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ESTELLE KAFER

* NEW BOARD MEMBER
** DECEASED

FAMILY ARCHIVES AT JHS



President's Message

Dear Friends:

As the Jewish Historical Society enters our 2015-2016 season, I am beginning to record Board meeting and event dates into my calendar. I find it amazing just how much our dedicated staff and talented, multi-generational volunteers are able to accomplish each season for your education and pleasure. From fascinating "favorites", to conceiving and instituting new and creative programs, the JHSGH is always a "work in progress".

It is a pleasure to welcome Abbey Kreinik, Steven Neiditz, and Amy Schoen to our JHS board. We are very fortunate to be able to avail ourselves of not only their professional expertise but their knowledge and experience on behalf of non-profit organizations.

Many years ago, I purchased an antique frame holding a pastel photo of a young woman. I never gave the photo too much thought until recently. Then I began to wonder . . . who was this young woman? Who was her family? What was her story? I realized just how vital a community's history (be it oral or visual) is to present and future generations.

We all have memories to share as well as boxes or albums brimming with photos that tell a story. Where will these personal family treasures reside some day? I hope not in an antique shop or even discarded by family members too young to place a name with a face or an event.

The Society welcomes documents, meaningful correspondence, and especially your treasured, labeled photographs (we can scan photos and documents). Our archives serve as a wonderful repository for scholars, students, and interested members of the community. We would be honored to become the caretakers of your cherished histories. Contact Estelle or Sara (shawran@jewishhartford.org) to discuss starting a family folder at the Society.

Wishing you and your dear ones a very Healthy and Happy New Year.

Sandra H. Rulnick
President

FALL 2015 CALENDAR

Wednesday, September 9, 2015 - 6:00 p.m.

Bridal Fashion Show and Vendor Showcase,
The Emanuel Synagogue, 160 Mohegan Dr., WH

Wednesday, September 16, 2015 - 6:30 p.m.

JHSGH Board Meeting
Board Room, Community Services Building

Monday, September 21, 2015 - 7:00 p.m.

Information session for Eastern European Trip
Board Room, Community Services Building

Tuesday, October 13, 2015 - 7:00 p.m.

JHSGH Board Meeting
Board Room, Community Services Building

Wednesday, October 21, 2015 - 12:15 p.m.

Book Talk by Gabe Galambos, author of *The Nation by the River*
Mandell Jewish Community Center
Co-sponsored by JCC Senior Adult Brunch and Learn

Thursday, October 22, 2015 - 7:00 p.m.

Information session for Jews of Cuba trip
(SOLD OUT)
Board Room, Community Services Building

Sunday, October 25, 2015- 9:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.

"Back to the Old Neighborhoods" bus tour
Tours leave from Community Services Building
at 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, November 17, 2015 - 12:00 p.m.

NEW LUNCH AND LEARN SERIES
Book talk by Barbara Sicherman, author of *Well Read Lives: How Books Inspired a Generation of American Women*
Community Services Building

Thursday, December 17, 2015 - 7:00 p.m.

JHSGH Board Meeting
Board Room, Community Services Building

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE FOR THE LATEST SOCIETY NEWS



The Society's website, www.jhsg.org is the best source for the most up-to-date information about programs, tours and exhibits sponsored by the Society. It's also an easy way to register for programs or make donations through our PayPal account. If you are not already on our e-mail list and would like to receive announcements of upcoming events, please contact Bea at bbrodie@jewishhartford.org

Front cover photos

Top left: Sol and Rebecca Hershman family, 1952. Left center: Art Nassau on his wedding day, June 23, 1957. Top right: Max, Carl, and Abe Banks, 1945. Bottom: Neiditz family, 1912. All photos from the JHSGH archives.

***The Nation by the River* by Gabe Galambos**

Book Talk and Bagel Lunch

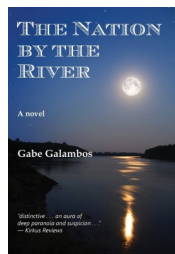
Wednesday, October 21, 12:15 p.m.

Members: \$5.00

Non-members: \$7.00

Location: Mandell JCC

Co-sponsored by the Mandell JCC
Senior Adult Department



The Nation by the River is a mystery set in the town of Best Harbor, Massachusetts, whose secret society community of Crypto-Jews is by appearances Catholic, by secret observances Jewish, and by legacies of secrecy and deceit--a people apart. The book has been nominated for the prestigious Hadassah Ribalow Prize recognizing outstanding new Jewish fiction.



