



1977  
**40**  
2017

# CHICAGO JEWISH HISTORY

## Open Meeting Sunday, April 30 – *Save the Date!*



Chicago Cubs World Series Championship season. Pre-game prep, Wrigley Field, September 3, 2016.

Have your pencils and scorecards ready

### Michael H. Ebner

Professor of American History  
Emeritus, Lake Forest College,  
presents an illustrated talk

### “And How Jewish is Baseball?”

*Temple Beth-El*  
3810 Dundee Road  
Northbrook, Illinois  
2:00 p.m.

Social hour with kosher pastries  
follows the program.  
Admission \$10 per person at the door.  
Members of CJHS and Beth-El free.

## Open Meeting Sunday, May 21

Chicago Tribune Transportation Reporter

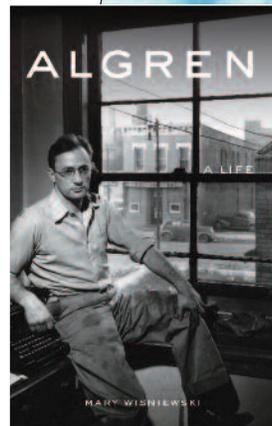
### Mary Wisniewski

discusses her new biography of the  
great Chicago author, Nelson Algren

### *ALGREN: A Life*

*Emanuel Congregation*  
5959 North Sheridan Road, Chicago  
2:00 p.m.

Book signing and social hour  
with kosher pastries follow the program.  
Admission \$10 per person at the door.  
CJHS and Emanuel members free.



Photograph by Jean Lechat.

# PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



**Rachelle Gold.**

*Guest columnist is CJHS Secretary Dr. Rachelle Gold.*

**We are familiar with the special designations given by American culture to certain anniversaries.**

We know that a 25th anniversary is “silver” and a 50th is “golden.” This year the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, founded in 1977, celebrates its 40th anniversary. Apart from the pride we can all take in the accomplishments of the Society these many years, is there extra meaning in having reached this particular milestone?

If we look within our Jewish tradition, we find that 40 is indeed a significant number that speaks to the very essence of the Society’s mission.

I am not a religious scholar, but my acquaintance with Jewish texts and the help of learned friends enabled me to find many examples of 40 as a special number. I hope that readers will recall some of these and think of others.

In the story of Noah, the flood lasted 40 days. We read that the life of Moses is divided into three eras of 40 years. He fled Egypt at 40, was divinely summoned at 80, and spent his last 40 years as the leader of the Jewish people. To receive the Torah, Moses spent 40 days on Mount Sinai without eating or drinking. The Hebrews spent 40 years wandering in the desert before they would become a nation and reach the Promised Land. Those 40 years were considered a generation. Before entry into Canaan, the men sent to spy out the land spent 40 days on their assignment.

Kings Saul, David, and Solomon each ruled 40 years. The people of the Assyrian city of Nineveh were warned by the prophet Jonah that their city would be destroyed in 40 days if they did not repent. The Talmud relates that it takes 40 days for a fetus to reach viability. A *mikvah* (ritual bath) must contain 40 *seah* (a unit of measure) of water.

The number forty is represented alphabetically by the Hebrew letter *mem*, which originated as a wavy line forming a pictograph for water (*mayim*). The Torah is often metaphorically compared to water.

Several related meanings emerge from these examples, according to experts and the thoughtful observer. The span of 40 represents a period of trial and testing; development, renewal, rebirth, spiritual ascent, and completion.

The connection to the Society’s 40th year is obvious. A group of volunteers at the Jewish exhibit “My Brother’s Keeper” at the Museum of Science and Industry commemorating the 1976 United States Bicentennial was inspired to establish a historical society for the Jewish community of metropolitan Chicago. From a modest beginning, through hard work, learning, and commitment to its mission, the Society grew into the mature, vital organization it is today.

I want to conclude with another Jewish reference to 40 that is my favorite. This is the connection between 40 and wisdom.

The great scholar and teacher Rabbi Akiva is said by the Talmud to have first begun to study Torah at age 40. Rabbi Yehudah ben Tema wrote in *Pirkei Avot* (Chapters of the Fathers, c. 3rd century) that 40 years is the stage of man’s development in which understanding is attained.

The CJHS, in its 40 years, has greatly enhanced our wisdom and understanding of our community. Let us all look forward to the next 40. ❖



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### Chicago Jewish History

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Send submissions to Editor, electronically (preferred) or via standard mail. Enclose SASE.

## EVENTS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

### New Art Space at Spertus Institute

Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership  
610 South Michigan Avenue

The Ground Level Arts Lab features artifacts from Spertus Institute's impressive collections around its perimeter, on view for both researchers and the public.

