Back to the Old Neighborhoods

Travel Through 200 Years Of Jewish History In Hartford

For more information, please visit our website at www.jhsgh.org
President’s Message

Dear Members,

As president of the Jewish Historical Society of Greater Hartford, I am proud of so many of our accomplishments and activities, but let me focus on a recent event, which took place on Sunday June 24th. The Society sponsored a guided bus tour of the old neighborhoods of Hartford, places where many of us grew up, shopped, played and attended school. To me, this trip epitomized exactly what the JHSGH is all about—restoring not only in our archives, but also through real life experiences, the wonderful past many of us shared. Even if you didn’t grow up here, there is much to learn about and enjoy.

Organized by executive director Estelle Kafer and project manager Gale Shapiro, forty of us reminisced for three and a half hours—a voyage which evoked wonderful memories of our youth. We drove from the Charter Oak Cultural Center (the original home of Congregation Beth Israel) to the old Talmud Torah on Pleasant Street, past the former site of the Crown Market, Maxwell Drug, the Lenox theater, the Northwest School—all on Albany Avenue; and Weaver High on Ridgefield Street. The highlight of our trip was visiting the former Emanuel and Agudas Achim synagogues. As the bus turned around in Keney Park, a chorus of “this was where we all met during Yom Kippur recess” came from the group as memories and reminiscences of the good old days came flooding back. Walking into the two former synagogue buildings was awesome and when Gale played a tape recording of Cantor Arthur Koret’s voice in The Emanuel sanctuary—it was a very emotional moment.

From Blue Hills Avenue to Albany Avenue, to Westbourne Parkway, to Bedford Street and the old Talmud Torahs I’ll leave the rest for you to experience for yourself on our next planned tours in October and in November. It’s a journey you won’t want to miss.

Wishing you the happiest and healthiest New Year, L’shana Tovah!

Barbara

FALL 2012 CALENDAR

Wednesday, September 12, 2012 – 5:30 p.m.
Mark Twain’s Jews – A Talk by Dr. Dan Vogel
The Mark Twain House & Museum, co-sponsored by JHSGH

Monday, September 24, 2012 – 6:15 p.m.
JHSGH Board Meeting, CSB

Thursday, September 27, 2012 – 7:00 p.m.
2013 Russia trip information session, CSB

Thursday, October 4, 2012 – 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, October 14, 2012 – 9:30 or 1:30
“Back to the Old Neighborhoods” bus tour
Leaves from CSB (see website for details: www.jhsgh.org)

Monday, October 22, 2012 – 7:00 p.m.
JHSGH Board Meeting, CSB

Thursday, October 25, 2012 – 2:00 p.m.
“Over the River and Up the Road – The Jews of Manchester”
Talk by Sissy Seader, Mandell JCC

Thursday, November 8, 2012 – 1:00 p.m.
Program on immigrant war veterans, State Capitol

Sunday, November 11, 2012 – 9:30 or 1:30
“Back to the Old Neighborhoods” bus tour
Leaves from CSB (see website for details: www.jhsgh.org)

Tuesday, November 27, 2012 – 7:00 p.m.
JHSGH Board Meeting, CSB
Was Mark Twain an anti-Semite? It’s not well-known that the great American author mentioned Jews dozens of times in letters, notebook entries, autobiographical dictations, sketches, essays and articles, culminating in his major 1899 essay, “Concerning the Jews.”

In his 2006 book *Mark Twain’s Jews*, scholar Dan Vogel tries to set the record straight by considering nearly every mention of the word “Jew” in Twain’s canon. Maintaining a scrupulous objectivity and impeccable scholarship, he comes up with some surprising and groundbreaking conclusions.

In its heyday, Hartford’s downtown area was “The” place to go for shopping, dining and entertainment. From large department stores such as G. Fox & Co. to smaller establishments such as the Gloria Gay Dress Shop, this exhibit will include historic photos from the Society’s archives and the Hartford History Center, along with memories from the Society’s oral histories. Co-sponsored by the Hartford History Center of the Hartford Public Library. Do you have any photos of a downtown Hartford business you can share for the exhibit? Please contact us at #860-727-6171.

Sissy Seader, a long time Manchester resident will speak and show photos about the founding fathers of Manchester’s Jewish community and how, as more Jews found their way across the river, it became a vibrant and active place for Jews to live.
Although the October snowstorm turned off the lights for many days and forced the postponement of our 40th Anniversary Gala, the rescheduled event on May 6th was a wonderful celebration of the Society’s past, present and future. Over 230 people came together that evening to remember those who had the foresight to establish the organization, to honor three very special volunteers—Gloria Bein, David Klau and Lillian Marlow, and to learn what the future holds for the Society.

