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FAMILY HISTORY DAY

SUNDAY, MAY 2, 2010
12:30 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.

BETH EL TEMPLE
2626 ALBANY AVENUE
WEST HARTFORD



PROFESSIONALLY LED WORKSHOPS FEATURING ARTHUR KURZWEIL, AMERICA'S FOREMOST JEWISH GENEALOGIST

Have you ever wondered what to do with those old pictures and documents that have been sitting in drawers or folders for years? Are you interested in learning more about the people in those long-ago photos? Are you ready to put names onto your family tree? Have you ever thought about writing down your memories to preserve them for children and grandchildren? Are you interested in learning how to display your memorabilia in an attractive and creative way? Would you like your story captured on a DVD? If you answered yes to any or all of these questions, put the afternoon of May 2, 2010 on your calendar and join us for our first Family History Day. This special program is designed to encourage families to collect and preserve their own unique stories. There will be professionally led workshops teaching participants how to conduct oral histories and interviews, trace your genealogy for the beginner and for more experienced researchers, create a treasured scrapbook, preserve precious photos and documents and write your own memoir, among others. There will also be vendors, including family history videographers.

We are delighted that our keynote speaker will be Arthur Kurzweil, who is nationally known in the area of Jewish genealogical research. Mr. Kurzweil is the author of *From Generation to Generation: How to Trace Your Jewish Genealogy and Family History* and *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Genealogy*. He is also the author of *Kabbalah for Dummies* and *Torah for Dummies*. He will explain the importance of genealogical research, and how to get started, even if your family includes loved ones who perished in the Holocaust. In addition to his keynote address, Mr. Kurzweil will be teaching two classes: *Jewish Genealogy: A Workshop for the Experienced Researcher*, and *Holocaust Research: How and Why to Locate Information About What Happened to Your Family During the Holocaust*.

Brochures will be mailed in March, or for more information, go to www.jhsg.org or call 860-727-6170.

President's Message

Dear Fellow Members and Friends:



As I come to the end of my term as President of the Jewish Historical Society of Greater Hartford, I reflect with great pleasure on how much I have enjoyed working with our board members and Executive Director Estelle Kafer to carry out the Society's important work. The strong foundation created by prior leadership including past President Arthur Nassau, has been indispensable. And, of course, Estelle's mentor, former Executive Director Marsha Lotstein, contributed so importantly to our success as well. A hearty todah rabah to all!!!

Appreciation and study of Jewish history is not to be confined to Greater Hartford. For example, last December, Eileen and I visited Cuba under the auspices of the Jewish Museum and Jewish Theological Seminary. The purpose of our visit was to make common cause with the tiny Cuban Jewish community reduced from around 18,000 prior to the 1960 revolution to approximately 1,300 today. The bulk of the community left after the revolution, finding the Castro regime's political and economic programs to be unacceptable.

Those who remained were basically the aged, those who were unwilling to start a new life in America and the ideologically committed. For years, the community declined religiously, culturally and spiritually to the point where its survival was in doubt. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the willingness of the Cuban regime to open a bit in order to make up for lost Soviet economic support, North American tourism began. American Jewish groups' visits to the island brought encouragement, financial support and pharmaceutical items. Cuban Jewish émigrés and Mexican Jews began to and continue to make significant financial and moral contributions, and maintain island institutions including the rebuilding and major renovation of the Patronato, the main synagogue in Havana.

Our eight days in Cuba were thrilling, inspiring and moving. We were touched by our interactions with the Cuban/Jewish community and came away from our trip anxious to share that experience with you.

Next fall, Enrique Levy, who was born in Cuba and left there in his teenage years after the revolution, will come to Hartford to inform us in beautiful detail about the history and current condition of the Jews of Cuba. Enrique was one of our tour docents and brought an immense amount of both personal and academic knowledge with him helping to make the trip an absolutely memorable experience. Watch for further details.

Please make plans to attend our annual meeting on June 17 at which time a new president will be elected as we continue to go from strength to strength in carrying out the mission of your Society.

