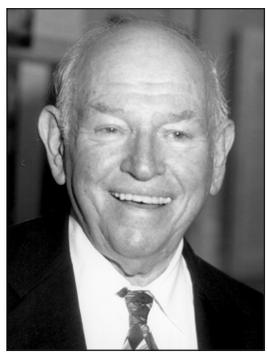




# chicago jewish history



*Save the Date!*  
*Sunday, Oct. 24 –*  
*CJHS Annual*  
*Meeting to Feature*  
*Irv Cutler Slide*  
*Lecture “Chicago’s*  
*Jewish West Side”*

The annual meeting of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society will be held on Sunday, October 24, 2010, at Beth Hillel Congregation Bnai Emunah, 3220 Big Tree Lane, Wilmette, Illinois.

Dr. Cutler’s program will begin at 2:00 p.m. following a brief review of the past year’s activities and the election of members of the Board of Directors. The nominees for re-election to a three-year term are: **Dr. Carolyn Eastwood, Clare Greenberg, Herbert Eiseman, Dr. Edward H. Mazur, and Burt Robin.**

Book-signing and social hour with kosher refreshments will follow the program. Admission is free and open to the public. For further information phone the Society office at (312) 663-5634.

## THE AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS: A JEWISH DEFENSE ORGANIZATION FALLS PREY TO THE MADOFF SCAM

BY WALTER ROTH

In its July 23, 2010 issue, the Jewish national newspaper, the *Forward*, carried an article on the rumored demise of the American Jewish Congress. The immediate cause, though the AJCongress has been in decline for a decade, is that nearly all of its endowment funds and cash resources had been invested with Bernie Madoff, who had caused the loss of billions of dollars through his fraudulent investment schemes.

After nearly a century of service, the American Jewish Congress has been forced to cease its operations.

The Chicago office of the AJCongress opened after the end of World War II and existed under its own corporate name, The Midwest Region of the American Jewish Congress. Among the presidents of the Midwest Region from 1957 to 1986 were Elmer Gertz, Paul Vishny, Walter Roth, Joseph Minsky, David V. Kahn, and Sol Brandzel, all of whom became active members of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society.

*continued on page 4*

**Calling All Authors!** November is Jewish Book Month, and the Fall 2010 issue of *CJH* will feature a section devoted to our authors. If you are an active member of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society and have published a book, please send the information to our office via e-mail or standard mail. If your book was listed last year (Fall 2009), rest assured, it will be listed again this year. Just let us know if there are any changes in description, ordering, or price. **Please reply by October 15, 2010.**

Author \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher/Ordering \_\_\_\_\_ Pages \_\_\_\_\_ Price \_\_\_\_\_

Description \_\_\_\_\_

Send via e-mail to: [info@chicagojewishhistory.org](mailto:info@chicagojewishhistory.org) or via standard mail to:  
Chicago Jewish Historical Society, 610 South Michigan Avenue, Room 803, Chicago, IL 60605-1901

## President's Column



Walter Roth

### HORST ABRAHAM AKA "HONEST ABE"

I recently received a phone call at my law office from a person who identified himself as Horst F. Abraham. He said he had asked for my name and phone number at the Selfhelp Home, where he is living, because he heard of my interest in Jewish history. He called, he said, because he has written a book, *Berlin-Shanghai-Chicago: Never Give Up*. Interested, I said, "Tell me about it."

He said that his book tells the story of his life, beginning with his birth in Berlin, Germany, on December 27, 1917. That information was enough for me to order the book on the spot. I phoned the manager of the Selfhelp Home (a retirement facility initially established for aged refugees from Nazi Germany). She told me that Horst Abraham is over ninety years of age, and he is an exuberant and delightful person with many artistic talents.

When I received the book, as a refugee from Germany myself, I quickly identified with Horst's history. His book is dedicated to the memory of his beloved sister Vera, who perished in Auschwitz with many of his relatives during the Holocaust.

Horst's book begins with his birth and early life in Berlin. The story is told in a simple manner, so that young people as well as adults can understand it. His father served in World War I. He then married, after which he opened a shoemaking shop in a working-class Jewish neighborhood (many religious Jews lived there as well). The family was poor, but they managed, as his father also worked for the Jewish Community in the administration of the Jewish cemetery in Berlin. Horst writes about his parents' struggle to make ends meet as the Depression struck Germany in the 1920s.

He recounts his early education in Berlin, where he first went to a secular school but was expelled because he was Jewish. He continued his education in Jewish schools and youth groups, and discovered a love of music. He also learned five languages.

With the passing of the Nuremburg Laws in 1935 (which he writes about in detail) and Kristallnacht, on November 9, 1938—which he witnessed—the family finally realized they must leave Germany. But by the spring of 1939, the only person in the family who had a chance to escape from Germany was Horst. He received a permit to go to Shanghai, China, only because a son of family friends had recently died, and the family had an extra permit, their son's, and they gave it to Horst.

On May 25, 1939, he left home and headed for Shanghai by sea, arriving a month later. In Shanghai he joined thousands of other German-Jewish refugees. He was twenty-two years old, poverty-stricken, and friendless. But with ingenuity and skill, he earned some money and obtained two permits for his parents to come from Berlin to Shanghai. However, he was unable to get one for his sister.

