joined the Michigan BBYO staff in 1969 as assistant director. He became Michigan Region director in 1972.

Michigan Region BBYO has flourished under his leadership and is considered one of the strongest regions in the country. He has been actively involved in directing programs both in the United States and abroad. He served as a member of the BBYO national management team under two international directors, and interim international BBYO director in 2000-2001. He declined to apply for that position because he wanted to continue to be actively involved with the youth. As a result, Michigan Region became the role model for a most successful program.

The tribute event brought remarks from Robert P. Aronson, CEO, Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, and presentations from Matt Grossman, executive director, BBYO, Inc.; Sarah Heoner, Michigan Region BBG president and Brandon Lebowitz, Michigan Region AZA president; Ilene Lubin-Amir, BBYO commissioner, and Barbara Horowitz, Michigan Region BBYO commission chairperson. Michelle and Mark Soltz chaired the tribute event, proceeds of which will support the Arnie Weiner Scholarship Fund to help BBYO'ers attend Israel and overseas programs.

In his farewell column of *B'Yachad*, the BBYO newspaper, Weiner wrote: "Some will say that Michigan BBYO is reflective of who I have been as a professional. I attended a Federation retreat for agency directors in which my generation was characterized as 'the connecting generation.' We connected the pre-World War II generation to the Baby Boomers. I really relished that role and enjoyed combining continuity and tradition with innovation and change to build the program of which we are all so proud. I



did not do it alone. We were able to gather many people of vision and good will, who saw the future leadership of our community within the Jewish youth whom we serve.

"As I look around our community," he continued, "I see that the vision has come true. Former BBYO youth are now rabbis, synagogue/temple leaders, Federation and agency execs, legislators and jurists, and many more found their Jewish identity in BBYO. There are lots of people to thank: parents who helped direct their teens into BBYO (some against their will); advisers who gave so much time and love to the kids for whom they volunteered; board/commission members who worked so hard to raise the dollars that allowed us to operate so effectively; staff members whose dedication translated into long hours of nights and weekends; and, of course, the youth themselves, who put so many hours of dedication and enthusiasm into a program that was truly youth-led, if at time, staff-inspired. May BBYO go from strength to strength. I will be watching with pride." – *Ida Nathan*

## **Flint's Temple Beth El Celebrates 80th Anniversary**

**A**n October 2007 weekend of events in Flint marked the celebration of Temple Beth El's 80th anniversary, themed "Old Faces – New Faces: Footprints in Time."

Mitchell S. Weiss, chairperson of the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary steering committee, summarized the celebration by recalling his statement at the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, "We have much to be thankful for. We are, after all, Reform Jews, who believe deeply that we can freely choose our own destiny. Thus, 'May we all continue to go from strength to strength' as we confront the challenges and choices that will shape our congregation's future."

At Friday night services, U.S. Representative Dale Kildee, 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, presented the congregation with a framed copy of his remarks, also printed in the Congressional Record, concerning the Reform Jewish presence in the Flint area since 1927. Approximately 100 attendees listened as Weiss shared the message he received from Gladys Schuster, whose late husband, Gerald Schuster, had served as the temple's rabbi for almost 18 years. Rabbi Stephen Mills, regional director of the Union for Reform Judaism's Northeast Lakes Council, delivered the keynote address. Rabbi Mills traced the historical change in the Reform movement over the past 20 years, in which spirituality has displaced "classical reformism." He stressed the need to reach "in," not just "out," if Reform Judaism is to maintain vitality in America.



*Rabbi Companez with Richard Shank,  
president of Mott Community  
College in Flint.*

M. Franklin of Detroit's Temple Beth El presided over the signing of the Articles of Association. The permanent home for the temple, at Liberty and East Second Street, was purchased in 1935.

In the 1940s, under the direction of Rabbi Morton M. Applebaum, the congregation expanded. Led by Martin Gordon, building committee chair, and Dr. Max Hart, finance committee chair, a new building was designed and the congregation moved to its Ballenger Highway Temple with the first services held there on April 14, 1950. With the decline of the Flint economy in the 1980s, accompanied by a decline in the area's Jewish population, Flint's Reform and Conservative congregations actively cooperated. A joint religious school with Congregation Beth Israel, called the Ivriah, began operating in 1984, and with the assistance of the Conservative congregation, a new temple building, literally next door to the Conservative synagogue, was dedicated on September 12, 1998.

The 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration continued with a wine and cheese reception Saturday night followed by a havdalah service conducted by the temple's present rabbi, Karen Companez. A family event on Sunday afternoon concluded the celebration with more than 50 children among the participants.

Weiss said, "To have the number of children running around our Temple gives us old faces some hope that our anniversary words will not have been said in vain — that we will go from generation to generation with Temple's Reform Jewish footprint continuing to be made in the Flint-Genesee County area." — Mitchell Weiss

**100:**

# **Two Community Leaders Ring in 100 Years**

## **Irene Rodman • Stanley Friedman**

### **Irene Rodman**



Meticulously coifed and beautifully dressed – as always – Irene Rodman stepped up to the podium to respond to tributes paid to her in celebration of her 100th birthday. With humor and sincerity she spoke for more than 15 minutes – without a single note card in front of her – to the 145 people in attendance at Adat Shalom Synagogue in Farmington Hills on October 25, 2007.

For more than 75 of her years, Rodman has been an active community volunteer. The eldest of three daughters, she was born in the Ukraine on October 31, 1907. Her family emigrated to the United States when she was 13 and moved to Detroit in 1921. Detroit would be where she met and married her husband, the late Joseph Rodman; and where her two daughters, Dr. Joan Rodman-Smoller of Riverdale, NY and the late Anita Tucker were born. She has three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Her volunteerism career began in 1931 when she joined the Primrose Benevolent Society, an organization she went on to serve as president. A decade later, Rodman became active with B'nai B'rith Women, known today as Jewish Women International. After holding various chairmanships in the Louis Marshall Chapter (Detroit area), she became its president and currently serves as president of the combined Marshall-Israel-Brandeis-Business and Professional and Pisgah Chapter.

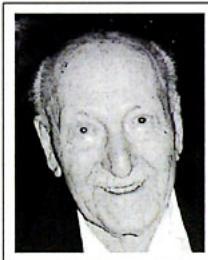
In 1971-1972 she served as president of the B'nai B'rith Women's Council of Metropolitan Detroit and was named its "Woman of Achievement" in 2000. Paula Marks Bolton, president of the Albert Einstein Chapter made a presentation to Rodman noting her loyalty as a chapter consultant and volunteer for the past quarter century.

Alan Yost, executive director of Adat Shalom Synagogue, noted that Rodman's synagogue membership is now in its 62nd year. Her contributions to the synagogue are numerous and, even at 100 she refuses to just sit and rest. She is currently president of the synagogue's senior adults group, ChaZaKah.

Rodman describes herself as a "people lover" and credited her involvement with friends, family and people as the reason she reached the century mark. A family celebration took place over the weekend which followed. – *Gloria Ellis*

**Stanley Friedman**

Just as they have each year beginning with his 80th birthday, Stanley Bertram Friedman's family gathered together for a summer weekend of family fun and celebration. This year, the event had special meaning as the 60 family members met in St. Petersburg, Florida to celebrate Friedman's 100th birthday. At the Saturday night family dinner, "Pa," as he is known to everyone, read his special annual letter recalling the past year's accomplishments of each of his four children, their spouses and four grandchildren.



Born in Cleveland in 1908, Friedman, the youngest of three boys followed by three sisters, is the son of Hungarian émigrés Jennie Rogan and Anton Friedman. The Friedmans lived in an Italian neighborhood, one of the few Jewish families in the area and belonged to Fairmont Temple, Cleveland's large Reform congregation.

When his father died in 1929, Friedman left the Wharton School of Finance to help his mother and raise his three sisters. His two older brothers, one a doctor and one a rabbi had already left the area. At night, Friedman attended Cleveland College of Law, graduated and passed the Ohio bar. At the age of 34 he was conscripted and ultimately was sent overseas where, following the Allies' victory, he was a member of the team evaluating the practices of I.G. Farben (the German chemical company that produced the poison gas used in Nazi concentration camps).

He met the love of his life — Miriam Keidan Levin, daughter of Wayne State University's Professor Samuel Levin and his wife Lillian — on a train, while traveling in uniform to Florida to visit his girlfriend. Six months later Miriam and Stanley married. After the war, Friedman joined his bride in Detroit.