To write this book, the author, Gabe Galambos, traveled to the Azorean Islands to meet with historians and academics to learn about the Inquisitions that drove Jews to that area. He also studied the Portuguese Azorean culture of southeast New England. Galambos served in the Israeli Defense Forces and, in 1983, assisted in the secret rescue of Ethiopian Jews.

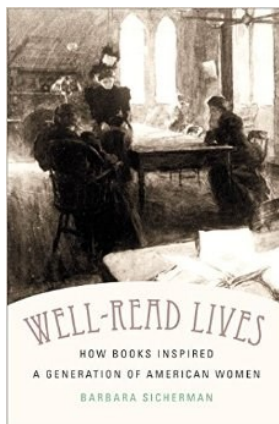
Bagels, salads, and coffee will be served. Reservations are required. Please send your check for \$5.00 or \$7.00 made out to JHSGH, 333 Bloomfield Ave, West Hartford, CT 06117, or go to our website, www.jhsg.org and pay via PayPal.

NEW SOCIETY LUNCH AND LEARN SERIES TO DEBUT

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2015
AT 12:00 P.M.
COMMUNITY SERVICES BUILDING**

**COST: MEMBERS - \$5.00
NON-MEMBERS - \$7:00**

**BOOK TALK BY
BARBARA SICHERMAN
AUTHOR OF *WELL READ LIVES:
HOW BOOKS INSPIRED A GENERATION
OF AMERICAN WOMEN***



Pack up your dairy/pareve lunch and join us for the very first program in our new Lunch and Learn series. We'll provide drinks and dessert, while you listen to author Barbara Sicherman discuss her book *Well Read Lives: How Books Inspired a Generation of American Women*.

Ms. Sicherman is Professor Emerita at Trinity College. Her book highlights the importance of reading in shaping the identities of women born in America's first Gilded Age, many of whom found inspiration for public lives in books like *Little Women*. The diverse women whose stories are told include: Jane Addams, Edith and Alice Hamilton, Ida B. Wells, and immigrant authors Hilda Satt Polacheck and Mary Antin, whose influential *The Promised Land* became a national best seller.

Reservations are required. Please send a check, made out to JHSGH, 333 Bloomfield Avenue West Hartford, CT 0117, or go to our website: www.jhsg.org to use our secure PayPal account.

NEW VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES!

The Society's need for volunteers is greater than ever. Recently, we have been fortunate enough to receive some large collections of documents from a variety of donors. All of this material needs to be evaluated and sorted. If you have a few hours a week, and are interested in Hartford's Jewish past, contact Estelle Kafer at ekafer@jewishhartford.org or 860-727-6171.

Jewish Historical Society of Greater Hartford Unique Bridal Fashion Show & Celebrations Vendor Showcase

September 9, 2015, 6:00pm

**Location: The Emanuel Synagogue
160 Mohegan Drive, West Hartford**

**Featuring vintage wedding gowns from
the community and contemporary bridal
fashions by Kathy Faber Designs LLC**

Emcee: MaryEllen Fillo, Hartford Courant

**\$12/pp at the door
\$10 /pp to pre-register**

**For more info and to pre-register online
visit www.jhsg.org or call 860-727-6171**



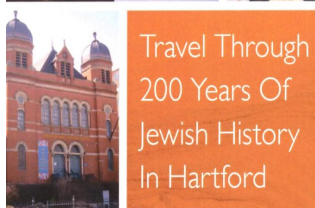
Back to the Old Neighborhoods

BUS TOUR

**Sunday, October 25, 2015
at 9:30 am and 1:30 p.m.**

Travel through 200 years of Hartford's Jewish history! Our professional guide will share information about the earliest Jewish settlers and new immigrants who came to the area and made it a thriving and growing center of Jewish life. The tour includes stops at the sites of three former synagogues: Congregation Beth Israel, Congregation Agudas Achim, and The Emanuel Synagogue.

To register, or for more information, visit our website: www.jhsgh.org. Please fill out both of the required forms (the PayPal form and the registration form), or call 860 727-6170.