In the center is flexible space for changing exhibits.

The first exhibit, titled **VOICES OF WISDOM**, presents new works by 12 distinguished Chicago-area Jewish artists.

**Voices of Wisdom: Artist-Led Tour**  
Sunday, March 19, 2017  
2:00 pm to 4:00 pm

On the exhibit's final day, tour with artists Sylvia Alotta, Susan Dickman, Ellen Holtzblatt, Judith Joseph, and Carol Neiger as your guides. Hear about the ideas and experiences that lay at the heart of their projects and learn about the techniques and materials used to create them.

**Admission is free but space is limited.**  
**Reserve your spot at [www.spertus.edu](http://www.spertus.edu)**

### 2017 JCC Chicago Jewish Film Festival March 9–19

*25 Films – 10 Days – 7 Venues*

This year, the Festival features a wide range of cinematic works, including a 2017 Oscar-nominated film, the exclusive Chicago screening of one of the year's most anticipated blockbusters, and the chance to experience one of the greatest film masterpieces of all time on the big screen.

***Tickets On Sale Now!***

**Online at [jccfilmfest.org](http://jccfilmfest.org)**

***See descriptions, calendar, and showtimes***

Landmark Century Centre Cinema  
AMC River East 21

Regal Lincolnshire Stadium 15 & IMAX  
AMC Northbrook Court 14

Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center  
Landmark Renaissance Place Cinema  
Century 12 Evanston/CinéArts 6 and XD

#### Corrections and Clarifications — *Chicago Jewish History*, Fall 2016, Print Edition

**Front page:** the photograph of the “Gang of Five” was taken on the Hebrew Union College campus, in front of the Sisterhood Dormitory. Thanks to Librarian Margalit Tal, HUC, for this information. The photo was sent to us by Richard Damashek. He received it from Rabbi Herman E. Schaalman z”l.

**Page 13:** Emil G. Hirsch, 3rd, corrected us: “On page 13, in brackets, you show my father as Samuel. He was my uncle, the younger brother of David, who was my father. Both sons of Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch, David and Samuel, named their older son after their father, Emil. Our rabbi, Dr. Louis Mann, differentiated us by adding 2nd after my cousin Emil’s name and 3rd after my name. My cousin Emil G. Hirsch, 2nd, was six or seven years older than me. He died about 10 years ago.” In the list of Rev. Dr. Emil G. Hirsch’s accomplishments: he was a founding faculty member of the Divinity College, University of Chicago. (*College* was omitted).

**Page 16:** the entry on the book *Bridges to An American City*: author Sidney Sorkin did not chair the CJHS Landsmanshaften Exhibition at the Spertus Institute in 1989-90. It was chaired by Janet Iltis Hagerup.

**Page 21:** the entry on the book *Sundays at Sinai: A Jewish Congregation in Chicago* (2012) states that Sunday services are still celebrated today. Thanks to CJHS member Monroe Roth, we learned that Sunday services at Chicago Sinai Congregation ceased in May 2103.

**Page 23:** the biographical notes of the “Gang of Five” rabbis: Alfred Wolf was Senior Rabbi of Wilshire Boulevard Temple, Los Angeles, by 1985, and Rabbi Emeritus (1985-2004). Rabbi Herman Schaalman first served at Temple Judah, Cedar Rapids (1941-1949), not Iowa City.

## CJHS members... YASHER KOACH!

*To all our activists, achievers, and honorees... the Hebrew phrase means "More Power to You"*



**Portrait Dedication at Herzl School of Excellence, 3711 West Douglas Boulevard, January 17, 2017.**

(From right) Herzl School Principal Tamara Davis, portrait donor David Matlow, Moran Birman of the Israeli Consulate, Chicago Festival of Israeli Cinema Executive Director Cindy Stern, Herzl eighth grader Marina Brown, and JCRC Executive Director Emily Sweet, Jay and Vered Feldman of Toronto, Tamara Frankel of Rochelle Zell Jewish High School and JCRC Director of Domestic Affairs Jane Charney. Photo courtesy of Jane Charney, JUF News.

In a ceremony the day after Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Toronto-based attorney **David Matlow** donated a portrait of Theodore Herzl to the West Side school named for the father of modern political Zionism. As we know, Herzl never visited the United States, but when the school was built in 1915, the North Lawndale neighborhood was the emerging hub of Jewish life in Chicago, often called "Little Jerusalem."

Herzl School Principal Tamara Davis honors the neighborhood history, and students learn about Herzl as well as about American heroes, African American leaders, and other inspirational figures. Eighth-grader Marina Brown said at the ceremony, "Both [Herzl and King] believed in dreams and fought for their beliefs that dreams can become reality..."