He began working with the Borman family and eventually rose to the post of corporate secretary of Borman Foods (Farmer Jack Markets) where he utilized his legal education without ever practicing law. In 1973, he retired to travel and spend winters in Florida.

The Friedmans have been continuous members of Congregation Shaarey Zedek, although the family also belonged to Temple Emanu-El, where all four children received a Jewish education.

Every year the family looks for ways to make "Pa's" birthday celebration and family reunion unique and memorable. This year, in addition to the landmark occasion of Friedman's centennial, his daughter Peggy married Peter Remington. Her 100-year-old father walked her down the aisle and the family wondered what ever will they do for the 101st? — *Peggy Daitch*

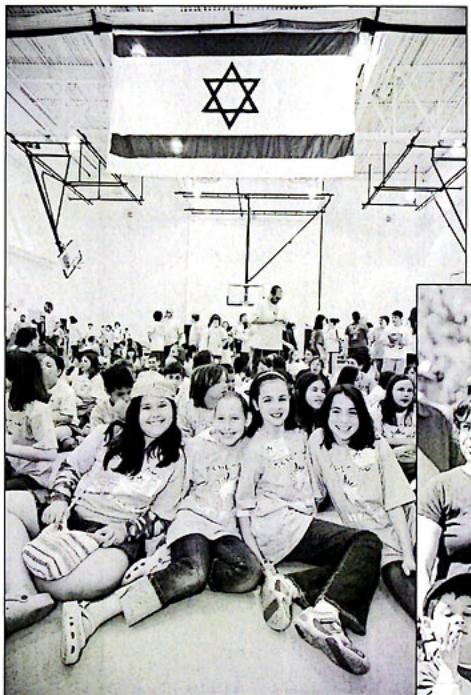
## Israel at 60

**O**n May 16, 1948, some 22,000 exuberant Jews gathered on the athletic field of Central High School in Detroit to celebrate the most momentous of post-war occasions...the birth of the State of Israel. Sixty years later, in the spring and summer of 2008, Jews from across the world once again celebrated Israel's founding. Throughout the Detroit area, the young and old, Orthodox and secular came together to celebrate the special relationship this region has with the Land of Milk and Honey.

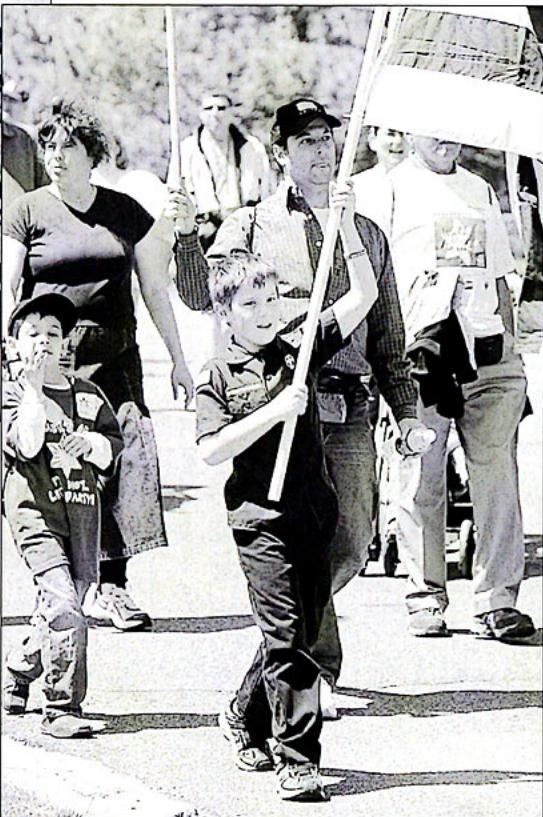
Events ranged from a gigantic children's party on the grounds of the D. Dan and Betty Kahn Campus of the Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit to the opening of an Israel Shuk (marketplace) at Shalom Street in the Jewish Community Center in West Bloomfield to a memorial service for the 22,437 soldiers who perished while defending Israel in a moving Yom Hazikaron ceremony at Congregation Shaarey Zedek Southfield.



*In what is being billed as the largest gathering of Jews in Detroit 60 years, a crowd of more than 15,000 celebrated Israel's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday at IsraelSixty: A Fair To Remember at the Michigan State Fairgrounds. Singing, dancing, carnival rides, fireworks, Kosher food, and an Israeli shuk were among the many amusements, but the real joy came from the people who gathered to celebrate the birthday of the Jewish nation.*



*"Israel is 60...I'm Not...Let's Party!"*  
Wearing a rainbow of colorful t-shirts, more than 2,800 children from 15 Detroit-area congregations celebrated Israel's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday at the Jewish Community Center in May, 2008. Kids participated in two concerts, sang the Hatikvah and showered each other with confetti. They also consumed 100 lbs. of cookies.



(below)

Approximately 1,900 community members celebrated Yom Ha'atzmaut and Israel's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at a concert featuring Israeli superstar Noa, with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra at the Max. M. Fisher Music Center in Detroit. The strong connection between Israel and Detroit was highlighted by "Detroit and Israel: In Harmony for 60 Years," produced by Michigan filmmakers Sue Marx and Allyson Rockwell.



(above)

Under a cloudless May sky, nearly 1,000 people attended the "Walk for Israel-Walk the Land" at the Jewish Community Center in West Bloomfield. Led by members of the Jewish War Veterans, participants were treated with music by the Kid Klez Band and refreshments along the one-mile route.

Photos compliments of  
*The Detroit Jewish News*

# Seferim/Books

## *Amidst the Shadows of Trees*

by Miriam Brysk

**Yellow Star Press, Ann Arbor, 2007; 183 pages**

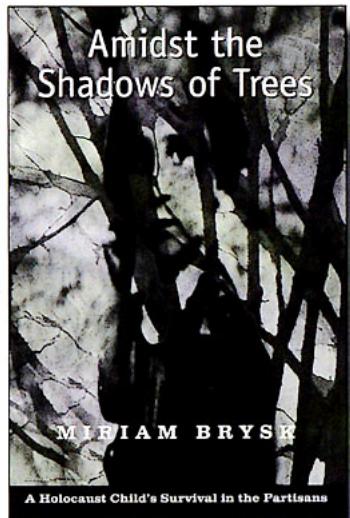
*"You must obey all the orders I give you without asking any questions.  
Do what I tell you."*

- Bronka Miasnik to her 4-year-old daughter, Miriam

An artist's depiction of a child-woman's haunted face peers warily through a foreground of barren tree branches on the cover of *Amidst the Shadows of Trees*. In the background is the barely discernible suggestion of a barbed wire fence. Miriam Brysk — artist, retired professor, scientist, writer and poet — is both the artist and the author of this memoir.

The nightmarish cover art taps into familiar archetypes of perverted childhood, lost innocence and danger in the woods — themes reminiscent of such fables as "Hansel and Gretel" — and foreshadows the astounding narrative of the now 73-year-old Brysk's survival as a child of the Holocaust. Brysk recollects her story — which reads like an "it-can't-have-actually-happened" work of fiction — from the viewpoint of her always-present childhood mind's eye.

Brysk opens her memoir in Warsaw in 1939 when she was four years old. She describes her feelings of terror and helplessness as she experiences the first of what would become regular bombing raids by the Nazis. Brysk learned her earliest — and what time would prove to be one of her most valuable — survival lessons from her mother: "You must obey all the orders I give you without asking any questions. Do what I tell you." This strict disciplinary command would become a steely component of her character, as time after time the family was forced into situations where a child's cry or act of disobedience would result in murder of the entire family.



When Nazi occupation made life dangerous for Warsaw's Jews, Brysk and her mother fled Warsaw to join Brysk's father, Dr. Chaim Miasnik, in the Soviet-occupied town of Lida, in White Russia. Dr. Miasnik, a noted physician, had taken a position as chief surgeon in a Lida hospital, laying the foundation for his family to join him after Poland fell.

The Miasnik family lived in relative safety under the Communist regime in Lida — due in large part to Dr. Miasnik's stature as a surgeon — until Germany attacked the Soviet Union in 1941. Intense bombing raids were followed by land invasions of Nazi storm troopers, creation of a Jewish ghetto, and in May 1942 the relentless massacre of 80 percent of Lida's Jews.