Elliott B. Pollack

SPRING / SUMMER 2010 CALENDAR

March 18	JHSGH Board Meeting, CSB, 7pm
March 21-April 23	<i>A Reason to Remember, Roth, Germany, 1933-1942</i> , a Hatikvah Holocaust Education Center exhibit, Mandell JCC
April 12	Holocaust speaker, Deborah Roth-Howe, daughter of a Roth, Germany survivor and <i>A Reason to Remember</i> exhibit curator, Mandell JCC, 7pm
May 2	Family History Day, Beth El Synagogue, 12:30pm–5:00pm
May 6	"Reconnect with North End Friends," Emanuel Synagogue, 3pm and 7pm
May 11	JHSGH Board Meeting, CSB, 7pm
May 18	Book talk: Professor Briann Greenfield, "Out of the Attic: Inventing Antiques in Twentieth Century New England," Community Services Building, 3pm
June 17	Annual Meeting featuring Society film <i>Pride, Honor & Courage</i> , Mandell JCC, 7pm
July 25 – August 5	Eastern European Trip with Professor Sam Kassow

SAVE THE DATE!!

SEPTEMBER 27, 2010

**A VERY SPECIAL PROGRAM WITH
FATHER PATRICK DESBOIS, AUTHOR OF *HOLOCAUST BY BULLETS***

A REASON TO REMEMBER, ROTH, GERMANY 1933-1942

A TRAVELING EXHIBIT FROM THE HATIKVAH HOLOCAUST EDUCATION CENTER

The Society and the Mandell Jewish Community Center are proud to be hosting a traveling Holocaust exhibit from the Hatikvah Holocaust Education Center in Springfield, Massachusetts from March 21 – April 23, 2010 at the JCC (closed when the JCC is closed for Passover). *A Reason to Remember, Roth, Germany 1933-1942* is the story of five Jewish families living in this rural village of 500 people. There had been Jews in Roth for more than 300 years and, until Hitler's rise to power, they lived, worked and played side by side with their neighbors. Their experiences are a microcosm of what happened to Jews throughout occupied Europe. This exhibit honors those who perished, those who survived and is a way to teach lessons to combat hatred and prejudice.

Middle and high school classes are being invited to view the exhibit. The Society has trained volunteer docents who will be available to school groups and organizations wishing to arrange a group visit.

On Monday, March 22, 2010, educators throughout the state will be gathering to experience the award winning Holocaust Education Program created by ADL. Planned in conjunction with the exhibit, *Echoes and Reflections* is a state-of-the-art multi-media curriculum developed by the Anti-Defamation League along with the Shoah Foundation and Yad Vashem. This important training session was initiated and is subsidized by the Society, and is co-sponsored by JFACT and the Jewish Federation of Greater Hartford's Commission on Jewish Education and Leadership.

For further information, or to arrange for a docent-led tour, please call Bea at 860 727-6170 or bbrodie@jewishhartford.org.



HOLOCAUST LEGACIES: DON'T MISS THIS SPEAKER!

Please join us on Tuesday, April 12, at 7:00 p.m. at the Mandell JCC, to hear Deborah Roth-Howe, daughter of a Roth survivor, and one of the creators of the exhibit. Her talk, *Teaching the Lessons of the Holocaust: A Survivor's Family Works with the German Village they Fled*, will discuss her experiences with the people of Roth, who have restored the town's synagogue and wish to remember their community's past.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- The Hoffman Summerwood Community, an assisted living facility on Simsbury Road, West Hartford, is looking for volunteers to lead a monthly one hour discussion group on current events, and facilitate an interactive discussion on news and issues.
- Interviewing – there are many interesting individuals whose stories have yet to be told. We will train you to become an interviewer.
- Transcribing oral history interviews – in order to make the best possible use of our oral histories, they must be transcribed. Listen to fascinating life stories as you type away using specialized transcription equipment in our office.
- Mailings – during the course of the year, the Society sends out several mailings and extra hands are always welcome.
- Program assistance – as we prepare for, set up and run special programs like Family History Day, we can always use additional help.