David Matlow owns one of the largest private collections of Herzl memorabilia in the world. He has paid a number of visits to the school, and every year Herzl students watch his documentary "My Herzl." It is available for purchase on **Vimeo** or **Google Play**.

The March 2017 issue of *Newcity* is titled "Design 50: Who Shapes Chicago." It celebrates the curators, organizers, educators, critics, and thinkers who lead Chicago's design scene. **Joan Pomaranc**, Program Director of the Chicago chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA Chicago), is included, with this comment: "Pomaranc is the institutional heart, bringing encyclopedic knowledge of the entire canon of Chicago's architectural history, and an eagerness to see every architect succeed in every circumstance."

**Sandra Holubow** is participating in a group exhibit of the Chicago Society of Artists, the oldest operating art organization in America, March 2 – March 31, 2017, at Gallery Seven, 116 North Chicago Street, Suite 102, Joliet, Illinois. Five of her works are included.

**A number of CJHS members** were in the audience that filled Cindy Pritzker Auditorium, Harold Washington Library Center, on Tuesday, January 24, to hear historian and author Peter Hayes discuss his new book, *Why? Explaining the Holocaust*. Professor Hayes poses a question in each chapter, such as: Why were the Jews the primary victims? Why were Germans the instigators? Why did murder become the "Final Solution"? and explores them clearly according to latest research, as he did for many years in his popular Holocaust class at Northwestern University.

**Elise Ginsparg** organized the 19th annual "Night of Knowledge" at Congregation Yehuda Moshe, 4721 West Touhy, Lincolnwood, on Motzaei Shabbat, November 12, 2016. Every year Elise expertly schedules eight speakers on a wide variety of timely subjects of Jewish interest. On this year's roster was the popular lecturer and community activist, **Leah Polin**. Her topic was "A Minyan of Jewish Families Who Built America." As always, a gala melava malka followed the presentations.



**Rabbi Dr. Zev Eleff's** new books were finalists for the 2016 National Jewish Book Awards in two categories: in American Jewish Studies, *Who Rules the Synagogue: Religious Authority and the Formation of American Judaism* (Oxford University Press); and in Modern Jewish Thought and Experience, *Modern Orthodox Judaism: A Documentary History* (Jewish Publication Society).

*Have You Ever Tried?*

# BLINTZES INN

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— WE CATER TO CLUBS, VEREINS, SPECIAL AFFAIRS —

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## JEWISH PEOPLE'S INSTITUTE

3500 DOUGLAS BLVD. - Corner St. Louis Avenue - Phone CRAWFORD 3090

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**Treasurer/Past President Edward Mazur** will speak about the activities of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society on three occasions in the near future. He will bring along some artifacts from our collection.

- **TUESDAY, March 14, 1:30 p.m.**  
Temple Anshe Sholom A Beth Torah,  
20820 Western Avenue, Olympia Fields
- **THURSDAY, March 16, 10 a.m.**  
Senior Group at Temple Sholom  
of Chicago, 3480 North Lake Shore Drive
- **WEDNESDAY, March 22, 9:30 a.m.**  
Community Lecture at Bernard Weinger  
JCC, 300 Revere Drive, Northbrook



← **Ed Mazur** is the new chairman of the City Club of Chicago. He is pictured here with Tom Ricketts, the chairman and owner of the Chicago Cubs, at a meeting of the City Club on February 27, 2017.

*“My parents spoke Yiddish whenever they didn’t want us to understand what they were saying.”*

How often **Rivka Schiller** has heard these words! In most cases, individuals seeking translations and/or genealogical research are already at least a generation or two removed from the spoken and living language, and want so badly to tap into the words and history of their departed loved ones.

Rivka Schiller has specialized in Yiddish archives and translation for nearly 20 years, having studied Yiddish for over 18 years, and having grown up in a Yiddish-speaking home, she can help solve your quest to learn what lies concealed within that old heap of letters, postcards, newspaper articles, or within the pages of that well-worn book or manuscript. Learn more about her translation work, genealogical research, and to see if she can help you. Visit her website [rivkasyiddish.com](http://rivkasyiddish.com) or email her at [rivka@rivkasyiddish.com](mailto:rivka@rivkasyiddish.com).

**Matthew Nickerson** owns a firm called Private Historian. The firm tells the stories of families in books that are created and published like commercially sold books, but they are only for the family. Private Historian will chart your genealogy, memorialize your family’s accomplishments, and pass on your legacy of values to your children. One book that Matt finished in 2015 chronicled the history of a Jewish family that established a magazine and movie empire. “My research revealed what we always hope for in a family history: a forgotten chapter,” he says. In their first years in America, family members tried sobdusting on the Plains. They met with bitter winters and defeat, but moved to a city and reversed their fortunes. The firm’s website is [privatehistorian.net](http://privatehistorian.net).

## WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY

Beth Emet The Free Synagogue  
*Evanston, IL*

Gordon Cohn  
*Long Beach, CA*

Dr. Sandra Deutsch  
*El Paso, TX*

Theodore & Margaret Goldberg  
*Chicago, IL*

Brian A. Hamer  
*Chicago, IL*

Celeste Land  
*Vienna, VA*

Robert Nagler Miller  
*Chicago, IL*

Andy Romanoff  
*Los Angeles, CA*

Charles & Susan Schwartz  
*Lake Bluff, IL*

Dr. Malka Zeiger Simkovich  
*Skokie, IL*

Jacob Slutsky  
*Cambridge MA*

Erwin Werth  
*Evanston, IL*

## ED MAZUR'S PAGES FROM THE PAST

**M**y source for these selections is the Chicago Foreign Language Press Survey Microfilm Collection at the Chicago Public Library Harold Washington Library Center.

In the autumn of 1936 the Chicago Foreign Language Press Survey was organized under the Works Progress Administration (WPA) of Illinois. The purpose of the Survey was to translate and classify selected news articles appearing in Chicago's foreign language press from 1861 to 1938.

Financial curtailments in the WPA program ended the Survey in October 1941. The Chicago Public Library published the work in 1942. The project consists of a file of 120,000 typewritten pages from newspapers of twenty-two different foreign language communities in Chicago.

Yiddish is the foreign language of the Jewish press in the Survey. English language periodicals are also included, as well as the publications of charitable institutions, communal organizations, and synagogues.

### BEAUTIFUL CEREMONIES AT OPENING OF ANSHE SHOLOM COMMUNITY CENTER

The opening of the Anshe Sholom synagogue's Community Center took place yesterday at Douglas Boulevard and Homan Avenue. The celebration began at 3 p.m. and lasted until late in the night. The large audience left for home satisfied and conscious that the new edifice is a fortification for Chicago Jewry in the fast growing Jewish community of the Douglas Park District. They not only rejoiced in the opening of a new place for Torah, but also contributed thousands of dollars to help complete the edifice.

### HEBREW CHARITIES GET GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS

The annual collections made in the temples on Erev Yom Kippur for the United Hebrew Charities were very gratifying this year. The total amount is in the neighborhood of \$20,000. At the North Chicago Temple, about \$900 was subscribed; at Zion, about \$2,400; at K.A.M. about \$4,000; at Sinai, \$12,000. This latter sum was collected in the fifteen minutes following Dr. Hirsch's eloquent plea, and the amount is probably the largest contributed by any single congregation in this country under similar circumstances. — *The Reform Advocate*, Week of October 8, 1892.

### CITIZENS, DO YOUR DUTY

Today is the day on which every citizen, man or woman, should vote in the primaries. It is the duty of every citizen to take a little time to go to his polling place and cast his vote for the most qualified and capable candidate in his ward. This is particularly the duty of all those Jewish citizens who are inclined to neglect their political obligations. This year, however, every political leader hopes that the Jewish citizens will understand that by their neglect during the primaries, persons are frequently nominated who are far from being qualified to represent Jewish interests in the City Council.

It is at primary election time that one must decide who are the best candidates.... The primaries were instituted to give the citizens not only an opportunity to vote but also to nominate candidates, thus precluding the possibility of favoritism on the part of the bosses.

At these primaries there is a new element, the women citizens. And these women, who have manifested intense resoluteness on registration day, will surely again today show that they understand the tasks of citizenship. The votes of the women will play a very important role; that they will be the power which will decide the nomination of most candidates.... — *Daily Jewish Courier*, February 24, 1914.

It was a pleasure to see Jews willing to pay large sums of money for the honor of [carrying] a Scroll of the Law in the consecration march from the community center hallway on the top floor down to the synagogue on the ground floor.

The first to buy such an honor was Mr. Z. Morris, who paid \$125. Later he paid \$225 for the honor of having the key to open the door of the synagogue.

The highest honor was that of Mr. Joseph Weill, a well-known social worker and a former president of Anshe Sholom. He paid \$2,000

for the honor of hanging a tablet over the door of the synagogue with his and his wife's name inscribed on it.... A sum of over four thousand dollars was raised at this event. Good speeches were given by the most prominent rabbis of our city and Judge Harry M. Fisher. The band of the Marks Nathan Orphan Home and Cantor Milkofski and his choir entertained the audience with Jewish songs and music.

*Daily Jewish Courier*,  
September 10, 1917.