Brysk's family was saved from the massacre when young Jewish partisans covertly led the family out of Lida into the surrounding forest where her father's surgical skills were needed by wounded partisans. Brysk recalls her feelings of exhilaration as the family joined other Jewish partisans in their new home without walls or barbed wire, and her sense of adventure and empowerment when her father shaved her head, dressed her as a boy and gave her a pistol for her eighth birthday. Ultimately, her father established a hospital in the forest, under the auspices of the Soviet high command and the family remained forest occupants until liberation.

Brysk has made a valuable contribution to the literature of the Holocaust with this masterful memoir. The acuity of her memory, her deep insight into human psychology and her superb story-telling skills combine to make her story one that reverberates in the mind and heart of the reader long after the book ends. — Marilyn Krainen

## Miriam Brysk

**M**iriam Brysk, PhD, is a professor emerita of the University of Texas Medical Branch, specializing in dermatology and microbiology. A resident of Ann Arbor since her retirement, Brysk now devotes her life to mining her childhood Holocaust experiences to create moving works of art that honor and memorialize the children who died in the Holocaust. Her art, based primarily on digital manipulation of photographs, has been exhibited in Jewish institutions and art galleries nationwide, including the Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington Hills. Brysk is also a writer, lecturer and poet. Some of her poems are included in *Amidst the Shadows of Trees*. Her artwork can be seen at [www.miriambrysk.com](http://www.miriambrysk.com).

# *Houses of Study:*

## *A Jewish Woman Among Books*

by Ilana M. Blumberg

**University of Nebraska Press, 2007; 173 pages**

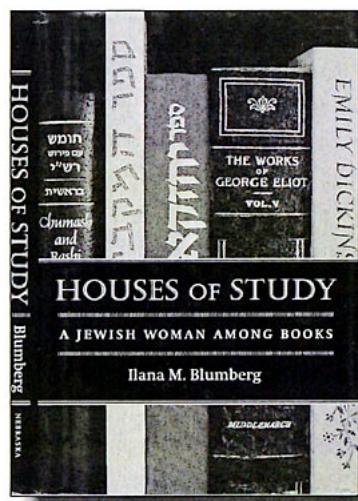
**N**early twenty years have passed since I left my childhood family and home and made my first forays into the Beit Midrash and the university, the two 'houses of study' I would inhabit independently as an adult," Ilana Blumberg writes in the preface to her memoir. "But any adult resolution I have achieved between these two worlds still yields frequently to my sense of deep conflict. For more than ten years conflict was so dominantly my experience that I assumed adulthood meant the force that pulled things apart."

Four essays comprise the book, which traces the writer's struggle to bridge the two distinct worlds in which she grew into womanhood — the observant Orthodox world of her childhood and the secular modern world of her literary studies. Today Blumberg is a professor of Humanities at James Madison College at Michigan State University.

In April 2008, Blumberg flew to Israel to accept the Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature Choice Award, given to her for this autobiographical work. Two Choice awards, in the amount of \$7,500, were presented, along with the prestigious \$100,000 Rohr prize. The Rohr family inaugurated the prizes in 2006 to celebrate the honoree's love for Jewish literature, and alternates between fiction and non-fiction in its awards. As she does at the end of each of her frequent trips to Israel, she returned with her bags filled with the latest in Israeli publications, for she is engrossed with the Hebrew writers of both prose and poetry.

Raised in Ann Arbor, where she attended a Conservative day school and then an Orthodox high school, Blumberg credits her grandfather, Harry, author of a Hebrew language text used in many afternoon schools, for learning not just the language but also developing a deep love for it.

Blumberg went to Israel for a year to pray and study. It was expected that this was where she would meet a prospective husband. She learned the laws of observance,



but she often felt a need to challenge these. She conveys the sense that learning at the Yeshiva was for the boys. She was ahead of the times that led to the modern Orthodox world; and this, along with her love of literature, fueled her internal struggles.

She returned to complete her studies at Barnard and then at the University of Pennsylvania where she earned her doctorate. She writes of this period of her life, revealing how the writings of George Eliot gained as much importance in her life as rabbinic texts held in her earlier years. She had a love affair with a non-Jew and became disillusioned when her attempt to start a women's prayer group failed.

Today, Blumberg again lives in Ann Arbor with her husband Ori, who grew up in a Reform family but is comfortable with her passion for Hebrew and their somewhat observant lifestyle. He too is a teacher of literature; together with their daughter they attend a small university minyan, orthodox in its orientation. Their place in the Jewish world continues to evolve. —Gloria B. Ellis, retired director, Walsh College Library

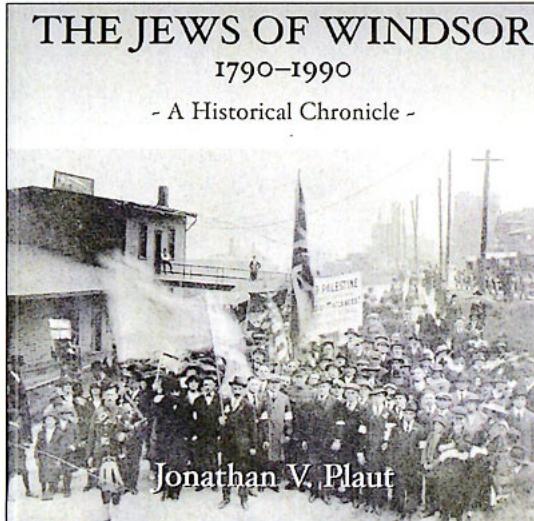
## *The Jews of Windsor, 1790-1990; A Historical Chronicle*

by Rabbi Jonathan V. Plaut, Ph.D.

**Dundurn Press, 2007; 320 pages**

Rabbi Jonathan V. Plaut's historiography on the Jews of Windsor suggests that Jewish history along the Detroit River is really a tale of two cities. Plaut, who served as the rabbi of Windsor's Congregation Beth El from 1970 to 1984, first wrote this as his doctoral dissertation. As is evident in his knowledge and personal involvement in Windsor's Jewish life during this time period, Plaut understands Windsor's Jewish history both within the bi-national Great Lakes Region and nationally within Canada.

Plaut begins his history with Moses David of Montreal who settled in British-occupied Detroit in 1790. David was a contemporary of the better-known Chapman Abraham and Ezekiel Solomon. Six years later, when the British officially transferred Detroit to the Americans, Moses David relocated across the Detroit River to the settlement of Sandwich, which later became the town of Windsor during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. After the death of Moses David in 1814, Sandwich became void of Jews for several decades until new settlers arrived from Eastern Europe in the late 1870s. From the late 1870s until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the saga of Windsor's Jewish community follows a similar tale as that found throughout most of Canada and the



settling in Windsor because of already established relatives there.

Plaut focuses on exceptional Windsor Jews who are worthy of note, including: David A. Croll, who became Windsor's first Jewish mayor during the 1930s, and later the first Jewish provincial cabinet member in Ontario and first Jewish Senator during the late 1940s and 1950s; and Herb Gray, who was elected a Member of Parliament from Windsor between the late 1960s to early 2000s, and who became the first Jewish federal cabinet member and the first Jewish Deputy Prime Minister of Canada. Not only were these politicians exceptional within Canadian history, they also had interesting connections and relations with the United States and its political history. For example, Senator David A. Croll was the uncle of Michigan's Jewish Senator, Carl Levin. Other examples within the Jewish community include Windsor rabbi (at Shaar Hashmayim) Samuel S. Stollman, the son of Detroit rabbi (at the Stoliner Shul) Isaac Stollman, who was the dean of the Detroit Orthodox rabbinate; and Rabbi Sherwin T. Wine, who began as a part-time rabbi at Windsor's Beth El during the early 1960s before going on to form the Society for Humanistic Judaism in Farmington Hills.

Plaut's *The Jews of Windsor, 1790-1990: A Historical Chronicle*, is an excellent scholarly contribution to the Jewish history of the region. However, for those who are avid fans of Michigan Jewish history, I would recommend becoming acquainted with some basic Canadian and Ontarian history and government before taking on this book. While Windsor is closer to downtown Detroit than suburban West Bloomfield or Farmington Hills, its historic context and government is very different. Perhaps this book will be the beginning of future Jewish historiography with a focus on the Canadian-American borderlands. -- Barry Stiefel

United States: immigrants escaping the anti-Semitism and depressed economic conditions of Eastern Europe for a better life. The first Jews who settled in Windsor during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century did so for their own reasons, but usually due to a unique economic opportunity or an inability to make the last leg of their trans-Atlantic-trans-continental odyssey into Detroit. According to Plaut, by the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Jewish immigrants were also

# *Edge City*

## *A Comic Strip Collection*

by Terry and Patty LaBan

**Andrews McMeel Publishing, LLC, 2007; 128 pages**

**M**eet the Ardin family. They are Abby, the insecure mother, the nerdy-wannabe-rocker father Len, the ballet dancing daughter Carly, and her slightly older pre-teen brother Colin. This charming, but slightly *meshugganah* modern day Jewish family is uniquely different with clever wit and style.

