



CHRONICLES

JOURNAL OF THE JEWISH GENEALOGICAL
SOCIETY OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA

דברי הימים



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THE CONFERENCE ISSUE FEATURING ARTICLES BY JGSGP MEMBERS, 2012 PARIS CONFERENCE ATTENDEES AND ROOTS TRAVELERS



REFLECTIONS FROM YOUR CHRONICLES TEAM

Publishing is an unpredictable endeavor, replete with joys and frustrations, and your *Chronicles* team is no stranger to them. We try hard to offer fresh, stimulating material but this isn't always easy because we rely on our readership for content. Every fall we hope to provide coverage of the previous summer's annual IAJGS conference but this year we knew of only two local members who were attending the Paris conference so we weren't sure there'd be much coverage. Boy, were we surprised when three additional members came forward to share their experiences! We also had no idea that anyone was planning to travel in Europe before or after the conference.

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JGSGP MEMBERSHIP

Membership dues and contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. Please make checks payable to JGSGP and mail to the address below. Please include your email address and zip+4 code.

Annual Dues (January 1 - Dec. 31)

Individual.....	\$25
Family of two, per household.....	\$35
Sponsor.....	\$50
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Overseas.....	\$21

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Submission of articles on genealogy for publication in *CHRONICLES* is enthusiastically encouraged. The editorial board reserves the right to decide whether to publish an article and to edit all submissions. Please keep a copy of your material. Anything you want returned should be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

While email and other electronic files are highly preferred, the editors will be happy to work with you and your material in any form. If you have an idea, please contact Evan Fishman of the Editorial Board by email: editor@jgsgp.org or by phone at 856-667-2077.

SUBSCRIPTIONS - ADDRESS CHANGE

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By the time you read this message we will have had two meetings since our summer break. At our September meeting David Mink gave a wonderful presentation regarding his recent visit to Poland. Now that the initial rush is past and all states have been indexed, the 1940 census is more accessible. In October Catherine "Casey" Zahn helped us learn how to better navigate that census through her informative and lively tutorial. From November through March we'll be meeting on Sunday afternoons at Main Line Reform Temple in Wynnewood. On November 11 Stanley Bergman, a veteran document preservationist at YIVO, will discuss and demonstrate how to preserve valuable documents and pictures.

At our September meeting I addressed the issue of volunteering for our society. Collaborative efforts can create new, useful databases that might help fellow JGSGP members and others in our worldwide genealogy community advance in their research on both deceased and current relatives. In addition, networking with each other can help break down seemingly insurmountable brick walls. Please read the article by Gayle Miller, which illustrates the value of networking and how she benefited from the work of volunteers from the Italian Genealogical Group.

In the past members of our society have indexed the immigrant bank records from the four immigrant banks in Philadelphia. We are now indexing obituaries from the *Jewish Exponent*. Several years ago, the son of another JGSGP member, a very ambitious Boy Scout, indexed all the burials at Mt. Carmel Cemetery in the Frankford section of Philadelphia. We would like to index more cemeteries in the Philadelphia area. If you feel you could help us, please volunteer by contacting Steve Schechter (programs@jgsgp.org) or myself (president@jgsgp.org).

One last item: if you are on Facebook please join us at the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia page (<http://tinyurl.com/jgsgp>).

Fred Blum

MEMBERSHIP MESSAGE

As the new Vice President of Membership, I would like to help develop new leadership for JGSGP. Over the fifteen years that I have been a member, I haven't seen much change in the leadership ranks. I am certain that many of those who have worked tirelessly for the society would appreciate being able to share their expertise with "new blood" and cut back on the time and energy they've devoted to the society as new faces step up to help run JGSGP.

As a small, first step, I intend to have sign-in sheets and name tags available at all meetings. I personally don't know most members' names. Greeting one another by name and then engaging each other in conversation is far more congenial than attending a meeting, being "entertained" by those in charge, and then leaving again. This is OUR genealogical society, and we should all bring what talents we have to help maintain and strengthen it.

The second small step I would like to implement is to form a membership committee to help make the society more welcoming, especially for newcomers. Much of the work that I have in mind for this project could be done at home, simply by using your telephone. I have lists of current members and those who did not renew last year or the previous few years. I would like to call all of these people and find out why they have not renewed and encourage them to rejoin. I also have a list of attendees of the 2012 Genealogy Fair who received complimentary membership through December 2012. I would like to invite each one of them to renew membership this coming January.

I think a personal touch would be extremely helpful. I'm unable to make all of these phone calls myself. A dedicated handful of volunteers, however, could help make this happen. I can be reached by e-mail at membership@jgsgp.org or by telephone at (732) 610-6318. I look forward to hearing from volunteers who are willing to spare an hour or two a month and help me out.

Susan Neidich, VP Membership, is researching Neidich/Nydick from Pinsk, Belarus and Eisenberg from Siedlce, Poland.

WE EXTEND A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBER

Lisa Shalet

Philadelphia PA

As a result we're very pleased to present a travel themed issue with loads of photographs to enhance the text. We've identified four benefits to attending an international IAJGS conference and traveling in Europe:

- We have access to a broader group of genealogical colleagues at a non-U.S. conference. Our counterparts from Europe and the Middle East find it comparatively easy financially to travel to a conference in Paris, for instance, and the distances are much less.

- By personally visiting our ancestral towns, we're more likely to see firsthand former residences and businesses of family members and/or ancestors. We may be able to reconstruct what their lives were like if the synagogues, schools, and public areas are still intact. There may even be locals who remember our family and/or witnessed events that were pivotal to their existence.

- Sadly many of our ancestral towns are now remnants of once thriving Jewish communities. Our physical presence demonstrates support and interest to the surviving Jewish populations and forge important connections.

- Visiting ancestral towns enables us to have direct access to records at European repositories. We can make immediate decisions to direct our research efforts, something a paid researcher cannot do, and we'd certainly be more thorough.

Thanks to Sharon Brown, Tammy Hepps, Merle Kastner, and Joel Spector for sharing their experiences at the Paris conference. We also appreciate Bernie Cedar, Merle Kastner, and David Mink for their insightful and moving observations based on their respective travels this past summer.

Evan Fishman - Editor

A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE PARIS IAJGS CONFERENCE

by *Tammy Hepps*

In convincing me to make the trip to Paris, my Jewish genealogy friends insisted that the 2102 conference would be unique amongst IAJGS conferences. I saw my first indication of those distinctions upon my initial entry into the conference level of the Marriott Rive Gauche, which took me past an exhibit entitled, "Postcards of Yiddishland and Maghreb."



Explanatory maps for the Yiddishland and Maghreb exhibit



View of the photo exhibit

Panel after panel of astonishing photographs captured the parallel experiences of Jews in the demolished communities of Eastern Europe and Northern Africa.

When I reached the registration table I heard a multitude of languages buzzing around me - French, Hebrew, Russian, and many others - and I noticed an exceptional diversity of hometowns listed on the name badges. Our conference guides informed us that the four days of lectures in English and French would be translated, sometimes simultaneously, for the conference participants. Presenters would cover information on more than forty countries, with particular emphasis on French-Jewish origins from North Africa, and touch upon the more exotic Jewish communities in the Caribbean, India, and locales where black Jews have lived. The walls of the main gathering area were lined with beautiful family tree charts covering French families with a range of Ashkenazi and Sephardi last names. Every aspect of the conference emphasized the diversity of Jewish origins with a special focus on the unique aspects of the host community.



Family trees lining the main area of the conference floor.

I attended a mix of talks that ranged from the personally relevant to the just plain fascinating. To hear some of the top Ukrainian researchers, like Alexander Denysenko and Alex Dunai in rare IAJGS appearances was a treat, espe-

cially for a South Philly Jew like myself. Even more exciting was the number of FSU archivists giving their debut presentations at an IAJGS conference and discussing the resources available at their respective institutions. Irene Serheyeva's two presentations, one about the Kiev archives and the other about the *pinkasim* (community journals) at the Vernadsky Library, were definite highlights for me.

I attended talks which covered topics beyond my personal research goals including: the *halachic* ramifications of genealogical discoveries, Jewish naming traditions since Biblical times (by famed expert Alexander Beider), ennobled Austrian Jewish families (by Georg Gaugusch of *Wer Einmal War*), recently discovered footage of a 1920s Hungarian Jewish wedding, and mohelbücher (circumcision records) of adult converts from the 18th and 19th centuries. A fascinating talk about the restoration of a Jewish cemetery in the south of France spurred me to get in touch with the project's photographer, a friend of mine with whom I hadn't been in touch for the past fifteen years. Our chance reconnection took me to Brussels for a day to catch up with her in person!

The audience expected the opening roundtable on "Jewish Genealogy in Europe" to be a highlight, but we were ultimately disappointed. Society leaders from France, Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, Switzerland, Luxembourg, United Kingdom and Germany used up the allotted time to list the activities of their respective societies. Sometime later, I learned the organizers did not intend for that to happen. As a result we lost the opportunity for an interesting discussion within the international Jewish genealogy community.



Jewish Genealogy in Europe roundtable

Throughout the conference we Americans giggled at the uneven translations: the food counter advertised “drinks on consumption”; “kosher” always appeared in its French equivalent *casher*; and post-lecture Q&A sessions were promoted as “debates”. The language differences did however provide much food for thought. For one thing, I witnessed a lot less mixing amongst attendees of different nationalities than I expected.