Travel Through
200 Years Of
Jewish History
In Hartford



Aim Chai
Endowment Campaign

WWW.AIMCHAI.ORG



Aim Chai is an on-going initiative of the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Hartford to help organizations establish and maintain their endowment, to ensure the Society's future. Gifts can be made outright, or through a bequest, but all donations are welcome! For more information about participating, contact Estelle at 860 727-6171 or ekafer@jewishhartford.org

YOUNG ADULT BOOK ON HARTFORD CIRCUS FIRE RECENTLY PUBLISHED

Big Top Burning: The True Story of an Arsonist, a Missing Girl, and The Greatest Show On Earth by Laura A. Woollett was published on June 1, 2015. Laura was one of the panelists in 2014 for our program on the Hartford circus fire. The book uses photographs and primary source material and is geared for children in grades 5-8.

JHS Trip to Spain Last May



The Society's recent trip to the Jewish sites of Spain was a whirlwind of exotic sights, sounds and tastes. The academic leader, Dr. Jonathan Ray of Georgetown University, provided both historical background and an informative commentary for the historic synagogues, museums and towns that were visited. The combination of guided tours and free time allowed participants to explore a number of cities and experience Spanish food and culture. From the soaring heights of the Sagrada Familia Church in Barcelona, to the Moorish beauty of the Santa Maria LaBlanca Synagogue in Toledo, to the simplicity of the newly discovered mikveh in the walled city of Besalu (the only one ever discovered in Catalonia) -- every day brought insights into the rich yet tragic history of the Spanish Jews.

Currently, there are about 5,000 Jews left in Spain. Almost all live in Barcelona or Madrid, and several members of the group took the opportunity to attend Shabbat services in Madrid. A Friday night dinner at a kosher restaurant was one highlight of the trip, made even more interesting when Dr. Ray asked the owner about the current conditions for Jews. He responded that they are an uncomfortable minority, and most are urging their children to leave Spain. But, to the credit of the current Spanish government, there are a number of museums related to Sephardic Jewry and many synagogues that became churches during the Inquisition have been returned to their original states and are open to visitors. In fact, several of the native guides noted that Spain's Jewish past is part of the curriculum in public schools. It was a special journey that will be long remembered.



JEWES OF INDIA PROGRAM

Author and lecturer, Rahel Musleah, delighted us with song and story as she recounted the history of the Jews of India, and of her own family, in particular, who came to India from Baghdad. The large crowd enjoyed a delicious Indian buffet prepared by the Crown Supermarket, and many people came later to attend her presentation.

Rachel soon had everyone joining her in the beautiful melodies of her heritage, and looking at the photos of historic Jewish sites in India. It was fascinating to learn about the melding of these two ancient traditions and how Indian Jews adapted to this very foreign culture. Rachel mentioned that she also leads Jewish trips to India, and several participants expressed interest, so the Society is considering this as a future travel experience.

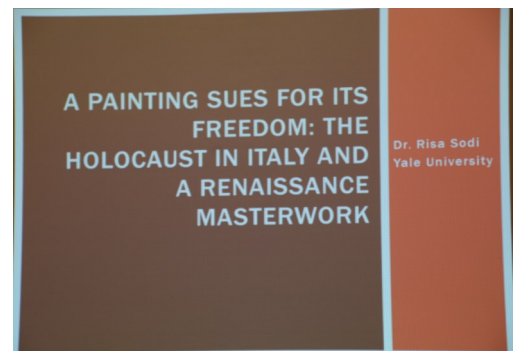
A LOOK AT “BREAKING THE GLASS: THE AMERICAN JEWISH WEDDING” ON DISPLAY UNTIL SEPTEMBER 30 AT THE MANDELL JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER



2015 Annual Meeting

This year's Annual Meeting was a wonderful opportunity to review the successes of the past year, and look ahead to plans for the future. Membership is growing and programming is attracting attendance from throughout the community and beyond. Both the Hartford bus tour and the farming tour are very successful and will continue in the coming year, along with a variety of lectures, trips and events. We also welcomed new board members Abbey Miller Kreinik, Amy Isaacson Schoen and Steven Neiditz, and offered our thanks to departing members, Rochelle Fierston and Jeremy Weingast.

With the success of the film *Woman in Gold*, it was very timely to have as our guest speaker, Dr. Risa Sodi of Yale University. Her talk, "A Painting Sues for its Freedom: The Holocaust in Italy and a Renaissance Masterwork" dealt with the case of a painting stolen during the Holocaust and the fight to restore it to its rightful owners. A lively question and answer period followed and Dr. Sodi provided new insight into the complex legal maneuverings, as well as the difficulties of dealing with certain nations which have fought to retain this stolen legacy.