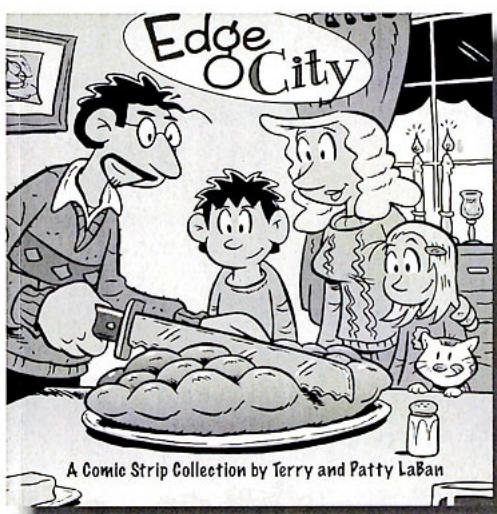
The book "Edge City" is a comic strip collection based on the lives of creators Terry and Patty LaBan. Terry, a University of Michigan art school graduate, playfully and talentedly illustrates the Ardin family, while Patty helps him write, making the story more realistic. When she is not writing comic strips, Patty is a couples and family therapist, which, not surprisingly, is the same profession as Abby's. Their combined talents allow the LaBan's to give the reader a better insight into the Ardin household and how each character's personality is embellished.

These delightfully colorful comic strips are appropriate for all ages and will have everyone wondering what family event the Ardins' are planning next.

From Abby's obsessing over the matzo ball soup for Passover, to Colin attempting to join a "mock" Led Zepellin band, or Len begging Abby to allow him to keep a taxidermy woodchuck in the house, "Edge City" will

have you falling down laughing... until you realize how well you relate to the day-to-day trials and tribulations of the Ardin Family.

— Sarah Blume (9th grade)  
and Laurie Blume



*Edge City* is a nationally syndicated comic strip, and can be viewed at [edgecitycomics.com](http://edgecitycomics.com).

# *Women Remaking Judaism*

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Edited by Riv-Ellen Prell

**Wayne State University Press, 2007; 331 pages**

This collection of essays is a wonderful compendium of the ways that American Jewish women have reshaped the Jewish landscape. Written by authors who are leading researchers in their field, each well-written essay deals with a specific topic and each is worthy of its own book.

The topics include ruminations on changes in egalitarian treatment of women ritually; the ordination of women rabbis; the development of Jewish feminist theology, including the usage of gender-neutral G-d language; a review of the role of women in Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, Reconstructionist and Renewal movements; the changes in Rosh Chodesh and mikvah ceremonies in the past decades; and the publication of Biblical commentary that finally "hears" the voice of women in our ancient texts.

"Mitzvah, Gender, and Reconstructionist Judaism," written by Deborah Dash Moore and Andrew Bush, traces the development of Rabbi Mordechai Kaplan's view of "folkways" as an appropriate term for mitzvot, a reinterpretation which supports the significance of gender in modern American Jewish life and serves as a basis for Reconstructionism.

I was born in 1964 and believe that I am a product of and a participant in the growing power of Jewish women in the religious arena. Although I don't recall meeting a female rabbi until the 1980s, I was aware that a female rabbi had been ordained in 1973. Certainly, growing up in the South, nobody in "our neighborhood" hired women rabbis. Yet, the Reform congregation with which I was affiliated, and the camp and youth movements that were a major part of my growing up, were all experimenting with gender-neutral G-d language, long before it became de rigueur in Reform congregations.

The impact women have made is truly delineated in this book; they have changed the way we think about ancient texts and have asked us to revisit ancient rituals including forcing us to re-examine the prayers we have chanted for centuries. This is the power of women: to allow large communities to look at what always was and to envision "why can't it be?"

I recommend this book to anybody who has forgotten how much has changed in 50 years, to those who have visions for future change and for those who just wonder how we got to this magical place. — Keren Alpert, Director of Education at Temple Beth El; 2007-2008 facilitator of the Melton Book Club

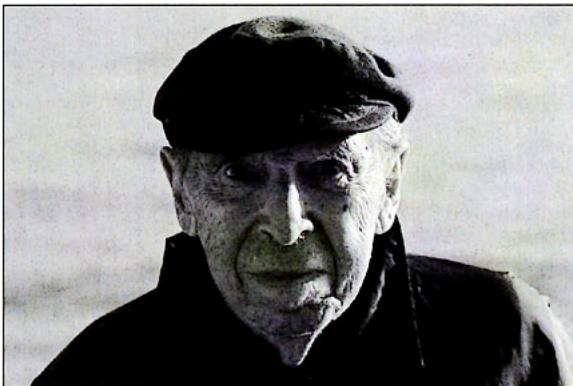
# In Memoriam

## IRVING JULIUS BLUESTONE

1917-2007



by Wendy Rose Bice



**I**one of the nation's most progressive trade union advocates, Irving Bluestone passed away in November 2007. He was 90 years old.

Bluestone, born in 1917 in Brooklyn, represented more than 400,000 General Motors workers in the 1970s as United Auto Workers vice president from 1970 until 1980. A protégé and close friend of Walter P. Reuther, Bluestone is credited with authoring the union's highly successful "mini strike" bargaining tactic and its innovative quality-of-work-life programs, which enabled workers to be included in the decision-making process to improve quality and production. His strong advocacy for workers was a position that set him apart early in his career from other leaders and one he continued to promote throughout his career and retirement.

The son of Herman and Rebecca Chasman Bluestone, immigrants from what is now Lithuania, Bluestone graduated from Brooklyn's City College in 1937 with a degree in German literature. Intending to teach, he first chose to spend a year at the University of Bern and a summer bicycling through Europe. While in Vienna, Hitler's troops seized the country and Bluestone came face-to-face with repression and fear. Despite a letter of introduction, a priest refused to speak to Bluestone for fear of reprisal because Bluestone was Jewish. He immediately returned home.

In a 1970 interview with the New York Times, Bluestone recalled the life-

changing incident: "I became convinced that only a strong labor movement can preserve democracy. The first thing Hitler did was to destroy the labor parties in Germany."

Shortly after his return, Bluestone married his sweetheart, Zelda Fitch, and chose to pursue working in a union rather than teaching. He landed a job as a grinder operator and repairman at a GM plant in Harrison, N.J., and quickly became an activist with UAW Local 511. In 1946, Bluestone met Reuther who appointed him to the union's General Motors staff.

In 1947, the Bluestones relocated to Detroit where they lived on Glendale in the Dexter-Davison neighborhood and the kids attended McCulloch Elementary School. In 1955, they moved to Northwest Detroit on Prairie Street, near Six Mile and Livernois.

Bluestone became Walter Reuther's administrative assistant in 1961 and went on to participate in numerous contract negotiations with General Motors, Ford, Chrysler, AMC and many suppliers. Ten years later, shortly after Leonard Woodcock succeeded Walter Reuther as UAW president, Bluestone took over leadership of the union's largest department, the General Motors division. He was elected vice president in 1972, filling the executive board spot vacated by Leonard Woodcock.

Bluestone's career took him to all corners of the world, enabling him to meet, befriend and gain the respect of numerous corporate and world leaders including Golda Meier and George Romney, according to Bluestone's son, Barry. He became extremely active in the civil rights movement, worked on behalf of the United Farm Workers, supported the women's movement and played a critical role in the UAW's strong support for Israel. Zelda was always by his side with an equal amount of passion. Bluestone served on various civil rights delegations under presidents Lyndon Johnson and Jimmy Carter.

"The UAW was an incredibly powerful political and social force in America during that time," recalled Barry Bluestone. "The UAW was one of the most important forces for social progress in the country. The resolutions they adopted covered a whole range of social issues. It was an extraordinary time with extraordinary leaders."

After his retirement from the UAW in 1980, at age 63, Bluestone joined the faculty of Wayne State University as University Professor of Labor Studies and directed the master of industrial relations program. He remained actively teaching for 20 years. Students were often treated to visits from Zelda, who came bearing chocolate chip cookies, Bluestone's favorite.