For further information, please contact Bea Brodie at 860 727-6170 or bbrodie@jewishhartford.org.

ITALY'S JEWISH HERITAGE: THE VENETIAN GHETTO

A lecture on Italy's Venetian Ghetto took place on December 6, 2009 as part of the Society's on-going "Jews Around the World" series. Dr. Michael Campo, John J. McCook Professor Emeritus of Modern Language and Literature at Trinity College, was our guest. He began by explaining that was the first historical use of the word "ghetto" deriving from the Venetian word "geto" meaning foundry, because the Jews were given a small dirty island that had been an iron foundry. It became known as Ghetto Nuovo. Although we now tend to think of "ghetto" as a pejorative term, for many years Venice's ghetto actually provided a safe haven for its inhabitants. He discussed how and why Jews of both German and Italian origin were first attracted to Venice, as well as their relationship with Venice's citizens and rulers. He also showed slides of the area and the many lovely synagogues still co-existing within the cramped Ghetto walls. The evening ended with an Italian dessert buffet featuring tiramisu, cannoli and biscotti, along with espresso and cappuccino.



Square in Venetian ghetto

NEW YORK'S LOWER EAST SIDE: THEN AND NOW

On Sunday, November 8, 2009, a group of intrepid travelers boarded a bus for a journey back in time. This trip to New York's Lower East Side was a strange contrast of the old and the new, as Asian markets jostle for space next to historic synagogues and Jewish communal institutions. The Society worked with the Lower East Side Jewish Conservancy to customize a tour based on the interests of our group. The Conservancy has two initial goals: to support, enhance and activate the Lower East Side's community of living synagogues and other historic structures, and to raise public awareness of the Lower East Side's distinct cultural identity. To this end, they offer a number of different tours and have access to many sites that are not open to the general public.



Eldridge Street Synagogue interior

We began at the famous Eldridge Street Synagogue. This synagogue, built in 1887, was in total disrepair, although services continued to take place there. The roof leaked, pigeons roosted in the balcony and it was in danger of collapsing. In 2007, the 20 year, multi-million dollar renovation project was completed and it now contains a museum and learning center, along with the magnificent sanctuary. From there, it was on to the Bialystocker Synagogue, which was originally built as a church in 1826 and became a synagogue in 1905. It is the largest active Orthodox congregation on the Lower East Side. The décor included Jewish interpretations of the signs of the Zodiac on the ceiling. It is believed that a corner of the women's gallery contained a secret entrance to a stop on the underground railroad.

Some members of the group took a walking tour of East Broadway, where we visited a shtieble (one room house of worship), and other notable Jewish sites were pointed out. The guides also shared the irony that the Forward Building, home of the pre-eminent Socialist Yiddish newspaper, has now been turned into million dollar condos.

After lunch, we visited the Kehila Kedosha Janina, the only Romaniote synagogue in the Western Hemisphere and the only Greek synagogue in New York. Here we heard a brief history of the Romaniote Jews and saw many of their treasured ritual objects. It was a wonderful end to a full and fascinating day.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

We are very grateful to these donors who have chosen to preserve Hartford's Jewish history in our archives. Acquisitions include:

- *Jewish Cemeteries of Five Counties of Connecticut, Volume 2* from Mr. and Mrs. Barney Miller
- Program from the Emanuel Synagogue Confirmation held in 1925 by Ira Smith
- Teferes Israel Sisterhood minute books and financial ledgers from Gladys Feingenbaum
- Marriage certificates, naturalization certificates, graduation program, copy of essay, wedding album relating to the Goldfarb and Agdish families from Arline Wolansky

PRIDE, HONOR AND COURAGE: JEWISH WOMEN REMEMBER WORLD WAR II

On Thursday, October 22, 2009, close to 200 people came together to view the film and exhibit honoring the Hartford



Film participants stand with Estelle Kafer and Sharon Rome Reisner

Jewish women who served at home or in the military during World War II. This documentary was directed and edited by filmmaker Alexis Bravos, who combined contemporary interviews of these women, and period film to create a very moving tribute to their strength and sacrifice.