From the Director

Dear Friends,

I hope you all enjoyed the beautiful summer we had. The highlight of my summer was my son, Jared's, wedding. The couple incorporated many traditional Jewish customs including the bedeken and tisch. I was thrilled to experience and participate in these meaningful and beautiful rituals, especially after researching all about them this past year for our wedding exhibit!

Only a few weeks are left to visit our "Breaking the Glass" exhibit. We are very grateful to the dozens of individuals and numerous institutions that made this monumental project and its correlating programs possible. This summer we led guided tours for six senior groups and are now very busy preparing for the September 9th Fashion Show/Vendor Showcase. At the moment the office resembles a bridal salon! Donated and loaned gowns dating from the 50's to the 90's are hanging in preparation for their second "walk down the aisle," many for the second time at The Emanuel Synagogue!

As the New Year approaches why not take this opportunity to look through your family photo albums and consider starting an individual family file within the Society archive? We would happily accept identified Hartford photographs of your family life, business, or milestone events, which would be documented into our accessible and secure database.

Your family's history, part of our community's legacy, would be preserved for future generations.

Wishing everyone a sweet and healthy
Shana Tovah,

Estelle



From the Archivist

Dear Friends,

It has been an exciting summer for the archives. The Society's exhibit on Jewish weddings opened in June, and the archives contributed many historical photographs and wedding gowns to the display. Our collections have also been accessed by a number of researchers for projects of their own. Among these researchers was a visiting grad student who discovered valuable information in our Zionism collections. Our archives were also visited by Betty Hoffman, who consulted our Hebrew Home materials for an upcoming *Connecticut Explored* article. Have you ever been curious about a person or place in the Hartford Jewish community? Consider visiting our archives to see what you can find!

We also received some wonderful donations to our collections. One particularly notable item is a folder of applications for the 1965-1966 Queen Esther contest, brought in by Cindy Mindell of the Jewish Ledger. In this contest, sponsored by the Hartford Times, young women of Jewish descent could apply for the chance travel to Israel as goodwill ambassadors. The applications include photos and biographical statements from the applicants. Another recent donation was the research material compiled by Dr. Leon Chameides for his book *Teach Them Diligently To Your Children: The Story of the Yeshiva of Hartford/Bess and Paul Sigel Hebrew Academy*. We also received a large amount of materials from Elliott Donn documenting the many activities of the JWV Post #45. These are just a handful of the interesting items we add to our archives every week.

As always, we welcome and appreciate any donations of your own materials. We want to preserve your history for future generations!

Best regards,

Sara

A RECENT RESEARCHER VISITING THE SOCIETY ARCHIVES SHARES HIS THOUGHTS

My research explores the varieties of Zionism in America in the first three decades of the twentieth century. One of my project's goals is to examine how Zionism manifested itself outside of New York City. Though nearly half of American Jewry lived in NYC by the interwar period, Zionism held great appeal for Jews beyond NYC in places like Connecticut. Most studies to date have nevertheless devoted almost all of their focus on Zionism in New York and a few other metropolises, a limited scope that I intend to broaden.

The Greater Hartford Jewish Historical Society possesses a veritable treasure trove of materials on the activities of Zionist organizations and personalities, opening a door into the kind of local Zionism that my dissertation will explore in great detail. The personal papers of Samuel Hoffenberg and Abe Goldstein, are just two of many examples detailing the lives of tireless communal workers and Zionist champions. Their boxes are stuffed to the brim with meeting minutes, newspaper scrapbooks, oral histories, letters to famous Zionists like Max Nordau and lesser known local workers, and other invaluable sources that paint a picture of Zionism at the grassroots in places like Hartford, Stamford, New Haven, New Britain, Meriden, and more. These and other files demonstrate that Zionism captured the attention of America's Jews in locales big and small, supplying a crucial ingredient in the emerging American Jewish identity that coalesced by World War II.

No archive, no matter how rich the source material it possesses, can be of help to the researcher without the generous work of its staff. My research at the GHJHS was made possible by the guidance of Sara Hawran, who took time out of her busy schedule to retrieve boxes for me, offer advice on which materials to consult, provide me with digitized sources, and collect source material for me after I departed from Hartford. Estelle Kafer was equally generous, allowing me to visit the archive on several occasions and making sure that I was provided with everything that pertained to my research interests.

Judah Bernstein is a doctoral student at NYU studying American Zionism.

Thoughtful Contributions

Contributions to the Jewish Historical Society are a thoughtful way of honoring or memorializing an individual, or commemorating an event, and at the same time supporting the Society.

All contributions of \$18.00 or more will be listed.