He edited several books, and in 1992, together with his son Barry, wrote "Negotiating The Future: A Labor Perspective On American Business."

In 1999, Irving and Zelda relocated to Brookline, Massachusetts, to be closer to their kids. Zelda passed away in 2001. Bluestone is survived by his three children. – *Wendy Rose Bice*

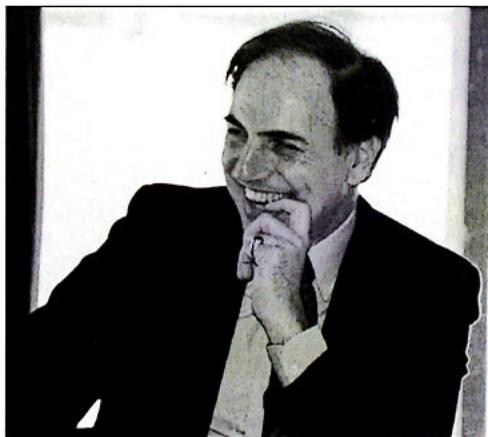
# RABBI SHERWIN WINE

## A LIFE OF COURAGE

1928-2007



by Julius Harwood



**S**herwin Wine taught that, "In each of us lies the seed of courage...with the courage of free individuals we can bravely confront destiny."

These words and many of his writings help to epitomize the driving forces in Sherwin Wine's life and his commitment, which produced a new, significant dimension in Jewish life. He was an extraordinary rabbi and man. It was his courage that ultimately

produced the Secular Humanistic Judaism movement now recognized as a fifth branch of Jewish life.

Humanistic Judaism is a non-theistic system of organized Jewish life style and practice. Wine said, "Humanistic Judaism, with its affirmation of human dignity and integrity, would not have been possible without the setting of North America with its free and open society." He founded a new, distinctive Jewish movement for our time and our place in the Jewish world.

The news about Wine's death in an automobile crash on July 21, 2007 while on vacation in Morocco, evoked an instantaneous wave of public emotion and concern. The memorial service at the Birmingham Temple was attended by a crowd of more than 1,000 people. Smaller memorial services for temple congregants found members standing in long lines waiting to express their grief and their memories of the many ways in which Rabbi Wine had impacted their life with warmth, compassion and personal interest. They remembered their rabbi as a teacher, mentor and friend.

Some 50 years ago, Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, a prominent rabbi in the Conservative movement, published his famous work, "Judaism as a Civilization", in which he proclaimed the revolutionary thesis that Judaism

was not merely a religion; it was the culture and evolving civilization of the Jewish people. Out of this, grew the Reconstructionist movement. Years later, Rabbi Wine brought to realization a distinct new movement of Secular Humanistic Judaism, which he considered compatible for our time and our place in the modern world of Jewish life.

Rabbi Wine wrote that a free world makes tradition only one of many options. "Our ancestors created, so can we. The Jewish experience is the experience of change."

In September 1963, Rabbi Wine, together with eight families, established a new congregation – the Birmingham Temple, which rapidly morphed into a Humanistic Judaism community, the first step to the worldwide movement of Secular Humanistic Judaism.

Wine grew up in a conventional, traditional Jewish home. His parents emigrated to the United States from Poland – met and married here. The home was traditionally kosher; the neighborhood predominantly Jewish in character. The family belonged to Shaarey Zedek, a Conservative congregation, and each Saturday Sherwin and his sister Lorraine would attend shul with their father.

Wine attended Central High School and was a brilliant student; to his mother and sister Lorraine, three years his elder, he was a "genius." In his senior year at Central he was the winner of the Detroit Times-sponsored National History Contest. He earned a tuition scholarship to the University of Michigan and specialized in philosophy and history. During his college years, while affirming his Jewish identity, Wine was no longer ritually observant and became a humanist. He also discovered that he liked being a leader.

Wine always remembered the charisma of Rabbi Morris Adler and his oratorical powers and influence. Upon graduation he entered the rabbinate rather than pursue a post-graduate degree in philosophy. He matriculated at Hebrew Union College with the expectation that Reform Judaism would entail the least conflict with his humanist outlook. He recognized that his non-belief in God would pose a major problem and managed to keep his views to himself while at the Seminary. He received his ordination in 1956, and six months later, joined the military as a First Lieutenant.

He was called to duty as a chaplain in post-war Korea, replacing Chaim Potok who later became a famous novelist. He quickly learned that salami and chicken soup were useful assets to attract Jewish GIs to services, and convinced the Quartermaster to stock both items. He traveled throughout Korea meeting GIs and became a popular chaplain.

Upon his discharge from the Army, he returned to his position as assistant rabbi at Temple Beth El in Detroit, but after 18 months, becoming restless with the traditional liturgy, he resigned and organized a new congregation in Windsor, Ontario, also known as Beth El, with a more modern Judaic practice. Under his leadership and charisma, the congregation flourished.

Over the next four years Wine's reputation became widespread and led to his being approached to form a new, more open Reform congregation in the Detroit suburbs. This became the Birmingham Temple in Farmington Hills, which in due time became a center for Secular Humanistic Judaism. Rabbi Wine and the congregation often felt ostracized by the Detroit Jewish community. The Detroit Free Press described Sherwin as the "atheist rabbi;" Time magazine called him the "rebel rabbi." Wine's ultimate answer to the frequently raised question, "How can you be Jewish if you don't believe in God?" was, "For Humanistic Jews, atheism is not at the heart of their belief system; what is at heart is a positive answer to the search for the source of power, strength and wisdom to cope with the problems of life."

### **A world-wide presence**

Under the stewardship of Rabbi Wine, the Birmingham Temple expanded successfully and provided the stimulus and base that led to a national and then an international movement. To nurture the growth of the Secular Humanistic Judaism movement, Rabbi Wine founded the following organizations:

- The Society for Humanistic Judaism (SHJ) – the umbrella organization involving some 30 Humanistic communities and congregations in the United States.
- The International Federation of Secular Humanistic Jews (IFSHJ) – 30,000 or more members and supporters spread over six continents.
- The International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism (IISHJ) – programs to train leaders for the Humanistic communities, having graduated about 50 leaders, which now has instituted an academic program to ordain its own rabbis.
- The Leadership Conference of Secular Humanistic Jews (LCSHJ) – the professional organization for leaders active in the movement.
- The Colloquium Series.

Rabbi Wine was a prolific writer, publishing more than 100 articles in various Jewish journals and magazines. He authored several books, including "Judaism Beyond God", "Humanistic Judaism"; "Celebration, a Ceremonial and Philosophic Guide for Humanistic Jews"; and "Staying Sane in a Crazy World." Shortly before his death, he completed a major work tentatively titled, "The Real History of the Jews," which is yet to be published.

A brilliant book reviewer and lecturer on almost any topic of interest, Wine was a sought-after speaker by numerous organizations, sometimes handling five or more engagements a week, often more than one per day. He ritually carried 3 X 5 salmon-colored index cards of notes — which he never used — and no matter what the specific time limit, he always finished within a few minutes of the assigned time, never looking at his watch.

In addition to his extensive commitments to secular Humanistic Judaism,

Wine was an activist for many causes and humanistic organizations including human rights, social responsibility and social action. He was an ardent defender of the cause of civil liberties.

When Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson initiated their Moral Majority, Wine founded The Voice of Reason to counteract their assault on liberal causes. He later founded Clergy and Citizens United, an organization fighting against attempts to introduce prayer in the public schools. He helped organize the Humanist Institute, International Association of

Humanist Education, North American Committee for Humanism and The Conference on Liberal Religion. Most recently, together with Reverend Harry Cook, he organized Citizens and Scientists United to protest the Bush administration's attacks on science. They mobilized public support for Michigan legislation for the endorsement and support of stem cell research.

Probably his most well known external activity was his Center for New Thinking, which provided a wealth of lectures and discussions on a broad spectrum of topics affecting public policy and interests.



*In 1998, Rabbi Wine celebrated his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. Bonnie Cousens, executive director of the Society for Humanistic Judaism presented Rabbi Wine with a map indicating all of the geographic locations of the organizations Wine founded.*

Among his many honors and recognitions, in May 2003, Sherwin Wine was proclaimed "Humanist of the Year" by the American Humanist Association. A few years later he was equally honored by the Detroit Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union for his commitments and outstanding activities in the cause of civil liberties.