This event would not have been possible without the time, energy and support of so many and we would like to acknowledge them here:

Gala Committee: Eleanor Caplan, Linda Cohn, Rochelle Fierston, Risa Filkoff, Dr. Leon Chameides, Barbara Gordon, Louise Kaufman, Eleanor Mayer and Sandra Rulnick.

Abel Caterers
Beth El Temple and staff
Phil Handler
Victoria Stuart
Marcy Cain and Bob Kagan

Eleanor and Allan Mayer
Elliott B. Pollack
Janet Poitras
Magevet A Capella Group
Randy Anagnostis

We have many people to thank, but our deepest gratitude goes to the members of the Heritage Society, dedicated individuals who made a special donation to the Society in honor of its 40th anniversary.

HERITAGE SOCIETY

HISTORIAN
Rochelle S. and David H. Fierston
Doris and Simon Konover
Henry Zachs

ARCHIVIST
Eleanor Caplan
Naomi and Michael Cohen
Rosanne and Jack Dolinsky
Joan and Daniel Fine
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Merle and David Harris
Kathleen and Bradley Hoffman
Louise and Todd Kaufman

Barbara and David Klau
Deborah M. and Steven C. Kleinman
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Reba and Arthur Nassau
Dr. Stacy Nerenstone & Morton Weinstein
Gerald A Roisman
Anja and Gene Rosenberg
Beth Schiro and Stephen Bayer
A GUIDE TO HISTORIC HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

A TALK BY AUTHOR, DANIEL STERNER

Thursday, October 4, 2012, 5:30 p.m.
Chase Family Gallery, Mandell Jewish Community Center
335 Bloomfield Avenue, West Hartford

This program is free and open to the public

Join Daniel Sterner, author of *A Guide to Historic Hartford Connecticut*, for a fascinating look at the history of Hartford from its beginnings as an agrarian community to its later role as a commercial hub. As the author “leads” us on tours of several different parts of town, we will learn about the people, places and events that have shaped our city.

Daniel Sterner has been a guide at the Mark Twain House, the Harriet Beecher Stowe House and the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum in Wethersfield. He has a degree in history from Wesleyan University and a Masters Degree in Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Chicago.

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EQUIPMENT WISH LIST

We are very grateful to Susan and Allen Viner who donated funds for a new transcription machine. Below is a Wish List of equipment that the office needs. We would appreciate donations in any amount towards the purchase of one or more of these items.

- PowerPoint Projector for programs $800
- Exhibit Display System for photos and exhibit panels $1,000
- Laptop computer for use in presentations and by researchers $800
- Color printer to reproduce photos, flyers and documents $200
- Portable audio and video digital recorders $200

Please remember to visit us on Facebook & Twitter!
From the Director

Dear Friends,

I hope everyone had a relaxing summer. Mine was filled with blessings; our eldest daughter gave birth to our first grandchild, our son began medical school and our second daughter started her radiology residency!

It has been a busy time for the Society. In preparation for our fall programs and projects, we have been working with consultants, collaborators, co-sponsors, volunteers, interns and researchers. With the diligent assistance of Susan Viner, project chair and Joan Walden, editor, we are finally approaching the editing and designing stage of the second volume of the North End book and can hopefully anticipate publication next spring. Our archivist, Gregory Farr, has been reaching out to various online research, history and academic sites, linking the JHS archive as a viable resource and increasing awareness and access to our collections. Jillian Hilderliter, a graduate student at Northeastern, has helped collect material for our upcoming exhibit “The Downtown Hartford Experience, 1930s -1960s”. She has also helped launch and maintain our updated Facebook page. Victoria Stuart, a senior at Saint Joseph University, continues to input data from our oral history cassette tapes to the new finding aid program, Archivist Toolkit. Gavi Fried, a junior at Haverford College will be lending a hand with various projects during the month of September. We are very grateful for their help and interest. We sadly note the passing of Edith Gittleman and Dr. Seymour Saltzman. We fondly remember their dedication and commitment to the Society. Edith co-authored, “Days of the Talmud Torah” and Seymour was President from 1996 to 1998.

As we begin our 2012 -2013 fiscal year, we are asking for your support and generosity more than ever before. Due to Federation campaign shortfalls, our allocation has been substantially cut by 42% or $6,600.00, compromising our daily operating needs. Please remember to send in your dues, upgrade your level if possible, check out our wish list and consider a donation for a special occasion or event. Thank you!