**KU-KLUX-KLAN**

... There are lots of Jews in this country who walk the streets proudly and cannot be made to feel that the sufferings of their own race elsewhere means anything real to them. They contribute to a relief fund under pressure of a campaign or an aroused public opinion, but as a rule they hold themselves aloof. They are not exactly snobs, but they feel as if they are standing on a mountain and all other Jews are struggling to reach the top to stand with them. They are individuals, you might say, or egotists. Reports are numerous of a change in the disposition of these folk since the advent of the Ku-Klux-Klan. They are astounded that such un-Americans should classify Jews among undesirables. They feel that the Ku-Klux-Klan means them, and not only the other fellows who have been raising such a racket about Jewish causes, and Jewish interests, and who have been speaking of Jewish solidarity and intruding with Zionism. The Klan is an arm raised against them; they resent it. With pure American indignation they become vocal.

They are joining the B'nai B'rith. They affiliate with the Anti-Defamation League. They write letters to the press. They call upon Jews to organize to fight this menace. Why should they be so excited? There is enough sturdy Americanism in the USA to eject the poisonous influence of an organization that is ashamed to show its face, that works in the dark, and that has become a rallying place for diseased minds. But it must be admitted that the Hooded

Knights are making better propaganda for an awakening of a Jewish consciousness than all other sorts of propaganda put together. Running from one fear, these Jews overcome another. Taking arms against a dark sea of anti-Semitism, they forget their fears of Jewish association....

*Daily Jewish Courier,*  
January 19, 1923.

**A SUPERFLUOUS DRIVE**

The United Jewish Charities of Chicago are preparing the Jewish public for a two and a half million dollar campaign to take place sometime in March or April. The money to be collected is to be devoted to the establishment of a Nurses' Home for the Michael Reese Hospital, which will cost in the neighborhood of one million dollars, to a Lawndale Jewish People's Institute, and eventually to the development of the Mt. Sinai Hospital. It has not yet been determined whether the Mt. Sinai Hospital will get anything out of this drive because the gentlemen at the head of these charities believe that a palatial Nurses' Home for the Michael Reese Hospital is more necessary than enabling the Mt. Sinai Hospital to get fifty or one hundred more beds [for] all those who want to be admitted....

*Daily Jewish Courier,*  
February 20, 1923

**PROFESSOR HURWITZ LECTURES TONIGHT AT THE WORKMEN'S CIRCLE LYCEUM**

"Nicolai Lenin—His Life and Influence." Who was Lenin? What were his achievements? How was Russia governed during his regime? Professor Hurwitz will lecture on all these questions tonight at the Workmen's Circle Lyceum, Kedzie and Ogden Avenues. Professor

Hurwitz has recently returned from a visit to Russia, where he had the opportunity to study Lenin. The lecture will start promptly at 8 p.m. Arranged by the Educational Committee of the Workmen's Circle. Comrade Benenson will be the chairman. Admission is 35 cents.

*The Forward,*  
January 24, 1924.

**PROSPERITY BANQUET FOR WORKMEN'S CIRCLE UNEMPLOYED MEMBERS A BIG SUCCESS**

The Workmen's Circle Prosperity Banquet, which took place Sunday, brought in the sum of \$12,000 for their needy members. More than six hundred representatives of branches and women's clubs performed their duty in a truly brotherly fashion.

The banquet, arranged by the relief conference, was opened by Mr. Witt, chairman of the 15th [?] committee, who presented the toastmaster of the evening, Mr. Belman, the committee's secretary. Mr. Belman explained that the Workmen's Circle is, and has always been, the Red Cross of the workmen's movement.

The musical program consisted of numbers by the well-known singer, Edna Rose; Mr. Bernstein; Paul Cohn, violinist; Goldie Rabin, pianist; and Bertha L. Goldberg. The program opened with the playing of the "Internationale" on the piano by Eda Belman.

Mr. Silverstein made the appeal. The branches and the women's clubs were generous.... An additional \$1,200 was collected at the banquet.

*The Forward,*  
February 2, 1932.



For a time the Turcks, parents of boyhood friends Harold and Marvin, had a mom'n'pop grocery store in that block. There was a beauty shop and Gonsky's grocery store, Phil's fruit store, a bakery, Gold's (later Joe Stone's) barber shop, and Tilken's Shoe Repair.

On the corner of Sixteenth Street and Kolin Avenue was Goodman's Delicatessen. In my early years, portly and avuncular Mr. Goodman was still in charge, overseeing the operation with his healthy belly bound in a full white and invariably soiled apron. Later the delicatessen was purchased by our neighbors, Harry and Norma Amrol Weinstein. To the right of the entrance was the counter where you ordered from among the cold cuts, hot dogs, and sausages. You could buy a quarter's worth, I remember, and eat to satiety. A chocolate phosphate was a nickel, a small bottle of Coca-Cola the same. Pepsi-Cola came in larger bottles but cost the same ("Twelve full ounces; that's a lot"). There was a pinball machine at the back, a pay phone booth with a door for privacy, and a couple of booths.