I found myself using my passable French to advise a Frenchman on some of the basics of U.S. genealogy. We Americans discussed the limitations of our English-only sites, and this gentleman's difficulties certainly highlighted the importance of translating the materials we've already produced so that Jews of all nationalities can access them. If nothing else, the conference stood out for its visceral reminder that there's a much wider world of Jews out there than we normally see at U.S. based IAJGS events.

A few days after the conference I joined the children and grandchildren of Jews who were deported from Paris in 1942 at a gathering marking the 70th anniversary of the Vel' d'Hiv roundups.

Instead of sightseeing, relaxing in a café, or otherwise enjoying a lazy afternoon we mourned with the French people as we listened to rabbis chant the *El Malei Rachamim* (G-d Full of Mercy) prayer for the repose of the dead. We watched the president of France, mayor of Paris, and other governmental and Jewish community representatives lay wreaths and proclaim their deepest remorse and obligation.

On this beautiful summer day Jews and non-Jews united behind the finest expressions of tolerance to commemorate the unfathomable horrors that occurred. However, I found the upheavals of the 20th century in Europe and the Middle East more compelling while at the conference. Not only did I examine the walls lined with photographs of a lost world and watch European attendees search for family genealogy but I also felt that we genealogists were confronting those memorable events head on.



View inside the official French commemoration of the Vel d'Hiv roundups. The proceedings took place at the far end of the tent where the official monument to the roundup stands. From my location all I could see was the TV feed to screens throughout the tent.

Ralph Bloch, a Swiss genealogist whose ancestral cemetery is located in Bavaria, concluded his lecture with a slide list-

ing the Shoah victims from his town. "These are the last sixteen residents of Krumbach who did not make it to the cemetery," he choked out, momentarily overcome. "Let us remember them now." His grief that these landsmen were denied burial along with their forefathers became ours. That moment of memorial, intimate and heartfelt, is what I remember most from my experiences at the conference and afterwards.

Tammy Hepps (tammy@treelines.com) is the founder of a forthcoming genealogy website, www.Treelines.com, where you will be able to preserve and share stories from your family's history. If you enjoyed this article, follow her blog at her website for more!

Her Philadelphia forebears include YORKER (formerly Yaroker) from Kanev (probably Stepansy) in Kiev Guberniya, SKVERSKY from Chornobai in Poltava Guberniya, GOLDBERG from Zhitomer in Volhynia Guberniya, and DAVIS from Zhuravno in Galicia. She's currently expanding her Philadelphia research to include her great-great-grandparents' ZAITSEV and BENN siblings.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2012 PARIS IAJGS CONFERENCE

by Sharon Brown

Three speakers at the conference stood out for me: Serg Klarsfeld, who spoke about his book, *Memorial to the Jews Deported from France*. I believe his presence at the conference coincided with the publication of an updated version of his book. There were many questions and comments from the audience, mostly related to specific individuals who were deported and died. What I found remarkable was that his responses clearly indicated that he knew specific details about each deportee in question and provided updated information on that individual or his/her family. It was a very interesting and very moving discussion (even in translation).

Father Patrick Desbois, the Roman Catholic priest who, with a team of supporters from the Yahad-in Unum organization he founded, documents sites where Jews were exterminated in Ukraine and provides proper burials for them, was the invited speaker at the conference gala on Tuesday evening. I was very moved hearing him speak and viewing his presentation slides.

Agnieska Holland, the Polish film director and screenwriter, spoke at the screening of her Academy Award nominated film "In Darness" and at the Gesher Galicia SIG luncheon.

THE PARIS CONFERENCE JULY 15-18 2012 FACTS & FIGURES

by Joel Spector

Over 850 attendees representing the following countries (and possibly others):

France, United States, United Kingdom, Israel, Canada, Australia, Belgium, Sweden, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, Italy, Luxembourg, Ireland, Latvia, Poland, Czech Republic, Austria

Over 280 events: Including about 180 lectures

- Most were given in English; some in French
- Over 100 were simultaneously translated (both ways)
- Several in one language & then repeated in the other

Trips: Louvre, Montparnasse, Le Marais, Shoah Museum & others

33 SIG meetings, 28 workshops

Lectures included many never before presented at an IAJGS conference and by non-US lecturers who had never attended or presented at a conference:

- Many lectures & displays on France & Germany
- 17 lectures & 8 displays on Algeria including *The 50th Anniversary of the Coming to France of Jews from Algeria*
- 4 lectures on Alliance Israelite Universelle including one on databases and archives
- 1 lecture on Sephardim in Bulgaria
- 3 lectures on Egyptian Jews
- 3 lectures on Greece including "The Jewish Community of Salonika"
- 1 lecture each on on India, Iran and on Tunisian Jews in Malta
- 9 lectures on the Mediterranean
- 6 lectures & 7 displays on Morocco including "Jewish Names in the Sahara"
- 8 lectures on North Africa
- 3 lectures on Portugal including one on Portuguese Jews after the Inquisition
- 7 lectures & 3 displays on Spain including one on Spanish pre-expulsion archives
- 2 lectures on Switzerland including one on the "History of Jews in Switzerland"
- 12 lectures & 5 displays on Tunisia including lectures on synagogues & cemeteries
- 5 lectures & 1 display on Turkey

To learn more, see the complete Daily Planner at the conference website: www.paris2012.eu

*Currently IAJGS secretary, Joel L. Spector is a past president of JGSG, and former chairperson of its Russian SIG. With knowledge of both contemporary and pre-Revolutionary Russian language, Joel has given presentations on the Russian language and has provided translations of documents to individuals and groups. He has been conducting research in several historic Russian language encyclopedias for well over a decade and has produced a unique Russian language Jewish Encyclopedia, *Evreiskaya Entsiklopedia*. He is researching the names ZEITLIN and BLACK, primarily in Vitebsk Gubernia. Contact Joel at JLSpector@aol.com*

She directed the film "Europa, Europa" and has also written episodes for two television shows, "The Wire" and "The Killing." Unfortunately, I missed the screening but heard her speak at the luncheon. It was fascinating to learn about her background (the daughter of two prominent journalists, her Jewish father's parents were killed in the Warsaw Ghetto and her Catholic mother participated in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising to liberate Warsaw from Nazi Germany) and hear about the issues and feelings she has with regard to writing and directing about the Holocaust.

Sharon Brown, a fairly new member of JGSGP, lives in Silver Spring, Maryland. She began researching her family when she retired in 2010. The surnames she is researching include: JASINOWSKY (Kobrin; Belarus), WIESENTHAL, SCHWARTZBACH, LANGHOLZ (Thuste, Ukraine); FLASTER, GLAZNER (Mlawa, Poland); BROWN/BRONFIN (Odessa, Russia). She can be reached at sharonpbrown@verizon.net

On the tour, we passed the Holocaust Museum and saw many plaques on the walls and in the surrounding streets, attesting to this horrible event.

Memorial plaque on the wall of a school building
"To the more than 11,000 school children arrested by the Vichy government between 1942 - 1944 and killed in Auschwitz because they were Jewish. More than 500 of them lived in the 4th Arrondissement of Paris and were among the students at this school.
Let us never forget them.
Plaque erected on 15 Dec., 2001

On Tuesday evening (July 17) a highly successful Bukoviners' Dinner took place at the hotel restaurant. My colleague and fellow Bukoviner, Sylvie G'sell, had arranged for a beautiful dinner with a choice of two menus. Fifteen people attended including Dr. Cornel & Marsha Fleming, who came by train via the "Chunnel" from London, Mariette Guthertz who took the train from Montpellier (466 miles away), a female conference attendee from Israel, myself, and others from Paris. It was quite a testimonial that so many came such great distances to break bread with their fellow *landsmen*. By 11 pm people were still lingering, not wanting to leave.



Bukoviners' Dinner

Back: Dale Prince, Cornel Fleming, Mariette Guthertz, Marilyn Winters Leroy, Alexis Lieblich, Elvire Rosemont, Lydia Schmerler, Merle Kastner, Dan Tuerk, Renee Stern Steinig, Jan Tuerk
Front: Dvorah Netzer, Anny Schaefer Chemla, Marsha Fleming, Sylvie Reicher G'sell

2012 IAJGS-PARIS CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

by Merle Kastner

Although she attends IAJGS conferences annually, Merle Kastner (a JGSGP member who resides in Montreal) had some new experiences to share with us:

Although I had been to Paris several times, I signed up for a walking tour (Monday, July 16) of Le Marais, the old, but still very lively, Jewish quarter of the city. This turned out to be a very rewarding three hour tour despite the high temperatures. There were many, many sobering references to and commemorations of the *Rafle du Vel' d'Hiv* (the Velodrome d'Hiver Roundup) when Paris police rounded up 13,000 Jews over a two day period (July 16-17, 1942) and had them confined at this bicycle velodrome and stadium. Subsequently they were transported to the infamous French camp at Drancy and later to Auschwitz death camp.



Twenty-one enthusiastic Bukoviners attended the Bukovina Birds of a Feather (BOF) meeting on Wednesday at which I showed a slide show presentation that my cousin and dear friend, Bruce Reisch, had prepared. Bruce originated and moderates the Czernowitz/Bukovina website, (www.czernowitz.ehpes.com), and the slide show demonstrated the research resources, some new, for the Bukovina area. I moderated the meeting in English while Sylvie G'sell translated into French.