L’Shana Tovah! Wishing everyone a sweet and healthy New Year!

Estelle

From the Archivist

Dear Friends,

It has been my great privilege to participate in many of the ongoing projects currently unfolding at the JHSGH archives. We have begun the process of digitizing the JHSGH oral history collection, helping to preserve the legacy of interviews and community events originally captured on audio cassette tapes. So far we have processed eighty recordings, linking written transcriptions and other descriptive information to each using our new collection management database. Continuing to capture these recordings in digital format will allow for much easier access to these oral histories for researchers and other audiences alike, and, again, will help to preserve these interviews for generations to come. We also plan to share these archival holdings with the greater public on our website in the near future, adding these artifacts to our growing list of online finding aids. Publishing inventories of our collection in an online format helps to promote the Society’s commitment to publically serve those interested in Jewish history and culture as it relates to the Greater Hartford area and hopefully to invite more contributions to our archival repository.

At present we have been very fortunate to receive over sixty new accessions this year, including a wide array of manuscripts, photographs, videos, oral history recordings, and artifacts. We thank all our archive donors for their special thoughtfulness in helping to preserve the history of Jewish life in Hartford, including:

- Marvin Catler — several series of manuscripts and community-related documents
- Roslyn Millstein Elston — photographs and letters documenting the travels of a Jewish woman WWII war veteran in Egypt and Palestine
- Arline Wolansky and Susan Schenker — photographs, pamphlets, and documents related to the Hartford Yeshiva
- Richard Bromberg — records and photos documenting Hartford business (Pierce Pharmacy)
- Sara Schuwolf — student essay on Zionism entitled, “The Eye of Hartford Looks Towards Zion”

Please consider contributing your historical artifacts, manuscripts, and documents to the JHSGH collection and many thanks again to all those who have participated in the life of the archives!

All the best for the New Year!  

G. Farr
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:
Herbert Abrams
   Susan and Allan Viner
James Charles Filkoff
   Barbara Gordon
Carol Heimer
   Barbara and Mark Gordon
Mollie G. Pollack
   Elliott B. Pollack
Dr. Seymour Saltzman
   Eleanor Caplan
Linda A. & Henry S. Cohn
Alice W. Herrman
Lorraine and Leo Pinsky
   Fran and Chick Waltman
Staff at the Probate Court Administration

In honor of:
Bobbie Klau’s special birthday
   Elaine Charendoff
Gloria Bein
   Dr. Richard and Janet Zimmerman
Bobbie Klau, with thanks for storytelling
   Cong. Beth Hillel
Dave Klau & with appreciation for Bobbie Klau’s storytelling
   Judy and Allen Kronick
Lil Marlow
   Irma Menschell
Gloria Bein and David Klau
   Hilary Freedman & Howard Zern
Gloria Bein, David Klau and Lil Marlow, for years of service to the Society
   Susan and Allan Viner
David Klau, Gloria Bein
   Elaine Title Lowengard

Mazel Tov to:
Judge Henry and Linda Cohn on Ilana’s engagement
   Susan and Allen Viner
Estelle and Dr. Sheldon Kafer on the birth of their grandson, Eitan Reiss Berger
   Susan and Allen Viner
   Helga Allweiss
Eleanor Caplan, for recognition by the Jewish Foundation of Greater Hartford
   Susan and Allen Viner
Naomi Cohen, for receiving Gerald & Paula Steinberg Community Service Award from SSDS
   Susan and Allen Viner

General donations:
Abby Alter
Jay Frankel
Dr. and Mrs. Melvin Horwitz
Evelyn Persell
Lauren Goldstein Tafrate
Dorine and Martin Toyen

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS
Laura Berlin
David Burstein
Bob Hurvitz
Judy Singer
Frances Blumenthal
Joyce & Richard Leibert
Burton Miller

IN MEMORIAM
Edith Gittleman
Gloria Goldenberg
Dr. Paul Klemens
Phyllis Lappen
Dr. Seymour Saltzman

Preservation Society
Rochelle and David Fierston
Reba and Art Nassau
Stacy Nerenstone and Morton Weinstein
Chick and Fran Waltman - in honor of their sister Lillian Lewis who was born in 1916 in Hartford and always loved this area.
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: jhsgh@jewishhartford.org
Website: www.jhsgh.org

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

Check one: ☐ Annual $36 ☐ Patron $72 ☐ Sponsor $125
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Or go online to www.jhsgh.org to join!

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