*continued on page 11*



### Officers 2010

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### Chicago Jewish History

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**Editor-Designer** Bev Chubat

**Editorial Board** Burt Robin, Walter Roth, Norman D. Schwartz, Milton Shulman

### Send all submissions to:

Editor, Chicago Jewish Historical Society, at street address or e-mail address shown above.

**TELEVISION AND ONLINE****WTTW Channel 11 Chicago Tonight:  
“Mysterious Murder of Lazarus Averbuch”**

President Walter Roth and Prof. Joe Kraus, former editor of *CJH*, participated in a segment of Chicago Tonight, about how a gruesome photo led producer Jay Shefsky on a quest to understand a century-old murder. The show aired on Wednesday, August 25, 2010.

In 1908, Lazarus Averbuch, a young Jewish immigrant, was shot dead in the foyer of the Lincoln Park home of Chicago's police chief, George Shippy. Soon afterward, the dead boy was photographed for the press—fully dressed in a portrait pose, propped up by a police officer. Shefsky found the shocking picture in the Daily News Photo Archive. Roth and Kraus wrote about the murder and the ensuing court case in their book, *An Accidental Anarchist*. Also taking part in the show, Bosnian-born writer Aleksandar Hemon and historian James Grossman of the Newberry Library.

<http://www.wttw.com/chicagotonight>

**Chicago Tonight Past Shows — August 25**

**THEATER****Chicago Dramatists:  
“The Invasion of Skokie”**

*Performances through October 2*

Steve Peterson's play is set in 1978. A Skokie Jewish family faces the threatened Nazi march, as well as their daughter's engagement to a non-Jew. Peterson introduced the characters in his play, *The Shabbes Goy*. Here he imagines them as they might be, fifteen years later.

**Chicago Dramatists, 1105 West Chicago Avenue**

Thurs, Fri, Sat, Sun — \$32 (reduced price tickets available)

**Tickets: <http://www.chicagodramatists.org>**

**LECTURE****Chicago Humanities Festival:  
“The Late Great Michael Reese:  
The Wider Context of a Lost Local Treasure”**

*Sunday, November 14 — 11 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.*

Alan Kraut, professor of history at American University and the leading historian of immigration and medicine; Dr. Marc Slutsky, a former Reese doctor; and historian and curator Rhoda Rosen place Michael Reese in the larger context of ethnic/religious hospitals in America.

**Newberry Library, 60 West Walton Street**

\$5 — Teachers and students free

**Tickets: <http://www.chicagohumanities.org>**

**Fall  
Cultural  
Events**

**EXHIBIT****Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies:  
“Uncovered & Rediscovered”  
Stories of Jewish Chicago**

*September 1, 2010 – December 29, 2012*

An evolving eight-part exhibit will unfold over time in a series of changing chapters (each on display for three to six months), using archival materials, cultural and fine art objects, and audio-visual content from Spertus's holdings to reveal the stories of individuals, places, events, and particular moments from Chicago's Jewish past.

“Uncovered & Rediscovered” is on display in the ground floor vestibule and will expand to other areas of the building as it progresses. It is augmented by an interactive media center on the 2nd floor, featuring clips of film and television recordings about Chicago Jewish life.

**Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies  
610 South Michigan Avenue**

Sunday thru Thursday 10 am to 5 pm; Spertus is closed on Fridays and Saturdays. This exhibit is free to the public.

**EXHIBIT****Chicago Cultural Center:  
“Louis Sullivan's Idea”**

*Through January 2, 2011*

Louis Sullivan was one of Chicago's most famous but misunderstood architects. Chicago artist Chris Ware and cultural historian Tim Samuelson present an installation of photographs, drawings, documents, and artifacts which will portray his life, writings, and architectural works in the context of his time and original creative intent. Architect-engineer Dankmar Adler's crucial role in Louis Sullivan's career is shown.

**Chicago Cultural Center**

**78 East Washington Street, Chicago Rooms**

Monday thru Thursday 8 am to 7 pm; Friday 8 am to 6 pm;  
Saturday 9 am to 6 pm; Sunday 10 am to 6 pm; Closed holidays

**THEY'RE BACK!****The Art Institute of Chicago:  
Marc Chagall's “American Windows”  
On View in New Gallery**

*Member Previews Begin Monday, October 29*

In 2005, when construction began on the Modern Wing, the beloved windows were removed for safety and conservation. Now they are being reinstalled in a new gallery. For details go to: <http://www.artic.edu>

## AJCongress *continued from the front page*

When the *Sentinel* was compiling its *History of Chicago Jewry 1911-1986*, I was asked to contribute an article on the history of the AJCongress, particularly as it existed in Chicago. In light of current events, now seems to be the right time to reprint major excerpts of the piece here in *CJH*, in a revised and edited version.

My article was the first in a chapter devoted to the work of the leading Jewish “defense” agencies that shaped the concerns of the American Jewish community. (The other organizations were the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League.)

## Jewish Defense 1 American Jewish Congress [1986]

The American Jewish Congress is unique among Jewish organizations in America. From its inception in 1916, it has attempted to act as a unifying voice of Jewish concerns outside traditional fundraising areas. Initially AJCongress was a spearhead for American Zionism. It then concerned itself with the threat to Jewish existence in Europe as well as the preservation of democratic principles in the United States. Its broad base of commitments made it the cutting edge for many legal and social issues. AJCongress was, and continues to be, made up of members throughout the country with strong grass roots commitments, and as such it remains unique in American Jewish life.