Merle Kastner (left) moderating the Bukovina BOF meeting with Sylvie G'sell's assistance.

This superb conference surpassed all our expectations. One of its distinctive features was the broad scope of topics that were covered, many of which had never been heard at previous conferences. Eighteen countries were represented, 850 people attended, and many new speakers from all over the world presented for the first time. I particularly enjoyed the international flavor that permeated. I was immensely pleased that I attended.

Merle Kastner is vice president of programming for the JGS of Montreal. While she resides there, she has definite roots in Philadelphia. Her paternal grandmother, Esther Miller Kastner, was born in Philadelphia in 1894 and moved to Canada with her family in 1909. Merle has spearheaded indexing of Jewish cemeteries in her home area and attends IAJGS conferences regularly. She is researching: KASTNER, OSTFELD (Bukovina), NATHANSON, MENDELSSOHN (Piatra Neamt & Negulesti, Romania) KUSSNER/KUSHNIR (Bendery, Moldova), MILLER/SHUSHINSKI (Lida, Belarus, Vilna & Eishishok, Lithuania), GARBARSKI & DENENBERG/DYNABURSKI (Sejny, Suwalki gubernia, Poland) Contact Merle at merlek@videotron.ca.

JEWISH TOWNS OF POLAND 2012

by David Mink

The following article is a brief summary of the interesting presentation David made at the September meeting of JGSGP. (ed)

This past July my wife, Judi, and I traveled to Poland on a trip organized by Gratz College, the Taube Center for the Renewal of Jewish Life in Poland, and Momentum Tours and Travel. The trip was led by Michael Steinlauf, professor of history at Gratz College, and Dariusz Kuzniar, tour director and Polish partner of Momentum Tours. The trip was dedicated to the history of the Jews and



the Polish people. We explored the rich culture that developed since the first arrival of the Jews, the dark times of the 17th and 20th centuries, and the promising work that is being done by Poles today to reclaim their history.

With the collapse of Communism in 1989, the Polish people were able to elect their leaders for the first time since 1795, when the third partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth erased Poland from the map of Europe.

Now the Poles are free to explore their history through their own lenses. Now they can deal with the dark periods of their past and create a world that looks to the future. We met people such as Jan Jagelski, a chemist, who has worked tirelessly to protect and preserve Jewish heritage sites, monuments, and cemeteries since the 1980s. We also met young Poles like Anna Sommer Schneider, born in the late 1980s in Oswiecim, Poland, (the Polish name of the town where the Auschwitz death camp was built). She has devoted her life to researching and telling the story of what happened in Auschwitz. A third group of folks we met were those who have discovered a Jewish ancestor and are reconnecting with Judaism on terms meaningful to them. Maciej Kirschenbaum, coordinator of Mi Dor Le Dor (From Generation to Generation), Taube Center's Jewish education program, is such a person.

The trip took us to Lublin, several *shtetlach* in southeast Poland, Krakow, Lodz, and Warsaw. Lublin was one of the major prewar cities in Poland. Its Jewish population then was 44,000, equal to slightly more than one-third of the total 120,000 residents. We visited the famous Yeshiva of the Elders of Lublin. This impressive building was completed in 1930 and testifies to a culturally rich and thriving Jewish community at the time. The yeshiva was returned to the Jewish community in 2003 and has been restored. Part of the



Yeshiva of the Elders of Lublin.

building is being converted to hotel rooms for travelers looking for kosher accommodations. In addition to hosting visitors and Jewish learning sessions, the yeshiva holds Jewish community events and programs.

The Jewish section was separated from the rest of the town by the Brama Grodzka or City Gate. Today it serves as a municipal cultural institution engaged in fostering an awareness of Lublin's rich Jewish history and developing a deeper sense of local identity and tolerance for other cultures. There are recordings of Jewish survivors from Lublin which tell about the life and daily routines before the war. The NN Theater provides a stage for readings of Isaac Bashevis Singer in Yiddish and Polish. The center's activities include cultural and educational programs as well as tours and interactive projects.

We went through several towns or *shtetlach* that had considerable prewar Jewish populations and today have none. Synagogues that survived Nazi destruction have been reclaimed and are being restored. Some of the work has been done by international Jewish groups such as Union of Jewish Communities in Poland and the World Restitution Organization. In Chmielnik, Piotr Kravczyk reconstructed the Jewish community by researching the archives. He has formed the Chmielnik Cultural Center and together with a family in Haifa that has Chmielnik roots, they have reclaimed many of the stolen *matzevot* (tombstones) and maintain the Jewish cemetery today. Altogether we visited five *shuls* which were in some process of restoration. The most famous was the *shul* in Zamosc which was built at the end of the 16th century. It is a fine example of Renaissance architecture, and the interior design details have survived. These synagogues are used as cultural centers today.

Perhaps the most telling event of the trip happened in a town that was not part of the itinerary. We heard that there was a commemoration of the Kielce Pogrom of 1946. We were about an hour away and would have to abandon the afternoon schedule. There was no hesitation. We went to Kielce.

We arrived in the middle of a multicultural ceremony commemorating this tragic event. Forty-two Jews were murdered on July 4, 1946 by Polish soldiers, police, and townspeople. As a result of this single event, 45,000 of the 50,000 Polish Jews who had returned to Poland after the war, departed. We stood at the monument in Kielce, a stain-



less steel menorah partially buried in the ground and partially exposed. Polish students held candles behind the menorah. The Israeli ambassador, rabbis, priests, and an imam delivered speeches.

After the ceremony we walked to the actual site of the pogrom. Each victim was identified by name and represented by a chair that stood in front of the house. A plaque that commemorates the memory of these forty-two Jews who were killed in the anti-Semitic riots that day was hung there at the initiative of Lech Walesa, leader of Solidarity. When Poland was a Communist state the victims of the Nazis were identified only as Poles; there was no mention of Jewish victims. Now, according to the Poles, the Nazis were the murderers, not the Poles, and now here in Kielce, the true story is being told.

Poles born since the late '80s have lived in a country that for the first time in many years has not been dominated by a foreign power or a dictatorship. They are free to look at their past without the blinders of the previous generations. They have seen the results of hatred and intolerance, and they wish to live in a world of engagement and tolerance. We visited small towns and cities where Jews were once very much part of the daily fabric of life. They are not today.

There is a desire on the part of the local population to recover and retell how life used to be. It would have been much easier to forget than to confront these demons of a past generation. I have no doubt that anti-Semitism exists today in Poland, but I don't think it's any worse than in the U.S. A reporter we spoke with told us that he has no problem wearing his *kipah* on the streets in Poland; in France, however, it's another story. There are no extreme security measures around Jewish monuments or institutions as in Western Europe.

Perhaps the most encouraging sign is the construction of the Museum of the History of the Polish Jews which is scheduled to open in 2013. A 21st century cultural and education center, the museum will provide a unique environ-



Museum of the History of the Polish Jews under construction

ment --welcoming individuals and groups from Poland and around the world and inviting them to engage in discovering 1000 years of Polish Jewish history.

This is a trip that one should take. Poland itself, I believe, will become a popular tourist destination. Given its rich and tragic history, Poland is a special place for Jewish travelers. The countryside is full of evidence and markers of a full Jewish past. The cities offer that and one more thing: they are the centers that are rebuilding an active and viable Jewish community today. I will discuss this in my next article.

David Mink joined JGSGP in 2006 and soon became Vice President of Programs. He co-chaired the 29th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy in 2009 which was held in Philadelphia. His trip to Poland was very enlightening, and he hopes to share his experience further in the next few issues. He's researching MINKOWSKY from Zhitomyr, GREENBERG from Uman, PSENY from Seidlce, and HUBER from Siemiatycze and can be reached through daminker@gmail.com.

MY LITHUANIAN ADVENTURE PART ONE

By Bernard Cedar

My Lithuanian adventure this past summer comprised the first ten days of a month long (June 20-July 20) visit to Europe. Organized by Howard Margol it enabled me to experience a Jewish genealogically oriented tour of Lithuania as well as support the needs of the current Jewish community there. Peggy Freedman, an associate of Howard's, who has assisted him several times, led my trip. I'd like to focus on my personal genealogical discoveries in this article.

On June 22 we visited the Lithuanian State Historical Archives in Vilnius. This institution holds historical documents that are mostly related to government activities and requirements and date back as far as the 15th century. Since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989 access to these documents has broadened considerably, and groups including JewishGen, Jewish Records Indexing-Poland (JRI-Poland), the Mormons' Family History Library, and Ancestry have demonstrated that there's a tremendous interest in these documents. The indices there have been translated into

English, enabling me to submit a citation (with Peggy Freeman's expert guidance) to the assistant archivist by e-mail and request specific documents. I was surprised to receive a copy of records concerning a great uncle and his wife. Had I had more foresight and done my homework before leaving for this trip, I would've contacted the archivists earlier and obtained much more information than I did.