In April 2007, just a few months before his untimely and tragic death, Wine participated in an International Conference at Harvard University, celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Humanist Chaplaincy at Harvard. The mobilizer of the conference was Rabbi Greg Epstein, the current Harvard chaplain and a recent graduate and ordained rabbi of the International Institute of Secular Humanistic Judaism. Hundreds of humanists from North America, Europe and elsewhere attended, including such world famous figures as Salman Rushdie. Wine considered his dialogue with Rushdie to be one of the high points of his life. Rushdie sees himself as a secular Muslim — a secularist by conviction, a Muslim by culture. It was as if Rushdie and Wine were on the same wavelength.

In 2003, the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism sponsored the preparation and publication of a Festschrift to honor Sherwin Wine's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, his forthcoming retirement and coincidentally, the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Birmingham Temple. Titled "A Life of Courage," this volume is a collection of articles and essays written by colleagues, friends and noted leaders in the humanist, secular and academic worlds. It paints a vivid picture of the significance and accomplishments of the life of Sherwin Wine.

Rabbi Wine once wrote, "Powerful people leave powerful memories." Sherwin Wine has left powerful memories that long will be cherished by his congregants, colleagues, friends and so many others whose life he impacted in many ways. However, Rabbi Wine has left more than memories. He has left a legacy – the legacy of Secular Humanistic Judaism, the international secular humanistic movement which he founded and whose growth he engineered. – *Julius Harwood is a member of the Birmingham Temple and is a charter member of the Board of Directors of the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism*

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## VIVIAN BERRY

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1914-2008

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by Harriet Siden



**V**ivian Berry, a Jewish Historical Society of Michigan lifetime member, passed away in May 2008. She was 93.

The West Bloomfield and Palm Beach, Florida resident truly was a "dynamo" who committed herself to Jewish causes, education and her loving family. She ranked her Jewish heritage uppermost on her list of communal priorities — a commitment reflected in the leadership positions she assumed

at her congregation, Congregation Shaarey Zedek in Southfield; in her board positions with Hadassah, Detroit Women's Division of both the American Jewish Congress and the Jewish Welfare Federation and the American Friends of the Weizmann Institute in Israel. She was honored twice by the Women's Division of Israel Bonds and her interest in the larger community was expressed in her membership in the Detroit Committee for the Maintenance of Separation of Church and State.

She strongly advocated for women. She was founder and past chairperson of the Michigan branch of the Women's League for Conservative

Judaism and led the sisterhood of Congregation Shaarey Zedek. She had the distinction of being the first woman to serve on a congregational committee at the synagogue and was the first woman called to the Torah when such rights were limited to men only. Her passion opened the way for generations of women who now have congregational voting rights.

In Palm Beach, where she spent her winters, she became chairperson of the Palm Beach National Women's Division of the United Jewish Appeal.

In 2005, Berry was one of five Gratz College honorary doctoral degree recipients. The honor was bestowed upon her for her "important work and tireless support of education, especially Jewish education," said Jay M. Starr, Chairman of the Gratz College Board of Governors. Gratz College is the first transdenominational Jewish college in the United States, located in Pennsylvania. "The commitment to the preservation of Jewish culture through education is a powerful example for our students and a model for the Jewish community," said Starr.

Together with her late husband, Louis, Berry established the Louis and Vivian Berry Surgery Health Center of Sinai-Grace Hospital.

Born in 1914 to Mary and Joseph Becker, Vivian Berry was born in and grew up in Windsor, Ontario. Her parents, Mary and Joseph Becker, helped establish Windsor's Shaar Hashomayim synagogue in 1884. Berry relocated to Detroit when she met her first husband, Louis Tatken.

Vivian Berry is survived by three daughters, two stepchildren, 13 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.

## **SELMA APPEL**

1923-2008



**B**orn in New York, Selma (Dubin) Appel taught high school for a decade and, when she stopped professional work outside the house, shared her many skills through active involvement in the community. She loved art and music and was a talented needleworker and artist, particularly enjoying textile arts. Together with her late husband, Dr. John, Professor Emeritus of American Thought and Language at Michigan State University and Adjunct Curator at the Michigan State University Museum, the couple collected cartoons and printed stereotypes of immigrant and ethnic groups in the U.S. Their collection, which dates from the Civil War, was donated to the MSU Museum as the John and Selma Appel Collection. It is considered one of the nation's largest collections of its type and consists of some 900 cartoons, prints and lithographs, 1,000 postcards, 340 trade cards and several dozen other miscellaneous visual materials, including greeting cards, valentines and advertisements.

# SAMUEL L. FRANKEL

## DETROIT JEWRY LOSOS A LEADER AND A VISIONARY

1914-2008



by Diana Lieberman



**S**amuel L. Frankel, who parlayed a wholesale grocery and retail supermarket career into a real estate and philanthropic empire, died April 7, 2008. He was 94 years old.

Together with his wife, Jean, Frankel championed boundless educational, charitable and religious organizations throughout southeast Michigan, including the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the Jean and Samuel Frankel Jewish Academy of Metropolitan Detroit, the University of Michigan Adat Shalom Synagogue, Congregation Shir Tikvah, Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute and many others.

His interests extended to the State of Israel, where he was instrumental

in establishing the TALI schools, secular schools that also include religious training.

"In everything he and his wife did, it was not about ego. Instead, it was for the right causes, for the good of the community," said Joyce Keller, executive director of JARC, the nonprofit, nonsectarian agency for persons with disabilities and their families. Frankel's personal contribution and fund-raising expertise allowed JARC to buy land and build its first home for disabled individuals.

Robert Aronson, chief executive officer of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, said Frankel not only responded to the needs of the community, "but envisioned those needs before anybody else."

"For example, his contributions to the Jewish Academy were absolutely

crucial to the growth of the school," Aronson said. "At first, he didn't want any recognition. Thank God, we were finally able to name the school after him."

"Sam Frankel was one of those personalities — there are so few left in the Jewish community — who are bigger than life," Larry Jackier said. "There's a famous quote from the Bible, from when Joseph died: 'a piece of Israel has died today.' That's how I feel about Uncle Sam."

Frankel was born in Detroit to parents from the Polish town of Gambin. He graduated from the University of Michigan in 1936 and began his career in the wholesale and retail grocery business. Among his businesses was the Big Bear Market chain. He gradually transitioned into real estate, building the first Kmart store, Somerset Mall in Troy (later expanded into the Somerset Collection) and other businesses. Frankel also purchased the land and spearheaded fundraising for Troy's Congregation Shir Tikvah and co-chaired a \$4.2-million capital campaign for Troy's Walsh College, Michigan's largest graduate business school, making possible impressive additions and renovations.

"If there's anybody who made Troy, it's Sam Frankel," said Doug Smith, Oakland County's director of economic development, who formerly held a similar position in Troy. However, the only building in the city that bears the Frankel name is the 17,800 square foot Jean & Sam Frankel Family Boys & Girls Club of Troy.

In the 1950s, Frankel served as president of what was then called United Jewish Charities, Federation's asset-holding arm and began acquiring land at Maple and Drake roads in West Bloomfield, the current site of the Eugene & Marcia Applebaum Jewish Community Campus. He also helped develop Hillel Day School of Metropolitan Detroit.

"He saw the big picture when it came to the Jewish community and to Detroit," Aronson said. "Sam had a complete understanding of Jewish education, both here in the United States and worldwide. He created the first teen mission with the synagogues of Metro Detroit. We said, 'How will we be able to send all those teens to Israel?' He said, 'Do it.'"

Sam and Jean Frankel's \$2 million challenge grant to the Jewish high school that now bears their name allowed the school to construct a permanent home on the campus of the West Bloomfield Jewish Community Center. The school raised a total of \$8.5 million for the capital construction, spearheaded by the Frankel gift. This is in addition to the Frankels' 2002 grant to the school, which totaled \$20 million in gifts and matching funds.

At the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Frankel was crucial in the development of the Samuel and Jean Frankel Center for Judaic Studies. "Sam Frankel possessed the vision to see how he could transform his love of Jewish learning into a program of Judaic studies so that all could benefit," said Deborah Dash Moore, director of the prestigious educational and research center. "The absence of Jewish studies at the University of

Michigan when he attended, or when his children attended, did not limit his imagination or his commitment. Indeed, he regularly renewed that commitment."

In addition, Frankel and his wife endowed the Frankel Professorship in Cardiovascular Surgery at the University of Michigan along with a fund dedicated to cardiovascular research.