AJCongress acted as a representative of American Jewry at the Versailles Peace Conference after World War I. Subsequently, under the leadership of Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, it became the voice for American Jewry’s concerns about the Jews in Europe who faced discrimination and later extermination by Hitler’s regime.

At the end of World War II, AJCongress established a Commission on Community Interrelations, at the initiative of the noted social psychologist, Kurt Lewin. The purpose of this commission was to solve the problems of discrimination and anti-Semitism by developing guidelines to diffuse prejudice.

At the same time, a Commission on Law and Social Action was organized under the leadership of Alexander Pekelis, one of the most creative legal minds in America. Under his leadership, AJCongress began to initiate

many legal actions before the courts and administrative agencies, designed to protect the rights of all groups in employment, education, and housing, and to ensure the separation of church and state.

The 1960s marked a new point of departure for the American Jewish Congress. The generation that came into leadership in the ’60s expanded the scope of the organization’s activities. Here in Chicago, these younger men and women instituted programs and activities dealing with Jewish education and learning. AJCongress initiated workshops and seminars on chapter levels and on a citywide basis on topics such as Talmud, Yiddish, Hebrew, Jewish Mysticism, and Zionism.

AJCongress began an annual summer weekend family retreat (Kallah) at the facilities of the Jewish Community Center at Lake Delton, Wisconsin. For the last twenty years, AJCongress members have met there at Camp Chi for a three-day weekend, to pray together on the Sabbath and hear outstanding speakers discuss important issues of the day. The topics have included Civil Rights, the Urban Crisis, the Right to Protest, Quotas and Preferential Treatment, the Peace Movement and Vietnam, and Jewish Education. In only one year was the Kallah not held. In 1967, with the outbreak of the Six Day War, AJCongress members cancelled the retreat and opted to spend the weekend raising funds for Israel. (The funds for the weekend which had already been collected were donated to the Israel Emergency Fund.)



Rabbi Stephen S. Wise

Citywide programming became paramount. Arthur D. Morse, who had just written *While Six Million Died: A Chronicle of American Apathy*, was brought to speak in Chicago. His documentation of the American government’s complacency during the Holocaust period was then still new. AJCongress invited Elie Wiesel to Chicago at a time when he was quite unknown to the city. AJCongress organized and co-sponsored the first Chicago exhibit of “Art in a Concentration Camp—I Never Saw Another Butterfly.” Thousands of people came to the Crown Center of Roosevelt University to view the art and poetry created by the inmates of the Terezin Concentration Camp.

After the Six Day War, AJCongress leadership and members participated in the Grant Park rally celebrating the Israeli victory. On February 28, 1970, a demonstration was held in front of the Palmer House, where French President Georges Pompidou was

speaking, to protest his government's decision to stop selling jet aircraft to Israel. The demonstration was organized by the Community Council of Jewish Organizations. (CCJO was an umbrella group that succeeded the Illinois Conference of Jewish Organizations. This was prior to the establishment of the Public Affairs Committee of the Jewish Federation.) AJCongress actively participated in organizing the demonstration, and its members were part of the large crowd that chanted, "Boo! Boo! Pompidou!"

Many AJCongress members became involved in activities related to the rescue of Soviet Jews. In 1972, AJCongress helped to obtain over a million signatures on a petition that was to be presented to President Nixon before his departure for a summit conference in Moscow. During this period a legal action was filed by AJCongress to restrain the Field Museum from preventing entrance to persons wearing tee shirts printed with the slogan "Save Soviet Jewry." The Field had sought an injunction barring access to such persons on the grounds that it represented "political" activity inside the museum where a Russian exhibit was being presented. AJCongress attorneys successfully argued that this was a violation of constitutional privileges, and the injunction was denied. When Jews were allowed to emigrate from the USSR, AJCongress helped the newcomers adjust to their lives in America by sponsoring a series of seminars at the Russian Drop-In Center dealing with their rights and responsibilities.

**W**hen the Yom Kippur War broke out, AJCongress members who were also members of the American Jewish Art Club organized an "Art for Israel" auction, soliciting donations of artwork from around the country. Organized in cooperation with the Jewish United Fund, the auction was held on the premises of the Jewish Federation. It was well-attended and the fundraising effort was successful.

In 1973, AJCongress inaugurated a program to provide free legal services to indigent elderly Jews. Since that time, the program has been expanded to become the Volunteer Legal Services Clinic, with a roster of more than 80 attorneys serving the Jewish needy.

In 1975, AJCongress led a protest against biased coverage of Israel in the news media. AJCongress also expanded its actions against the Arab boycott of Israel. AJCongress members who owned shares in American companies participating in the boycott protested by submitting anti-boycott resolutions to be included in proxy material mailed to annual meetings. AJCongress filed suit against the U.S. Secretary of Commerce under

**D**uring the 1960s, AJCongress had some notable legislative successes in the Illinois General Assembly. Among them was an intensive campaign to seek passage of an Illinois Fair Employment Act. The dismal record of Illinois in many areas of civil rights—employment, housing, education, and public accommodation—was highlighted in a pamphlet published by AJCongress, entitled *The Lost Decade*.