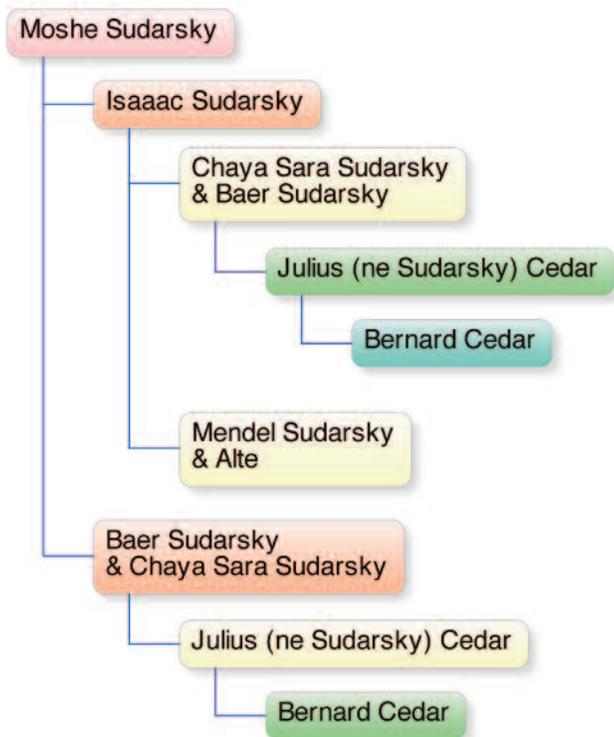


Interior Stacks -Lithuanian State Archives - Vilnius, Lithuania

That evening I met with Peggy to discuss the customized roots trip portion of the tour which would consist of traveling to the small towns and villages from which my forbears originated. I was interested in three towns, all in relatively close proximity: Vistytis, (*Vishtinitz* in Yiddish), on the Prussian border, from which my father (Julius) and both of

his parents (Chaya Sarah and Baer) hailed. (Please note that my grandmother was born a Sudarsky and married her uncle, also a Sudarsky); Verbilis, where Chaya Sarah's father, Isaac Sudarsky (who was also Baer's brother) relocated his brush making factory in the 1890s, probably because of its easy access to a railroad line; and Vilkoviskis where Julius' grandfather (on his father's side), Reb Moshe Sudarsky, was a schoolteacher. According to the manifest for one of his sons, Reb Moshe's second wife, Rebecca, still resided in Vilkoviskis in 1909.

Descendants of Moshe Sudarsky



(Chaya Sarah married her uncle, Baer. Consequently Moshe Sudarsky was Julius's great grandfather on his mother's side as well as his grandfather on his father's side.)

While my objective was to visit each of these towns and contact the local government agencies and historic societies there in the hope of learning more about these Sudarsky ancestors, I didn't expect to find anything. Peggy recommended that I start my roots tour in Suwalki, Poland because Suwalki and the small towns on the Lithuanian border were all once part of the same *gubernia* (county) under the Czarist regime.

On Monday, June 25, I began my roots tour to Suwalki along with my guide and translator, Tamara, and our driver, Victor. Despite visits to the Suwalki city hall and regional archives

we were unsuccessful in uncovering more information about my family. The next day we went to the Vistytis town hall and asked the administrative staff to help us; again we found no appropriate documents but the town administrator phoned a local doctor who had written a history of Vistytis. Unfortunately the doctor was tied up that day but he provided his e-mail address, and I'll be contacting him soon. We later went to the Vilkoviskis cultural history museum, but even though articles I had read about Jewish life of that town noted my ancestor, Reb Moshe Sudarsky, we found no additional information. While I didn't obtain any concrete records or glean new information those two days, I was nevertheless impressed with the kind attention we received from all the administrative personnel we encountered.

On Wednesday, June 27, the entire tour group reconvened at the Kaunas [Kovno] Regional Archives located a couple of blocks from our hotel. Just as we had done in Vilnius, Peggy and I pored over some information, cited documents of potential interest, and forwarded those citations to the archivist at the Kaunas institution. My efforts were rewarded when she gave me thirteen pages about Alte Sudarsky, wife of Mendel Sudarsky, my grandmother's brother. Concurrently Peggy learned through Howard Margol that there's a dossier on Mendel at the Central State Archives in Vilnius which she'll pursue after the conclusion of the tour. That evening, on my walk home from a restaurant back to our hotel, I made my final discovery. I passed by the location of my great uncle, Mendel Sudarsky's medical office and home from the early 1920s to 1937 which I promptly photographed.

MY LITHUANIAN ADVENTURE PART 2

By Bernard Cedar

In the second installment of my Lithuanian adventure I'd like to share our itinerary and compare the conditions of Jewish life before and after the Holocaust.

Our tour began on Wednesday, June 20th in Vilnius, the capital and largest city in Lithuania. Our first organized event was a dinner at the hotel with several guest speakers including an assistant consul from the American Embassy whose work includes negotiations with Lithuanian officials regarding reparations for Holocaust survivors from Lithuania. He related that progress is being made, but it's going slowly. His duties also include being involved with cultural matters on behalf of the embassy. The two other speakers are in-

volved in improving the economic and cultural situation of the remaining, small Jewish community in Lithuania.

The following morning, we went to the Jewish Holocaust Museum, housed in a building that was used as a history museum under the Soviet regime. The Soviet government played down the deliberate targeting of Jews and Communist officials by the Germans, simply saying that Soviet citizens were massacred.



Jewish Holocaust Museum - Vilnius, Lithuania

The museum's displays depict the following: Jewish life in Lithuania before the German invasion in June, 1941; the effects of the initial occupation; the roundup of Jewish men, their transfer to local forests, their slaughter, and subsequent mass burial; the formation of ghettos, life in the ghettos, and their subsequent dissolution. Photographs, text (some in English), and artifacts are used to tell this tumultuous story but there is little use of the more interactive techniques found in state-of-the-art museums. While our visit was definitely worthwhile, I was disappointed that the primary focus was on conditions in Vilnius, ignoring what went on in the rest of the country.

The Museum of Tolerance was our next stop. This institution is oriented to presenting art produced by Lithuanian Jewish painters and sculptors and displaying a large collection of religious and household items, mostly in precious metals and ceramics. I was favorably impressed with the museum's design and displays but I didn't understand its name; I saw nothing related to tolerance or interaction with the various ethnic groups in Lithuania.

We were then bused to a forest area in a suburb of Vilnius called Paneriai where between 30,000 to over 100,000 peo-

ple, mostly Jews, were slaughtered and buried in pits between mid-1941 and 1943 by the Germans and their volunteer Lithuanian helpers. No one seems to know the exact number. Based on her study and evaluation of information collected after World War II, our guide estimated that 50,000 were killed here. The park-like setting includes a small museum on the site along with about ten memorials that were installed by various groups: a Jewish organization, Poles, Soviets and Lithuanians.

Our final stop that day was a visit to the Jewish cemetery and the grave of the Vilna Gaon, the highly respected rabbi of the 18th century.. The cemetery is still in active use and in reasonably good condition. I found it interesting to view the differences in headstone design over the past several centuries, seemingly based on religious, cultural and political changes.

On Friday, June 22nd and Saturday, June 23rd, we had several opportunities to view current Jewish life. Elderly people are provided a subsidized lunch at the local Jewish community center. Some group members visited the homes of Jewish families whose living conditions left much to be desired. Shabbat morning some of us attended services at the only remaining synagogue in Vilnius. The building dates back to the early 1900s, is in fairly decent shape and is ornately decorated as was the custom in those days. The service follows a traditional Orthodox format and was conducted by a cantor who had a good voice. Women sit separately from the men, either in a section on the main floor or in the balcony above. Attendance that morning was sparse, numbering only thirty, including our tour members. Towards the end of the service we saw a group of teen aged girls go to the balcony. They were probably Orthodox based on the way they were dressed and were chaperoned by a similarly dressed woman and a man with a black, wide-rimmed hat. We later learned that the group was from Israel.



Vilnius Synagogue

Following lunch we went on a tour of the ghetto area of Vilnius which consisted of two adjacent sections. The larger section replaced the original, and all residents were relocated there in September 1941. Simultaneously a separation process was carried out; some Jews were forced to move into the ghetto, while others were taken to the killing area to be slaughtered. The number of mass killings decreased in early 1942. For a while, the ghetto was able to maintain itself, organizing health and school facilities, as well as cultural activities, all under the overall control of the Germans. This relatively quiet period ended in 1943 when the ghetto was liquidated and its inhabitants were sent to concentration camps, mostly in Latvia and Estonia.

Our guides pointed out the locations where buildings were destroyed by the Germans after the ghetto was emptied and historic, religious and cultural areas considered important to Jews and non-Jews that were destroyed during the Soviet era. They shared copies of photos taken after the Germans were driven out which showed the remaining buildings as well as photos of the same area as it is today. A complex of buildings, including a synagogue, schools and residences, was the center of religious learning of the Vilna Gaon and his followers and was still in place after the Germans left. Soviet officials had the complex leveled, and a school was constructed on the site. After a number of years the school moved out. The building is now used for social service activities. An imposing bust of the Vilna Gaon mounted on a pedestal denotes the historic importance of this area where the Jews of Vilna lived before World War II. In addition, there are several memorial plaques and statues related to the past Jewish presence in Vilnius.

The magnitude of the extermination of millions of people in Eastern Europe, with the Jews as the largest segment, was significantly reflected in Lithuania where it is estimated that 90 percent of the Jewish population was wiped out. There are a few who remain in Lithuania, attempting to maintain and revitalize a Jewish presence in their country.