**D**irectly across from the deli, on the northwest corner, was Galler's Drug Store, Emanuel Galler, Prop. Its glass windows faced both Kolin Avenue and Sixteenth Street. Inside, three or four steps down from street level brought you to the soda fountain on your right, four or six booths on the left in which to enjoy your seventeen-cent milk shake with two complimentary cookies, or your malted, soda, or sundae for about a nickel more. You passed a glass case stocked with perfume, pipes, and other gift items before reaching the pharmacy at the back of the store, where stern Mr. Galler and his moon-faced, bald, and bespectacled clerk, Jason Sweet, with a disposition to match his name, spent their time. Later, one of the corner boys, Bernard (Bunjy) Plotzker succeeded Jason, who surprised everyone by marrying late and leaving the neighborhood.

Galler's was powerfully air-conditioned in summer and comfortably warm in winter. The corner boys filled the booths each night in Chicago's steamy and frigid seasons until their boisterousness caused Mr. Galler to empty the joint. We would amble across to Goodman's, continue our discussion, and slowly trickle back a few at a time to the booths at Galler's. Very little money was spent in either store. We were sometimes roused three times in an evening.

For a few months early in my teens I did service as soda jerk at Galler's, earning something like fifty cents an hour and making sure that any of the boys with enough change to order something received more than fair value: the Sealtest ice cream scoops would be

giant—the size of billiard balls rather than the golf balls served to the “regular” customers, and the milk shake's stainless steel vessel would be filled to the brim.

When we turned north on Kolin Avenue from Galler's, we strolled past a succession of mostly three-story apartment buildings in deep red, dirty yellow, or brown brick. While most of the buildings were three-flats, there were a few larger ones of up to ten apartments, and even some with courtyards. In a few of the buildings there were basement apartments, and two of my friends lived below ground for many years, with heating pipes suspended from their ceilings. A couple of older wooden two-story houses were also part of Kolin Avenue. There were almost no single family dwellings.

It may be romantic and it may be erroneous, but I believe that despite a university education, a long marriage and working career, parenthood, and grandparenthood, considerable world travel, and the passage of more than six decades, I am still one of the boys on the corner of Sixteenth and Kolin under the street lamp on a summer night, arguing sports and sex, books and music, politics and prejudices.

The Kolin Avenue street sign served as a “basket.” Teams of two and three boys played interminable basketball games with a sixteen-inch softball. Hitting the sign scored two points. The first team to score twelve points won the game.

In my memory there were as many as fifty to a hundred people on the corner on a summer evening, divided by age, from preteens to grandparents, discussing all trivial to significant issues of the time. Much of the talk was about the activities of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was perceived as a friend of the Jews, the antidote to Herbert Hoover, and the man to lift America from the Great Depression and defeat Hitler. His photo seemed to adorn a wall of every shop and store.

On steamy summer nights everyone waited for the buildings to cool down before climbing the stairs to sleep on damp sheets. No air-conditioning, of course. We slept wet in the summers and well-bundled in the winters. Often, as I lay under heavy quilts, my father and grandfather covered me with their woolen overcoats until they were needed again in the morning.

We knew everyone in all of those buildings on Kolin between Fifteenth and Sixteenth and many people on adjacent streets in any direction. In Long Beach, California, after more than fifty years living in the same house, I do not know the names, nor would I recognize the faces of neighbors three or four doors north.

*Continued on Page 14*

## Kolin Avenue *Continued from Page 13*

Silver's Beauty Shop occupied the first floor of one apartment building on Kolin Avenue, and directly across from 1526 were Sokolsky's Grocery and Magid's Butcher Shop. In the former they ran your credit tab with short thick soft blunt pencils on a brown paper bag affixed to a hook behind the counter. There were barrels on the floor: one filled with pickles, one with herring, and another from which you scooped butter. At Magid's we used to love watching chuck steak and other cuts being shoved into the grinder to come out as hamburger, and we loved even more squatting or kneeling to look down into the basement window where the elder Magid, a shochet, slaughtered chickens in the Kosher manner. Any poultry smell today recalls memories of Magid's.

**S**urely smell has to be an immensely powerful sense. One morning in the 1990s I was jogging alone at dawn along the wide thoroughfare that is Studebaker Road in Long Beach. It is customary even at that hour to inhale the scents of face powder, baking, bacon, tobacco, even marijuana, as you pass the houses lining the service road. On this particular morning I suddenly sensed the heavy aroma of Central European cooking. Immediately I said aloud, "Meinert Mischnick."