With the rise of the Civil Rights Movement, AJCongress, in its chapters and citywide, became heavily involved with the Black community. AJCongress leaders met frequently with Black leaders in order to explore avenues of common interest, such as housing and neighborhood integration. AJCongress representatives attended meetings with the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the AJCongress banner was carried with those of other Jewish organizations at a rally in Soldier Field in July 1966, at which Dr. King called for a racially unified effort in the non-violent fight for Black civil rights.

During these years, AJCongress also attempted to mediate an issue which sorely tested the good will of the Black and Jewish communities—the contract buyers' litigation. Black leaders charged that homes sold to them on contract were at excessive prices, represented gouging, and should not be enforced by the courts on default. Many of the real estate contractors were Jewish, and bitter charges were exchanged between the two sides. AJCongress's attempts to intervene and arbitrate the issues were only partially successful, and the problem festered for many years.

With the assassination of Dr. King and the decline of the civil rights movement in the 1970s, AJCongress focused more closely on its role as a lawyer for the Jewish community.

the Freedom of Information Act to require the Department to disclose the names of the companies participating in the boycott. A newsletter, *The Boycott Report*, was published. These actions by the AJCongress led to legislation prohibiting American companies from participating in the tertiary boycott of Israel.

Chicago AJCongress has been deeply involved in the local community, publishing a *Guide to Jewish Chicago*, which has been reprinted a number of times.

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## YIDDISH WRITER DAVID BERGELSON VISITED CHICAGO IN 1929 BEFORE HIS FATEFUL RETURN TO THE SOVIET UNION



In 1929, the *Yiddishe Dramatishe Gezelshaft* (Jewish Drama Society of Chicago) honored David Bergelson. Seated (from left): Luba Kadison, Jack Dubow, David Bergelson, Joseph Buloff, Sara Patt. Standing (from left): D. Davidson, Benjamin Fishbein, Maurice Mason, M. Eisenberg, M. Mandelbaum, P. Buchstein.

Photo from the *Sentinel History of Chicago Jewry 1911-1961*, illustrating the article "The Yiddish Theater" by Danny Newman. The photo was used again in Newman's article on the same subject in the *Sentinel History of Chicago Jewry 1911-1986*.

**D**avid Bergelson, a Yiddish writer, was born on August 12, 1884, in Okhrimovo (Sarny in Russian) a *shtetl* near Uman in the Tsarist province of Kiev. He was the youngest child of a wealthy and pious Jewish family.

He was shot to death on August 12, 1952, his sixty-eighth birthday, in the Soviet Union, after a rigged trial and a pre-arranged death sentence. In all, thirteen Jewish defendants were executed that day. One of them had commented, "What is on trial here is the Yiddish language."

Public programs of remembrance are held and memorial essays mark the anniversary. On August 12, 2008, David Bergelson's only son, Lev, took part in a program in New York City. Excerpts of his remarks were published that week in the Yiddish language *Forverts*, and some are noted in this article. The scholar and critic Joseph Sherman wrote extensively on David Bergelson and made excellent translations of his works into English. Sherman is quoted here, and he is the source of much of the article's historical data.

Bergelson was a younger contemporary of Mendele Mokher Sforim, Yitskhok Leybush Peretz, and Sholem Aleichem, the pioneers of modern Yiddish literature. But with the publication of his novel *Nokh Alemen* (The End of Everything) in 1913, Bergelson moved into new territory. Joseph Sherman writes that his prose was "less concerned with action than with mood, had little use for conventionally conceived plot, slowed down events to focus on the interior life of characters, yet refused to offer any conclusions about them. In all these respects, Bergelson's work reflected the instability

that accompanied radical socio-cultural change from an old world that was dying to a new world that had not yet fully come into being." His consciously literary style puzzled Yiddish readers who were used to folksy volubility and moralizing.

**W**hy did Bergelson visit Chicago? The answer must begin back in the tumultuous time in Russia during and after World War I.

By 1917, Bergelson had a wife and young son. They were living in Kiev, where an independent multi-ethnic Ukrainian republic was established after the overthrow of the Tsar. This idealistic entity soon collapsed, and Jews were beset from all sides by horrendous pogroms. The Bergelsons fled to Moscow.

A publisher in Berlin offered to produce a six-volume edition of Bergelson's work (he had begun writing at a very young age), and the family moved there, into a milieu of émigré writers and artists from all over Eastern Europe. Bergelson was able to sell his work to the Yiddish press in Poland and Lithuania, and also to the *Forverts*, the socialist but anti-Communist paper in the USA.

He was a gifted violinist and a splendid storyteller. Lev remembers that after his father had completed his diligent daily writing, he would relax by playing his fiddle, joking, telling Hasidic tales, or reading aloud from Sholem Aleichem (his fellow Ukrainian), taking on the voice and manner of each character.

The actors of the Habima Theater and GOSET, the Moscow State Jewish Theater, were frequent guests in the Bergelsons' apartment.