On June 25th, our driver suggested we drive to Sejny, Poland to see an inactive synagogue. It looked a little decrepit on the outside and we checked the door, but it was locked. There was a plaque on the wall near the door, written in Polish, indicating the history and importance of the building. Our guide questioned a passerby as to who might be in charge of the building. He pointed to a building about a block away. Just then, a car pulled into the driveway next to the synagogue, and several young people got out. We walked over and introduced ourselves and inquired about

the building. The leader of the group spoke English and explained that they are trying to do several things to raise the educational and cultural opportunities in the town. The building adjacent to the synagogue was once a yeshiva, and they are presently running an early childhood arts program there. He opened the door of the synagogue and invited us in. He explained that the Germans had cleared out the interior of the building: fixtures, furniture, *bema* and ark. After the war, the town used it for several purposes including a firehouse. The synagogue is presently not being used, but the group is attempting to convert it into a performance space for art exhibits, and music and theatre performances. Some work has already been done; the internal structure seems to be solid, and the exterior needs some patching up. The leader seems to be bright and energetic. The locals, from what he related are supportive. I'm glad we made this stop.

After a short stop in Kybartai we drove to the nearby Verbilis town hall. Our attempts to find records about the Sudarsky family there proved futile but we then asked about the Jewish cemetery. Just then, as if it had been set up in advance, a young man who lived near the cemetery showed up and offered to direct us there. There was a low iron fence across the front of the cemetery with an unlocked gate. We were able to walk through the grounds and noted that while most of the gravestones were still there, many of them were toppled over and appeared to have been reset. Many stones were weathered and unreadable but some were in fine shape. Some work is needed to bring this cemetery back to a decent level of repair and care. It's sorrowful to see how poorly it looked.

On Wednesday, June 27th our entire group went on a bus tour of Holocaust related sites in Kaunas (Kovno). First we stopped at a small monument where the Kaunas Ghetto was located. Just as in Vilnius, there had been two adjacent ghetto areas. The smaller one was abandoned and its inhabitants transferred to the larger one which was already overcrowded. Over a period of two years many of those in the ghetto were sent to Fort Nine, part of the larger Kaunas Fortress originally built by the Tsarist Russian government and located at the edge of the city. This is the place where the Germans interred Jews and other undesirables they wished to exterminate. About 7000 people were shot to death there and buried in mass graves.

Our guide spent considerable time talking about a breakout at this fort. In September of 1943 the Nazis launched an operation to exhume and burn the thousands of corpses

buried in Fort Nine, part of a larger, systematic program to eliminate evidence of their mass murder campaign. Sixty-four prisoners, including four non-Jews, were forced to take part in this operation. Despite being kept under strict guard, the group carried out a plan to escape through a tunnel under the fortress. Of the original sixty-four, sixteen survived.

Russian, German, French, and Jewish organizations erected plaques outside the fort memorializing the 30,000 people from Kaunas who were killed, and 50,000 from the region. In 1984 the Soviets added a massive monument to this site.

Before leaving Kaunas and returning to Vilnius on Thursday, June 28th we visited Sugihara House, the home and office of Chiune Sugihara, the Japanese Vice-Consul in Lithuania in 1939-1940. He, along with a few Western European consuls, issued transit visas to Poles and Lithuanians, mostly Jews, who were then able to cross the Soviet Union, ending up in Japan, Shanghai, and other locations away from the German threat. It is estimated that as many as 10,000 people were saved by his initiative in violation of direct orders from his superiors against issuing visas. The Sugihara House is now a museum and memorial to Mr. Sugihara and the others who helped him.

Our final destination was a wooden synagogue in the town of Ziezmariai, just off the road to Vilnius. The outer walls are still standing but the interior is gutted. An elderly, non-Jewish resident is personally trying to keep the building erect. He does some patching of the deteriorating walls, just to keep them intact. However, there is a need for financial and technical support from outside groups.

Much of Lithuanian Jewish life currently exists in the form of museums and memorials. The local populace is definitely willing to the best of its ability to be helpful and respectful in the maintenance and preservation of cemeteries and other significant buildings; town officials were helpful when we asked for records, and the museums offer worthwhile exhibits depicting Jewish life before and during the Holocaust. There are some valiant attempts to provide financial aid and supportive services to the small Lithuanian Jewish population, but they are all that remain of the rich and thriving Jewish community that flourished before 1939.

Bernard Cedar has been involved with genealogy for twelve years, focusing mostly on his father's family, from southern Lithuania, near the old Prussian border. He is researching SUDARSKI, SUDARSKY, GRUINBERG (Vistytis, Verbis, Viloviski, Kaunna, Lithuania); SUDARSKY, CEDAR (United States); BANILOWER, LEIBOWITZ (Czernowitz, Nadwernia, Ukraine, United States). He can be reached at bernardcedar@yahoo.com.

MY KASTNER & NATHANSON ROOTS TRIP TO BUCOVINA & MOLDAVIA/MOLDOVA

by Merle Kastner

(While Merle's four-day trip through Bucovina and Moldavia covered a lot of ground, we've selected to highlight her stay in Rădăuți where she experienced some particularly significant genealogical moments. [ed])

After the IAJGS-Paris conference ended, Sylvie G'sell (a fellow attendee), Sebastian "Gigi" Traciu (our congenial Suceava-based guide, driver, and translator), and I traveled together in Romania. Our second destination there from July 20-21, 2012 was Radautz/Rădăuți (the third largest city in Suceava County) where my grandfather, David Kastner, was born, possibly in 1885.



(below) Historical Romanian Provinces (left) Bucovina detail. Rădăuți is located 23 miles northwest of Suceava



While the Jewish population in Rădăuți in 1807 was infinitesimal, by 1859 the Jews formed their own community, and by 1880 they comprised 30% of the total town population of 11,162. A temple and six official *shuls* existed then. Just before the Holocaust more than 5000 Jews resided there. Currently only a few dozen Jews remain in Rădăuți.

Trade with the forty villages of the surrounding area, the wood industry, and the richly supplied weekly market days brought prosperity to the population. Most members of our extended Kastner family owned lumberyards or were involved in the lumber industry in some way. My great-grandfather, Meyer Moische Kastner, also owned a tavern and used to curse "those drunken peasants" who frequented his establishment.

During our visit to Rădăuți the three of us went to the Jewish cemetery. It is actually in pretty good condition, although needing some grass and weed cutting. Three goats roam the cemetery; they serve as very gentle, harmless, live lawnmowers. In advance of our visit our guide, "Gigi" had alerted the caretaker, Mr. Popescu, who lives across the

road from the cemetery, as to which graves we wanted to view. He was easily able to locate these gravestones by using a comprehensive cemetery map. We gave him 40 lei (equivalent to \$10.72) as a token of appreciation for clearing away the brush and escorting us to the tombstones.

After close to twenty years of family research, I was finally able to put a stone on the graves of my great-grandparents, Sheindel Ostfeld Kastner and Mayer Moische Kastner, my only great-grandparents who never came to Canada. I also wanted to put a stone on the grave of Dorin Frankel, a dear friend to Bruce Reisch (my cousin and *landsman*) and me. Dorin, the son of two Transnistria survivors, found Bruce and me on the Czernowitz mailing list. When we were searching for family in Rădăuți where he lived, Dorin took it upon himself to go to the city archives and photograph vital record after vital record, send the images to us, and then put all the information into a concise database. This was like receiving manna from heaven! Professional researchers charge considerably for this, but Dorin refused to take any money. An accomplished pianist and piano teacher, his only request was for Bruce and me to send him sheet music which we gladly did on two separate occasions. As a result of his generous help, I had valuable information with which to plan this trip. I had been looking especially forward to meeting Dorin on this trip, but sadly he passed away suddenly in May 2011 at the age of 68. Sylvie and I regretfully put stones on his grave together.



(above) Sylvie G'Sell & Merle Kastner at the grave of Dorin Frankel.
(right) Merle Kastner at the grave of her great-grandfather, Mayer Moische Kastner

We then went looking for cousin Netty Kastner Moses' house. After several tries we found it, just as she had told me, on a small, unidentified street containing only three houses, located opposite the Orthodox Cathedral. Netty, who lives in Montreal, informed me that she and her sister, Dora, had shared the room with the big, windowed corner balcony from which they could see the steeple of the church

at the end of the street. Back then, that room wasn't painted the pinkish color that it is now. She was rather disheartened to see the dilapidated condition of the house. Her family lived in this house from the time that Netty was three years old in 1925 until their deportation to Transnistria in October 1941.



Netty Kastner Moses' former house, Rădăuți, Romania

I was disappointed that I was never able to find the addresses of my great grandparents' house or business despite diligent and persistent searches into records (including those provided by Dorin Frankel) and using various research techniques. I did, however, have addresses for two other Kastner relatives, but in both cases, the streets are no longer in existence, having been replaced by large buildings or complexes. Even with the changed street names (first in German, then in Romanian, then in Russian, and finally in Romanian again), it was clear that these streets no longer exist. In another case, despite having a photograph of a large house and its 1941 address, we concluded after careful inspection that the house was no longer there.

The next morning, we met with Igo Koffler, president of the small Jewish community in Rădăuți. He gave us a guided tour of the synagogue and of the brand new Jewish museum which was to be inaugurated the following week, just after our departure.