Project coordinator Sharon Rome Reisner solicited narrators, organized interviews, and collected artifacts and other memorabilia for the creation of the film and exhibit. She first arranged a Road Show type program, in conjunction with the Jewish Women's Archive (JWA.org), located in Boston. Local Jewish women were invited to come in to be interviewed on videotape and have their documents scanned into our computer. This was very successful and was followed up by more interviews done by

a number of volunteers. We are grateful to Gloria Bein, Leiba Bernstein, Susan Goldberg, Judy Singer and Betty Hoffman who conducted these additional interviews. Betty Hoffman also wrote the narration for the film which was read by professional actress, Karen Ryker. Her script provided historical context and connected the individual stories. In addition to our interviewers, we are grateful to the following for their assistance: Rabbi Howard Rosenbaum and the pre-B'nai Mitzvah students of Beth El Temple, Paul Goldberg, Laura Hughes, Louise Kaufman, Sid Kaye, David Klau, Maxine Lerman, Janet Poitras, Leann Sherman and Janet Wallens.

The fascinating exhibit consists of several panels which highlight photos and quotes from some of our participants, and three display cases featuring scrapbooks, letters, photos and other artifacts from the Society archives and on loan from Shirley Seltzer. The exhibit will be available for viewing until July 30th. Please call the Society at 860 727-6171 before visiting.

The Society is very proud that the documentary film, *Pride, Honor and Courage: Jewish Women Remember World War II*, has been selected for the Hartford Jewish Film Festival. It will be shown on Sunday, March 21 at 12:00 p.m. at the K & G Theatres, Bloomfield.



Past president Arthur Nassau with film participant and narrator Gloria Bein (far right) and her daughter, Tara Shapiro



The Spanish Synagogue in Prague

This project would not have been possible without the financial assistance of the Koopman Family Fund at the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Hartford, The Women's Education and Leadership Fund of the University of Hartford (WELFund), and the Teen Leadership and Philanthropy Institute, a program of the Jewish Community Foundation in collaboration with Yachad. We are very grateful for their support.

TRIP TO EASTERN EUROPE

There are still a few places left for this summer's trip to the great Jewish centers of Eastern Europe. It is planned for July 25 - August 5, 2010 and will include stops in Warsaw, Krakow, Prague, Bratislava, and Budapest. It will be led by noted scholar Professor Samuel Kassow of Trinity College and Rabbi David Small of Emanuel Synagogue. For further information contact Estelle Kafer at 860-727-6171 or ekafer@jewishhartford.org or Fay deHaas at 860-206-8224 or fdehaas@cruiseplanners.com.

From the Director

Dear Friends,

I just returned from a second visit to the Hatikvah Holocaust Center, located on the Springfield Jewish Community Center campus. A small group of Board members and volunteers were trained to “docent” the traveling exhibit “A Reason to Remember” coming to the Mandel JCC from March 21- April 23. It is a replica of the permanent exhibit installed in Hatikvah’s beautiful space in 2004. The compelling twenty-seven panels are divided into various themes explaining the systematic process of the Nazis destruction of Jewish life. The documents, photographs, quotes and first-hand testimonies illustrate the consequences of racism and genocide fostered by the Nazis. The information is designed to motivate visitors to think about their own personal choices and how they take responsibility for them. Please join us on **Monday April 12 at 7:00pm** at the Mandell JCC to hear Deborah Roth-Howe, daughter of one of the survivors and exhibit curator, talk about her family’s reconnection and partnership with the German village they once fled.

For the past eight months, the most common request received in our office is “Where can I buy that book about North End memories?” With over 1300 books sold, we are currently working on a third printing. The Board is discussing plans for a future second volume and we hope to start collecting additional stories and anecdotes this summer.