Bergelson was lured (as were many others) by Stalin's promise of the eventual creation of a Jewish

autonomous republic in the USSR where Yiddish would be the official language and Yiddish culture would thrive as nowhere else. He was invited to visit the USSR. Despite the heavy hand controlling everything there, he fatefully chose to put himself in the hands of the Communist Party. He promptly left the *Forverts* and began writing for *Der frayhayt*, the New York-based Communist daily.

Bergelson was sent on a tour of the USA from November 1928 until May 1929, arranged by *Der frayhayt*, under the aegis of the Party. In Chicago, he was feted by the pictured drama society and also welcomed by his *landsmen* from Ochrimovo.

In 1933, the Bergelsons left Berlin. They had never intended to live there permanently, and when the Nazi threat became real, and their teenage son was beaten up in the streets, they relocated to where Bergelson was sure that his career could thrive, the Soviet Union.

For the next fifteen years, he lived well and profited nicely from the publication of his work by the Yiddish language press in Birobidzhan. Unforgiving critics in the West noted that Jewish religious traditions were often the targets of his satire.

**D**uring World War II, Bergelson's role was to rally Yiddish speakers around the world to the cause of what Soviet terminology called "The Great Patriotic War." Stalin set up the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee (JAFC), headed by Solomon Mikhoels, the director of GOSET. Bergelson served as a member of the Committee and edited the Yiddish periodical *Eynikayt* (Unity). As news of the Nazi exterminations poured in, Bergelson wrote stories depicting the suffering and heroism of individual Soviet Jews.

He was prodded by Mikhoels to write works expressing solidarity with the national identity of the Jewish people, and Bergelson began to do so. His play *Prince Ruveni*, set in medieval times, concerns a violent national uprising of Jews against their oppressors.

After the war, all the members of the JAFC were awarded the state medal for "Valiant Labor During the Great Patriotic War." But such public acknowledgement of their identity as Jews exacted a heavy price.

On January 13, 1948, on his way to Minsk to oversee a rehearsal of *Prince Ruveni*, Solomon Mikhoels was murdered in an elaborately faked car accident, on direct orders from Stalin. Mass arrests of leading Jewish cultural figures began in September 1948 and continued until June 1949.

"Bergelson was seized on the night of January 23, 1949.... Together with his fellow-accused, he lingered in prison for over three years, until his trial in May

1952. Fifteen defendants, including the poets Peretz Markish, David Hofshateyn, Itsik Fefer, and Leyb Kvitko, were charged with capital offenses, ranging from treason and espionage to 'bourgeois nationalism.' ...

"In 1961, nine years after his death, a volume of Bergelson's selected work was published in Moscow during the Krushchev 'thaw.'...It marked Bergelson's official 'rehabilitation' and identified those of his works that were acceptable to the party line in the 1960s. Among them, interestingly, was *The End of Everything*, which was republished in its entirety. The appreciation of a masterpiece, it would seem, can survive even the most brutal vicissitudes of ideology." — *from Joseph Sherman's introduction to his superb translation of The End of Everything, published by Yale University Press in 2009, shortly after Mr. Sherman's death at age sixty-five.*

**L**ev Bergelson, a graduate of Moscow State University, served with distinction in the Red Army in WWII. He headed the chemistry laboratory at the Shemyakin-Ovchinnikov Institute of Bioorganic Chemistry (1963-1986) and was later associated with the Department of Pharmacy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His daughter, Marina Bergelson Raskin, is the wife of Victor Raskin, Distinguished Professor of English and Linguistics at Purdue University. — *Bev Chubot*

## Summer Tour Report

### *Jewish Artists in Chicago*

On Sunday, August 15, Judith Joseph of the American Jewish Artists Club guided our three-stop bus tour of the world of the imagination.

First stop, Old Town, at the home/studio of Sandra Holubow, whose subject is Chicago, from the skyline to the street corner. She creates her brilliant abstractions in acrylic paint on canvas and enhances them with digital photo collage.

Next stop, the Art Institute of Chicago, at the main building, to see the Impressionist paintings of Camille Pissarro; then to the Modern Wing to view early- to mid-twentieth century works by Modigliani and Lipchitz and consider the Jewish components of Marc Chagall's *White Crucifixion*.

Last, the ARC Gallery, to see Judith Joseph's timely, provocative, site-specific installation on the subject of "Owing," which featured a number of her splendid acrylic-on-canvas amulets.

Thanks to Judith, Sandra, and CJHS Tour Chair Leah Axelrod for a fascinating afternoon.

## 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 22 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.

### **WE ASSIST POOR EXPECTANT MOTHERS**

The Independent Sisters of Charity, the only Jewish society which assists poor expectant mothers, is going to give the 7th annual ball on Saturday evening, December 2nd, at the Illinois Hall, Ogden Avenue and Madison Street. According to the weather prophets, we anticipate a very severe winter. Therefore we appeal to every right thinking person to help us make this ball a success, so that we will be able to help the poor expectant mothers, as we have done for the last six years. We also appeal to the

Presidents of the different Lodges and Societies, to give our interviewing committees a hearing and to buy as many tickets as possible. Aside from the great good that you will be doing for this holy cause, you will also be entertained immensely at this most enjoyable ball.