In 2003, Detroit Symphony Orchestra opened the Max M. Fisher Music Center. Although Sam Frankel's name was not on the marquee, the philanthropist was principal fundraiser for the project, which renovated and added to Detroit's former Orchestra Hall. Frankel led the group that bought out the hall's mortgage, was a major donor to the Save Orchestra Hall campaign, and drummed up many other donors.

"When the opportunity arises to save something, you take it," Mr. Frankel told the Jewish News.

To his friend Robert Aronson, Samuel Frankel was truly a visionary. "I don't overuse that word in my speaking," Aronson said, "but in his case, there is no other way to express it."

Frankel is survived by his wife of 69 years, Jean; sons and daughters-in-law, Stuart and Maxine Frankel, Stanley and Judith Frankel and Bruce and Dale Frankel; daughter and son-in-law, Jo Elyn and George Nyman and many loving grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

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## BETTE SCHEIN

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1925-2008



**B**ette Weinberg Schein passed away on August 7, 2008 and will be greatly missed. Along with her husband Herbert, she was a generous and longtime supporter of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, serving as a valuable member of the Board of Directors for many years. For more than a decade, from 1944 to 1955, she played a leading role in managing her father's popular radio program, "Weinberg's Yiddish Radio Hour," which went off the air in 1958. For a complete description of this beloved weekend institution in Detroit, check [www.michjewishhistory.org](http://www.michjewishhistory.org). Click "Journal" and follow the links to *Michigan Jewish History*, Vol. 7, 1966, pages 6-9. Bette remained interested in Yiddish culture throughout her life. She and her husband supported the National Yiddish Book Center which rescues Yiddish and other modern Jewish books and celebrates the culture they contain. Bette is survived by her husband, children and grandchildren.

# RICHARD KOZLOW

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1926-2008

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Profiled in the Fall 2004 (Vol. 44) edition of the *Michigan Jewish History*, Richard Kozlow was one of the area's most contemporary beloved artists. His work has been shown worldwide, including the Detroit Institute of Arts, Ford Motor Company and the Spanish National Library. Born in Detroit and a Cass Technical High School graduate, Kozlow attended the Center for Creative Studies in Detroit, served

in World War II and then spent two years painting and working in New York city. He returned to Detroit as an advertising artist where he enjoyed much success, but left it behind in 1960 to live and paint in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. Throughout his life, Kozlow – together with his wife, Lois, would live, visit and paint in some of the world's most beautiful places, finding inspiration for his paintings. He always returned home to Detroit. "Artistically, I've thrived here," Kozlow said in 2004. He is survived by his wife, children and grandchildren.



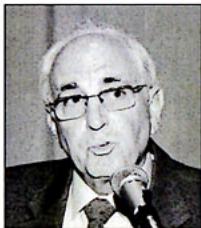
# A Few Updates & Corrections

In the Fall 2007 Vol. 47 edition of *Michigan Jewish History*, we ran an article on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mackinac Bridge and its amazing director, Larry Rubin. JHS member David Brody wrote us with the identity of one of the dignitaries pictured in a photo we ran. Thanks Mr. Brody!



*Standing at the center of the bridge at a pre-opening inspection are (l to r): John Mackie, state highway commissioner; Dr. David B. Steinman, bridge designer; Governor G. Mennen Williams; Bridge Authority members Prentiss M. Brown (Michigan U.S. Senator 1936 – 1943), Murray D. Van Wagoner (Michigan governor 1941 – 1943), George A. Osborn and William G. Cochran and Lawrence Rubin, Bridge Authority executive secretary for 32 years. Photo courtesy of MDOT.*

# President's Report



*Each year, Michigan Jewish History features excerpts from the annual meeting in the form of the President's Report. This year's report is being authored by new our team of co-presidents, Ellen Cole and Arnie Collens.*

Job sharing, four-day work weeks, working from home...the ways Americans work these days has evolved, creating new opportunities for leadership, productivity and out-of-the-box creative thinking. Thus, the decision to create a co-presidency of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan is not all that unusual for us as an organization, but it is nonetheless a milestone. Both of us bring unique yet complimentary attributes to the position and both of us feel deeply committed to ushering in JHS's next phase of growth.

We're making history in many ways.

JHS of Michigan's year has been nothing short of incredible. Aimee Ergas, our director, not only keeps our organization running at top speed but helps to secure and expand the awareness and reputation of JHS of Michigan, thanks to much innovative programming and community outreach. Aimee claims that her success is due to the selfless involvement of our board and committee leaders such as Judy Cantor, Ann Conrad, Barbara and Jerry Cook, Rob Kaplow, Lois Freeman, Ruthe Goldstein, Jim Grey, Margery Jablin, Alan Kandel, Myrle Leland, Marc Manson, Alan Nathan, Diane Pomish, Harriet Siden, Adele Staller, Linda Yellen, and Mary Lou Zieve, to name just a few. Everyone contributes time, creativity and ideas.

This group also brings boundless energy to our organization. Attendance at board meetings is not only at record levels, but the meetings have become events in themselves as bundles of new thoughts and ideas are shared. Please feel free, as a member of this organization, to attend one! You may find yourself suddenly inspired to become involved in a project of interest to you. Call our office to get the schedule of meetings.

## Highlights of the Year

Our fall 2007 tour of Jewish Midtown Detroit and Ferry Street was our most successful ever, and was just the first of many tours presented this year. As always, we helped sponsor events during the annual Jewish Book Fair and Jewish Music Fest, and sponsored a performance at the

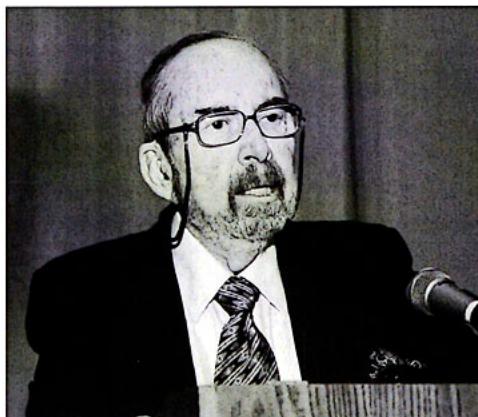


*Participants got a behind the scenes look at locker rooms and other facilities at the JHS tour of Ford Field, home of the Detroit Lions football team, and its former Jewish neighborhood.*

JET Theater, all at the Jewish Community Center in West Bloomfield. In February, Lila Corwin Berman, a fellow at the Jean and Samuel Frankel Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan, spoke (through her surrogate Jessica Evans, after Prof. Berman delivered her new son a bit early) to a JHS audience on "Why the Jews of Detroit Moved and What It Says about Jewish Politics, Culture and Religion."

The year culminated with the presentation of the Leonard N. Simons History Award to George "Mike" Zeltzer at the Annual Meeting held before a record number of participants at Temple Beth El in Bloomfield Hills.

Zeltzer has been a leading activist for the preservation and study of Jewish history and culture for six decades. Of vital importance, Zeltzer



*The 2008 Leonard N. Simons History Award was presented to George "Mike" Zeltzer at the JHS of Michigan Annual Meeting in June.*



*Alfred Taubman headlined the 2008 JHS of Michigan Annual Meeting. He is pictured here with JHS board member and past president Judy Cantor.*

chaired the Jewish Federation committee that steered to publication the landmark history of Jewish Detroit by Professor Sidney Bolkosky, Harmony and Dissonance, Voices of Jewish Identity in Detroit, 1914-1967. He is also a founder of the Cohn-Haddow Center for Jewish Studies at Wayne State University and chair of its advisory committee. He and his late wife Pearl also established an endowment for technology in Judaica at the Brandeis University Library. The annual event, beautifully coordinated by Lois Freeman, featured the rare opportunity to hear Alfred Taubman speak on his visions for the Motor City. Mr. Taubman's comments reminded us of how precious this community is for both its American and Jewish history and for its promise of a hopeful future.

### **JHS Gets Ready to Celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup>!**

In 2009, the Jewish Historical Society will celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Expect a variety of celebratory opportunities. This journal, continuously improving with age, will receive an exciting redesign. We can't wait to share it with you one year from now!