In memory of:

Parents, Samuel B. Pollack and Mollie G. Pollack

Elliott B. Pollack

Beloved mother and mother-in-law, Sara Spielman Charney

Eileen and Elliott B. Pollack

Harold Mindell, father of Cindy Mindell

Susan Viner

Marianne Orkin

Joann Temkin

Deborah, Lance and Barak Goldberg

Kopel Seidman

Hermia Aronson

Anne Bassok Schupack

Susan and Allan Viner

Our parents, Sol and Rebecca Hershman and Bennie and Minnie Novarr

Ruth and Gilbert Hershman

Ann Schupack

Gerald A. Roisman

Wilbert Kaufman

By Elaine Kaufman

In honor of:

Aunt Edie Katzman's special birthday

Sandra and Marshall Rulnick

Sandra and Marshall Rulnick's 45th wedding anniversary

Rabbi Arthur and Dr. Adrienne Rulnick

Ruth Solomkin

Harvey Hoberman

Pia Rosenberg Toro's 40th birthday

Gerald Roisman

The engagement of Shira Silver to Alex Langer

David Silver

General Donations:

Jeffrey Adler

Bette Glickman

Beatrice Mitlak

Libby and Bennett Pearl

Shirley and Henry Seltzer

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Hermia Aronson

Ilene & Mike Baron

Hyla and James Cohen

Ellen and Peter Donshik

Avi and Helen Elnekave

Maxine Jaffe

Abbey Kreinik

Irene & Stuart Mahler

Irene and Joel Milzoff

Steven Neiditz

Laura Pels

Amy Isaacson Schoen

Shelley Schuman

Patty Schuster

Ruthan Wein

JOIN THE PRESERVATION OR HERITAGE SOCIETIES

The Preservation Society is composed of members who have chosen to give at the \$1,000 level of membership. The Heritage Society consists of members who have chosen to give at the \$1,800 level of membership. Both groups provide crucial support for all of the Society's activities. These donations, above and beyond the normal dues categories, enable us to remain financially stable, while at the same time providing the level of service and programming that this community has come to expect from the Society. If you would like more information about making a gift to either the Preservation Society or the Heritage Society, please contact Estelle at 860 727-6171 or ekafer@jewishhartford.org.

IN MEMORIAM



Michael Dreschler

Alex Goldstein

Lillian Hochman

Margaret Mair

Bennett Pearl

Paula Polivy

Leah Spector

IN MEMORIAM - MARGARET MAIR

Margaret Mair, the Society's archivist for several years, died on July 13, 2015. Margaret began her tenure under Marcia Lotstein, and continued in that position when Estelle Kafer became Executive Director. She was instrumental in orchestrating the move to the Community Services Building and organizing the archive in its new home. Margaret worked as an independent consultant at the Mark Twain House, the Harriett Beecher Stowe House and the Connecticut Historical Society. At the time of her death, she was an archivist at the Mortensen Library at the University of Hartford.

HELP US PRESERVE MEMORIES

Jewish Historical Society of Greater Hartford

Complete this form for membership and/or donations (Please print)

Sophie Tucker circa 1950

Name _____
Address _____
City, State, Zip _____
Telephone _____
Email _____

For Membership: please check the appropriate category and amount level you wish to support.
Membership dues are effective July 1 to June 30 of each year

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Heritage Society \$ 1,800 | <input type="radio"/> Scholar \$ 500 | <input type="radio"/> Historian \$ 125 | <input type="radio"/> Senior*/Student \$ 36 |
| <input type="radio"/> Preservation Society \$ 1,000 | <input type="radio"/> Archivist \$ 250 | <input type="radio"/> Friend \$ 50 | *62 and over |

To Donate: please fill out the information below.

Enclosed is my (our) gift of \$ _____	<input type="radio"/> Additional Donation \$ _____
In honor of _____	In honor of _____
In memory of _____	In memory of _____
Other _____	Other _____

Send acknowledgment to:

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Payment methods

- ☐ Check (please make checks payable to: JHSGH, and return in this envelope.)
☐ Credit (please visit our website at www.jhsg.org and use our secure PayPal account)
- ☐ Please send additional contribution envelopes. ☐ I am interested in more information about the Society.
All gifts of \$18.00 and above will be acknowledged in the Society's Bulletin. Your donation is fully tax deductible.

Questions?

Contact us at jhsg@jewishhartford.org, call 860-727-6171, or visit our website at www.jhsg.org.



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