Thanking you in advance.  
The Arrangement Committee,  
Bessie Benjamin, Chairman.  
— *Daily Jewish Courier*,  
November 3, 1911

### **DR. SACHS, PRESIDENT OF THE CONSUMPTIVE SANITARIUM**

The noted Jewish physician, Dr. Theodore B. Sachs, was elected president of the Chicago Municipal Tuberculosis Sanitarium. Dr. Sachs contributed a great deal to the scientific treatment of consumption. He also spent a lot of time and energy at the recent tuberculosis exhibition in West Park No.2.

— *Daily Jewish Courier*,  
June 6, 1913

### **REGISTER YOM KIPPUR NIGHT**

Tomorrow is Registration Day, and all voters—men and women—should register in order to be able to vote in the coming November elections for President, Governor, Congressman, and others. The old registrations are void, and therefore each voter must take his time and register tomorrow, so his name can be entered in the election books. The great mass of Jewish voters will be able to register on Yom Kippur night, right after the prayer. All voting places will be open until 9 o'clock at night, and no one should fail to perform his citizen's duty.

WOMEN VOTERS, especially, should register, for this is the first

time in history when women will have the right to vote in a Presidential election.

— *Daily Jewish Courier*,  
October 6, 1916

### **MANISCHEWITZ MATZO COMPANY'S CHECK OF \$1,400.96 FOR WAR STAMPS**

Mr. Max Abel, the Chicago representative of the well-known Manischewitz Matzo Company of Cincinnati, recently sent in to the local office of the Joint Distribution Committee a check for \$1,400.96. This was the sum total of war stamps which, in answer to the appeal of local rabbis, he had pasted on every package of matzo and sack of matzo flour that was sent out from his store. This is the largest sum of money which any matzo company has collected from stamps for the war-suffering Jews. ... At a meeting of the office committee of the Joint Distribution Committee, the decision was made to appoint Mr. Abel as member-at-large of the executive committee in recognition of his great and noble work for the Relief. ... — *Daily Jewish Courier*,  
June 17, 1918

### **A GIFT TO UNCLE SAM FROM A JEWISH SOLDIER**

Private Harry Horwitz has given fifteen thousand dollars to the Red Cross while he is in the trenches of Europe. The officers of Major General Martin's division in Camp Grant were greatly surprised yesterday when they heard that Harry Horwitz, a private who was recently sent across to the Western Front, together with other soldiers from Camp Grant, had contributed fifteen thousand dollars in cash and property to the Red Cross in

Harvey, Illinois. Horwitz is twenty-six years old. He came from Russia, and lived at 631 South Marshfield Avenue, Chicago, until he enlisted. While he was in the training camp, he received word from relatives that both his brothers, who were in the Russian army, had been killed by the Germans. Harry waited impatiently for the day when he was to leave for Europe, and assured everyone that he would revenge himself upon the Germans. In his will he leaves the above-mentioned sum to the Red Cross. In Camp Grant, they don't know whether or not Horwitz has fallen in battle. His comrades are watching the casualty lists. — *Daily Jewish Courier*, June 24, 1918

#### F.H. ASTELER DEDICATION

A year ago, a Jewish policeman named F.H. Asteler was killed on the corner of Twelfth and Halsted Streets by an automobile. He was on duty regulating traffic so that people might cross in safety. This Tuesday, at the dedication of the

monument, the widow, although herself a poor woman, and others present, collected thirty-two dollars for Jewish war-sufferers. This money was given to the office of the Joint Relief, 720 West Roosevelt Road. — *Daily Jewish Courier*, July 4, 1919

#### TO JEWISH STOREKEEPERS

Some swindlers who represent themselves as health officers and license examiners have appeared recently in the Jewish neighborhoods of Chicago. They enter a small store and demand the immediate payment of the license fee from the storekeeper, or else the city will close their stores, they say. Many storekeepers become frightened and pay immediately. They receive a receipt for their payments. We came across such a receipt and thus became aware of the swindle. We notified the license department in the City Hall about it. Alderman Joseph A. Kostner, chairman of the Revenue committee of the City Council, asks us to notify the public that

the city has no employees who are authorized to collect money from any person or business establishment. Licenses can be obtained only at the offices of the city collector, Room 107, City Hall. The license fee is paid there by check or cash. Notify the police department at once if anybody demands payment of the license fee from a storekeeper. — *Daily Jewish Courier*, January 25, 1924

#### MISHKIN FAMILY AND NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY GRADUATION

At the Commencement Exercises held by Northwestern University last week, Jule Mishkin of Chicago was honored by having conferred on him the degrees of Juris Doctor (Doctor of Laws) and Bachelor of Science in Law. He is the third of his family to receive degrees in law from Northwestern University, being preceded by his brothers, Charles and Isadore. This is the only such instance on record. — *Jewish Chronicle*, June 25, 1926

## A CALL FOR PAGES FROM YOUR PAST

**M**uch of the work we publish in *Chicago Jewish History* focuses on broad themes, historical personages, and notable events. But we are always delighted to print contributions from our readers.

The memoirs we seek are refined versions of the stories you may tell at family gatherings or when you and old friends get together. Individual memoirs give us the opportunity to present history in its narrowest contours. A story you might recall from your childhood or some unusual situation in which you found yourself often prompts other people's memories to flow, as well.

During the High Holidays, you may recall your first impressions of services in one of Chicago's great synagogues or little *shtiblekh*. As the school year begins, you may remember a Jewish teacher who influenced

your life. Did you have an after-school job in a Jewish-owned business that no longer exists?