In 1880 Emperor Frank Josef I visited Rădăuți and met with a delegation of local Jews who requested a plot of land that could accommodate a large synagogue commensurate with the increased number of Jews in the town. The emperor complied, ceding them a large plot in the center of town. The synagogue that was built was modeled after the great synagogue of Czernowitz but ended up with twin towers instead of a single dome. The synagogue was inaugurated on August 18, 1883, the Emperor's birthday. After I returned home Netty was overjoyed to see photographs of the newly renovated Great Synagogue of Rădăuți. Her father had been *gabbai* (the individual who insures that synagogue services run smoothly) there.



This synagogue was formally rededicated following its renovation (which cost 100,000 Euros and was funded by outside interests from North & South America and Israeli) with a ceremony on July 25, 2012 that involved the mayor of Rădăuți as well as national

and local religious and Jewish communal leaders. The ceremony was followed by a symposium on Jewish life in Rădăuți and the formal opening of the small Jewish museum.

Following our inspection of the synagogue and the museum, we walked up and down the street on which the synagogue was located. Sylvie’s grandfather had his furrier business not far away; we found the precise building, went inside, and talked to the two men who were running a business there, but their conversation was rather guarded. They were most likely concerned that Sylvie was making attempts to reclaim this property, confiscated from her grandfather many years before. This reticence is very common in Eastern Europe. Several doors away from this house, we found the house that Netty’s family had lived in during her early childhood.

This entire trip was a wonderful experience; I loved every moment of it! Everything went so smoothly, and I learned so much and saw such fascinating things. I had been a bit nervous before



Sylvie G'Sell's grandfather,
Reuven/Rubin Reicher's house

going, because this was not a guided trip and I had arranged everything myself – the guide, the accommodations, the itinerary and I don't speak the language – but it worked out beautifully, even better than expected.

Merle Kastner's biography can be found at the end of her article on page 8. Contact her at: merlek@videotron.ca.

RANDOM ACT OF GENEALOGICAL KINDNESS REDUX

By Jack Kauffman

After my wife, Ann, and I both retired in the summer of 2010, we began to explore genealogy, especially to learn more about my family. We attended a fascinating presentation by a representative from the Mid-Atlantic Regional National Archives and learned about census and immigration records. We later discovered the JGSGP website, attended the 2011 Genealogy Fair, received complimentary membership, and began attending meetings regularly. Little did we know this membership would not only help us meet our goal of learning about both lines of my family, but it would also draw us into learning about the histories of and forming connections with other families we had yet to meet. This is one of those stories.

At the December 2011 JGSGP meeting we received the fall 2011 issue of *Chronicles* that included an intriguing section entitled "Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness", featuring requests from four individuals who needed help with Philadelphia-based research but lived too far away to do it themselves. Buoyed by our recent success in finding information about my family, we wanted to access the “brick and mortar” resources in Philadelphia to help another person in need.

Maurice Newborn, a teacher at the Milton Hershey School, submitted one of those requests. He asked for help finding information about his great grandparents, Jacob and Sarah Newborn. His grandfather, also named Morris/Maurice, had shared very little information with his children about his parents, his siblings, and their lives. We contacted Mr. Newborn after the JGSGP meeting to confirm that no one else had responded to his request. We also mentioned that we had learned through a quick ancestry.com search that Jacob Newborn's occupation had been "carpenter". Maurice had found information in the 1920 census about his grandparents and their five children. He reaffirmed that he had few details beyond what was revealed by that census and had no familiarity with Philadelphia resources that might hold clues about the information he and his father, coincidentally also named “Jack”, were seeking. His teaching and coaching schedule made it difficult for him to come to Philadelphia during normal business hours. With full knowledge that we were amateurs, Maurice accepted our offer of help.

We had already planned a visit to Philadelphia’s City Archives for our own family research and added the search for Mr. New-

born's grandfather. As many of us have experienced, we weren't initially successful in finding birth records for the elder Morris/Maurice or either of my parents and felt discouraged. The Archives staff suggested, however, that we broaden our search in the birth index to cover multiple years. There we saw the entry for a child born in 1908 with the surname of Newborn. The full copy of the birth record listed this baby as a daughter whose parents were Jacob and Sarah Newborn. Learning that the father's occupation was listed as carpenter/builder made us even more optimistic and eager to continue our search.

We scanned baby Yetta Newborn's birth record and e-mailed it to the younger Maurice. He replied, "I have to be honest with you, when I saw your message and then the document, it brought tears to my eyes. I do believe this Yetta is my great aunt ...". What could be more rewarding or reinforcing to the most experienced family researcher let alone relative novices? At that point we fully committed to helping Maurice and his father find as much information about their family as we could.

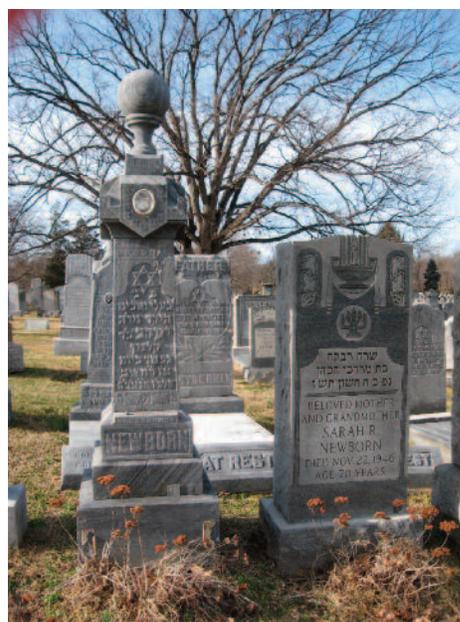
On our next visit to the Philadelphia Archives we located the birth records for three more Newborn children: Annie (1910), Jenny (1912), and Kalman/Charles (1914). While we did not find the birth record for Morris/Maurice we hope his record may surface in 2013 when the Pennsylvania's Bureau of Vital Statistics releases the 1907 birth records.

The 1920 census noted that great grandfather Jacob Newborn was naturalized. We had recently learned that some naturalization petitions were filed with city or county rather than federal courts so we requested the index for naturalization petitions at the Philadelphia City Archives. To our surprise and delight, we found that a Jacob Newborn had filed a petition on 9 June 1920. That petition proved to be a gold mine of information! In addition to the five children listed in the Newborn household on the 1920 U.S. census, we learned there were also three older siblings, i.e., Hermann (1897) who was born in Husatyn, Austria, and Samuel (1899) and Israel (Edward) (1902) who were born in Philadelphia. Jacob, their father, was born in Dinovitz, Russia, in 1872 and Sarah, their mother, was born in Husatyn, Austria. Jacob arrived in New York on or about 9 April 1898 and moved to Philadelphia the following year.

Addresses from the children's birth records indicated that the family had moved through the years. We used microfilms of *Polk's-Boyd's Philadelphia Directories* to track the Newborn family's moves. According to their earliest entries (1903-1907) they lived in the 600 block of Lombard Street. In 1907, Sarah's

name was listed along with Jacob. His occupation was listed as "carpenter". "Furniture" accompanied Sarah's name. By 1908 the family was living in the 800 block of N. 8th Street. In 1915 they appear in the 800 block of N. 12th Street where they lived until 1927. Jacob's name then appears with their oldest son at 4259 Viola Street. No directory was published in 1928. In 1929 Sarah again appears but this time she was listed as Jacob's widow. She continued to live on Viola Street and nearby on Wyalusing Avenue through the last available city directory in 1935. At that time several of her adult children were also listed with her at that address. Others, likely adult children, were listed at other addresses within the city. Several of the male children followed their father into carpentry/building trade/real estate careers.

With an approximate date for Jacob's death, (the Index to Pennsylvania Death Certificates was not yet available) we began a search for the site of his burial. We had been impressed by the staff at Montefiore Cemetery during our own family research and, consequently, we contacted them for any Newborn family information. "Yes," they replied, "Jacob and Sarah Newborn were buried there". Jacob had died in August 1927 and Sarah in November 1946. We visited the cemetery and photographed the gravestones that accompany this article. Jacob's father's name was Kalman; Sarah's father's name was Mordechai.



As novice researchers we felt a significant responsibility to give Maurice accurate information. Armed with dates of death

for both Jacob and Sarah, we hoped that finding an obituary, a will, or an administration naming survivors for either or

Graves of Jacob & Sarah Newborn - Montefiore Cemetery, Jenkintown, PA



both of them would make us feel more secure that we had the correct Jacob and Sarah. A visit to the Register of Wills office at Philadelphia City Hall was disappointing. We never found obituaries for either Jacob or Sarah.

However, through a search of the Philadelphia Marriage License Application Index via ancestry.com we learned that possibly seven of the eight children had applied for marriage licenses in Philadelphia. By reviewing these applications we confirmed they were Jacob and Sarah's children. We also learned the names of their respective spouses. This information proved to be invaluable, particularly for the female siblings, in our search via online databases and obituary indices. Online searches of the Social Security Death Indices, death and burial records of U. S. veterans, and obituaries produced promising leads.

We hypothesized that some of the children might also be buried at Montefiore. A phone call confirmed that two of the children and their spouses were also buried there. However, there were no records for the other couples. Veterans records led us to Roosevelt Memorial Park where Jacob and Sarah's second child and his wife were buried. An obituary for Yetta's husband led us to Shalom Memorial Park.

Obituaries for two siblings buried at Montefiore listed the names of their surviving, adult children. A white pages search identified three women within an estimated, reasonable age range with those same names who lived in the Philadelphia area. We drafted and sent a letter to the woman who lived closest to Montefiore Cemetery seeking to confirm that she was related to Jacob and Sarah. We received no response. We then sent the same letter to the next closest name on our list. On the afternoon of February 14 she responded by telephone.