The second request we hear often is “Can I find information about this program, trip, exhibit, etc. on your website?” Thanks to the excellent web design skills of our new archivist, Cynthia Harbeson, our website is undergoing a makeover! With Steven Bernstein providing initial guidance, the updated website will contain interactive components and links to learn of upcoming programs and projects. Visitors will be able to download forms to purchase publications and register for programs and events. Past and current Heritage Bulletins, exhibitions and photographs from our collection will also be featured. Future components may include payment on line and submitting and sharing Hartford memories. Make sure you check out www.jhsg.org this April!!

In closing, on behalf of the Board of Directors, Society members and myself, I would like to thank our president, Elliott Pollack, whose three year term will come to a close this June. We are very grateful for Elliott’s tireless commitment and dedication. His ongoing efforts and innovative ideas to promote interest and financially sustain the organization have truly made a difference, fostering the Society’s growth and a greater awareness of our mission.

It was a pleasure to work with such a supportive and capable leader and we look forward to Elliott’s continued interest.

Wishing everyone a Happy Pesach!

Estelle

REMEMBERING THE OLD NEIGHBORHOOD: STORIES FROM HARTFORD’S NORTH END

BOOK AND CD PURCHASE FORM

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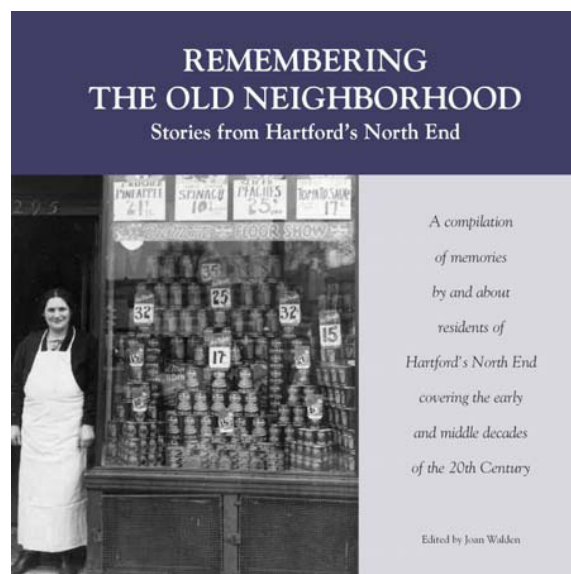
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Make your check out to: JHSGH

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333 Bloomfield Avenue
West Hartford, CT 06117



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 printed.

In memory of:

Betty Hoffman's mother
from Susan and Alan Viner

Marjorie Rafal
from Dr. and Mrs. Irving Waltman

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IN MEMORIAM



**Lola Cohen
Anna Anshel Heineman**

The Preservation Society provides additional funding for sustaining and growing the Historical Society. We appreciate our generous donors who have committed to making yearly contributions of \$1,000 (supporting member) or \$1,800 (Chai member) to promote the ongoing work of the Society.

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WE ARE DELIGHTED TO WELCOME YOU!

JOIN THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER HARTFORD

Your membership dues not only support programs, projects and exhibits that educate and entertain, but they also help us in our efforts to preserve and archive the history of Hartford's Jewish community.

You receive benefits as well, including:

- Access to the archival collection without charge
- Staff assistance with personal research
- Discounts on events and projects sponsored by the Society
- Special invitations to new exhibits and other openings
- Discounts on Society publications
- The satisfaction of knowing that you have helped to preserve the past for future generations

Become a member and show your support for the Society's work.

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US

We are dedicated to collecting and preserving your historical documents, photographs and memorabilia of the Jewish community of Greater Hartford. Help preserve our rich legacy for future generations.

Become a member, support us, volunteer!

Jewish Historical Society office hours are:
Monday-Thursday, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Our telephone number is (860) 727-6171
Email: jhsg@jewishhartford.org
Website: www.jhsg.org

The Jewish Historical Society of Greater Hartford is a beneficiary agency of the Jewish Federation of Greater Hartford.

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