Meinert was my classmate for twelve years, beginning in kindergarten. His mother and mine had attended Harrison High School together, and after they recognized each other one afternoon years later at a Mason Elementary School PTA meeting, Mrs. Mischnick invited me to come over to play with Meinert and stay for dinner. The smell of her Czech or German cooking, different from that of my grandmother and mother, was strong enough to come to mind during a casual jog almost sixty years later. No wonder, then, that the poultry smell of Magid's butcher shop is so well inventoried in my brain. Visually, so is the classic reproduction of a painting of Jesus that adorned a wall at the Mischnicks. Later I saw that same portrait in other homes and shops, as common in the Czech neighborhood as FDR was in ours.

Kolin Avenue had narrow sidewalks, separated by only a few feet from the street by even narrower "lawns." Grass was sparse, but there were tall trees. I remember catalpas for their "cigars." I think the others were chiefly poplars with shaggy barks. Our street was not beautiful by any measure, and when I hear people from the GVS say that the blacks who succeeded us ruined the old neighborhood, I remind them that we never lived in elegance.

**P**eddlers frequently sold their fruits and vegetables down Kolin Avenue or in the alley between Kolin and Kostner. There was also the "Rexaline" ("rags and old iron") man and an iceman whom we harassed for chips to suck on after his tongs had cut a fifty or a hundred pound piece in half for a particular customer. Tar trucks also came through occasionally. We loved to capture the drippings and chew on them. We were told that tar was good for our teeth.

And of course we had organ grinders with their monkeys, and itinerant singers who came through the alleys into the backyards making music. Bubbie always wrapped a few pennies or a nickel inside the corner of newspaper and told me to throw it down the two flights to the entertainer. I loved those moments, particularly when the monkey caught the paper, unwrapped Bubbie's offering, and tipped his little pillbox hat.

A debit insurance man from Metropolitan Life, Mr. Berlow, came each week to collect the nickel for each of several policies Bubbie maintained on members of her family. Berlow was impeccably dressed in starched white shirt, a conservative gray suit, highly polished black "old man's" shoes, and wire-rimmed glasses. He was what I imagined a "professional man" to be. He was unfailingly polite, always addressing my grandmother as Mrs. as he recorded her nickels in his inches-thick payment book.

Another man came each week to empty the telephone cash box. Calls were a nickel then, but if you had none you could use an official slug, a metal disc the same size and weight as the coin. When the phone man came he opened the box, separated the nickels and slugs, counted the slugs, charged you for them, and left them with you for future use. He then quickly rolled the nickels in paper wrappers, took them, and was gone.

Berlow and the phone man were romantic figures to me when I was very young. I had lots of heroes then, special folks with special gifts, in every realm of human endeavor. Somehow the list today is very short.

**I**n response to queries from the *CJH* editor regarding my family and the Jewish aspects of my childhood: there was a small shul in our neighborhood, Bnei Ruven, at 1256 South Kedvale, which is where I had my bar mitzvah, though we were not members.

My grandfather would walk me to Douglas Boulevard on the High Holy Days and beg the various doorkeepers to let his *aynikl* in to hear cantors Pinchik, Richard Tucker, or Koussevitzky. My grandparents and parents observed all the Jewish holidays and kept a kosher home. Bubbie lit candles every Friday and washed the linoleum floors beforehand.

My father was a stockman for men's, women's, and

children's clothing wholesalers. My beloved Zaydie worked fifty years on Maxwell Street, from his arrival in 1907 until his death in 1956. My parents were both born in Chicago.

My choice of high school: I graduated from Mason Elementary School at 18th and Kildare and then Farragut High. The kids on our block of Kolin had the option of attending either Farragut or Marshall. I did not want to go to a school that was all Jewish. I told my mother that I wanted to be part of the larger world. ❖

**GORDON COHN** graduated from Farragut High School in 1950 and spent three semesters at Herzl Junior College before heading down to The University of Illinois (UIUC), where he earned two degrees in English. In 1954 he married Lois Miller of Springfield, and months later the couple moved to Southern California.

He taught in Long Beach before joining the University of Southern California (USC) in 1961 as a writer in the Department of University Advancement. Over the next thirty years he became responsible for private sector fund-raising, publications, and public relations on behalf of the USC Schools of Dentistry, Medicine, Pharmacy, and the Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and Hospital.

Shortly before his retirement in 1992, Mr. Cohn was asked by USC President James Zumberge to record and write the life of his predecessor, Dr. Norman Topping. The book was published, and that event marked the end of a very short retirement. In the past 25 years, Gordon has assisted 45 people in telling their life stories for distribution in print to family, friends, and associates.