Over the course of a nearly hour-long conversation, she confirmed that she was the granddaughter of Jacob and Sarah. Her grandmother, Sarah, had lived with her family. She remembered her Uncle Maurice noting that he had attended his mother's funeral. She also recalled visiting him and his family at their home in New York State. She thought she might even have a photograph taken with the younger Maurice's father, her cousin, during that visit. She supplied additional information that helped us to locate the graves of the two siblings who had proven elusive. Both were also buried at Montefiore. A name change and divorce of one sibling and the early death of another sibling whose widower later remarried had impeded our search. The ashes of a seventh sibling and his wife were scattered on their beloved Atlantic Ocean.

This cousin gave us permission to share with Maurice and his father her name, contact information, and confirmation that we had identified the graves of Jacob, Sarah and their six children and their spouses who had remained in Philadelphia. Maurice and Jack wanted to immediately make a trip to Philadelphia but schedule conflicts and illness delayed their visit. On April 9 the four of us met and together visited the graves of Jacob, Sarah, six of their children and their respective spouses. Maurice's father told us during an enjoyable lunch that after our visit, he and Maurice were traveling on to lower Bucks County to meet and renew a relationship with his cousin after a sixty-year lapse.

We are indebted and grateful to JGSGP members for their expertise when they guided us at the 2011 Genealogy Fair and for our complimentary membership. As a result we continue to find information about my family. We are gratified that Maurice Newborn and his father Jack continue to reconnect with family members. Hopefully they will learn more.

"Please contact Maurice Newborn if you have additional information: NewbornM@mhs-pa.org.

A native Philadelphian Jack Kauffman joined JGSGP at the 2011 Genealogy Fair. He is a retired systems analyst. Surnames he and his wife, Ann, are researching include: KAUFMAN/KAUFFMAN, CRUGMAN (Skorodnoye, Belarus); REIDER/RETBLATT (Narowlya, Belarus); BERKOWITZ/BERK (Kaposvar, Hungary); SCHWARTZ (Ungvar, Ukraine (formerly Hungary). He can be reached at kauffmanj982@aol.com.

GETTING CONNECTED & FINDING ANSWERS

by Gayle Miller

Hello everyone. My name is Gayle Miller, and I recently discovered my half aunt. Here's the story.

When my grandfather Max's will was read after he died in 1988, my mother found out that she wasn't her father's first born child and that he had been married before he married her mother. This information was apparently a family secret. Knowing that she wasn't the first-born explained why she hadn't been named after her father's mother, Bunny. In fact, her half sister was.

My mother was very disturbed by these revelations, and I wasn't about to stir the pot. As I got older and began doing genealogy, I tried to find out as much as I could about my

grandfather's first-born child. No one in my family discussed this family secret, and by the time I started investigating, no one of that generation was still alive to question. I remembered hearing that the girl's name was Barbara. I also knew that the bride's first name was Bella. Using Steve Morse's site (www.stevemorse.org), which linked me with the index of New York City bride and groom records compiled by volunteers in the Italian Genealogical Group, I was able to learn details about my grandfather's first marriage.

I learned the maiden name of his bride and the date and location of the marriage (October 1934, Bronx, NY). I then successfully looked for a divorce record, thanks to www.ancestry.com which gave me the date of the divorce. That narrowed the range of years (1934-1939) during which Barbara would have been born.

After the 1940 census came out I tried unsuccessfully to find a listing for my grandfather's first wife (Bella) and their daughter (Barbara). I then turned to Fred Blum for help. Using the initial information from the Italian Genealogical Group's database, he then obtained the actual marriage record from the Family History Center, which identified Bella's parents' names (David and Esther) and her date of birth.

Fred then went back to the 1930 U.S. census and found the listing for David & Esther along with daughter Bella. A son, Albert, was also listed.

Fred looked for an Albert in the Social Security Death Index (SSDI) and later found his obituary which listed the names of his surviving children. Within two weeks he contacted Albert's daughter who confirmed the information but said her cousin's name was Joan, not Barbara, and that Joan had been raised by her mother (Bella) and maternal grandparents (David and Esther).

Here is where the story gets interesting:

The cousin put Fred in touch with Joan who related a funny story that confirmed his findings.

Joan's son-in-law wanted to take her on a trip outside the U.S. but she needed a passport. She was unsuccessful in locating her birth certificate so she hired a lawyer to find it. He later informed Joan that he had found her birth certificate but that her GIVEN name was actually Barbara Joan! She had never been told that Barbara was her legal first name or why her family called her by her middle name.

After Fred and Joan conversed for a while he asked if she'd be interested in speaking with me. After all, that was the reason for his contacting her to begin with. Fred called me coincidentally on my son's birthday to tell me he had successfully located my half aunt.

I couldn't wait to call her. We spoke for thirty minutes, and I found it interesting to learn how little she knew about her origins. We gave each other a "status report" about current family but avoided mentioning my grandfather, her father, Max. One of her grandsons called me the next day to verify my story and to get more information about the extended family.

Since then I've had several conversations with my half aunt and her grandson, and I've been able to give her a medical history from my grandfather's side. This has helped her understand some of the recent diagnoses of some of her grandchildren. I am looking forward to meeting her side of the family in the near future and hope to continue to keep in touch until then.

While she considers herself a relative "newbie" to genealogy research, Gayle Miller abounds in enthusiasm for her newfound hobby. She attended both the 2009 IAJGS-Philadelphia and 2011 Washington D.C. conferences.

Contact her at rgsm9300@gmail.com.

OCTOBER MEETING SUMMARY

by *Evan Fishman*

Catherine "Casey" Zahn helped erase confusion about and frustration with the 1940 census at our October 15 meeting. She indicated there were 22 million hits on the first day it was available (April 2), and the total has surpassed 52 million as of our meeting date.

She explained some important terms: NARA, enumerator, enumeration district, city directories and then proceeded to enumerate (pun partly intended!!) various sites where we can access census data:

- www.archives.gov (NARA site)
- www.1940census.com

There are interesting video clips on You Tube (www.youtube.com) which illustrate population overview, how to help the indexing project, and www.dearmyrtle.com, a daily genealogy column.

City directories from 1940 are essential in the process of de-

termining the specific enumeration districts in which our relatives' addresses were categorized, and ultimately they lead us to the precise citations we're seeking. Unfortunately, from this perspective, city directories were no longer published in Philadelphia after 1935. Steve Morse's web site (www.stevemorse.org) provides techniques to compensate for that obstacle with a tool that converts 1930 ED's to their 1940 equivalents.

There are some special features in which data are presented in the 1940 census: the person who gave the information is indicated by an x within a circle after the name, and there is a supplemental population information section at the bottom of each page that highlights trends that were emerging at the time.

After an entertaining "Jeopardy"-like segment which tested our understanding of the ins and outs of the 1940 census, Casey concluded with the following words of advice:

- Expect delays; patience is a virtue.
- Record all your results and download images.
- Expect errors in the data collected by the many who were employed as census takers.

The handout Casey distributed will be available at our website (www.jsgsgp.org) shortly.

NEW ONLINE RESOURCE: JSTOR

by Lois Sernoff

Recently, while doing some genealogical research into the family of a prominent 17th century Philadelphian, I came upon an online resource that was new to me. It is called JSTOR, which is an acronym for Journal Storage.

JSTOR is defined as follows: "JSTOR is an online research and teaching platform that helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. JSTOR provides a growing number of access options for individual researchers."

I found the section pertaining to industry as well as the professions to contain the most genealogical content. I also found books containing documents from the Pennsylvania Supreme Court records of early 20th century. As far as I

could tell the whole collection is indexed by name and subject. Although I could view most of the material I found online, I could not copy, save or print the pertinent sections from my home computer.

Since JSTOR is a site for researchers and academics it is not easily accessed from a home computer unless you have a university affiliation. Although my college appears on their list of academic institutions that subscribe to the service, I found it easier to use this service in the Print & News department at the Free Library of Philadelphia. which is what I did. I had the pages printed but, in the future I think I would first try to save them to a flash drive.

A longtime JGSGP member, Lois Sernoff has welcomed many newcomers to our society and is our liaison to the JewishGen daily listserv (www.jewishgen@lyris.jewishgen.org) She's a frequent contributor to Chronicles; she shared her story of how she found information about a deceased relative in "Alternate World War II Research Strategies" in our Summer 2011 issue.

Lois is researching MEZHIRITZKY [MERITZ, MARRITZ, MARRITS] from Korsun in Kiev Gubernia to Philadelphia; SOSNOVSKY [SOSNOFSKY, SOSNOV - all spelling variations] from Gorodishche in Cherkassy uyezd, Kiev Gubernia to Philadelphia or anywhere; FRIEDMAN from Beltsy/Balti ["Bels" Bessarabia] Moldova to anywhere; KUSHNER [all spelling variations] from Tomashpol and Yampol in Podolia Gubernia to anywhere

Contact Lois at jglois@verizon.net.

SAVING YOUR FAMILY PHOTOS: Q & A

by Marge Farbman

Q. The old photos from my mother have scotch tape on them when they were put into an album, now crumbling. How do I get the tape off without ruining the photo?

A. Look for STICKER LIFTER a product made by Goo Gone. It's available in craft and hobby stores. They might carry it in the hardware store or Home Depot or Lowes. Works like a charm, and saved my photos of my husband as a baby!