The highlight of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration will be the Midwest debut of "Haven to Home: 350 Years of Jewish Life in America," a traveling exhibit developed by the American Jewish Historical Society in collaboration with the Library of Congress to commemorate the 350 years of Jews in America. This dynamic display will be revealed at a gala benefit at the Detroit Historical Museum in May 2009 and continue to be on display through August. Museum-quality panels display the history of the Jewish people of America – from the 1654 arrival of 23 Jewish adults and children in the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam to the tenements of New York to our people's progress and accomplishments in science, math, medicine, entertainment, sports, government, education, etc. Judy Cantor, JHS past president and noted author, and Sharon Alterman, archivist of the Jewish Community Archives, will create a special section covering the history of the Jews of Michigan.

The financial and human expense of bringing this amazing exhibit to Detroit is enormous. We need financial support from our community. We need help coordinating events. We need docents. We need office volunteers. We need help in every capacity. This exhibit will be promoted to educators, school groups, senior citizens, community groups and outlying communities. With your support "Haven to Home" will be a monumental success. Please contribute some of your time and/or funds to this great project to mark our 50<sup>th</sup> year.

### **A Secure Future**

The Jewish Historical Society's vision for the future reaches far into the future. We are very pleased to announce the acquisition of two tremendously generous philanthropic donations to the JHS of Michigan

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

endowment from community leaders Eugene Applebaum and A. Alfred Taubman. These funds will help to secure the organization's future and will enable us to bring important programs like "Haven to Home" to our community.

Our future priorities include many exciting goals.

The beauty of the Michigan Historic Marker at Tri-Centennial Park in Detroit has attracted many visitors, and we are creating new programming to introduce and share the history of the Jewish community at the park. Bringing this marker and our tours of Jewish Detroit to life is how we can continue to keep generations invested in preserving our history.

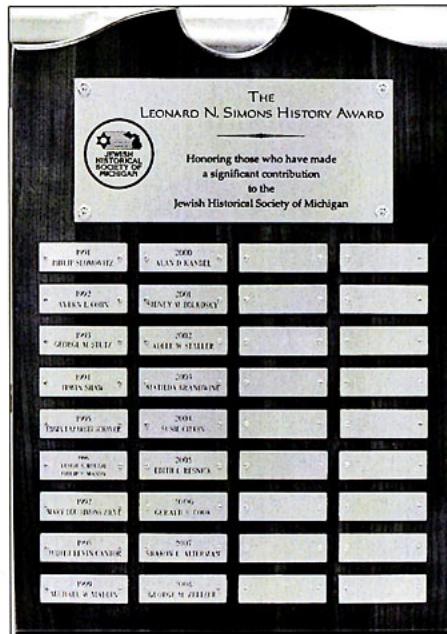
The Yearbook Collection continues to grow. A recent program created in conjunction with New Detroit afforded participants the opportunity to turn the pages of many of these books, demonstrating the collection's immense value and promoting it to the community who ultimately will help us grow the collection.

The Landmarks Project--to update, catalog and preserve our community history-- is near the point where we will begin collecting data. Kudos have to be given to Jerry Cook, Carol Weisfeld and Dr. Barry Stiefel who have worked to keep this important project moving forward.

A busy year has passed, and a busier one lies ahead. As co-presidents, we are looking forward to many simchas over the next 12 months. We invite you to ride along with us.

— Arnold Collens, Ellen Sue Cole

*A page from the 1930 United Hebrew School yearbook, just one of the hundreds of yearbooks held within the JHS of Michigan's Yearbook Collection.*

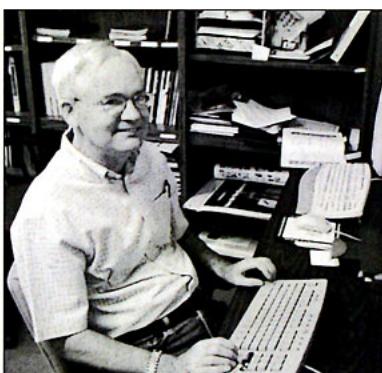
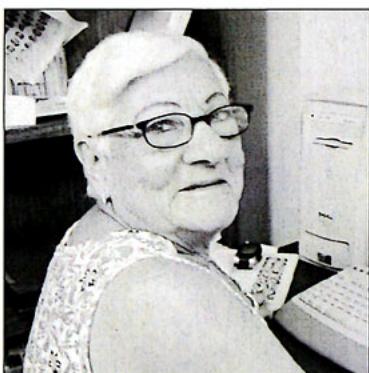


# THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN YEARBOOK COLLECTION

**T**he young man from Phoenix had never met his grandfather nor seen his picture. Armed only with his grandfather's name and year of birth, he contacted the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. After a quick search, we provided him with two copies of his grandfather's high school graduation photo. One was a clean copy of his senior headshot and the other bore his grandfather's autograph, with a handwritten note to a female classmate. We also provided the grandson with the school clubs and sports teams his grandfather had joined. How did we do it?

The JHS of Michigan Yearbook Collection began in 1999 when a group of dedicated volunteers began gathering yearbooks of Detroit-area public and private high schools attended by Jewish students. Now totaling more than 900 books, the collection is a rare treasure trove of photos and information. The yearbooks – most of which have been donated by community members – are primarily high school yearbooks, although some middle and elementary public school books are included. The collection also contains the yearbooks of various Jewish day schools, synagogue Sunday schools, private schools and colleges, and a few booklets from high school reunions, class photos and commencement invitations.

In years to come, this collection will be a valuable tool to be utilized by genealogical and historical researchers. The books provide a visual census of the teens living within the Jewish community, though religion and ethnicity are not stated. It is easy to follow a neighborhood's history by examining books from a particular school across a span of years: the initial influx of Jewish students, a peak period and the decline as families



*Ruth Vosko and Allan Rauner have donated hours of their time inputting the names of students into the Yearbook Collection database, which numbers more than 110,000 names.*

move away. More precious are the personal notes – students' hopes and dreams, predictions about their futures and stories written by the yearbook staff.

### You Can Help

While some of the books date back to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there are significant gaps in the collection. The most notable gap dates from the early 1960s through today. We are searching for books from not only Detroit but all of the suburban schools, including the older suburban schools like Berkley, Livonia, Oak Park and Southfield, and areas north and west where Jewish students attend schools today.

This collection is a living collection; it expands as more books are donated and as the database of the students' names, which now numbers in excess of 110,000, is updated. When funding is available, the yearbook pages will be scanned and uploaded to be accessible on-line. Until then, we will sell photocopies of pages from the books to help build a fund for scanning and for acquiring more books.

A large number of books came to us from the personal collections of Marc and Marcia Manson, Charles Domstein, Richard Leland, Jason Wine, Ben Chinitz, Max Garber, Joseph Selezny, some of whom are or were teachers and collected books from high schools where they taught. Supporters also purchased books at used book stores and then donated them to the Society.

The collection is a tribute to its chairman Marc Manson, who has provided superb leadership, many books, funds and time. He and Marcia stored the books in their home until they were moved to a space provided by the Meer Jewish Apartments in West Bloomfield. Marc willingly picks up books at donors' homes, organizes the collection and the indexing system. Other committee members, including Ed Stein and Jim Grey, have gone above and beyond in helping to secure this collection and its future.

Please consider donating your yearbooks, whether it is a single copy or a collection, either now or in the future. Share these intentions with your family members and perhaps they too will donate their books. To help, contact yearbook committee chairman Marc Manson at (248) 661-0668 or [mdmcousa@aol.com](mailto:mdmcousa@aol.com); or the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. – *Gerald Cook, a JHSM Board member, has served on the yearbook committee since its inception.*



*At 95 years, Ann Mondrow enjoyed cataloguing the yearbooks. She passed away earlier this year and is missed every single day.*

# Donation/Information

We invite you to share our journey....

**The Heritage Council**, an endowment society, seeks to insure the future of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan through large gifts and bequests. The Guardian's name will appear as the endower of the journal. Trustees, Chancellors, Deans, Fellows and Collectors become life members. The Heritage Council will continue to be listed in Michigan Jewish History, which circulates to members, libraries and universities around the world.

I hereby join the Heritage Council at the following level:

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- I am making a testamentary bequest to the Society in my will and will forward documentation.
- Please contact me regarding the Heritage Council.

*The Society profoundly appreciates the support of the Heritage Council.*

## Membership

Support the ongoing work of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. Categories of membership include: \$36 Individual / Family; \$20 Institutions / Organizations; \$100 Corporate / Foundations; \$360 Life Member.

Tribute Cards will be sent upon request for contributions received (minimum \$10)

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# theHeritageCouncil

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If your name does not appear or is incorrect, we apologize and ask that you contact our office to correct the error.

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Jewish Historical Society of Michigan • 2008-2009

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