Gordon and Lois Cohn were married for 61 years before her death in October 2015. She taught in the Long Beach and Los Alamitos elementary schools for thirty years, and in 1991 was named one of California's top twelve teachers. The couple have three children and three grandchildren, all of whom live in Long Beach within 15 minutes of each other.

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**K-Town** Residents of North Lawndale Community Area sometimes refer to the western part of their neighborhood as "K-Town" because so many street names there begin with the letter K. For several miles west of Pulaski Road there are stretches of north-south streets all starting with the same letter. This naming practice arose because of the annexations of 1889, which brought approximately 133 square miles and many duplicate street names within Chicago's boundaries. John D. Riley, superintendent of the city's Bureau of Maps, prepared a plan in which each mile west of the Indiana-Illinois border was assigned a successive letter of the alphabet, starting with A; streets within each mile were to begin with that letter. The city council rejected the proposal for the eastern sections of the city, but did apply it to some western streets in 1913. K-Town thus marks the eleventh mile from the Indiana state line. — **Amanda Seligman** *Encyclopedia of Chicago*



Clockwise from top left: Edgewater Historical Society President Robert Remer, CJHS President Edward Mazur, Rabbi Herman Schaalman, and Richard Damashek. Emanuel Congregation, 5959 North Sheridan Road, Chicago. Sunday, October 13, 2013. Photograph by Rachelle Gold.

## Remembering Our Afternoon With Rabbi Herman Schaalman

On April 28, 2016, Rabbi Herman E. Schaalman, the oldest living Reform rabbi, celebrated his 100th birthday. He passed away on January 31, 2017, only weeks after the death of his beloved wife, Lotte.

On an autumn afternoon in 2013, at Congregation Emanuel, the Edgewater Historical Society presented its Annual Austin Wyman Lecture, in collaboration with the Chicago Jewish Historical Society. It was a conversation between Emanuel Congregation's Rabbi Emeritus Herman Schaalman, a major religious and interfaith leader, and his biographer, Richard Damashek (*A Brand Plucked From the Fire*). Rabbi Schaalman had recently been named a Living Treasure by the EHS.

The sanctuary was filled with rapt listeners as Rabbi Schaalman told of his early life in Munich and his first years in the USA—with the warmth, humor, and insights that endeared him to fellow clergy, congregants, and students. The CJHS was proud to count him as a longtime member.

We add this unique remembrance to the many memorial tributes to the Schaalmans *z"l*.

Look to the rock from which you were born  
הביטו אל-צור חצבתכם



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## IN THIS ISSUE

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### Our History and Mission

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society was founded in 1977, and is in part an outgrowth of local Jewish participation in the United States Bicentennial Celebration of 1976 at an exhibition mounted at the Museum of Science and Industry by the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago and the American Jewish Congress. Three years after celebrating our “double *chai*,” the Society’s

**Tribute Cards for Celebrations or Memorials** The card design features the Society’s handsome logo. Inside, our mission statement and space for your personal message. Pack of five cards & envelopes \$18.00. Individual cards can be mailed for you from our office at \$5.00 per card, postage included. Mail your order and check to the CJHS office, 610 South Michigan Avenue, Room 803. Chicago IL 60605-1901. You may also order online at our website.

**Visit our website — [www.chicagojewishhistory.org](http://www.chicagojewishhistory.org)**

**Pay your membership dues online via PayPal or credit card, or use the printable membership application.**

Inquiries: [info@chicagojewishhistory.org](mailto:info@chicagojewishhistory.org)

All issues of our Society periodical from 1977 to the present have been digitized and posted on our website in pdf format. Simply click on “Publications” and scroll down through the years. There is an Index to the issues from 1977 to 2012.

## ABOUT THE SOCIETY

unique mission continues to be the discovery, collection, and dissemination of information about the Jewish experience in the Chicago area through publications, open meetings, tours, and outreach to youth. The Society does not maintain its own archives, but seeks out written, spoken, and photographic records and artifacts, and responsibly arranges for their donation to Jewish archives.

**Membership** in the Society is open to all interested persons and organizations, and includes:

- A subscription to the Society’s award-winning quarterly journal, *Chicago Jewish History*.
- Free admission to Society public programs. General admission is \$10 per person.
- Discounts on Society tours.
- Membership runs on a calendar year, from January through December. New members joining after July 1st are given an initial membership through December of the following year.

Life Membership	\$1,000
Annual Dues	
Historian	500
Scholar	250
Sponsor	100
Patron	65
Member	40
Student (with i.d.)	10



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