Q. Any tips for organizing an album?

A. You can do it chronologically, by family, by person or by relationship. As you organize and sort your photos, logical groupings may present themselves.

My photos from my family sorted into:

- Pre-WWII which divided into my dad's family and my mom's family;
- Photos my parents exchanged while my dad served in Europe during World War II including photos of me as a baby, toddler, preschooler;
- Both sides of the family (post World War II) and then photos of me, my little sister, and my cousins;
- Vacations sorted by decades;
- Major family events-by decades.

My photo stash from my mother-in-law sorted into:

- Her family and Dad's family when they were young,
- Photos of "the boys" as my husband and his brother were called
- Major family events
- Vacations

In both groups of photos, I followed the "family members by decades" approach, eliminating the photos that were fuzzy or faded beyond identification or just inferior.

Doing the albums, struggling to determine WHEN as well as WHO, taught me to date and identify my photos, at least on the envelopes from the photo finisher, and preferably on at least half of the photos themselves, to help out my descendants!

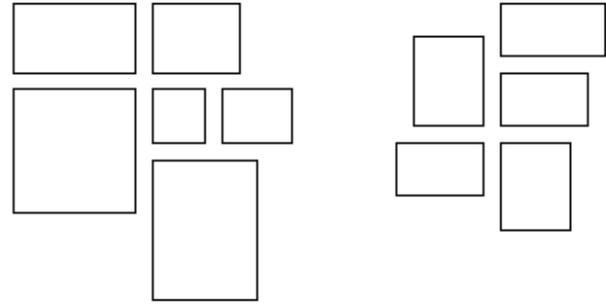
Q. I'm not into doing albums, so what do I do with all these photos?

A. Organize them for your children or grandchildren to deal with! Take the time to sort through them and identify the people, the place and date photo was taken and perhaps the event (Bar/Bat Mitzvah, wedding, vacation, back yard at _____ address. Write the information on the back of the photos. Put them into photo storage boxes by year, or part year, or whatever time frame works. Looking through old photos is such a pleasant activity, so enjoy it. Do so at a family holiday gathering or other festive occasion. Don't wait until you are sitting *shiva*.

Q. How do I lay out pages in a scrapbook?

A. Since you have already organized the photos, look at the ones you want to use with the mindset of telling the story of the photos. Then, as in a regular book, start at the top and go left to right. Leave some "white space" for the eyes to rest.

To keep the page from looking jumbled try to line up edges of photos either in a grid or all the top edges of a row, or, if they are of different sizes, set them in a rectangle with the adjacent sides lined up so that you have a grid interior for the photos to fan out from; the outside edges will be irregular, but the central part will be anchored in a grid.

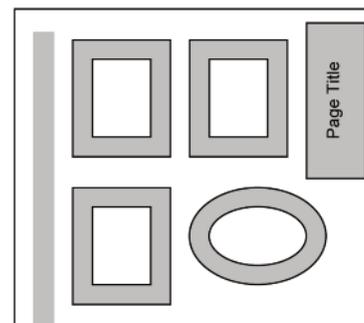


Q. What about writing on the scrapbook pages?

A. Write directly on the pages. And don't worry about your handwriting. In the future, the readers of your album will treasure your handwriting as much as they treasure what you have written. If you are nervous about writing directly on the page, write on a separate piece of paper and glue it on as if it were a photo. As a last resort, if you truly have illegible handwriting, print your text from your computer or use a typewriter.

Q. Any simple design suggestions for decorating album pages?

A. Pick one or two colors that you like, or that appear in many of the photos, or two neutral colors (Black and white, a beige and white or black, a greige and navy - greige is a grey-beige! or any strong color with a neutral). Purchase acid-free, photo safe sheets at a craft or hobby shop along with your photo-safe, double-sided tape. Use the colored papers as a background for your photos, either individually or to add color to the whole page. If you use beige scrapbook pages, one color behind some photos and perhaps a strip down the side of the page will make an instant theme for you photos.



Marge Farbman has a varied and concurrent career background: 30 years in interior design, 15 years as a fundraiser, 12 years as a scrapbooking teacher, consultant and scrapbook designer for clients. In the odd hours not taken by these enterprises, she and her husband have raised four children, enjoy eight grandchildren and managed to do a bit of gardening and traveling to boot! Marge loves sending video email to family, friends and clients to keep them updated on her latest adventures. You can reach Marge at: margefarb@aol.com or 610-291-8988.

QUERIES:

Dear Fellow Members:

I have hit many brick walls in the story of two Benjamin Singers. I have been researching my paternal grandfather, Benjamin Singer, since the early 1990s and have given up many times. Here is the story.

In 1880 two Benjamin Singers left Hamburg, Germany about three weeks apart. One left on the SS Silesia on August 28 at the age of 18; the second (my grandfather), also 18 years old, left on September 15 on the SS Weiland. Both ships landed at Castle Garden in New York City, and both Benjamins apparently were headed for Philadelphia. The first Benjamin was from Germany and probably was a Christian, while the second originally came from Russia. The documentation I have indicates that he came from a town called Schinane but I have no idea in what country it's located. This is my first brick wall.

According to his death certificate the German Benjamin died at age 33 on April 11, 1897. My grandfather died two and a half months later on June 22, 1897 at age 30, but I have no death certificate because the Philadelphia City Archives either lost it or can't find it. I hired a person in Philadelphia to try to locate the document but to no avail. This is my second brick wall. Both men apparently died of tuberculosis. My grandfather is buried at Har Hazetim cemetery in Gladwyne, Pennsylvania but during a visit there I was unable to find either the grave or gravestone. His grave is supposed to be in row 3, grave 63. This is my third brick wall.

The German Benjamin lived at 604 Guilford St and may have been a tailor. My grandfather lived at 604 Gilbert St and was a barber. It seems odd that the number "604" appears in both addresses.

I have no more information on the German Benjamin but my grandfather married Rebecca (Beckie) Goldstein,

daughter of Charles Goldstein, on November 11, 1893 at the home of a cousin, A. L. Lieberman, who resided at 235 N. 2nd St. At the time of the wedding both the Goldsteins and the Singers lived at 647 Sears St., below Wharton St. My grandparents later moved to 705 Passayunk St. where my father was born on February 5, 1895. The attending physician was J.J. Owen of 411 Pine St. There were also two cousins, sons of the Liebermans, whom I could not locate; one was Nathan who worked at the office of the prothonotary, while his brother, Moe, was a detective.

I had given up my search a while ago but have since reignited my interest.

Albert Singer, Schenectady, NY
al2chriss@gmail.com

I was born in Philadelphia and now live in Madison, WI, and I have the following question: I read in an old newspaper article that when Congregation Beth Israel was constructed at 32nd & Montgomery, they put in a time capsule. Does anyone know what happened to it?

Thanks

Howard Bregman
hsbreg@gmail.com

Dear Sir or Madam,

As a professional Jewish genealogist in Hungary (www.jewishroots.hu), I have developed an iPhone / iPod / iPad game that plays with Jewish surnames, it's called *Famble*. It is the classical word search type game, but the words you have to look for are Jewish surnames. It is really funny when play with your ancestors', friends' neighbors' names. The game can be accessed under:
<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/famble/id543534434?l=hu&ls=1&mt=8>

I think it is one of the not-so-many genealogy games available. Please let me know if you have questions about the game or Jewish genealogy.

Thank you and best regards,

Andras Koltai - Budapest, Hungary
www.jewisroots.hu
koltai@jewishroots.hu



Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia

2013 Membership & Renewal Form

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(Dues are for the calendar year, January 1-December 31. Members joining after September 30 will receive membership through the end of the following year.) Contributions and dues are tax deductible within the limits of the law.

What are the most important surnames and their associated ancestral towns that you are researching?
Provide up to six surnames, towns and countries which will later be shared with other members.

Surname	Town	Country



Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia
1657 The Fairway, #145
Jenkintown, PA 19046
www.jgsgp.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

JGSGP CALENDAR & REMINDERS

Please note that our mailing address has changed to: 1657 The Fairway, #145 Jenkintown, PA 19046

Please direct all U.S. mail correspondence to this new address.

Look for information about other IAJGS member societies: <http://www.iajgs.org/members/members.html>

Join the JGSGP Facebook group. Our members are continually posting fascinating news and developments which impact on genealogy and important related areas. <http://tinyurl.com/jgsgp>

Upcoming Meetings

**** Save these dates on your calendar. Note new starting times ****

Program details will be posted on the JGSGP website as soon as they are complete: www.jgsgp.org

Sun., Nov. 11, 1 PM, Main Line Reform Temple - Beth Elohim 410 Montgomery Ave, Wynnewood, PA 19096
Stanley Bergman, Director of Preservation and Microfilming at the Center for Jewish History in New York City, will speak on the conservation and preservation of photographs and genealogical documents.

Sun., November 18, 1:30 - 4:30 PM, JGSGP Russian Interest Group
Cherry Hill Public Library - 1100 Kings Highway North, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034
Multicultural Room (lower level)

Topic: My Cousins' Trip to My Grandfather's Shtetl in Russia (and What They Found There)

Sun., Dec. 16, 1 PM, Main Line Reform Temple - Beth Elohim

Sun., Feb. 10, 1 PM Main Line Reform Temple - Beth Elohim