We encourage you to record what you remember from first-hand experience. Memories are most convincing when they are most personal.

Keep in mind that manuscripts should be no longer than six double-spaced pages, and (preferably) should be submitted in an MS Word document via e-mail. For those of you without access to computer technology, good old pen and paper will work just fine!

We comment on every submission, but we cannot guarantee the publication of any work. Send to:

**info@chicagojewishhistory.org** or  
**Chicago Jewish Historical Society, 610 S. Michigan Ave.,  
 Room 803, Chicago, IL 60605-1901**

## Letters to CJH



We placed this inquiry in the Spring 2009 issue of *CJH*, following our “Jews of Austin High School” mini reunion:

**Ron Chizever** This talented student artist illustrated the Austin High 1951 *Maroon & White* yearbook. He made this drawing of the Austin Tiger for the sports section and sketched cartoon images of daily life at school for the endpapers.

If you knew Ron, please send your remembrances of him to us.

*We received the following e-mails from his brother and his son:*

### Talented Member of a Notable Chicago Jewish Family

Ron (Ronald) was my brother. He was born June 20, 1934, and passed away from heart trouble in 1987.

While he was an avid cartoonist, as indicated in the article, he had a passion for journalism. He was managing editor for the *Pier Illini* (University of Illinois student newspaper at Navy Pier) after graduation from Austin High. He was also managing editor of *Shaft*, a parody and humor magazine published by students at the University of Illinois, downstate. Ron also produced cartoons for *Shaft*. The magazine was ultimately banned by the university during his tenure.

After graduating from college and completing service in the Army, he joined the City News Bureau and then the *Chicago Daily News* as a reporter. He later went on to ABC News in Chicago, and then NBC Chicago, where he spent several years as News Editor. He was also his union's shop steward for NBC News in Chicago.

At age 43, while working, he began attending law school at night, and became a lawyer at age 47. Shortly thereafter, he quit NBC and practiced law, while working part time as the managing editor of the union's international newspaper.

Ron was a hard working, dedicated professional who was highly thought of and respected by his associates. Unfortunately, his life was cut short by sudden illness.

Sheldon D. Chizever, *Columbus, OH*

P.S. Chizevers and Chizewers are all related. Ron was first cousin to Jack Chizewer, a former president of the Bernard Horwich Center; Ira C. Herbert (Ira Chizever Herbert), former president and chief marketing officer of Coca Cola USA; Irwin Ware (Irwin Chizewer), furrier; and Diane Chizever Zunamon, wife of Simon Zunamon, philanthropist; all now deceased.

My name is Hirsch Chizever. I am Ron's son. Thank you so much for remembering him in *Chicago Jewish History*. His union was NABET, the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians. I remember as a young boy picketing with him during a strike!...

Hirsch Chizever, *Marshalltown, IA*

## AJCongress [1986]

*continued from page 5*

In 1978, when Nazis threatened to march in Skokie, AJCongress presented its viewpoint at a meeting with Skokie Jewish leaders and Village officials and examined their local ordinances in order to deal with this threat. Later, AJCongress filed a brief with the Illinois Supreme Court in support of the position of the Village of Skokie to prohibit the Nazi demonstration.

In the early 1980s, AJCongress helped to organize visits of American mayors to Israel. Mayor Jane M. Byrne of Chicago visited Israel as part of an AJCongress delegation. But the organization mainly pressed forward on the legal front.

There was the interesting recent “Yarmulke Case.” AJCongress represented student basketball players at the Ida Crown Academy in their suit against the Illinois High School Association, to permit the team to wear *kipot* during their games. The IHSA adamantly refused to vary its rules prohibiting head coverings. AJCongress attorneys initially obtained a restraining order to permit the Academy team to play. This decision was subsequently remanded by the Court of Appeals, where the issue was settled with the requirement that a type of alligator clip be worn instead of a bobby pin, and that clips must be attached to straps sewn into the underside of the yarmulke. This case demonstrates the extent to which AJCongress will go to protect the constitutional rights of its constituency.

**A**s AJCongress entered the mid-1980s a new item was added to its agenda—Women's Equality. While the organization had a separate Women's Division for many years, at the 1980 national conven-

tion, action was taken to integrate the Women's Division with the General Division. Under the leadership of a younger generation, AJCongress has created a Commission on Women's Equality. In the short time since its inception, the Commission has presented several interesting programs, such as "Women as Jews: The Israeli Perspective."

In the past twenty-five years, AJCongress has been represented by vigorous men and women.

The Presidents — Chicago Council, American Jewish Congress (the name was later amended to Council of Greater Chicago, and is now known as Midwest Region, American Jewish Congress) were:

1957-1961	Paul G. Annes
1961-1963	Elmer Gertz
1963-1966	Paul Vishny
1966-1968	Irving L. Wein
1969-1973	Walter Roth
1974-1975	Fred Glick
1975-1978	Joseph Minsky
1979-1985	David V. Kahn
1986-	Sol Brandzel

During the period before integration, the Presidents of the Chicago Women's Division were:

1960-1961	Mrs. Martin Narodnick
1961-1963	Mrs. Harry Oberman
1963-1966	Mrs. Sam Gould
1966-1969	Mrs. Morris Sherman
1970-	Mrs. Sam Gould

The Executive Directors — Chicago Council, American Jewish Congress during this period were:

1956-1967	Maurice Klinger
1968-1979	Manuel Silver
1979-	Shirley Sachs

The Staff Attorneys during this period were: Ralph E. Brown, Harry S. Miller, Bruce Goldberg, and Sylvia Neil.

Rabbi Norman Lewison is the Director of the Commission on Jewish Life and Culture, and International Affairs and Israel. ❖

## President's Column *continued from page 2*

Horst's many talents enabled him and his parents to survive. He was able to leave Shanghai in May of 1949, almost ten years to the day that he arrived. He went first to Hong Kong, and then to San Francisco. From there he went to Chicago, where he got a job as a shipping clerk at a tee shirt company on South Wabash Avenue.

A year later, in 1950, he managed to obtain a job with the Armour Dial Corporation, where he was soon promoted to work in the soap boiling department, and he was able to get to know the manager of part of the company. He was also able to raise enough money to bring his parents from Shanghai to Chicago.

Horst relates how the manager did not think his first name was appropriately American and told him to choose another. "I thought of President Lincoln, who was often called 'Honest Abe.' 'Call me Honest Abe!'" From then on, he was known as Honest Abe on the job, and he used that name until he left the company in 1981.

He moved from manufacturing to cost accounting, and he enrolled in computer courses at Roosevelt University. He lived in the South Shore neighborhood, on Luella Avenue, and joined Congregation Habonim. His magnificent tenor voice enabled him to join the Chicago Symphony Chorus, where he would sing for many years.

At Congregation Habonim, he renewed his acquaintance with Cantor Leopold Fleischer, who had also been in Shanghai during the War, and where they had first met.

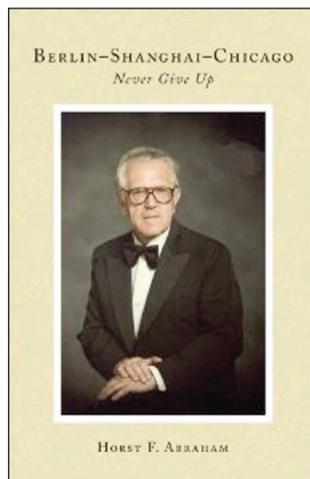
Horst established many lasting friendships, and one in particular with Alex Revering, who was also a lover of music and who became Horst's partner in an antique business. The two of them opened a shop, which they ran together for many years. After Horst retired from that business, he lived for a few years in Santa Fe with Alex.

After surviving a bout with cancer, Horst returned to Chicago to live at the Selfhelp Home. He is still full of enthusiasm, and regales those who will listen, with his many stories about his lifetime experiences.

He embodies the will to live, even under terrible social, health, and economic conditions. He displays resilience in all of these things, not to mention what might be the hardest of all—aging. His book is well worth buying and reading.

### **BERLIN-SHANGHAI-CHICAGO**

***Never Give Up.*** By Horst F. Abraham. Paper, \$17.00. Available from the author and online at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)



As president of the CJHS, I wish all of you—valued members of the Society, your families, and friends—  
A Very Happy and Healthy New Year. *L'shana tova!*

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



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## About the Society

### What We Are

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. The Society has as its purpose the discovery, preservation and dissemination of information about the Jewish experience in the Chicago area.

**Tribute Cards for Celebrations or Memorials** The card design features the Society’s logo, our mission statement, and space for a personal message. A pack of eight cards and envelopes is \$10.00. Individual cards can be mailed for you from our office at \$5.00 per card, postage included. Order cards from the Society office (312) 663-5634.

**Remember the Society** Name the Chicago Jewish Historical Society as a beneficiary under your Last Will, Living Trust, IRA or other retirement account. Any gift to CJHS avoids all estate taxes and can be used to support any activity of our Society that you choose—publication, exhibition, public program, or research. For information please call the Society office at (312) 663-5634.

**Browse Our Website** for information about our upcoming programs. Read past issues of *Chicago Jewish History*. Discover links to other Jewish sites. Use the printable membership application. We welcome your inquiries and comments. E-mail: [info@chicagojewishhistory.org](mailto:info@chicagojewishhistory.org)

[www.chicagojewishhistory.org](http://www.chicagojewishhistory.org)

### What We Do

The Society seeks out, collects and preserves written, spoken and photographic records, in close cooperation with the Chicago Jewish Archives, Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies. The Society publishes historical information; holds public meetings at which various aspects of Chicago Jewish history are treated; mounts appropriate exhibits; and offers tours of Jewish historical sites.

### Membership

Membership in the Society is open to all interested persons and organizations and includes a subscription to *Chicago Jewish History*, discounts on Society tours and at the Spertus Museum store, and the opportunity to learn and inform others about Chicago Jewish history and its preservation.

### Dues Structure

Membership runs on a calendar year, from January through December. New members joining after July 1 are given an initial membership through December of the following year.

Life Membership	\$1000
Annual Dues:	
Historian	500
Scholar	250
Sponsor	100
Patron	50
Basic Membership	35

Make checks payable to the Chicago Jewish Historical Society, and mail to our office at 610 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605-1901. Dues are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.